

2006 – 2007 Annual Report



Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

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Table of Contents

What is CSEAC	2
Purpose of CSEAC	2
Vision Statement of CSEAC	2
Mission Statement of CSEAC	2
Reflections from Co-Chairs	3
Accomplishments	4-5
Committee Reports	6-9
Additional Highlights	10-11
CSEAC Membership 2006-2007	12
Schedule of Meetings 2007-2008	13

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 Leadership
- 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 Leadership 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.

Notes

Reflections from the Co-Chairs Orvin Brenningstall & Alison Seyler

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as co-chairs of the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee during the 2006-07 year. This year our theme was “A Sharper Focus on Students” and the committee identified three topics to investigate and address:

- Priority 1: CSEAC learned about **Response to Intervention (RTI) at the Secondary Level** throughout Colorado from several informative presentations from school district and BOCES administrators and educators.
- Priority 2: **Secondary School Reform** was also explored through presentations from students, CDE consultants, and Colorado school district administrators.
- Priority 3: **Increased parent and educator involvement and collaboration throughout the state** by writing, designing, producing, and disseminating a brochure about the benefits to local school districts on creating local school district advisory committees.
- Our committee also provided important input to CDE during the year and at an additional special committee meeting in July on several topics within Colorado’s implementation of the Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA).

Accomplishments

- Heard first hand from several past and current Colorado students receiving special education supports on their educational experiences at two committee meetings. This was a very informative addition to our structure and the CSEAC Executive Committee has agreed to continue to look at ways to add student input for each meeting.
- Worked with the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center to learn which other state advisory councils have added permanent student positions to their committees.
- Surveyed Colorado school district special education directors, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and facility directors to find out which school districts have local special education advisory councils.
- Produced a brochure about the benefits of starting local district special advisory committees in order to include more family and educator voices across the state and to increase collaboration in special education. The brochure will be widely disseminated throughout the state and can also be found on the Colorado Department of Education website at www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/CSEAC.asp.
- Received 25 applicants for committee membership. Interviewed and recommended six new members to the State Board of Education in March 2007. In addition, one interim member was appointed. We will welcome these new members at the CSEAC retreat in July.

Scheduled Meetings for 2007-2008

September 20, 2007
November 15, 2007
February 21, 2008
April 17, 2008
July 31 & August 1, 2008, Retreat

Contact the Exceptional Student Leadership 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 2006-2007

Name	Congressional District
Debi Blackwell	5
Orvin Breningstall *Co-Chair	1
Dianna Chrisman	4
Paula Christina	2
Jann Clevenger	6
William Evans	5
Dr. Lynne Fitzhugh	5
Lisa Schwartz Franklin	6
Michelle Gonzalez-Yoder	7
Mary Griffin	7
Diana Kellner	2
Dr. Jana Macias	3
Jane Russell Miller	2
Glenda Nash-Buscarello	1
Paula Norman	4
Linn Oliver	7
Dr. Corey Pierce	4
Yvette Plummer	7
Tim Rea	6
Jack Robinson	1
Karen Rutledge	1
Steven Sandoval	4
Dana Scott	1
Alison Seyler *Co-Chair	5
Robin Singer	6
Rep. Judy Solano	2
Eleann Steinberg	1
Cindy Ucker	5
Mike Wales	6
Menda Warne	4
Ian Watlington	1
Jason Wilkinson	5

- Served as CSEAC representatives on a number of committees this year including: Response to Intervention (RTI) Implementation Committee, Sliver Grant Review Committee, 2% Flexibility Modified Achievement Standards Committee, Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA) Alignment Committee, Eligible Facilities Advisory Committee, Colorado Development Disabilities Council, Colorado LINKS for Mental Health, Routt County Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), and Douglas County SEAC.
- Provided input on the ECEA alignment with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Senate Bill 118), State Performance Plan Indicators/Targets, and special education issues to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education.

Sub-Committee Reports and Highlights

The **Public Policy and Legislative** sub-committee, chaired by Tim Rea, focused on two primary goals:

Disseminated information about implementing regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The sub-committee monitored the U.S. Department of Education websites, attended a Federal “Town Hall” meeting, and dispersed information on the CSEAC listserv.

