



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)
LISTENING AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
8:00 A.M.-10:00 A.M.-JANUARY 28, 2011
APPOQUINIMINK STATE SERVICE CENTER
122 SILVER LAKE BLVD.
MIDDLETOWN, DE 19709

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wendy Strauss/Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC); Julie Johnson/Chairperson of the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Sub-Committee, Council Member of GACEC, Thierry Morlet, A.I. DuPont, Kyle Hodges/State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD), Brian Touchette/Delaware Department of Education (DOE), Tina Fredrickson/Coordinator-Statewide Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, staff at Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD), Nick Fina/CHOICES

OTHERS PRESENT: The Honorable S. Quinton Johnson, Fran Fletcher, University of Delaware-Facilitator, Kristin Mullen, Sub-Committee Recording Secretary, GACEC Staff

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lou Bartsoshesky, Christiana Care, A.I. DuPont

Wendy Strauss called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

Julie stated that the first order of business was to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, and asked if there were any changes or corrections.

Tina Fredrickson pointed out the following errors, which were noted by the recording secretary, and subsequently changed in the previous meeting's minutes by the recording secretary, for the record:

- Page 5, first paragraph, the sentence reading "The assessment program used by DSD is Teaching Strategies GOLD" should have read, "The assessment program used by **Christina School District** is Teaching Strategies GOLD."

- Page 5, first paragraph, last sentence-should read **Mary Ellen Nevins, founder of Professional Preparation for Cochlear Implants (PPCI)**.
- Page 6, first paragraph, Tina's words were not transcribed correctly in the minutes. Instead of "...she herself doesn't have that background..." this portion of the sentence should read "...she herself doesn't have that **certification**..."

With these errors being addressed, Julie then asked if there could be a motion to approve the minutes, with the aforementioned corrections. Kyle made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Brian. All were in favor of approving the minutes.

Julie stated the meeting objectives. The first objective of the meeting was to address the following questions raised at the previous meeting:

- Is the sound booth being removed from the old building at DSD? What gets done in the sound booth, and how much is it used?
- Fact finding for funding supports for each program. This includes location of the pilot program, Needs Based Funding, location of the sound booth, teachers, and related service personnel.
- Parent choice criteria/information.
- Need for an early childhood education (ECE) teacher on the LSL Sub-Committee.

The second objective of the meeting would be handled by Fran Fletcher, who would discuss the process for moving forward.

The third objective of the meeting would be the presentation of the CHOICES position paper on the Monolingual Listening and Spoken Language Preschool by Nick Fina, followed by a round table discussion.

The fourth meeting objective was to discuss Next Steps.

Per the agenda, adjournment was proposed to be at 10:00 a.m.

Julie then turned the meeting over to Fran.

Fran asked if Julie would like to discuss the questions first, per the agenda, or if she would rather have Fran go right into her portion of the agenda. Julie replied that she would prefer that Fran go first, and then the first meeting objective (questions from the first meeting) could be addressed.

Fran began by saying that, after reviewing the minutes, it was very evident that there was an abundance of mistrust within the sub-committee. She said that this is absolutely fine, and indeed very common. The entire point of the sub-committee is to present different viewpoints. Though it may be common for a group with differing viewpoints to mistrust one another and have some issues moving forward, these issues must be worked through and discussed in order to maintain the focus of the group. Fran noted that when a group first begins working together, there are some topics which are identified immediately as

priorities to be worked on. After working together for a bit more time, and having new things come up, groups often find they need to clarify their objectives and procedures.

Fran reminded all present that they are all united with a common concern, this concern being the success of the students of the LSL pilot program. Fran said that in order to move forward, there needed to be a discussion about decision making, communication, and disagreement within the sub-committee. The sub-committee's goal, per the charter, is for the group to come to a consensus. Fran reminded all present that coming to a consensus involves a bit of compromise. Just because the sub-committee reaches a consensus, this does not necessarily mean that a particular committee member has to agree with everything involving that agenda item, but rather that they feel they can live with it.

Fran then clarified her point about communication, stating that there are two forms of communication to be addressed at today's meeting. First would be communication within the confines of the sub-committee, such as "how long are we going to continue to discuss a specific item, since we do not have unlimited time." Next would be communication outside of the sub-committee, which is addressed in the charter. Fran then asked that everyone refer back to the proper procedures for communication addressed in the charter. The charter clearly states that all discussion is to take place within the sub-committee meetings, or be funneled through the GACEC to be included as an agenda item.

Regarding disagreements, Fran said that these are normal and expected. She questioned, however, how much time should be spent on discussing disagreements instead of focusing on coming to a consensus and moving forward. Fran addressed the issue of how the sub-committee planned to address the possibility of not being able to come to a consensus. Do they plan to take nothing back to the main committee? Do they plan to present written "sides"? Or do they wish to continue to meet until they come to an agreement?

