

# Special Education State Advisory Committee (SESAC)

Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services  
200 West Baltimore Street, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

## SESAC General Meeting JANUARY 21, 2011 JHU/CTE Columbia, Maryland MINUTES

**SESAC Members In Attendance:** Rachel London, Mary Baskar, Pamela Hardy, Kelli Meissner, Lorraine Costella, Marlo Lemon, Heather Sopher, Dorie Flynn

**EXCUSED:** Katrina Kickbush, Amy Morales, Colleen Guardia, Andy Anderson, Sharon Glass

**GUESTS:** Vanessa Ridgeway (Chair, Calvert County Special Education Citizens Advisory Council)

**MSDE Staff in Attendance:** Carol Ann Heath, Donna Riley, Sharon West, Sheréa Makle

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Prior to the start of meeting, Ms. London informed participants of the need to reschedule the April 21, 2011 general meeting due to upcoming holidays and Local School System spring breaks. The following dates were proposed and agreed upon:

- Executive Meeting: February 10, 2011, 10-12 pm, at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Baltimore
- General Meeting: March 17, 2011, 1-4 pm at Johns Hopkins University/Center for Technology in Education, Columbia

**Ms. London called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m.**

- I. **Welcome:** Ms. London welcomed participants and provided an overview of the meeting agenda.
- II. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes for the following meetings were to be reviewed: September 16, 2010 and November 18, 2010. However, a quorum of SESAC members was not present. Ms. London proposed, and SESAC members agreed, to have the minutes reviewed by the entire membership prior to the next general meeting. Approval of the minutes would then be considered via an e-mail vote or during the March 17, 2011 general meeting.
- III. **Summary of local SECAC Activities:** Ms. London shared a summary of major activities by local Special Education Citizens Advisory Committees (SECACs) for FFY 2010/SFY 2011 (2010-2011). Refer to handout, *Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee FFY2010/SFY2011 (2010-2011)*. MSDE requires local Directors of Special Education to provide in their annual application for funds a summary of their activities and a description of how the public is informed of special education programs through the local SECAC. Ms. London reminded participants that this summary is being provided in line with the SESAC's decision to have updates from local SECACs as a priority and to look at ways of connecting with SECACs and receive feedback.

Ms. London asked if anyone participated on local SECACs and thought about other ways to received feedback from local SECACs. Ms. Riley agreed to send an email to local directors and SECAC chairs to ask if local SECACs had information they'd like to share or have brought before the SESAC. Discussion followed. Ms. London added that the handout from today's meeting be attached to Ms. Riley's email to the directors. Ms. Riley asked if the SESAC was interested in having another SECAC/SESAC meeting and if the question should be posed to the directors in this email. Ms. London suggested that given the priorities selected by the SESAC that having a joint meeting may be a good idea for now. Other members agreed. Ms. West suggested framing the beginning of the meeting in the same way that Dr. Carol Ann Heath structures her monthly meeting with local directors of Special Education, where at the beginning of the meeting, participants network and participate in facilitated, topic-driven discussions. Then follow with the regular meeting agenda. Participants shared additional ideas on structuring the meeting and setting an agenda.

#### IV. **SPP/APR (FFY 2009/SFY 2010) Update**

- a) **Survey Results:** Ms. Riley shared the document, *Survey Results and Analysis for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS), FFY 2009/SFY 2010*,

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*State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR), Special Education State Advisory Committee (SESAC)*, dated Friday, January 14, 2011. The document contains a detailed statistical analysis of the results of the survey titled *Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, 2010 Special Education State Advisory Committee State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report*. The results analysis includes answers from all respondents who took the survey in the 41-day period from Thursday, December 2, 2010 to Tuesday, January 11, 2011. Ten completed responses were received to the survey during this time.

- b) MSRRC Input: Ms. Riley reported that in late December a draft copy of the SPP/APR report was sent to the Mid-South Regional Resource Center (MSRRC) in Kentucky for review and technical assistance. Staff at MSRRC reviewed the draft during the week of January 3, 2011, and provided comments to MSDE on January 11. MSRRC commented that staff was pleased with both the Part B and Part C submissions. Several SESAC members also provided comments.
- c) Latest Draft: Ms. Riley stated that the final report was being finalized for submission to the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) by the January 28, 2011 due date. SESAC would be sent a copy of the report via e-mail.

## V. Professional Development Activities

- a) Local Application for Federal Funds: Ms. Riley shared and discussed the *Maryland Teacher Professional Developmental Planning Form*, which is made part of the Local Application for Federal Funds (LAFF), as well as the MSDE discretionary grant applications. The planning form is completed by each local school system. Ms. Riley also shared the *FY2011 LAFF Professional Development Plans*, which provides a summary of professional development activities conducted by each local school system.
- b) Comprehensive System of Professional Development: Ms. West expressed the importance of professional development in Maryland and explained that local school systems determine their professional development needs. The local school system shares with MSDE the components to determine which professional development activities are needed, how the need was determined (data analysis, etc.), what the LSS plans for delivering the professional development, the desired outcomes, and any follow-up (coaching, mentoring, etc.). MSDE also works with the local school system to determine how professional development outcomes were measured. Ms. West stated that timing is a major issue for Maryland school systems: when to provide professional development and how to effectively provide professional development with limited resources.

