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cde



Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

2008- 2009 Annual Report

Creating Change...Making an Impact

Colorado Commissioner of Education
Dwight D. Jones

State Board of Education Liaison
Peggy Littleton

Assistant Commissioner and State Director,
Special Education
Ed Steinberg

CSEAC Members 2008 – 2009

| Name | Congressional District |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Canase Beveridge | 3 |
| Jami Boarman | 6 |
| Paula Christina | 2 |
| Pam Christy | 6 |
| Jann Clevenger | 6 |
| Tamara Durbin | 4 |
| William Evans | 5 |
| Lynne Fitzhugh | 5 |
| Lisa Schwartz Franklin | 6 |
| Mary Griffin | 7 |
| Diana Kellner | 7 |
| Cathy Lines | 6 |
| Jana Macias | 3 |
| Nita McAuliffe | 3 |
| Lu McDaniel | 6 |
| Jane Russell Miller | 2 |
| Gloria Mae Casias Mounts | 3 |
| Linn Oliver | 7 |
| Corey Pierce *Co-Chair | 4 |
| Yvette Plummer | 7 |
| Tim Rea | 6 |
| Duane Richert | 3 |
| Jack Robinson | 1 |
| Erin Ross | 2 |
| Dana Scott | 1 |
| Alison Seyler | 5 |
| Robin Singer | 6 |
| Representative Judy Solano | 2 |
| Elenn Steinberg *Co-Chair | 1 |
| Mimi Thurston | 3 |
| Robert Ward | 6 |
| Menda Warne | 4 |

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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 Special Education
- 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)

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 2009-2010

- September 17, 2009
- November 19, 2009
- February 18, 2010
- April 15, 2010
- July 22 & 23, 2010

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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New CSEAC Members for 2009 – 2010

The following new members have been appointed by the Colorado State Board of Education and will join the CSEAC in July, 2009:

- Evan Borg – representing private schools (Congressional District 1)
- Pat Chamberlain – representing parents of children with disabilities (Congressional District 4)
- Zoe Ann Holmes - representing parents of children with disabilities (Congressional District 5)
- Matt Hudson – representing the Charter School Institute (Congressional District 5)
- Sarah Metsch – representing individuals with disabilities (Congressional District 6)
- Richard Schleusener - representing parents of children with disabilities (Congressional District 4)
- Barbara Seacrest - representing parents of children with disabilities (Congressional District 6)
- Gregory Sullivan – representing Transition Services (Congressional District 6)
- Dee Vasquez - representing parents of children with disabilities (Congressional District 5)

We have enjoyed the privilege of serving as co-chairs of the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC) for the 2008-2009 session. It was an active and full year, driven by dedicated members and targeted priorities related to important issues for students with special education needs and their families. The member make-up of the committee was diverse regionally and in terms of representatives for different disability groups. Having input from committed self advocates, family representatives and professionals from legal, state, and higher education agencies allowed the committee to view the issues from multiple perspectives which enabled us to see the bigger picture of each issue in a very impactful way.

The theme for this year was *Creating Change...Making an Impact*. The committee developed 3 priorities to guide our efforts for the year:

- **Provide on-going support to existing local special education advisory committees (SEACs) and initiate the development of additional local committees.** Efforts included surveying districts to determine where SEACs currently exist, providing materials designed to help districts develop their own SEAC, and providing presentations on how SEACs function and can support both students with disabilities and their families, as well as the schools they attend. A co-chair met with districts and parents to support the role of current SEACs and the ongoing role their groups could serve. We also met with stakeholders to support the process of creating new groups. Finally, we developed a listserv designed to create a communication network between groups and with the state committee.