Fran said that once the sub-committee achieved clarity on the issues of decision making, communication, and how to handle disagreements, they would be able to move forward. She noted that there was a timeline in place for the establishment of the LSL pilot classroom. She stated that the sub-committee needed to remain focused on this timeline by staying on time and on-task. Fran said, given the sub-committee member's busy schedules, as well as the aggressive timeline for the LSL classroom, there could not be endless sub-committee meetings. She questioned the need to continue to discuss numbers and statistics, and to share personal stories, noting that these take up a great deal of time, but do not seem to move the sub-committee forward.

Fran said that people who mistrust one another can do one of two things. 1.) They can go away and decide that they are not going to work together at all. 2.) They can come together and say "that's the way it is. We don't have time to work on this relationship, but we have a goal that we are working toward that is more important than worrying about this relationship." Fran noted that people can mistrust one another, and still work together toward a common goal. Once trust is broken, it takes a long time, if ever, to

mend that trust. And the sub-committee does not have the luxury of taking that time to mend that mistrust, so they must find a way to work together.

Fran addressed decision making and consensus. What is that process going to look like? She said that in any given meeting, there will be some agenda items that will need quite a bit of discussion, some will not need much discussion, and some will involve seemingly endless discussion with no consensus. So, how will this be handled? Fran suggested a modified Circle Process. This involves pre-designating an amount of time for a particular person to speak. During each person's turn to speak, they would hold a "talking piece," indicating that they have the floor and are not to be interrupted.

Fran explained that even though a group member may be allotted 30 minutes to speak, they may only need 5 minutes. Once each person is finished speaking, they will pass the talking piece to the next person in the circle who is scheduled to speak. A time frame for the Circle Process would need to be determined. For example, "we are going to go around the table with this issue three times. If no consensus is reached, we will then decide to discuss it at a later time or table this issue." Even if a consensus is not reached, each person will still feel that they had the time to give his or her input.

Fran then re-emphasized the need for the sub-committee to communicate only within the room, at sub-committee meetings. Fran said this is common procedure with groups whose members mistrust one another. Fran stated that while e-mail can be a wonderful thing, there are considerations to be made when deciding to send an e-mail. The first consideration is how the message contained in that e-mail will be received. This is dependent upon many variables, including the recipient's mood or stress level, or perhaps subtle nuances that do not come through in written communication. Fran urged the sub-committee members to remember that another disadvantage of communicating via e-mail is the possibility of the e-mail being seen by persons other than the intended recipient. If an e-mail were to go astray and be seen by persons other than the intended recipient, this would only serve to deepen the level of mistrust among group members.

Fran then asked how many more meetings the sub-committee felt were needed. She said, having the least experience in the room, she sought information from the CHOICES Position Paper and Tina's responses to that paper, and then placed that information on a flip chart. (Fran placed the flip chart at the front of the room at this time.) She then used both Nick's and Tina's documents to identify what issues need to be discussed by the sub-committee. She asked the sub-committee to look at the charts that she posted, and to give their input regarding the accuracy of her interpretation of the issues. Fran asked if there were items listed on her flip chart which needed more discussion. She also asked if there were any issues on the flip chart that the sub-committee felt could be discussed ad infinitum without reaching a consensus, and how important those items were to continue discussing.

For instance, what benefit would further discussion of the location of the LSL pilot program have? (Location meaning, not which building on the DSD campus the LSL pilot program would be housed in, but the need for LSL programs statewide, outside of

Christina School District.) Fran pointed out that the decision has already been made to implement the pilot program in September 2011 in Christina School District. This is the framework that the LSL sub-committee is working within. Discussion should be about the pilot program opening in the Christina School District in September 2011. While there is concern regarding a statewide LSL program, is this the time to discuss that? Or is discussion of a statewide LSL program counter-productive to offering sound recommendations for the program that is going to move forward in September 2011? Fran asked if the sub-committee felt the need to further discuss points such as this one, which do not directly relate to the pilot program opening in September 2011.

Fran then said that once a time frame is established, the sub-committee can decide how much each item can be discussed, how that will affect their discussion. She asked for the sub-committee's input on the proposed framework for communicating, dealing with disagreements, and coming to a consensus.

