



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)

LISTENING AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

8:00 A.M.-10:00 A.M.-FEBRUARY 4, 2011

APPOQUINIMINK STATE SERVICE CENTER

122 SILVER LAKE BLVD.

MIDDLETOWN, DE 19709

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Julie Johnson, Chairperson of the LSL Sub-Committee Council Member of GACEC; Thierry Morlet, A.I. DuPont; Kyle Hodges, State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD); Tina Fredrickson, Coordinator-Statewide Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Nick Fina/CHOICES; Lou Bartsoshesky, Christiana Care & A.I. DuPont

OTHERS PRESENT: Kristin Mullen, GACEC Staff, Committee Recording Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT: Wendy Strauss, Executive Administrator, GACEC; Brian Touchette, Delaware Department of Education (DOE), Martha Toomey, Proxy for Brian Touchette, DOE

Chairperson Julie Johnson called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. She announced that the facilitator scheduled for this meeting, Fran Fletcher, was ill and unable to attend. She also announced that Wendy Strauss had been called out of town to South Carolina due to the premature birth of her grandson, Beau Alexander Strauss. Julie requested approval of the minutes. Although the minutes were sent out ahead of time, some sub-committee members were unable to read them beforehand. Julie asked that Kristin Mullen follow up with a vote to approve the minutes via e-mail at a later date. Kristin said that she would do so.

Nick Fina asked Julie what the status of getting a representative from Child Development Watch (CDW) on the GACEC Advisory Committee for the Education of Individuals with Hearing Loss (hereafter referred to as "the committee" or the "main advisory committee") was. Julie stated that Jill McKinney would be filling the role of CDW representative on the main advisory committee. She explained that Jill works as a liaison

between CDW and the Department of Education (DOE), and that Jill is based in southern Delaware.

Julie stated that she hoped to get through all of the items on the agenda. The main objective of this meeting was to come to a consensus on the sub-committee's recommendations regarding the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Pilot Program at the Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD). Other items on the agenda included non-priority items and next steps.

The agenda items identified as a priority to be addressed were as follows:

- Ages of children in the LSL Pilot Program
- Criteria for admission into the LSL Pilot Program
- Class times for children to attend the LSL Pilot Classroom
- Design of the LSL Pilot Program
- Instructional personnel criteria for the LSL Pilot Program
- Consultants regarding the LSL Pilot Program
- Referral process for the Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD), and Statewide Programs (keeping the past in perspective.)
 - Ongoing discussion
 - What is currently being worked on?
 - Involving Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS)
 - How to reach out to parents of children who are identified as being deaf or hard of hearing, and what to say.

AGES OF CHILDREN IN THE LSL PILOT PROGRAM

Following a discussion regarding how to best group children of different ages and who use different modalities, the sub-committee determined the following:

- The LSL preschool pilot program should be divided into groups of children from birth to age 3, and then from age 3 to 5 (not in kindergarten).
- Children who use American Sign Language (ASL) and Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) should not receive instruction in the same classroom.
- Classes should be held on different days of the week for children who use ASL and LSL. At no point should children who use different modalities be taught in the same classroom.
- It is the goal of Statewide Programs to eventually have more of a center-based program for families. Statewide Programs will still provide home-based services, but would like to encourage families to come in to the Statewide Programs Family Resource Center more in the future.
- The sub-committee determined that incidental contact between children using different modalities (i.e.-going to the nurse or to the bathroom) would not be detrimental. However, spending extended amounts of time together would be.

- Nick made the point that if a family initially chooses to utilize ASL to communicate with their child, then later decides to use LSL, it may be too late for a cochlear implant (CI) to be successful.

Nick asked for clarification from Julie regarding what Child Development Watch does for a child with hearing loss, and when they do it. He then asked Julie to answer the same question for Guide by Your Side and Hands and Voices. Julie explained that Hands and Voices (HV) typically has interaction with families before Child Development Watch (CDW).

Julie then said that one of the challenges regarding children with hearing loss at this time is the vacant position at Delaware Public Health (DPH) for the Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator. The person in this position is responsible for receiving information from hospitals and audiologists around the state regarding children who have failed a hearing screening. The Newborn Health Screening Coordinator will then begin tracking that child, and making sure that they are receiving appropriate services. Julie said that she is hoping to have Guide by Your Side (GBYS), along with the Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator, be the first point of contact with parents. If children are not being identified at an early age as having hearing loss, they are losing valuable time in which they could be receiving medical attention and services. The sub-committee agreed that this was a concern that Julie should take back to the main committee and the GACEC for action.

Tina Fredrickson stated that DSD/Statewide Programs would also like to see GBYS working with the Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator. This would allow the child's chosen form of communication to be identified very early. At the time of the child's referral to them, Statewide Programs will then be able to focus more on the education piece, since the child's chosen modality will already have been identified.

