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## Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

2009- 2010 Annual Report

*CSEAC - Making Someday Happen*

Colorado Commissioner of Education  
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Peggy Littleton

Assistant Commissioner and State Director,  
Special Education  
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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.

**Reflections from the Co-Chairs**  
**Jann Clevenger and Jane Russell Miller**

The 2009-10 session of the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC) was a whirlwind of activity and lively discussion. The committee was a well-versed, diverse group with returning members continuing the work of the previous year and new members diving right in to provide a fresh perspective. As co-chairs we enjoyed the opportunity to moderate for this spirited group.

The theme for this year was **CSEAC - Making Someday Happen.**

Goal setting at the July retreat set the tone for the year and the committee agreed on three priorities for the 2009-10 session:

- **Continue to build linkages and expand influence with the State Board of Education, the Colorado Legislature, the Colorado Education Association, the Colorado Association of School Executives, the Colorado Association of School Boards and local special education advisory committees (SEACs).**

The Public Policy and Legislative Subcommittee focused on this goal.

- **Continue to grow local SEACs.**

The Communication Subcommittee updated the CSEAC website and created a guest speaker list. The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual SEAC Forum, “Power of Partnership,” was held April 20, 2010. A letter was sent to school board presidents, superintendents, and special education directors of administrative units not utilizing local special education advisory committees. The letter encouraged the establishment of a committee. With a lot of hard

work and encouragement from Lisa Franklin, former CSEAC member, Jefferson County School District implemented their local SEAC this year. Two hundred parents signed up for the committee. CSEAC Member Paula Christina provided time and support in this effort, and joined co-chair Jann Clevenger and Dr. Ed Steinberg at the kick-off meeting to congratulate the committee on their commitment.

- **Identify unmet needs and advise the Colorado Department of Education to meet those needs.**

The State Performance Plan subcommittee reviewed indicators 3, 8, 11, 12 and 13.

**Accomplishments:** CSEAC continued to provide time for family input and support for areas of concern brought to the committee at the beginning of each meeting.

Throughout the year the committee was presented with information regarding the State Performance Plan (SPP) and commends the staff at the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) for their immense efforts to improve the Office of Special Education Programs’ (OSEP’s) determination from “needs improvement” to “needs assistance” for Colorado. The committee was also kept informed of the many legislative issues concerning education in Colorado.

The Colorado Chapter of the Child and Family Committee from the State Mental Health Planning and Advisory Council of Families for Children’s Mental Health attended a meeting to provide an overview of “Building Bridges for Children’s Mental Health”.

Following this presentation a student panel from an eligible facility talked to the committee about their educational experiences in the foster care/residential system.

The committee also enjoyed various updated reports from the State Department of Education staff including Response to Intervention (RtI), Compliance Monitoring, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, conferences and family partnerships.

As co-chairs we are proud that we were able to address all the recommendations offered by the co-chairs from the 2008-09 session, and that many of these are included in our accomplishments. We are also pleased that committee members continue to be active outside of the quarterly meetings of CSEAC.

### **Recommendations Based on 2009-10 Priorities and Work Completed:**

- CSEAC recommends continuing efforts to encourage all administrative units (AUs) to have an effective SEAC. The incredible endeavor of the Communication Subcommittee has set a very strong foundation for this continued work making this an attainable goal.
- CSEAC recommends continued collaboration with the staff of the CDE on matters concerning the State Performance Plan in order for Colorado to achieve the level of “meets requirements” with OSEP.
- CSEAC recommends continuing to enhance relationships with professional organizations. Continued efforts to bring professional organizations, school districts, and families to the same positive collaborative level will ensure the optimal education of all students with disabilities.
- CSEAC recommends continued identification of unmet needs concerning all stakeholders of students with disabilities and continued recommendations to

the State Board of Education regarding these needs

- CSEAC recommends continuing the discussion of the book, Fixing Special Education – 12 Steps to Transform a Broken System by Miriam Kurtz Freedman to determine if it would be a useful tool for making recommendations to the State Board of Education by the committee. Dr. Ed Steinberg introduced the committee to the book and a discussion was initiated during the quarterly meeting in April.

### **2009 - 2010 CSEAC Subcommittee Reports**

#### **By-Laws Subcommittee**

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

**Members:** Robert Ward - Chair

#### **State Performance Plan Subcommittee**

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

**Goal Statement:** Analyze data trends in the SPP and develop an action plan around unmet needs.

**Members:** Nita McAuliffe – Co-chair, Tamara Durbin – Co-chair, Rick Schleusener, Greg Sullivan, Matt Hudson, Pat Chamberlain, Dana Scott and Jami Boarman

**Accomplishments:**

- Participated in setting state targets for Results Matter and they reported back to the SPP subcommittee.
- Participated in the parental involvement committee with the CDE and they reported back to the SPP subcommittee.
- Began creating a list of questions around SPP data to determine unmet needs.
- Re-entered in Fast Facts: Parents Getting Involved and Teachers Getting Parents Involved electronically for feedback.
- Began feedback on Fast Facts for adoption.

**Recommendations – Next Steps:**

- Continue to ask critical questions regarding SPP data to determine unmet needs.
- Continue input into CDE through participation on indicator meetings.
- Continue representation on state committees to address state targets and definitions.
- Determine any last minute corrections to parent involvement Fast Facts and move to adopt by CSEAC.