Nick stated that he believed it was a good framework for dealing with the issues the sub-committee is facing. Fran asked Nick how many meetings he felt would be needed, and asked him to begin with "extremes". The sub-committee could give input Nick's suggestion, and go from there. Nick shared that he spent a lot of time as a project manager, so he may be approaching the sub-committee's time schedule from a different point of view. Nick stated that he realizes that not everyone thinks the same way. He explained that he would feel more comfortable answering Fran's question if there were a project schedule in place. Fran mentioned that, while there is no official project schedule in place, there is a deadline of March 2011 for the promotional materials to be done.

Nick said there are a lot of complex, interacting events, some of which have dependencies on each other, to be considered. He said that a project schedule with timelines and outlines would be helpful in moving forward. Fran said that in addition to the March 2011 date, there was also the proposed September 2011 start date for the LSL pilot classroom. Fran said she thinks of things from the desired end result first, and then thinks "backwards" about what is needed to achieve the desired result. Nick agreed this is a good approach.

Fran asked the sub-committee if they were in agreement that the items listed on her flip chart needed to be fleshed out in order to be included in the written material by the March 2011 promotional materials deadline. Nick said that, for the purposes of the promotional materials deadline, not all of the items listed on the flip chart needed to be addressed by March 2011. Nick stated that the promotional materials will be intended for end consumers of the LSL pilot program. He gave the example of parents of potential students being more concerned with the services offered by the LSL program, than with how those services are funded. With that being said, Nick proposed that addressing the items that would be contained in the promotional materials would take priority.

Fran asked the sub-committee to identify the things on the flip chart that needed to be addressed before the March publication deadline. She reminded the sub-committee that they are not the decision-makers as far as official recommendations to the GACEC are

concerned. Fran went on to say that the sub-committee must allow for a “cushion” of time for the main advisory committee to consider their recommendations.

Kyle asked for clarification on “written materials.” He asked if this term refers to promotional materials only. Tina answered “yes,” that was what was being discussed. She reminded the sub-committee members that she has between now and the end of the school year to obtain the units to fill the LSL pilot classroom.

Nick said that he felt a need for perhaps two additional meetings in February, beyond the already-scheduled February 4 meeting. He said that after that time, perhaps the sub-committee could get past philosophical discussions, and try to work their way past the emotional barriers in place. Nick said that he did not believe the sub-committee needed to have those discussions before the promotional materials deadline.

Nick then questioned why promotional materials could not be done by May 2011 instead of March 2011. He said that promotional materials would be geared toward parents of children who are deaf. More specifically, parents of children who are deaf, who are trying to determine which avenue would best suit their child. Parents could choose from American Sign Language (ASL), LSL, or both.

Fran re-directed everyone’s attention to the time frame. She asked, if the sub-committee decided to add two more meetings, what their goals for those two additional meetings would be. Fran questioned how the sub-committee planned to structure these two additional meetings, in order to meet their deadline. Nick said he didn’t know. Kyle suggested that if there were an issue remaining after a meeting was adjourned, that those items should be put on the agenda for the next meeting. This process, Kyle said, could continue until a decision was made.

Nick mentioned the position paper he previously submitted (at the 1.14.11 meeting), and the issues that have separated CHOICES and DSD in the past. He then said that he would present a new document bearing CHOICES comments regarding Tina’s remarks on the original CHOICES position paper later in the meeting. Nick noted that many of the remarks in the new document were positive, and CHOICES is in agreement with quite a few of DSD’s statements. However, Nick believes that there is still a lot to be discussed regarding the referral process. He noted that the sub-committee may not be able to fix the referral system as part of this process. Nick said it was a priority of CHOICES to make sure that parents who choose LSL for their child, have a clear path to enrolling their child in the LSL program.

Fran said that the referral process piece may take a significant amount of time and discussion. Kyle said that he felt it could be determined in that day’s meeting how many more meetings are needed. Kyle stated that if the items of concern were addressed in order of priority, then a future meeting schedule could be determined based on those priorities.

Brian said that there were some items on the flip chart which directly impacted the LSL pilot classroom starting in September, and some which did not. For example, Brian noted that the referral process, while undeniably important, may not be a priority for the sub-committee to come to a consensus on prior to the LSL pilot program starting. Brian said that he thinks that there are students currently in the Delaware educational system who would be viable candidates for the LSL pilot program. Brian believes that if an issue is not directly related to the LSL pilot program opening in September 2011, he feels that discussion on that issue should be tabled until a later date.

Kyle agreed with Brian, stating that the sub-committee needs to prioritize their goals. Nick also agreed with Brian's statement.

Julie agreed with Brian as well, but said that she does not believe prioritizing the goals will take much more time. She stated that she is not sure if two more meetings will be necessary. Julie reminded the sub-committee that when their meetings stop, the recommendations do not. The sub-committee's recommendations go to the main advisory committee, where discussion may continue.

