



State Advisory Panel For Special Education

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**Summary
State Advisory Panel Meeting
September 24-25, 2009
Brasstown Valley
Young Harris, GA**

Thursday, September 24, 2009

Time	Items	
7:30 – 9:00	CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	
9:00-9:50	Welcome Panel Member Introductions and Update	Stephanie Moss and Radha Vettrai opened the meeting and welcomed members. Panel members introduced themselves and provided input and comments. Members discussed the possibility of creating one or more committees, specifically, a rules committee and identifying panel members who can serve as mentors for the new members. Discussion ensued about input on the proposed rules and about the issue of audio taping of SAP Panel deliberations.
9:50-10:15	Comments from Larry Winter State Board of Education Member	State Board member Larry Winter spoke to panel members regarding their service on the State Advisory Panel. He provided information on the budget and other issues and considerations that the Board is facing. He explained the goals of the State Board.
10:15-11:30	GaDOE, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports Update	<p>Nancy O’Hara and Kim Hartsell presented updates from the Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports.</p> <p>Ms. Hartsell provided an update on activities being implemented by the Georgia Project for Assistive Technology including the regional assistive technology consortia, the on-line assistive technology curriculum, and the conversion of state required assessments in accessible formats. She also provided information on the Georgia Instructional Materials Center (GIMC) which provides accessible textbooks to students who are blind or other print disabled. She shared information on the braille production program which is operated in cooperation with the Department of Corrections.</p> <p>In addition, Ms. Hartsell told Panel members about the current status of the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) statewide initiative. During the 2009-2010 school year over 150 schools are implementing PBS. Six of the Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support programs are participating in PBS. Two GNETS directors will present on GNETS during this meeting.</p> <p>She shared information on the State Personnel Development Grant Graduation/Dropout Prevention Project which is currently working with over 100 schools to implement dropout prevention strategies. She discussed the work that has been done in Georgia to develop professional learning resources that focus on math strategies for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Ms. O’Hara gave an overview of the six GaDOE strategic goals and explained how the GaDOE goals align to the 20 indicators in the State Performance Plan for Special Education. She updated Panel members on the two statewide institutes that were conducted on Autism this summer and shared information on regional offerings this school year. Information was also provided on activities and resources provided for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities.</p> <p>Ms. O’Hara discussed the need for teachers in low incidence areas and shared efforts to increase and improve services of sign language interpreters. She told the Panel about a</p>

		collaboration with Utah State University on training and assessment of interpreters. She provided an update on curriculum initiatives in math and a joint position with School Improvement.
Time	Items	
		There was a suggestion to make requirements for submitting public comment more prominent on the website, especially the 3-day advance deadline. Moreover, a suggestion was offered to have GLRS’s publicize the meetings that will be held in their areas.
11:30-12:00	Public Comment Session	No persons appeared at the scheduled time for presenting public comments. Comments were submitted prior to the meeting via email by Terry Barradine, Teresa Edwards and Mary Hollowell. They were read aloud to the Panel. All comments were related to seclusion, restraint, and/or corporal punishment.
12:00-1:00	LUNCH	
1:00 -2:45	Update on State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) Graduation/Drop-out Prevention Project	Julia Causey, GaDOE, and Laura Brown, Pioneer RESA, provided Panel members with an overview of Graduation Dropout Prevention Project that is funded through the State Personnel Development Grant. Mark Earnest, Principal of Rabun County High School, and Fran Bay, Collaboration Coach in Gwinnett County, shared the impressive outcomes of project activities in their schools.
2:45-3:00	BREAK	
3:00-3:30	Proposed General Education Rules: Amendments and Initiations	<p>State staff provided an overview of proposed education rules being initiated or amended. Allan Meyer, Interim Director of Policy, explained the rule-making and amendment processes.</p> <p>Seclusion and Restraint Rule—Ms. Hartzell and Mr. Meyer provided an update on the proposed rule on seclusion and restraint. One Panel member questioned the GaDOE’s authority to develop a rule on seclusion and restraint and suggested that the department consult with the Attorney General’s office on the rule. Questions were presented about enforcement and monitoring, training, and implementation with preschool-aged students.</p> <p>Hospital/Homebound (HHB) Services—Ms. O’Hara addressed key changes in the newest version of this rule.</p>
3:30-5:00	Proposed Amendments to Special Education Rules	<p>Ms. O’Hara provided an overview of proposed amendments to state special education rules:</p> <p>Child Find—Proposed changes in this rule address the requirement for prior interventions. Panel members discussed the need to clarify the difference between interventions and accommodations.</p> <p>Evaluations and Reevaluations—Proposed changes in this rule stemmed from the difficulty that local systems experience in conducting evaluations when staff are not on contract (summer time). Some Panel members were concerned that this change could delay services to children in the fall. It was suggested that the areas required in a comprehensive evaluation be clearly stated and that a definition of educational progress should be added to the definitions section of rule.</p> <p>Eligibility Determination—It was suggested that language for “adversely affects” educational performance be edited to be consistent with other rules. The issue of the twelve weeks of interventions and the need for training for was discussed at length.</p> <p>The “current academic year” language was changed to “current year” since valuable information from the end of previous academic year was being discarded.</p> <p>In the area of Visual Impairment, most of the proposed changes were made to align the state rule with federal language and delete language that was unique to Georgia.</p> <p>Questions were presented about Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and how it fits in our</p>

