

Commissioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education Services
November 5-6, 2015
Comfort Inn and Suites, East Greenbush, New York
Meeting Notes

Thursday, November 5, 2015

AGENDA ITEM	KEY POINTS DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS	NEXT STEPS
Welcome and Get Organized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Introduction of new and existing members ❖ Reviewed by-laws, agenda and materials ❖ Reviewed dates and times for the remaining CAP meetings which are also held on Thursdays (11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) and Fridays (8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.). SED staff also asked members to place a hold on their calendars for the remaining dates and asked members to let their supervisors know of dates and times. The scheduled dates are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 25 and 26, 2016 • June 2 and 3, 2016 	
Minutes	A motion to accept the May 2015 minutes was made and seconded. Motion approved: Minutes approved	
Election of Officers	Members voted and elected vice chairperson and secretary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yvonne Sinisgalli as vice chairperson • Jacqueline Harris as secretary 	
Public Comment	There was no official public comment received.	
Discussion with Assistant Commissioner	SED Leadership provided information and responded to member questions about Office of Special Education focused initiatives regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool Programs and Services • Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) • Graduation Options including Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential, Project-Based Assessments and Proposed Appeal to a Score of 55 on Regents Examinations • Individualized Education Program (IEP) Facilitation • Changes to the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) Member comments and recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Performance Plan Indicator 7 is not always a valid measure of student performance for preschool students with disabilities 	SED staff to e-mail members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed preschool regulations; • Field memorandum on IEP Facilitation Pilots; • Regents item on LRE; • Field memorandum on the Role of the CSE in Relation to the Common Core Learning Standards

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Discussion with Assistant Commissioner Cont'd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern regarding Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) turnover and chairs who are not qualified to conduct meetings • Pleased NYSED is looking at the quality of preschool programs • Implement a coaching model in preschool programs to improve education in LRE and preschool student outcomes • Provide incentives to preschool programs to promote education in LRE • Recognize districts that do well as an incentive for continued progress • General educators are often not aware of supports and services in student individualized education programs (IEPs). When introducing the Blueprint, remind the field that all teachers are responsible for IEP implementation. • Increase focus on teacher preparation programs and the role of the general education teacher in teaching students with disabilities • Report school-age LRE data by region • Challenging to provide education in LRE with budgetary issues and lack of planning time. Parents should advocate with legislature for additional funding. • Connect with Regional Economic Development Councils to promote CDOS Commencement Credential 	
Information Sharing	Members shared information about issues and events in their region.	
State Policy	SED staff provided information and engaged members in a discussion on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential; • Required instruction in hands-on only Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and the Use of Automated External Defibrillators (AED) and a proposed exemption from the requirement for students whose disability precludes their ability to participate in instruction in hands-only CPR and the use of AEDs; • IEP facilitation; • Proposed preschool regulations about one-to-one aides and the amended definition of special education itinerate services; • Transition to Unified English Braille (UEB); and 	

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State Policy con’t	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistive technology initiatives <p>Members recommended that a CDOS Commencement Credential brochure similar to the parent brochure for students be created by SED.</p>	
Discussion on Changing the Term “Student with Disability”	<p>Based upon a robust discussion and a show of hands for the 33 members present, all those with the exception of one parent strongly preferred retaining the term “student with a disability.” Members made the following comments/concerns about changing the term “student with a disability”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many other important educational issues to focus on right now than changing the term “student with a disability.” • Some disability specific labels are offensive phrases and are not respectful (e.g. autistic students). Recommend using person first language (e.g. student with autism) • “Student with a disability” ensures rights and protections. Other terminology such as special/different are not associated with protections and rights. • “Student with a disability” is part of human diversity and helps to clarify the purpose of special education. Using a new term would be confusing. Very strongly recommend to continue to use the term “student with a disability.” • Post-secondary education uses the term “student with a disability.” Students must self-identify to receive supports at the secondary level. Their ability to discuss their disability and advocate for their rights helps student qualify for supports in the post-secondary setting. 	
State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)	<p>SED staff provided a brief overview of the SSIP including the theory of action, timelines and proposed improvement activities specific to the goal of increasing the percentage of students with disabilities who score at proficiency levels two and above on grades 3-8 English Language Arts State assessments. In small group discussions, members provided the following comments and recommendations specific to SSIP infrastructure enhancements, timelines and improvement activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial and school or district-wide recognition as incentives. • Ensure improvement activities are measurable. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine metrics around schools in receivership to inform improvement activities. • Growth within levels (lower level 1 to a higher level 1) is valuable. Measure and recognize this growth. • Increase focus on monitoring to ensure that these activities are provided with fidelity. • To be effective, targeted interventions should last 3-5 years. • Use consistent language that can translate across settings (preschool to school-age) and/or help parents and staff to understand the terms/language. Consider mapping terms so that the similarities between preschool and school-age terms can be easily compared. • Incorporate tiered systems of support into improvement activities (Recognition and Response, Response to Intervention and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports). 	
Project-Based Assessments	<p>SED staff provided general information on project-based assessments and demonstrated a computerized project-based assessment used in Pennsylvania. Members were very supportive of the possibility of using project-based assessments in NYS and recommended further exploration of such options.</p>	

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New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)	<p>SED staff provided information on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes to NYSAA for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics beginning with the 2015-16 school year; and • existing portfolio/datafolio-style assessment for Science and Social Studies <p>Members were generally in support of the changes to NYSAA and provided the following comments and recommendations regarding NYSAA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that many students who take NYSAA do not have severe cognitive disabilities and are not appropriately identified for NYSAA (e.g. students who are deaf). • Provide additional guidance on the criteria for determining a student eligible for NYSAA, including what a severe disability is, specifics about what is meant by deficiencies in adaptive behavior and examples of that behavior. • Provide additional guidance for parents to ensure they understand the implications of their child's participation in NYSAA. This information should be provided early on and frequently during their child's education. • Provide additional guidance on testing accommodations as Committees on Special Education (CSE's) often do not appropriately recommend testing accommodations for students taking NYSAA. 	SED staff to e-mail members field memorandum on Revised Dates for Administration of the New York State Alternate Assessment
Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities	<p>SED staff provided members with information and facilitated a discussion on the Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities. Members provided the following general comments and recommendations about the Blueprint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success will depend on the role of the school board, superintendents, principals, general education staff, CSEs, CPSEs, special education teachers, parents and their buy-in into the principles of the Blueprint. • SED needs to provide a strong and consistent message as to the purpose of the Blueprint and why it is important. • Engage the staff and Curriculum Development Network which represents 37 BOCES and the Big 5 City Districts in the roll out of the Blueprint. • Ensure the Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE- 	

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Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities Cont'd	<p>TASC) has a strong and consistent role in rolling out and supporting activities around the Blueprint.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York State is very diverse. Consider strategies for getting individual's from different cultures to understand and support the Blueprint and its related activities. • Look at options other than in-person training due to time constraints. Use social media and short webinars as an avenue for training. <p>Members provided the following comments and recommendations specific to self-advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Statewide training and implementation of self-directed IEP's. • Provide sample lesson plans on self-advocacy. • Provide schools more information on Independent Living Centers (ILC's) and engage ILC's in collaborating with schools to promote self-advocacy. • Promote the use of Person-Centered Planning. • Reach out to self-advocacy groups to provide resources and training to schools. • Feature youth in self-advocacy videos. 	
Disproportionality	<p>A member of the Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality (TAC-D) presented information and responded to member questions regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What disproportionality is and why we need to address it; • National and State trend data; • Strategies to build school capacity and infrastructure; and • The role of the TAC-D in addressing disproportionality. 	