Nick stated that during the design committee meetings, initially a half or full day meeting was proposed. This half or full day meeting did not take place. Nick would like to see discussion regarding the last sub-committee meeting being a half or full day event. Nick proposed that this last meeting would not adjourn until all issues are resolved.

Wendy asked for clarification that Nick was referring to the initial design committee meeting. Nick said that he was referring to the initial design committee meeting, during which was discussed holding a half or full day meeting. Wendy reminded Nick that the idea was not accepted, due to individual member's busy schedules as well as the aggressive time frame for the implementation of the LSL pilot classroom. Fran then reminded everyone that the object of the sub-committee meetings is to move forward, not look back.

Fran stated that the priority list would be pared down to include only those items which would have a direct impact on the LSL pilot program beginning in September 2011. She then turned the sub-committee's attention back to the question of how they would like to handle decision making. Fran said that the sub-committee needed to make a determination on how much time they were going to dedicate to a particular topic before turning it over to the main committee, making a recommendation, or telling the main committee that they were unable to come to a consensus.

Nick said that he feels this is where Fran's presence would be most useful. He asked that if she observed the sub-committee going back and forth fruitlessly on an issue, with no decision being made, to please interject at that time. This would put everyone back on track. Nick asked Fran if she would be willing to do that. Fran said she would be willing to flag the group regarding time constraints, and would then re-state what she had heard, and ask the group to come to a consensus. Fran stated that she would prefer to handle

things this way, as she is not a specialist in the area of concern here, as so many others present are.

Brian said that he felt allotting specific slots of time to topics of discussion would be helpful to move things along. At the end of the time allotted, the group could either vote on the item, agree that it needed more time to be discussed (at which time it would become an agenda item for the next meeting), or agree to not discuss the item any further. He said that he has found this technique useful in the past when he has facilitated meetings.

Fran asked for input on this technique. Julie reminded everyone that the sub-committee is making a recommendation to the main committee. If the sub-committee does not come to a consensus, that is fine. She reminded everyone that, ultimately, Statewide Programs will be implementing the LSL program in the fall, with or without the sub-committee and main advisory committee's input. Julie said that she would like to be sure that the opportunity to provide input to Statewide Programs is not wasted by spending too much time on matters of lesser importance.

Kyle said that the sub-committee may not be able to come to a decision, but the main committee may be able to. Wendy agreed with Kyle. She said that it was very important to determine and address the most pressing issues quickly. Wendy added that some of the more minor issues could be discussed by possibly forming smaller work groups within the main advisory committee.

Fran re-addressed the communication piece, regarding inside and outside communication. She asked if everyone was comfortable with discussing issues related to the sub-committee only during sub-committee meetings. Fran noted that it was acceptable for sub-committee members to take some information back to their own groups, as long as it is not directly related to the work of the sub-committee. Fran re-stated that all topics that would have a direct impact upon the work of the sub-committee must remain in the meeting room.

Nick said that, as almost everyone present knew, he triggered some bad feeling by sending an e-mail that was hurtful to Julie. Nick stated that he has apologized to Julie via e-mail, and he repeated his apology in front of the sub-committee. Nick said that he now clearly sees the importance of selecting an appropriate communication channel in cases where anger or other emotions can interfere with good teamwork.

A discussion then took place in which the sub-committee shared their thoughts on what was or was not considered "fair."

Fran stated that she was glad that the sub-committee mentioned the word "fair." She reminded the sub-committee that as long as all communication happens within the setting of a sub-committee meeting all present can be the judge of what is and is not "fair." These issues can then be openly discussed and dealt with immediately.

Fran then asked all of the members to agree that in order to remain “fair,” all communication must be kept within the sub-committee meeting room.

Representative Johnson then said that he agreed and wanted to make sure that point is very clear. He said that fairness will only work if communication is kept within the meeting room. Representative Johnson said that, obviously, if communication takes place outside of this room, depending on someone’s point of view, something could easily be misconstrued as not being fair. While within the room, if an issue regarding fairness is brought into the open to be discussed by the group, it can be clearly hashed out within the group. This way, everyone can state their standpoint regarding what is and is not “fair,” and come to a common agreement.

Kyle agreed, saying that in order to move forward as a group, it is absolutely essential to confine communication to the meeting room.

Fran then said that she was out of her time limit, but had to move on to the issue of outside communication. She asked what the sub-committee’s feelings on the rules regarding outside communication were. Did the sub-committee wish to follow the procedure set forth in the by-laws, which states that if a sub-committee member wishes to have something heard, they are to contact the GACEC and have that item put on the agenda for the next meeting? Instead of having conversations and sending e-mails outside of sub-committee meetings, should the members of the group follow the very clear process which is set forth for putting those items on the agenda?