		<p>eligibility categories. A suggestion was made to add FAS to the list of typical Other Health Impairment examples.</p> <p>Time for discussion expired and Ms. O'Hara advised panel members of key sections of remaining rules that will be covered tomorrow.</p>
6:00	DINNER	

Friday, September 25, 2009

Time	Items	
7:00 – 8:00	CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST	
8:00-9:00	Committee Meetings	All committees met.
9:05 – 9:30	Committee Reports	<p>Committees reported to Panel on current activities and recommendations.</p> <p>Policies and Procedures-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recording panel meetings—Committee members suggested seeking a legal opinion regarding making visual and audio recordings. in regard to OCGA 50-14-1(C). 2. Mentoring—It was recommended that mentoring would be beneficial for new SAP members. <p>Public Comment –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seclusion—Committee members have reviewed comments on the rule. 2. Corporal Punishment—Members recommended a discussion of corporal punishment at a future meeting. 3. Public Comment – Members recommended that the GaDOE put a deadline on the website for public comment. They recommended targeting the local GLRS in the meeting area for publicizing the time and place of the meeting. <p>Dispute Resolution -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reviewing Results- Requested that panel members look at due process results before each meeting. 2. Due Process Hearings- Reviewed results of recent hearing. 3. Dispute Resolution Guide—The dispute resolution guide written for families is now posted on GaDOE website. 4. DL Update- Reviewed summary of disputes as discussed in the recent DL Update. 5. Dismissals- Concerns were expressed about how ALJs dismiss a case as having no merit. They recommended doing a review of these dismissals. <p>Family Engagement—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fact Sheets- Developed one-page fact sheets that Parent-to-Parent will distribute. Topics included: IEPs, Evaluations, Transition, and Discipline Recommend other topics including: Georgia Alternate Assessment , Assistive Technology, 504, Intervention Plans, Americans with Disabilities Act, Georgia Special Needs Scholarship, and Student Support Team. 2. Attendance of Parents at IEP Meetings: Reviewed data regarding parent participation in IEP meetings and requested updated data. They looked at the top performing systems to identify strategies for increasing parent attendance. 3. Co-teaching- Discussed ways for improving recognition of co-teaching teams. PTP Impact Awards will include an award for co-teaching teams.
9:30-10:25	Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) Overview	State staff and GNETS directors provided an overview of GNETS programs. (Marianne Wagner, Pat Wolfe, and Mike Blake.) Panel members discussed the amount of time that GNETS students are on the bus each day; services for students in schools before referral to GNETS; seclusion; teacher training; funding shortages; and data collection and analysis.
10:25- 10:50	BREAK	
10:50-12:00	Continuation-	Panel members and state staff continued the discussion regarding the proposed changes

	Discussion of Proposed Special Education Rule Changes	to the special education rules.
12:00-12:05	High Cost Fund Overview	Ms. O'Hara provided an overview of the High Cost Fund that will be available to local school districts to offset the cost of providing services to students with unusually high cost needs.
12:05-12:10	Update on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)	Ms. O'Hara provided an update on special education funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). These funds can be expended over the next two years.
Time	Items	
12:10-12:15	Georgia Annual Determination by the Office of Special Education Programs US DOE	Ms. O'Hara shared the results of Georgia's FY09 Annual Special Education Determination. A copy of the determination letter has been provided to all Panel members in their notebooks..
12:15 – 1:15	LUNCH	
1:15 – 2:30	State Advisory Panel Planning for Future Meetings	<p>Panel members discussed topics for future meetings. FY09 Annual Report was distributed.</p> <p>Locations for Upcoming Meetings: Nov 10-11: Savannah; Jan 21-22: Athens area (TBA); May 6-7: Lake Blackshear, Cordele</p> <p>The following discussion topics were suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --options for providing due process hearings, --Georgia Alternate Assessment changes, explore funding for Alternate Assessment with Modified Achievement Standards --RTI and its implementation/any data/evidence based practices, --transition issues, --parent involvement (Patti Solomon), --innovative schools that focus on achievement for all students, --benefits of co-teaching, --information on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), and --dyslexia.