Ms. West provided a brief overview of Maryland's Co-Teaching Initiative, which is coordinated by Ms. Fran Sorin in the MSDE Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, Student Achievement and Professional Development Branch. Group discussion followed.

Ms. West shared the following resources:

- *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards*
  - Maryland Teacher Professional Development opportunities (a printout from the MSDE website: *Development*, [http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/instruction/prof\\_standards](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/instruction/prof_standards))
  - *Maryland e-Learning for Educators Online Professional Development Courses for Maryland Educators, Winter 2011*, offered by MSDE and Thinkport (an online resource from Maryland Public Television and Johns Hopkins University/Center for Technology in Education)
- c) Using Technology to Advance Professional Development: Ms. West added *Maryland Learning Links* will incorporate a professional development tracker, as well as the *Stages of Professional Development* documents. Webinars and podcasts will also be made available. Ms. West shared that she visited Goucher College, which developed online courses through the Maryland State Improvement Grant. Ms. West shared that the courses were highly engaging and interactive, with online chats, etc. Ms. Costella and Ms. West spoke of the importance of having professional development available to both regular and special education teachers. Ms. Flynn asked

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what was suggested on communicating professional development information to teachers in non-public settings and juvenile services. Ms. West suggested further discussion with the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services staff on this important topic.

## VI. Assistant State Superintendent's Update

Dr. Heath shared updates on the following items.

- a) OSEP Verification Visit, December 2010: Dr. Heath stated that the MSDE Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services spent an intensive 8 or 9-month period preparing for the visit and also worked with a law firm about two years ago regarding documentation and funding. Dr. Heath shared that the meetings and presentation by Part B and Part C staff all went very well. MSDE is expecting a favorable report from OSEP, however, it is expected that the MSDE will be required to follow up on two specific issues: (1) letters of finding for State complaints, and (2) the State's method of calculating local maintenance of effort.
- b) Budget Hearings for MSDE Headquarters and Aid To Education: Dr. Heath shared that Legislative Hearings for MSDE Headquarters and Aid To Education had been scheduled for February 2011. Dr. Heath had no word on budget reduction as of the meeting date. However, State and local employees could experience furloughs for a fourth year in a row, which makes it hard to attract top-notch employees to the MSDE. To alleviate the need for furloughs, Dr. Heath shared that the Governor had offered early retirement incentives to qualified State employees. One person in the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services took advantage of this voluntary reduction program. Dr. Heath expected the Governor's budget to be posted on the Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM) website by January 21.
- c) Relevant Legislation:
  - A non-public bullying bill has been introduced although Maryland already a related policy in place.
  - Five-Day Rule: Some local school systems have reported issues with this legislation.
  - Senate Bill 577, Alt-MSA Review: The following mechanisms have been used to receive feedback from across the State: survey monkey, listening sessions, 4 regional planning meetings have been held, special centers principals meetings to be held, special listening session for Montgomery County's teachers union to be held. 8 focus groups around specific stakeholder groups are being held. Report to be completed on the issue. The information would be used to determine changes to the review while still keeping Maryland in compliance.
- d) Maryland Council on Teacher Effectiveness for Special Educators (Teacher Reform): Council members to be appointed by the Governor. A special workgroup for special education has been formed. A special Education Effectiveness panel is to be held next week. There are issues around measuring special education educator and related services personnel effectiveness.
- a) Autism Commission: Dr. Heath has co-chaired this Committee for approximately two year. The Commission has been focused on Maryland's Autism Waiver and the quality of services available in schools for students with Autism. The Commission is concerned about the lack of mechanisms for transitioning youth with autism into adult services. Ms. London shared that according to recent data, Maryland spends the least amount of money on adults with disabilities than any other U.S. state. The Commission is planning a retreat is planned for April.
- e) Discretionary Grants: This year, locals will be asked to analyze their data and focus on areas that they need to focus on improving their data. The locals must then show results from use of the funds.
- f) On March 22, 2011, a comprehensive overview/update on special education will be presented to the Maryland state Board of Education, at the request of the Board. Dr. Heath invited SESAC members to attend the Board meeting to see the presentation.

Dr. Heath invited questions and invited members to write to her at any time with questions or comments.

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- VII. **Comments/Open Discussion:** Ms. London opened the floor for public comment and open discussion.
- a) Dr. Heath encouraged participants to read a recent report from the Center for American Progress, (see *Return on Educational Investment*, A district-by-district evaluation of U.S. educational productivity, Ulrich Boser, January 2011, <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/01/pdf/dwwroi.pdf>).
  - b) Ms. Sopher announced that a new interim Secretary for the Department of Human Resources would be coming on board soon.
  - c) Dr. Heath stated that Maryland Child Count data should be posted to the MSDE website by March 2011.
  - d) Ms. London expressed gratitude for participating membership and shared that she would be contacting the members who have participated in fewer than 50% of scheduled meeting this calendar year.

Ms. London adjourned the meeting at 3:45 pm.