Kyle said that if there is to be discussion allowed outside of the meeting room, he believes there needs to be some very clear rules regarding what is and is not acceptable. Kristin asked for clarification on the process of submitting an agenda item. Fran referred back to the charter, which states that all items must be submitted in writing to the advisory committee chairperson at least two weeks prior to the next meeting. The written communication must include the following information: objective, purpose, rationale, and desired outcome. The person requesting an agenda item must come to the meeting prepared to discuss his or her agenda item. Agenda items may include announcements, sub-committee reports, previously tabled agenda items (old business,) new agenda items (new business,) or public recognition. Fran said that one of two things would happen to an item that has been submitted for the agenda. It will either be returned to the person submitting the agenda item for further clarification, or it will be placed on the next agenda.

Nick said that this procedure is fine, but for the LSL Sub-Committee’s meeting schedule, the two week requirement is difficult. Kyle agreed. Nick suggested a rolling agenda, which would allow sub-committee members to put an agenda item “in the pipeline.” This item could then be dealt with as the sub-committee deemed important, or it could be removed altogether at any time. Fran said that this approach would possibly lead to confusion regarding when discussion of a particular item was completed.

Fran re-directed the sub-committee's attention to the issue about communicating outside of meetings. Brian stated that he felt this was dealt with at the last meeting. Brian reminded everyone that, at the end of the last meeting, there was a discussion about different things that needed to be shared with the group. Brian said that feels anything outside of what was determined at the 1.14.11 meeting to be acceptable to share with the group would be out of bounds. He reminded everyone that communication outside of the committee could easily be misconstrued, or be perceived as hurtful. Brian re-iterated that the agenda for this meeting was determined at the last meeting, and therefore that is what should be discussed *in the meeting*. Brian said that he feels the sub-committee leadership should be the ones to determine how much time is spent on a particular agenda item. Anything not resolved in that day's meeting would be carried over onto the next meeting's agenda.

Nick said that this approach opens "a big can of worms" for CHOICES, as the group is very open about sharing information. Nick said that if it were decided that no information could be shared with his group, he would find that to be difficult. Fran asked for clarification on Nick's concern. She explained that outside communication regarding the business of the sub-committee is counter-productive. Fran gave the example of 50 e-mails that going back and forth in between meetings not being a good thing. Tina then addressed the root of the problem, saying there should not be communication outside of the group, especially if one group member has a problem with another. These things should be discussed in the meeting room only.

Brian clarified further, saying he felt general discussions were acceptable. For example, if an outside group of people were to discuss DSD in general terms, that would be fine. Brian shared that within his constituency, emails or written communication between groups who share the same viewpoint is not usually a problem. However, written communication between people distrust one another is not a good idea. Brian said that he did not mean that there could not be discussion with CHOICES at all.

Nick said that this clarified the issue for him. He said that it doesn't make it less difficult, but he will comply.

Wendy returned to the subject of agenda items. She said she feels that at the end of each meeting, it is important to capture what the sub-committee wants to see addressed as an agenda item at the next meeting. She noted that if a sub-committee member were to think of something in between meetings, she and Julie would do their best to add that item to the next meeting's agenda. Wendy said that she and Julie will not seek the sub-committee's approval on agenda items which are mentioned outside of meetings, due to time constraints. Wendy said that she would hope the sub-committee trusted her and Julie to determine the agenda items.

Fran then summarized the past hour's discussion on agenda items:

- Fran noted that it is expected for members of the sub-committee to discuss agenda items among its own membership. Fran reminded the sub-committee that the

focus and intent of sharing information is to bring back further input to assist the committees in reaching their goals.

- Agenda items for the next meeting will be determined at the end of each meeting.
- Agenda items may be more detailed with time lines added.
- Due to time constraints, last-minute items may not make it to the next meeting's agenda, but this does not necessarily mean that they will not be discussed later.
- Wendy and Julie will determine which items will go on the agenda.
- Leadership of the sub-committee will determine the timeline to be spent on an agenda item.
- The sub-committee would like Fran to interject if she sees the sub-committee not making progress due to disagreements, or becoming off-task.

Fran then thanked everyone for their time and attention, and turned the meeting back over to Julie.

Julie addressed the agenda item regarding the questions left unanswered at the end of the previous meeting.

