

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL  
EDUCATION  
Education Committee Meeting**

**LOCATION  
Governor's Council Conference Room  
3601 C Street  
Anchorage, Alaska  
Teleconference**

**Meeting Date  
December 6, 2012**

**Attendees:**

Taylor Gregg, Chair  
Ernie Manzie  
Terese Kashi  
Sam Jordan  
Meredith Jaecks  
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus

**Community Members/Guests:**

Patrick Pillai  
Christie Reinhardt  
Starr Marsett

**Staff:**

Teresa Holt

Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo  
Peninsula Reporting

**CALL TO ORDER – 1:30 p.m.**  
**ROLL CALL**

**Welcome from the Chair**

**Review of Council Mission Statement**

Taylor Gregg reviewed the Council’s mission statement: Creating change that improves the lives of people with disabilities.

**Announcements and Good News**

Teresa Holt announced that Christie Reinhardt has been hired by the Council to staff the Education and the Early Intervention Committees. Her first date will be January 9, 2013.

Taylor Gregg announced that she will be heading to Hawaii after the SESA meeting.

**Approval of Agenda**

Teresa Holt amended the agenda to replace the discussion on the special education handbook to the issue of the new teacher evaluation regulations.

Ernie Manzie **MOVED** to approve the agenda as amended. The motion **PASSED**.

**Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Ernie Manzie **MOVED** to approve the October 17, 2012 minutes as presented. The motion **PASSED**.

**Correspondence**

**U.N. Convention**

Teresa Holt explained that the Council has received correspondence in the form of posts to the Council’s Facebook page in opposition to the Council’s support of the U.N. Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities, which is to make sure that everyone with disabilities has the same rights as

other people in their nation. America is one of the last nations to ratify this Convention. This issue came up for a vote in the Senate, and had already passed the House. Unfortunately, the Senate vote failed by five votes.

Teresa stated that the majority of those concerned about the passage of the Convention were from a parent's group who were misinformed that children's rights would override parent's rights should this pass. There are also 300 other disability organizations throughout the nation that are in support of this U.N. Convention. The Council posted on the Facebook page urging people to call their senators and thank them for voting for the passage of the resolution. Teresa stated the Governor's office and the Commissioner's office have contacted the Council for the Council to defend their position in support of that resolution.

Ernie Manzie felt that the Council or individual Council members should send a letter of thanks to both Senators Murkowski and Begich for voting in support of the resolution. Teresa Holt will take this issue to the Executive Committee for their approval.

### **Discussion on a Plan of Action for the HSGQE**

Teresa Holt stated that the Education Committee has had the HSGQE on their work plan for a long time and asked how committee members would like to pursue the issue. She listed the following options:

1. Remove the requirement to pass the HSGQE in order to get a diploma.  
*(Tried to get passed in two legislative sessions and failed both times.)*
2. Work with the State Board of Education to see if there is a way to change the regulations, such as a special waiver for students with disabilities.
3. Look at a two-tiered diploma system.

Teresa Holt suggested they could form a subcommittee of the Education Committee to hold a Midwest Academy planning session.

Teresa took a roll call vote, with the majority of committee members in favor of options two and three as well as convening a subcommittee. Volunteers for the subcommittee include Starr Marsett, Ernie Manzie, and Terese Kashi. Teresa Holt stated that the subcommittee can explore options and then present those options at the February Education Committee meeting.

## **Discussion on New Teacher Regulations**

Teresa Holt reported that the State Board of Education meeting is being held today and tomorrow. She stated that she provided public testimony at the meeting this morning regarding teacher evaluations. She stated that the issue came up quickly, and they will be voting on it during this meeting.

Teresa explained that the Department of Education has new teacher evaluation regulations that were recently changed. The piece that the Council is concerned about is 4 AAC 19.010. She summarized that no later than the 2015/2016 school year, whether a teacher or administrator's performance on the district standards for student learning data is exemplary, proficient, basic, or unsatisfactory, districts will include student learning data in teacher and administrator evaluations. She stated that by the school year 2018/2019, 50 percent of the teachers' or administrators' overall performance ratings will be based on student achievement.

Teresa Holt stated that one of the concerns she expressed to the State Board of Education is that the evaluation of the teacher based on student achievement data becomes more complex when they are special education teachers, teachers for English language learners, and students who are at risk for dropping out. Teresa cited the 2010 report entitled, "Evaluating Special Education Teachers and English Language Learner Specialists" from the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.

Teresa Holt stated that the Council recommended to the State Board of Education that they not adopt the regulations tomorrow and take additional comments from teachers, although they had already received 1,000 comments. They also recommended that the State Board look at lowering that percentage to either 20 or 10 percent of the teachers' evaluation based on student achievement.

Teresa explained that even though there are tests to measure student performance, there are external factors that affect student achievement, such as divorce of parents.

She stated that another problem is if they have some arbitrary number set for student achievement, an excellent special education teacher may only get their student to increase by two points, and even though it's a great

accomplishment for that special education student, it doesn't reach the level the districts may have set to gauge everybody equally.

