

2005 – 2006 Annual Report



Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

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William J. Moloney

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State Director, Exceptional Student Services
Terri Rogers Connolly

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Notes

Table of Contents

What is CSEAC2
Purpose of CSEAC2
Vision Statement of CSEAC.....2
Mission Statement of CSEAC2
Reflections from Co-Chairs3
Accomplishments4-5
Committee Reports.....6-9
Additional Highlights.....10-11
CSEAC Membership 2005-200612
Schedule of Meetings 2006-200713

What is CSEAC

The Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC) is a state level committee mandated by federal and state law. Members are interested in the education of children/youth with disabilities. We include parents of, and individuals with disabilities, educational service providers, administrators and representatives from a variety of related agencies. Participation is statewide and representative of diverse disabilities.

Purpose of CSEAC

- Provide input and assistance to the State Board of Education
- Advise the State Director of Exceptional Student Services
- Advocate and promote communication, collaboration and partnership among educational service providers, children/youth, parents and administrators
- Serve as a liaison among parents of children with special needs, local educational agencies and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Exceptional Student Services Unit

Vision Statement of CSEAC

All learners are respected and challenged with high expectations, their needs are met, and student aspirations for success are fulfilled.

Mission Statement of CSEAC

Our mission is to actively represent children/youth with disabilities and impact decisions made on their behalf to enhance the quality of educational services.

Scheduled Meetings for 2006-2007

September 21, 2006
November 16, 2006
February 22, 2007
April 19, 2007
July 26 & 27, 2007, Retreat

Contact the Exceptional Student Services Unit for times and locations at 303-866-6943.

For Additional Information

For further information about the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee, please visit www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/CSEAC.asp, call 303-866-6943, or contact one of the following persons:

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CSEAC Members 2005-2006

Reflections from the Co-Chairs Karen Rutledge and Steve Sandoval

Name	Congressional District
Nella B. Anderson	3
Dani Lisa Arck	1
Debi Blackwell	5
Orvin Breningstall	1
Paula Christina	2
Jann Clevenger	6
Lynne Fitzhugh	5
Lisa Schwartz Franklin	6
Michelle Gonzalez-Yoder	7
Mary Griffin	7
Diana Kellner	2
Lynette Lang	7
Stephanie Lynch	2
Laura Merrill	7
Ray Mix	3
Glenda Nash-Buscarello	1
Paula Norman	4
Linn Oliver	7
Tim Rea	6
Jack Robinson	1
Karen Rutledge *Co-Chair	2
Steven Sandoval * Co-Chair	4
Tim Sanger	4
Alison Seyler	5
Robin Singer	6
Ed Steinberg	4
Elenn Steinberg	1
Cindy Ucker	5
Mike Wales	6
Menda Warne	4
Ian Watlington	6
Senator Suzanne Williams	7

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as co-chairs of the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee during the 2005-06 year. This year our theme was “Ascending New Heights” and the committee identified four topics to investigate based on feedback from the Colorado Department of Education and PEAK Parent Center. We are proud to have developed position statements on these areas that provide guidance to Colorado decision makers and increase our visibility in the state among various stakeholders. Our four identified priorities for the 2005-06 year were:

Priority 1: The **Response to Intervention (RTI) model** and the impact it has not only with the identification of students with learning disabilities, but to the potential it has for overall school reform.

Priority 2: The **transition process** from one environment to another (e.g., from high school graduation to employment and/or higher education).

Priority 3: The **recruitment and retention of high quality educators** – general and special education – as well as how these educators are being prepared by institutes of higher education.

Priority 4: The creation and implementation of the students’ **Individualized Education Programs (IEP)**. Throughout this year CSEAC has kept abreast of how the Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) will impact Colorado students and we have provided input on numerous occasions to the Colorado Department of Education as it plans for implementing these changes. We have been a partner, a sounding board and a guiding voice on special education issues in Colorado.

Accomplishments

- Produced three position statements with the fourth one in progress. These position statements can be found on the Colorado Department of Education website at www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/CSEAC.asp. The titles of these papers are “Response to Intervention (RTI) in Colorado Schools”, “Individualized Transition Planning and Services for Students with Disabilities”, and “Recruiting and Retaining High Quality Special Educators”.
- Developed a dissemination plan for each of these position statements. Each of these papers was sent to the following stakeholders with a cover letter: Colorado State Board of Education, Colorado legislators from the House and Senate, Exceptional Student Services Unit personnel at the Colorado Department of Education, Special Education Directors and Coordinators, PEAK Parent Center and Superintendents. In addition, each position statement was sent to targeted groups interested in each topical area.
- Received 26 applicants for committee membership – the largest candidate pool in CSEAC history. Interviewed and recommended nine new members to the State Board of Education in March 2006 and one interim member. We will welcome these new members at the CSEAC retreat in July.