- Regarding the sound booth at DSD: Julie reports that it has not yet been determined what will be done with the sound booth from the old building. There will be a brand new sound booth going into the new building. Regardless of the construction of the new building, the existing sound booth was already scheduled to be replaced, due to age and other issues.
- Time spent in the booth: Julie reports that this varies per child. Brian asked for clarification on time range for use of the booth. Frequently being once a week once a week/ once a month, and infrequently being once every six months. Tina said she could make an approximation using hours, and stated that Kathy uses the sound booth approximately 10 hours per week. Brian asked how frequently an individual student might use the booth. Is there a possibility that an individual student could be using the booth once a month? Tina answered, "no, not the booth." There is the possibility of using other equipment that frequently, to check for ear infections, etc... Tina said the booth is primarily used with students when their Individual Education Plan (IEP) is about to be done, to test their hearing levels, etc...
Brian then asked if the sound booth was used with children who have cochlear implants only. Tina answered that the sound booth is used for all types of children.
- Funding supports: Julie reports that there would be more flexibility in the new building in terms of allowing units to reach other students. The unit of measure is 2.6. For example, in the new building, a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) might conceivably be able to serve some high school students as well. This would be more difficult to do in the old building. The LSL program will require 2 teaching units to instruct 6 children. Tina is seeking a group of 6 children.

Tina would like to see the class taught by both a teacher and a SLP, as was mentioned at the 1.14.11 meeting.

Tina and Julie clarified for the group if the LSL pilot classroom is housed in the new building, there would no minimum number of children required. If the LSL pilot classroom was placed in the old building, there would have to be 6 children in order to receive the funding. Tina added that the Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) staff in the new building are contracted with DSD, and have worked with them for many years. She said that the DSD staff and students are familiar with these PT and OT specialists. If the program were to be housed in the new building, there would need to be new staff hired for that building.

Nick stated that Statewide Programs should keep in mind that there is a likelihood of similar LSL programs being implemented in the state, based on this LSL pilot classroom. He asked that Statewide Programs be mindful of not implementing anything in this LSL pilot classroom that cannot be at a later date. Julie reminded Nick that the focus of the sub-committee is not statewide LSL classrooms, but this particular LSL pilot classroom. She stated that the LSL pilot classroom that is set to begin in September 2011 is the focus of this sub-committee.

Brian said that HB 1 has passed the Senate, so there is now an equal funding system throughout the state. The 2.6 unit of measure now relates to all districts. Wendy asked Brian if there were many school districts in DE who already had preschool programs in place. She also asked if a district already had a preschool program, if Brian believed implementing a LSL preschool classroom would be easier for those districts. Brian said that this is not his area of expertise. He explained that it is not the norm throughout the state to have a preschool be a part of a district. This is unique to the Christina and Appoquinimink School Districts.

Tina added that some school districts, such as Indian River, contract with a preschool program. The Indian River School Districts preschool program is called the Tots Program.

Thierry asked for clarification on the location of the LSL preschool classroom. He asked if the sub-committee were to recommend that the program start in old building, and if the minimum requirement of 6 children for the classroom was not met, would the program then not be able to move forward? Thierry noted that finding those six children may be a lot of work. He said that he did not wish to move forward with an agenda for a program that would not work if 6 children were not found to participate in that program. He said that, in light of this fact, he felt it was important to determine location before moving forward with anything else.

Representative Johnson said that he has seen Governor Markell's budget, and he feels that there is a heavy focus on efficiency within school districts. There will be added pressures on districts due to transportation cuts and other budgetary constraints. Representative Johnson said that if the program were to be housed in the new building,

the number of students would not matter. The program would still move forward. He recommends housing the program in the new building. The program would be monitored, and a report would be made after the first year. This report will aid in the implementation of other LSL preschool pilot programs statewide.

Brian added that Martha Toomey of the DOE would be attending the 2.4.11 meeting in his place, and that Martha is extremely well-versed on Needs Based Funding issues. He said that the sub-committee may want to address any questions that they have regarding Needs Based Funding to Martha at the next meeting.

Representative Johnson then noted that the DOE “found” 1.9 million dollars for Needs Based Funding. He clarified that this funding was not actually “found,” but rather taken out of **Inter-Agency Collaborative Team (ICT)** funds. Representative Johnson said this is significant, due to the fact that the 1.9 million dollars is not coming out of a new appropriation fund. At this time, no one is sure if 1.9 million dollars will cover all that is proposed. He stated that if, for example, 2.3 million dollars were actually what was needed, and this would pose a significant problem. Representative Johnson asked the sub-committee to remain mindful of this fact. Even though HB1 has passed, there are still concerns regarding sufficient funding

Wendy asked if the sub-committee wished to vote regarding the LSL preschool pilot program being housed in the new building.

Kyle asked if Tina could tell him how difficult it would be to find 6 students for the program. Tina stated that they already have 4. Thierry said he feels the issue of student numbers goes back to the referral process, which he would like to see addressed by the main advisory committee at a later date.