Teresa mentioned that another problem is that the student data is based on a statistical average based on a classroom of 30 students. Some special education classes only have three students, and the data wouldn't be statistically reliable, and it would be unfair to hold the teacher to the same statistical standards for reliability.

Teresa also discussed states in which they have gone to a system where they base their achievement data for the special education students on the student's progress on IEP goals. She noted that one of the unintended consequences of this is that IEP goals changed significantly when teacher evaluation data was being measured on those goals, so the goals were geared toward the teachers' and not the students' needs. Teresa suggested that another unintended consequences could be that special education teachers would migrate towards teaching the students who would give them the best performance data. This could affect integration into regular education classrooms because teachers may not want to have special education students in their classrooms that could skew their scores. She also suggested that they might see a migration of teachers from at-risk schools to higher achieving schools.

Starr Marsett commented that she attended an event where she heard teachers discussing leaving Title I schools as a result of this regulation.

Terese Kashi commented that another problem is teachers teaching to the test and not actually making any progress with their students.

Teresa Holt stated that the regulations say that no later than July 1, 2015, a school district shall adopt standards for performance based on student learning data. The district shall require the use of at least two, but not more than four, measurements of student growth. Teresa mentioned that the difficult part about that is that each of the 54 school districts will need to be approached to see what they are individually doing to address special education. She would like to see the State provide more specific direction regarding the issue of special education staff evaluations. She also felt that the "at least two but not more than four" remark is very vague.

Teresa stated that the Council recommended that instead of this large portion

of the evaluation be based on student achievement, there should be a large portion of the evaluation based on observation of teachers while they are teaching by someone of the same discipline or profession. They also ask that they include in the observation section student and parent feedback, self-evaluation, and then professional development as well. The professional development includes three components: Self-directed, observation-directed, and individualized.

Teresa Holt stated that if the regulation doesn't pass, they can work with Geri Benshoof to do some additional research. If the regulation does pass, then the Council needs to be actively advocating with each school district as they create their own evaluation plan. Teresa Holt stated that she will report back to the Education Committee after tomorrow's session of the State Board of Education meeting. Ernie Manzie suggested they need to be very careful that they explain that the regulations as they are currently written are not satisfactory, but that the Council is also agreement that teacher quality and teacher evaluations are very important. Teresa asked that committee members research this as well and send her any information they can find on the issue on a national level.

### **Report from State Board of Education**

Geri Benshoof was attending the State Board of Education meeting and was unable to give a report.

### **Report from SESA**

Patrick Pillai gave the following report for SESA:

- Between August and December, SESA provided technical assistance to:
  - 69 family members
  - 128 related service providers
  - 280 paraprofessionals
  - 356 special education teachers
  - 173 general education teachers and 94 administrators.
- Patricia McDaid, SESA autism specialist, provided training in November to 250 paraprofessionals of the Mat-Su School District.
- The SESA educational technology plan was submitted to the Department of Education and approved for 2013-2016.

- A SESA team met with people from North Star Behavioral Health to align services and to coordinate efforts to share program information.
- SESA received a clean bill of financial health from Mikunda Cottrell, and the final report will be reported to the SESA board on December 14, 2012.
- The second reading of SESA's revision of board policy will be read at the December board meeting. Two readings are required prior to adoption of policy.
- SESA has undertaken a project to create a video of SESA services provided to districts and families. They plan to have the video completed by January 25, 2013
- They are preparing for working with the legislators, and step one will be to seek a sponsor for a bill to reauthorize the agency and seek increased funding.

## **DEED**

Sam Jordan presented the following for the Department of Education:

- They just finished up the last of the monitoring visits.
- They are in the midst of the funding reviews for intensive funding.
- EED's APR is due February 1, 2013.
- They are preparing for ASSEC. They will all be in attendance and will all be presenting.
- In collaboration with SERRC, DVR/TVR, and others, they developed an e-learning course directed at secondary school teachers who are developing transition plans. It has been well received by school districts that have started using it.
- Developing the updated version of the Special Education Handbook, and are hopefully in the final draft stage.

Teresa Holt asked Sam Jordan if the Council would be allowed access to the e-learning course to get an idea of the message to incorporate into the Employment First message they will be sending through funding from the Trust. Sam Jordan also suggested contacting SERRC, who runs the transition camp model.

Sam Jordan shared with Patrick Pillai that people in the Mat-Su were very pleased with the autism training done by Patricia McDaid.

## **Important Future Meetings/Conferences/Trainings**

- State Board of Education – December 6 - 7
- January Council meeting – January 22 – 24, 2013, Juneau
- ASSEC – February 2 – 4, 2013, Anchorage.

Teresa Holt stated that they have a much shorter deadline this year on the Inclusive Practice Award nominations. They must be done with the awards by the first two weeks in January in order to have time to get the plaque printed and made. She asked that Council members spread the word and try to get some nominees before Christmas. She also noted that anyone can nominate an educator for this award, and the nominator is confidential.

## **Time and Date of Next Meeting**

The next teleconference is scheduled for January 17, 2013 at 1:30 p.m.

## **Adjournment**

Terese Kashi **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. The motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.