CSEAC members regularly attend conferences as part of their professional and personal development. Sometimes, CSEAC supports members to attend conferences. Following is a sampling of the breadth and diversity of conferences attended by our members this year:

- Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Leadership Conference
- International Dyslexia Association
- Reading in the Rockies
- Straight Talk about Reading
- Symposium on Learning Differences: Teaching, Learning and the Brain
- Conference on Inclusive Education
- Very Early Diagnosis of Autism: Diagnostic and Treatment Issues
- Autism Society of America, Pikes Peak Region Conference
- Training for Transition (T4T)
- Courage to Risk
- Making Sense: Is It Really ADHD?
- The Legal Conference
- Math on the Planes
- Affective Needs Conference
- Division of Youth Corrections Provider Conference
- Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities
- Parent Professional Partnership Training
- Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP)

Additional Highlights

Throughout the year we were privileged to hear presentations on a variety of topics during our meetings. Below is a sampling of some of the speakers we heard from and the topics they discussed.

- Jason Glass, Andrej Birjulin and Cheryl Johnson (CDE) – State Performance Plan
 - Alison Seyler (PEAK Parent Center) – Unmet Needs in Colorado (from parents’ perspectives)
 - Candy Myers (CDE), Ed Steinberg, Cathy Lines, Shirley Ramos (Cherry Creek School District) – Response to Intervention
 - Allison Layland, Jon Paul Burden and Barb Palmer (CDE) – Transition
 - Dr. Harvey Rude (University of Northern Colorado), Cyndi Boezio (CDE) – Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers
 - Evie Hudak, Colorado State Board of Education
 - Senator Suzanne Williams, Colorado legislature
- Served as CSEAC representatives on a number of committees this year to include but not limited to: Response to Intervention Task Force, PCD Eligibility Criteria Task Force, Sliver Grant Review Committee, 2% Flexibility Modified Achievement Standards Committee, Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA) Rules Committee, Eligible Facilities Advisory Committee.
 - Provided input on the ECEA alignment with IDEA (Senate Bill 118), State Performance Plan Indicators/Targets, and special education issues to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.
 - Provided input to the Exceptional Student Services Unit via a conference call on several issues within IDEA 2004 such as age of transition and removing short-term objectives from the IEP.

Committee Reports and Highlights

The **Public Policy and Legislative** committee, chaired by Orvin Brenningstall, focused on:

- Educating CSEAC members about Referendum C and the expanded funding available for special education if it passed.
- Assessing “Students in the Gap” in Colorado: A Report from the HB05-1246 Study Committee.
- Discussing implications for Colorado of parts of IDEA 2004 including highly qualified teachers, evaluation and over-identification.
- Informing members about public policy and legislative information particularly as it related to IDEA 2004 through the CSEAC list serve.

The **State Performance Plan** committee, chaired by Glenda Nash-Buscarello, was instrumental in reviewing the indicators of the State Performance Plan and providing input to the Colorado Department of Education on measuring these indicators. Since the State Performance Plan is changing and more is required by the federal government, giving input will be an ongoing process. Members of this committee:

- Attended additional meetings and participated in phone conferences to discuss State Performance Plan indicators.
- Reviewed the definitions of drop-out and disproportionality.
- Reviewed the Parent Satisfaction Survey data.
- Discussed suspension and expulsion. This committee will continue to monitor these issues as more data is collected by CDE.

The **Communications** committee, chaired by Michael Wales, focused their efforts in disseminating the position papers generated by CSEAC. More specifically, this committee:

- Developed a dissemination plan so that each position statement could be efficiently distributed to a core group of stakeholders after its completion. This included having each position statement added to the CSEAC website. Additionally, content specific groups were also identified as position statements were produced.
- Established links to the CSEAC web page on other important statewide websites such as PEAK Parent Center and Parent-to-Parent of Colorado.
- Posted the Mental Health position statement (completed in July, 2005) on the CSEAC website and had it distributed to a state level committee dealing with mental health issues as well as to the Douglas County Schools mental health support staff.

The **By-Laws** committee, chaired by Linn Oliver, is considering two issues related to membership and will meet with the membership committee to discuss these issues in July. No changes were made to the by-laws during the 2005-06 year.

Jane Russell Miller, representing parents of children with disabilities, Congressional District 2

Dr. Corey Pierce, representing institutes of higher education, Congressional District 4

Yvette Plummer, representing parents of children with disabilities, Congressional District 7

Dana Scott, homeless liaison, Congressional District 1

Representative Judy Solano, representing elected officials, Congressional District 2

Jason Wilkerson, representing parents of children with disabilities, Congressional District 5

The **Membership** committee, chaired by Lisa Franklin, was busy this year recruiting and recommending new members for the CSEAC committee. This year, the committee:

- Distributed the “notice of vacancies” announcement widely throughout Colorado in the fall. A total of 26 people submitted applications which is the greatest number of applications ever received by CSEAC.
- Interviewed candidates by phone and participated in several conference calls throughout December and January.
- Recommended candidates to the Colorado Board of Education to fill the appropriate positions and Congressional Districts in March.
- Established a mentoring program for incoming members. New members will be matched with an existing member at the July 2006 annual planning session.
- The newly appointed CSEAC members are as follows:

Dianna Chrisman, representing general education administrators, Congressional District 4

William Evans, representing parents of children with disabilities, Congressional District 5

Dr. Lynne Fitzhugh, representing parents of children with disabilities, Congressional District 5

Dr. Jana Macias, representing special education administrators, Congressional District 3