Thierry then said that, although he does not like the thought of the LSL preschool pilot classroom being housed in the new building, he is willing to concede that is the best place for it in order to meet the September 2011 deadline. Thierry said that, since there is no minimum number of students needed for the pilot program to take place in the new building, due to funding considerations, he is in favor of moving forward on a vote in favor of the new building. He added that he felt if the referral process were to be improved, there would be no problem locating children.

Nick concurred, saying that he feels the sub-committee needs to move forward. Julie said that she took some of the information regarding the new vs. the old building to her Hands and Voices Organization, as she was seeking input from families. The consensus of Hands and Voices was to house the pilot program in the new building. Julie then reminded everyone that this is a pilot program, and that it will be reviewed regarding what works and what does not. Rep. Johnson stated that he is in favor of a one-year review of the pilot program.

At this time, the sub-committee achieved a consensus that they would recommend to house the LSL preschool pilot classroom in the new building at DSD.

Nick stated again that Statewide Programs should avoid building anything into the new building that could not easily be duplicated for future LSL programs statewide.

Wendy said that she felt the questions from the previous meeting had been addressed, and asked if the sub-committee felt that they could move on to the next items on the agenda. The sub-committee agreed.

Wendy stated that the issue of a particular person being on the sub-committee as an early childhood education representative remains to be addressed by the group. Wendy said that there were not many more sub-committee meetings planned, and it would not make sense to invite an early childhood specialist to be a member at this late date. Kyle then asked if there was a slot open within the main advisory committee for an early childhood education representative. Julie said that Rosanne Griff-Cabelli would be sending a representative from Child Development Watch (CDW), but that she had not gotten back in touch with Julie to let her know who that would be. Julie added that perhaps the person would not need to be a full committee member, but rather be invited to attend as a consultant.

The sub-committee agreed that there was not a need for an early childhood education professional to be on the sub-committee.

Nick noted that CHOICES raised the question (during the design team meeting period in December) if there was to be a parent who chose LSL for their child included as a member of the sub-committee. No LSL parent was ever added, so he said that he was fine with moving ahead without an early childhood education professional being a part of the group.

Wendy reminded everyone that the design team struggled a great deal when determining who to invite. She said to please keep in mind that the public is invited to attend, and that the committee would certainly listen to their comments. However, members of the public would not have a vote.

Julie said that she wanted to make time for the round table discussion and Nick's CHOICES group presentation. Fran asked the group what the best format to discuss the CHOICES document was.

Nick stated that he had a new document, which contained replies to Tina's comments on the CHOICES group's original position paper. Fran asked if the sub-committee had seen this new document. The answer was "no." Fran said that since this is new information, and people process things differently, would Nick agree to present this at a later date. Nick said no, stating that Tina did not distribute her comments for the 1.14.11 beforehand. (Recording secretary's note-I will assume responsibility for this. Tina did send her document well beforehand, and it was mistakenly omitted from the email I sent to the sub-committee members containing the materials for the 1.14.11 meeting. I

attempted to rectify this by making copies of Tina's comments for the sub-committee members while on-site at the 1.14.11 meeting. I apologize for this error.-KM)

After a great deal of discussion, it was agreed that Nick could proceed with presenting the new document, as it contained pertinent information. Nick noted in his document that his comments had not been reviewed by the full CHOICES group, and that he assumed all responsibility for the content of the document. Nick then distributed copies of the new document to the sub-committee. Nick followed the tabular format of the document. Please refer to the copy you were given of Nick's document for a full account of his comments.

Questions from the sub-committee regarding Nick's document:

Kyle asked for clarification on the acoustical environment of classrooms in the new building. Tina and Nick both agreed that the new buildings classrooms were "prime listening environments." Tina noted that DSD is also the "greenest school in the state."

Regarding Nick's comments about curriculum, Tina said that Christina School District is linked to the What Works Clearinghouse. She referenced Doors to Discovery from July 2007, and then said that there is a newer study from June 2009. Tina said the only thing missing is the phonological processing piece. Tina said that Dr. Carol Vukelich from the University of Delaware and her team of grad students have built the phonological piece for that. Tina said this is a very well-rounded oral, print, phonological curriculum in and of itself.

At the conclusion of Nick's presentation, he said that he did not think there was a need to go back over the document one more time, other than to answer questions or for discussion.

Wendy thanked Nick for preparing such a concise document. She said that the four things she took away from Nick's presentation were:

- CHOICES feels that further discussion of the referral process is needed in the future. This would be a long-term goal.
- CHOICES would like Statewide Programs to look at the home-visitation program in regard to the referral process.
- For professional staff, CHOICES would like Statewide Programs to consider consultants in the future.
- CHOICES would like to see Statewide Programs and A.I. DuPont attempt to achieve a good working relationship.