- **Increase the role of parents as effective partners with Colorado Department of Education (CDE)/Districts/Schools so that they are informed and involved in all areas of education.** Efforts included working with CDE on training initiatives, such as the Response to Intervention (RtI) Family and Community Engagement Module (one current CSEAC member and the CSEAC CDE liaison helped develop this module) and developing partnerships with parent organizations such as PEAK Parent Center and the Denver Metro Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC).
- **CSEAC members commit to developing relationships with influential decision-makers across the state (e.g., State Board of Education members, Exceptional Student Leadership Unit (ESLU) consultants, and legislative representatives).** Efforts included attending State Board of Education meetings and creating a State Board and Legislative membership directory for all CSEAC members to encourage personal contact when important issues regarding students with disabilities and their families arose. CSEAC representatives from the legislature and school board reported regularly to our group to keep us apprised of issues and gain the group's perspective to bring to their work.

Accomplishments:

As co-chairs, we felt it was important to continue important initiatives that were developed during the prior year. This primarily included communication with existing committees and supporting the development of

and dissemination.

Members: Lisa Franklin – Chair, Corey Pierce, Tamara Durbin, Cathy Lines, Pam Christy, Lu McDaniel, and Jana Macias

Accomplishments:

- Reviewed CDE's RtI Family and Community Engagement training module and provided detailed input on topics covered and how information was presented.
- Provided input on how and when the CDE RtI Family and Community Engagement training module would be disseminated.
- Invited developers of the CDE RtI Family and Community Engagement training module to present to the full CSEAC membership.
- Reviewed potential issues RtI implementation will have for students with disabilities and their families

Recommendations – Next Steps:

- Solicit feedback from members of the CDE RtI Family and Community Engagement training module regarding their interpretation of the impact it is having for families and community members
- Continue to monitor RtI implementation across the State and note common areas of need for families of students with disabilities
- Continue to support CDE in the dissemination of RtI training materials for families
- Monitor issues related to RtI and its impact on families at the local school district level.

Accomplishments:

- Identified current local SEACs with contact information
- Invited SEAC representatives to CSEAC meeting to share information and gather new ideas
- Created CSEAC banner to increase visibility
- Gave recommendation to the State Representative Liaison for possible legislation by recommending special education representation on District Accountability Committees (DACs).

Recommendations – Next Steps:

- Present information along with special education directors during a break-out session at a State Directors' Meeting regarding:
 - Building family partnerships
 - Benefit and creation of a local SEAC
 - Discuss the significance of Indicator 8
- Establish an annual gathering between CSEAC and local SEACs to encourage networking and sharing information
- In early fall, disseminate letter with CSEAC Partnership brochure to local school boards, special education directors, and superintendents encouraging the development of a local SEAC
- Collaborate and participate with State RtI consultants regarding statewide trainings
- Continue to collaborate with the CSEAC Communications Subcommittee
- Share CSEAC information at conferences and events

Response to Intervention

Purpose: To increase CSEAC influence in the development of training materials CDE is developing to introduce Response to Intervention to parents.

Goal Statement: Continue to work with CDE consultants in the development of an RtI training module for parents and provide input regarding the development

new local SEACs. We were able to begin to carry out this plan and to see positive outcomes, including the development of a listserv designed to share information between CSEAC and local SEACs. In addition, dissemination of a brochure designed to help start a local SEAC has assisted in the development of local SEACs and in communication between schools and families. Individual meetings attended by a CSEAC co-chair facilitated the ongoing success and building of new committees. The efforts of the members on this initiative need to be recognized as the benefits for students and families will continue for years to come.

We were pleased to see committee members taking active roles in the development of the RtI training modules and for their willingness to work with CSEAC and other organizations to ensure that the modules accurately address family issues, concerns, and needs related to this important topic. CSEAC members were able to review training materials and provide input related to content and dissemination.

As the new rules for identification of students for special education have become an issue for many families and districts, our group invited CDE to provide a presentation on this topic. This presentation both answered committee member and guest questions and raised new ones. It is part of our ongoing commitment to ensure that all stakeholders fully understand the implications of these rules for student services. As we continue to receive questions and concerns, we will continue to work with CDE to ensure that there is both an understanding by families and educators of how this new initiative will serve our students and a forum for them to express their issues and concerns.