**Communications Subcommittee**

**Purpose:** To increase CSEAC networking and visibility between all stakeholders by supporting communication between families, school districts and CDE.

**Goal Statements:**

- Continue to build working relationships with current local special education advisory committees (SEAC) and support the formation of new committees within the state
- Increase access to CSEAC information for all stakeholders
- Emphasize the power of partnerships

**Members:** Paula Christina – Chair, Yvette Plummer, Lynne Fitzhugh, Dee Vazquez

**Accomplishments:**

- Identified current local SEACs with contact information
- Maintained information regarding the SEAC listserv
- Distributed state/local event information
- Reviewed and reorganized CSEAC information on CDE website
- Explored Parent Training and Information (PTI) involvement on CSEAC
- Created guest speaker list
- Disseminated a letter to administrative units encouraging the formation of a local advisory committee
- Participated in the development of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual SEAC Forum
- Distributed information gathered from the SEAC Forum to all interested parties
- Maintained contact with the State Representative Liaison for possible legislative issues

**Recommendations – Next Steps:**

- Present information at the State Directors' Meeting regarding:
  - Building family partnerships
  - Benefits of a local SEAC
  - Building a network of communication
- Contact Administrative Units in the fall, 2010 regarding SEAC formation
- CSEAC to formally recognize accomplishments of local SEACs
- Continue to expand CSEAC information on CDE website
- Expand the use and purpose of the SEAC listserv
- Create a resource for school districts on how to form a SEAC
- Participate in planning the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual SEAC Forum

## 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.

### **Goal Statement**

- To better prepare/educate new members.
- Fill open membership positions.

**Members:** Gloria Mae Casias Mounts, Robert Ward, Elenn Steinberg, Zoe Ann Holmes and Cathy Lines.

### **Accomplishments:**

The membership subcommittee began its process of recommending new members for CSEAC in September 2009. The notice of vacancies was distributed with a specific request for members from Congressional Districts 1, 4 and 7. A November deadline was established for applicants and the committee received a total of 27 applications to fill vacancies for three parents and one special education teacher.

The committee enjoyed interviewing all of the candidates and realized what a difficult decision it would be to narrow them down to four. All candidates were interviewed by phone and the recommendations were decided by conference call.

Recommendations were submitted to the Colorado State Board of Education in March 2010 and candidates were appointed and notified in April. Those applicants not selected were also notified and encouraged to apply again to CSEAC next year. New members will be welcomed at the annual planning retreat in July 2010. The membership committee will continue the mentoring program for new member at the retreat.

The next vacancy notice identifying new membership needs will be posted in September 2010.

## 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, Linn Oliver, Corey Pierce, Duane Richert, Erin Ross and Mimi Thurston

### **Accomplishments:**

- Updated and distributed to all CSEAC members information (name, district served, phone, email, web site) on the State Board of Education members, on the State Legislature House and Senate Education Committees.
- Updated and distributed to all CSEAC members information (name, area of expertise, phone, email) on the Colorado Department of Education – ESLU Consultant staff.
- Sent CSEAC representatives to attend State Board of Education meetings to increase visibility of CSEAC.
- Provided CSEAC members with listing of pertinent state legislative agenda items, and encouraged members to provide feedback on items related to CSEAC.

## Recommendations – Next Steps:

- Continue efforts in working collaboratively with the Colorado Department of Education – ESLU consultant staff.
- Continue to update CSEAC member 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 legislation 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 legislation.
- Identify priorities at Annual Retreat to present to legislative representative, to proactively support legislative efforts rather than simply react to proposed legislation.

## New CSEAC Members for 2010 – 2011

The following new members have been appointed by the Colorado State Board of Education and will join the CSEAC in July, 2010:

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| • Cheryl Gaines    | 3 |
| • Amanda Jones     | 1 |
| • Patricia Kiel    | 1 |
| • Adrienne Parrott | 7 |
| • Lori Smith       | 7 |

## CSEAC Members 2009 – 2010

<b>Name</b>	<b>Congressional District</b>
• Jami Boarman	6
• Evan Borg	1
• Pat Chamberlain	4
• Paula Christina	2
• Pam Christy	6
• <b>Jann Clevenger * Co-Chair</b>	6
• Tamara Durbin	4
• William Evans	5
• Lynne Fitzhugh	5
• Mary Griffin	7
• Zoe Ann Holmes	5
• Matt Hudson	5
• Cathy Lines	6
• Jana Macias	3
• Nita McAuliffe	3
• Sarah Metsch	6
• <b>Jane Russell Miller * Co-Chair</b>	2
• Gloria Mae Casias Mounts	3
• Linn Oliver	7
• Corey Pierce	4
• Yvette Plummer	7
• Duane Richert	3
• Erin Ross	2
• Rick Schleusener	4
• Dana Scott	1
• Barbara Seacrest	6
• Representative Judy Solano	2
• Elenn Steinberg	1
• Gregory Sullivan	6
• Mimi Thurston	3
• Dee Vasquez	5
• Robert Ward	6

## Scheduled Meetings for 2010-2011

## Notes

- September 16, 2010
- November 18, 2010
- February 17, 2011
- April 21, 2011
- July 21 & 22, 2011

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](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/CSEAC.asp), call 303-866-6943, or contact one of the following persons:

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