Fran asked if the sub-committee felt that these four items were a part of Nick's document, or if they need to be added. Julie said that she feels the four items are already imbedded in the document. Fran asked the sub-committee to prioritize the four items mentioned above, based on priority and direct impact upon the pilot program beginning in September 2011.

Nick said he is fairly confident that the instructional personnel piece would be handled appropriately by DSD. He said that, even though he knows it can not be solved completely right now, the referral piece is his top priority. Unless there are students in the program, it is not going to be able to move forward. Nick fears that the state may discontinue the LSL program if there is not enough involvement. This is why he feels the referral process is so critical.

Julie said that the referral process is continually being worked on in the state. There is a plan in place for the referral process. Julie said she feels there are some processes at DHSS which are impeding this process.

Kyle said he knows this is an important issue, but said the group needed to focus on issues which directly impact this program starting in September 2011. Nick asked what if there were no students. Kyle stated that Tina has already said that there are four students, and with the program being housed in the new building, this would not impede the program moving forward. Kyle said that he realizes the referral program will need to be looked at in the future.

Tina said that Statewide Programs and DSD are two different entities. She noted that, for children from birth to age three, through an inter-agency agreement, state agencies (acting on behalf of local education agencies or LEAs) have given authority to a state agency such as Child Development Watch (CDW) to refer children who are deaf or hard of hearing to Statewide Programs. Tina said that Statewide Programs then serve the children as the parents wish. Tina said that Statewide Programs contacts the LEA again after the referral, to let the LEA know that CDW has given Statewide Programs the referral. Tina said that the LEAs are invited to the meetings to develop a child's Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP). She asked how this process is "broken" if it is the law.

Nick said that the best information CHOICES has is that it is illegal.

Kyle interjected and said that he would like to discuss process. These points would not be able to be properly addressed within the five remaining minutes of the meeting. Kyle said that he would like to use the remaining time to discuss what items should be placed on the next agenda.

Brian asked to speak, saying that he agrees with Kyle. Brian went on to say that he feels the referral process is not something that should undergo heavy discussion at this time, as it may not impact the opening of the pilot program. He also noted that all of the right "players" may not be at the table. Brian said that he would hesitate to criticize, or speculate on the procedures used by, Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS) without having a representative of DHSS present. He said that he does not feel it is fair to discuss another agency without having a representative of that agency in attendance. Brian concluded by saying that he did not feel that the current referral process is necessarily a hindrance to getting the pilot program up and running in September 2011.

Thierry stated that he both agrees and disagrees with Brian. He agreed that all “players” should be present for the discussion. Thierry stated that he is concerned with how outreach to parents and families explaining the LSL program will be handled. Thierry re-emphasized that he wants this outreach to be done properly and effectively. Thierry said that he feels the sub-committee needs to focus on the promotional materials to be given to families considering the LSL program.

Brian said he thinks promotional materials for the pilot program are a separate issue from the long term discussions regarding the referral process. Brian agreed that effective promotional materials would be an integral part of making sure that families were informed about the LSL program.

Wendy agreed with Thierry that addressing promotional materials should be a top priority at the next meeting. This is especially true, given there is a March 2011 deadline for promotional materials to be done.

Rep. Johnson said that he has been involved with this issue for almost 16 years. He has seen a great deal of change from the philosophies and information of the past to the philosophies and information of the future, because the players have changed. Rep. Johnson said he wants the group to keep in mind, that there are certain individuals (who shall remain nameless) whom he has concerns about. He has the same concerns regarding certain procedures that were used in the past. Rep. Johnson said some of these people and procedures led him to seek the position that he holds today, as a State Representative. However, he asked that moving forward; the group respects the current players whose actions affect the issues which concern them. Rep. Johnson also reminded the group to remain focused on the future, not on the past.

Fran identified the following points to be worked on at the next meeting:

1. Promotional materials to send to parents.
2. Instructional personnel and equipment. Who and what are the LSL pilot preschool program students going to find when they arrive in the classroom?

(Tina asked Thierry to compile a list for the next meeting of what equipment he feels will be necessary. She said that this would assist Kathy and herself in making a cohesive list. Kristin asked Thierry to cc the GACEC when he sends his list of recommendations, so that a copy can be sent to the sub-committee members, as well as be included in their packets for the next meeting. Thierry said that he would be glad to, if time allows.)

3. Specific ages of the children.
4. Specific time of day for the classes.
5. Criteria for admission into the program. Clarify what “sufficient auditory access to learn through audition” means.

Following the determination of the next meeting’s objectives, the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Mullen, GACEC