We were also pleased to see a large number of the CSEAC members becoming more active outside of our quarterly meetings, including attending State Board of

Education meetings, contacting legislative members to influence issues related to students with disabilities and their families, and meeting with local parent and family advocacy organizations and state mental health organizations to increase the visibility and influence of CSEAC.

This year's activities included holding a joint meeting with the Gifted and Talented State Advisory Committee (GT-SAC) which resulted in a clearer understanding of the crossover of issues confronting students in all areas. The issue of students identified as twice exceptional and the new rules relating to both qualification for special education and the new gifted and talented rules were brought to light for our groups. The opportunity for ongoing communication and participation should enhance our ability to impact students.

The issue of mental health is always one that the committee takes under careful consideration when setting goals. This year our committee agreed to a partnership with Colorado Linking Interagency Networks for Kids' Services (LINKS) for Mental Health and signed an agreement to support their efforts on behalf of individuals with mental health issues. CSEAC committed to having a member from our committee attend their meetings and share the information they receive with our group.

Finally, we were proud to have the opportunity to respond to issues parents brought to CSEAC as areas of concern. We were able to build in agenda time to allow parents to discuss their issues with topics such as Extended School Year (ESY), as well as, bringing in CDE - ESLU staff to educate CSEAC members and guests about these topics. Time for family input is dedicated at the beginning of each of our quarterly meetings. We feel that we were able to make this time productive, listening to and supporting the families we serve.

Guests included individuals from private schools who have begun to experience challenges with Child Find in figuring out how to identify and determine eligibility for IEPs and 504s for their students. The presentation brought up concerns that the committee hopes CDE can address in future forums.

The issue of ESY was a concern brought to the committee by a parent that we felt merited a presentation from CDE. This was another presentation that brought a large number of visitors to our meeting. In hearing both the parents and State's view it became clear to our members that this is an issue that requires more analysis. There appeared to be a lack of clarity as to how Colorado's view on ESY did not match current federal standards. CDE was responsive and open to further review of this subject and CSEAC will determine if this need to be an ongoing committee goal.

Outcomes: Once these issues had been addressed, the committee merged with the RTI committee, as we felt that our continued work paralleled what they were targeting and we could work more effectively together.

Regional Outreach Committee

Purpose:

- To increase parent partnership and communication with local school districts/LEAs within special education services and programs.
- To encourage and support the creation of effective local SEACs.

Goal Statement: Increase CSEAC visibility and communication with stakeholders throughout the state. Begin to establish a network of communication between parents, school districts, and CDE

Members: Paula Christina - Chair, Jana Macias, Cathy Lines, Jane Russell Miller, Bill Evans, Linn Oliver, Canase Beveridge, Lu McDaniel, Elenn Steinberg, Lynne Fitzhugh

2008 - 2009 Ad Hoc Committee Reports

Parent Partnership

Purpose: To understand the issues relating to parents in the State and to look at ways in which to increase the role of parents as effective partners between CDE/District/Buildings, so that they are involved in all areas of education.

Goal Statement: Increase the role of parents as effective partners to CDE/Districts/Buildings so that they are involved in all areas of education.

Members: Elenn Steinberg, Bill Evans, Dana Scott, Bob Ward, Robin Singer, Erin Ross, Mary Griffin, Pam Christy, Gloria Mae Casias Mounts, Yvette Plummer, Alison Seyler, and Menda Warne

One of the committee's primary concerns was the impact of the new rules regarding the identification of students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) and the impact it would have on students in Colorado. Extended School Year (ESY) was a second issue brought to the attention of our committee by a parent.

Accomplishments: The committee invited the Colorado Department of Education to present the SLD criteria at our meeting, which was met by many questions and concerns. Included in the concerns were ways in which districts would be assessing students and how long it would take for a student to move from the RTI system into more intensive intervention if required. Another area of concern was the lack of assessment in the areas of processing speed, memory and IQ as it impacts a student's ability to learn.