Monitored ongoing national and local activities relevant to special education and apprised members of important legislative and policy issues through a monthly “Policy & Legislative Update.”

The **Communications** sub-committee, chaired by Lynn Fitzhugh, focused efforts on surveying local school district special education, BOCES, & facility directors about local advisory committees and compiled a report on which school districts have local advisory committees. This information will be put on the CDE website.

The committee presented at the State Special Education Directors’ meeting in February about the importance of local SEAC’s.

The **Bylaws** sub-committee, chaired by Debi Blackwell, did not have changes to the bylaws during the 2006-07 year.

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
- OSEP (IDEA) Regulations Rollout
- Conference on Inclusive Education
- Autism Society of America, Pikes Peak Region Conference
- Training for Transition (T4T)
- Courage to Risk
- The Legal Conference
- Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP)
- International Dyslexia Association
- Academic Language Therapy Association
- Leveraging Literacy
- Gero-Psychology Conference
- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
- Title X (Homeless Education) State Coordinators Symposium
- Colorado State Conference on Autism
- National Conference on Learning Disabilities
- Reading in the Rockies
- Math on the Planes
- Odyssey
- Colorado LINKS for Mental Health, Joint Meeting of Chairs

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:

- Orvin Breningshall (CSEAC), Report about students receiving special education services and supports in Colorado
- Andrej Birjulin (CDE), State Performance Plan
- Randy Boyer (San Juan BOCES), Bill Esterbrook (Archuleta School District), Orvin Breningshall & Harry C. Bull, Jr. (Cherry Creek School District), RTI at the Secondary Level
- Allison Layland (CDE), Secondary School Reform: Promising Practices in Colorado and Beyond and Areas in Need of Improvement
- Jack Robinson & Diana Kellner (CSEAC), Update on ECEA Rules Committee
- Steve Axford (Falcon 49 School District), Jon Paul Burden (CDE) & Laura Freppel (CDE), Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA) Update & Discussion
- Terri Connolly (CDE), 2% Flexibility Committee
- Alison Seyler (CSEAC), Adding Student Input to CSEAC, Report on What Other States Have Done
- Evie Hudak, Colorado State Board of Education
- Representative Judy Solano, Colorado Legislature

The **Membership** sub-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 in the fall widely throughout Colorado and specifically focused on recruiting parents from rural areas including Congressional Districts 3 and 4 in order to improve representation.
- Received 25 applications.
- Added new positions required by law this year – a representative from the Charter School Institute and a district charter school administrator.
- Interviewed candidates by phone and participated in conference calls throughout December and January.
- Recommended candidates to the Colorado State Board of Education to fill the appropriate positions and congressional districts in March.
- Continued the mentoring program for incoming members. New members will be matched with an existing member at the July 2007 annual planning session.

The newly appointed CSEAC members are as follows:

Canase Beveridge, representing parents of children with disabilities, Congressional District 3

Dianna Chrisman, representing general education administrators, Congressional District 4

Tamara Durbin, representing special education administrators, Congressional District 4

Cathy Lines, representing parents of children with disabilities, Congressional District 6

Lu McDaniel, representing the Charter School Institute, Congressional District 6

Allison Sedlacek*, representing parents of children with disabilities, Congressional District 4

Mark Zentner, representing parents of children with disabilities, Congressional District 2

*Interim Appointment

The **State Performance Plan (SPP)** sub-committee, chaired by Diana Kellner, advised the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) on the development and implementation of the Colorado Special Education State Performance Plan.

Members of this sub-committee selected the following five indicators from the SPP for study:

- Graduation Rate
- Dropout Rate
- Participation and Performance on Assessments
- Rates of Suspension and Expulsion
- Parent Involvement

Parent involvement was selected as the first area of study. They explored developing a new tool using the present parent Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) survey and a parent survey developed by the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring. Members recommended relevant items from each to aid in gathering required data.

The sub-committee also learned about sampling procedures that have been used by CDE to gather data from districts and provided ideas to increase the return rate.