Recommendations Based on 2008-2009 Priorities and Work Completed

- CSEAC recommends continued close, on-going communication between CSEAC members CDE staff members, legislators, and State Board of Education members on issues related to students with special education needs and their families. CSEAC believes it is critical to have a family voice that can influence important issues in a thoughtful way at multiple levels.
- CSEAC recommends continuing and enhancing relationships with professional organizations such as PEAK Parent Center, Denver Metro CPRC, GT-SAC and Colorado LINKS to ensure coordination of information and communication between groups with similar missions to support children and families.
- CSEAC recommends continuing to provide support to local SEACs. Continuing to examine ways local SEAC organizations can support children with disabilities and their families in working positively with schools will benefit all parties involved. In addition, continuing to invite local SEAC members to CSEAC quarterly meetings will foster communication between the organizations.
- CSEAC recommends continuing to find new ways for students with disabilities and their families to openly communicate their needs at quarterly meetings. While time at the beginning of each quarterly meeting is dedicated to public input, it is important to let individuals outside of the CSEAC community know that this opportunity is available.

2008 - 2009 CSEAC Subcommittee Reports

By-Laws Subcommittee

No changes were made to the by-laws this year.

Members: Jack Robinson - Chair

State Performance Plan Subcommittee

Purpose:

- To review the Colorado State Performance Plan (SPP)
- To work with and advise the representative from the CDE regarding changes, issues, and concerns of the SPP
- To focus on a particular indicator(s) for in-depth study.

Goal Statements:

- Become knowledgeable regarding the SPP, the Annual Performance Report (APR), the Continuous Improvement and Focused Monitoring Plan (CIMP), and the federal and state levels of determination.
- Monitor the activities of the Indicator 8 Team.
- Become familiar with the Mountain Plains Primer for Special Education Advisory Panel Members.
- Participate in the revision of the current parent survey used to measure Indicator 8. Utilize data to recommend interventions and actions.
- Working with the CSEAC's other committees, produce a position paper on what works to increase parent involvement in special education planning/monitoring.

The next vacancy notice identifying new membership needs will be posted in September 2009.

Communications Subcommittee

Members: Jami Boarman, Nita McAuliffe, Jane Russell Miller - Chair, and Robert Ward

The committee continued to encourage local education agencies (LEAs) to develop their own special education advisory committee (SEAC) if they had yet to do so. As in the past the committee did this by contacting special education directors, superintendents, and/or administrators of LEAs with information in support of SEACs and how they contribute to the support of special education and families within the learning environment.

The subcommittee also invited existing SEACs to participate in the April 2009 meeting to exchange ideas about how CSEAC may support them in their communities. The April meeting was very insightful.

Members of the committee also attended the State Board of Education meetings and several legislative sessions where they may have had special interest.

The Communications Subcommittee combined with the Ad Hoc Regional Outreach Committee to boost the CSEAC visibility. CSEAC members distributed brochures and pamphlets at all conferences and meetings they attended in an attempt to increase the visibility of CSEAC.

Membership Subcommittee

Purpose: To reach out to individuals who meet the criteria for the membership of CSEAC and solicit applicants for membership to the committee.

Members: Jann Clevenger – Chair, Gloria Mae Casias Mounts, Lisa Franklin, Alison Seyler and Robin Singer

Accomplishments: The Membership Subcommittee began its process of recommending new members for CSEAC in September 2008. A notice of vacancies was widely distributed. The subcommittee specifically focused on recruiting candidates from Congressional Districts 1, 4 and 5 in order to improve representation from those districts. The deadline for applications was November 2008 and a total of 12 applicants indicated interest in joining CSEAC. This was another year of great interest in membership and the committee found the quality of applicants to be once again exceptional.

We were fortunate to have highly qualified candidates for almost all positions and a wide representation of congressional districts. All candidates were interviewed by phone and several conference calls reviewing the applicants took place in January 2009. There are two positions for teachers that opened this year. To date there have been no applicants for these positions and the committee continues to use various networking opportunities to recruit.

Recommendations were submitted to the Colorado State Board of Education in March 2009 and candidates were appointed and notified in April 2009. Those applicants not selected were also notified and encouraged to apply again to CSEAC for next year.

New members will be welcomed at our annual retreat in July 2009. The Membership Subcommittee will continue the mentoring program for new members at the retreat.

Members: Diana Kellner - Chair, Canase Beveridge, Pam Christy, Tamara Durbin, Mary Griffin, Cathy Lines, Jana Macias, Yvette Plummer, and Dana Scott

Accomplishments:

*Worked with Sarah Cannon, CDE representative, to:

- review last year's parent survey results
- review the organization and purpose of the SPP
- discuss the Indicator 8 Committee and assign a volunteer from the SPP Subcommittee to attend the Indicator 8 Committee meetings and to report back to the CSEAC SPP Subcommittee.
- discuss the Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) Response Table

Sarah Cannon reported that no changes would be made in the parent survey until the 5 year period for this current SPP was ended.

*Made available for discussion the Mountain Plains Primer for State Special Education Advisory Panel Members.

*Developed two drafts of Fast Fact sheets on Parent Involvement within a local school. One Fast Fact sheet addresses the parent role and the other sheet addresses the teacher role. The subcommittee devoted three meetings and two conference calls to organize the papers. The subcommittee will continue to refine these papers and present them to the CSEAC for suggestions at the annual retreat in July 2009, with the final drafts to be completed by the November 2009 meeting. It is hoped that these documents can be made available to families and teachers through local SEACs.

Public Policy and Legislative Subcommittee

Purpose: To stay abreast of and disseminate information affecting education of children/youth with disabilities through electronic mail to members.

Goal Statement: Collect and distribute to all CSEAC members information on emerging and ongoing local, State and Federal Policy or Legislative issues which impact special education. Build relationships with the State Board of Education, the Colorado Department of Education – ESLU, State Legislative Groups and influential decision-makers across the State throughout the year.

Members: Paula Christina, Bill Evans, Lu McDaniel, Sarah Metsch, Linn Oliver, Corey Pierce, Tim Rea, Duane Richert, Jack Robinson, Erin Ross, Representative Judy Solano, Mimi Thurston, and Menda Warne

Accomplishments:

- Collected and distributed to all CSEAC members information (name, district served, phone, email, web site) on the State Board of Education members including a cross-walk showing each CSEAC member their representative on the State Board.
- Collected and distributed to all CSEAC members information (name, district served, phone, email, web site) on the State Legislature House and Senate Education Committees. As a follow-up effort, collected and distributed to all CSEAC members information on all State Legislators including a cross-walk showing each CSEAC member their Senator and Representative.

- Collected and distributed to all CSEAC members information (name, area of expertise, phone, email) on the CDE – ESLU Consultant staff
- Designed, created and distributed CSEAC name badges for all members to wear to all official functions and when they represent CSEAC.
- Developed a process to identify CSEAC representatives available to attend State Board of Education meetings to increase the visibility of CSEAC.
- CSEAC representative in attendance at three State Board of Education meetings.

Recommendations – Next Steps:

- Continue efforts in working collaboratively with the CDE – ESLU consultant staff.
- Continue to update CSEAC members on new congressional representatives and State Board of Education representatives.
- Identify at least one CSEAC representative who is available to attend Colorado State Board of Education meetings on an ongoing basis. A sign-up sheet will be available at the annual retreat.
- Develop a process to proactively reach out to the liaison from the State Board of Education and the Colorado legislature so that information is shared on a regular basis even when the liaison is unable to attend CSEAC meetings.
- Develop a process to obtain regular updates on bills submitted to, or under discussion on the floor of, the Colorado legislature.