CRITERIA

The committee discussed if the statement regarding criteria for admission into the LSL Pilot Program was sufficiently thorough. The statement in question reads that in order for a child to be considered for the program they must have, "...sufficient auditory access to learn through audition." The sub-committee feels that this statement, as written, indicates that children will be considered for admission into the LSL Pilot Program on a case-by-case basis, and with respect to the parent's wishes regarding their child's chosen communication method. The sub-committee recommended that no changes be made to this statement.

TIMES

The sub-committee agreed that for children ages 0-3, home and center-based visits would be based on the schedule and convenience of the child's family. The sub-committee agreed that for the preschool program (ages 3-5), the children should attend school for a

full day, from 8:30-2:30 p.m., with a nap in the afternoon. This schedule mirrors the current DSD preschool schedule.

DESIGN

This discussion centered on the curriculum to be used in the LSL Pilot Program. In previous discussions, the sub-committee agreed that the Christina School District Curriculum would be used, along with the Teaching Strategies GOLD curriculum. The Christina School District Curriculum adheres to the guidelines set forth by the State Department of Education and the University of Delaware. These curricula (one for infant, one for pre-kindergarten) have activities built in to assure that teachers are meeting state requirements. Nick had also asked Tina to consider the Foundations in Learning Curriculum. Tina stated that she would review the curriculum and report back, but noted that if there were overlaps between the already-chosen curriculum and Foundations in Learning, DSD would not be using Foundations in Learning.

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

- Following discussion regarding the qualifications for the LSL Pilot Program teacher, the sub-committee came to the conclusion that LSL Certification is not absolutely necessary for an applicant to be considered for the LSL classroom teacher position.
- If an applicant has the necessary experience or ability, but do not currently have the LSL Certification, they will still be considered.
- DSD states that they hope to have already hired the Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), and hope to have the classroom teacher for the LSL Pilot Program hired by May 2011.
- 2.6 teachers are needed to instruct 6 children, as is detailed in the recently passed Needs Based Funding Bill. This ratio is necessary for Christina School District to receive unit funding.
- Following consultation and review of the job posting with colleagues, Tina will be preparing a job posting for the LSL classroom teacher, and will be posting it nationwide.
- The sub-committee recommends that the LSL Pilot Program teacher, as well as the SLP, be certifiably up-to-date on all existing and emerging technology having to do with hearing loss.

CONSULTANTS

Following much discussion concerning recommended consultants, the following items were suggested and agreed upon by the sub-committee.

- Statewide Programs and DSD should consult with the Clarke School in Bryn Mawr, PA, on an as-needed basis.

- To facilitate an effective working relationship for DSD and A.I. DuPont, Thierry Morlet recommended that DSD reach out to A.I. DuPont regarding their evaluation of the LSL Pilot Program. Thierry specifically recommended consulting with Amy Powell of A.I. DuPont.
- It was suggested that Judy Sexton of the Clarke School be asked to review the LSL Sub-Committee's recommendations for the LSL Pilot Program. It was proposed that Judy be invited, as a consultant, to a meeting of the main advisory committee to share her observations.
- Julie will be taking the suggestion of inviting Judy back to the main advisory committee for consideration. Whether or not there are consulting fees involved will be a deciding factor.
- The sub-committee requested a one page summary of their recommendations to be prepared for the main advisory committee's review.

REFERRAL PROCESS (KEEPING THE PAST IN PERSPECTIVE)

- It was determined that this piece requires further discussion.
- There is more discussion than can reasonably be addressed within the confines of the sub-committee's meeting schedule, or the LSL Pilot Program's proposed start date.
- The sub-committee recommends that the topic of the referral process be discussed within the main advisory committee in the future.
- As an action item, since early identification of hearing loss in children is such an important part of a child receiving the best services for them, and in helping determine their chosen modality, the sub-committee recommends that DPH unfreeze the position of Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator, and hire a qualified person immediately.
- Julie will share the concerns regarding the vacant position of Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator with the GACEC, and ask that they write a letter to Delaware Health and Social Services (DHSS) Secretary Rita Landgraff.

Several items which were identified in the agenda as being less urgent to the opening of the LSL Pilot Program were then discussed:

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Tina will be working on the promotional materials for the LSL Pilot Program. Tina stated that she would be willing to present draft copies of the promotional materials to the main advisory committee in March. The sub-committee recommends that these promotional materials be designed to assist with increased understanding for parents of children with hearing loss regarding their options (i.e. choosing between LSL/ASL instruction). Utilizing multiple media outlets was also suggested (i.e. print brochures, internet presence, etc..) The sub-committee also would like the promotional materials contain information regarding services for children from birth to age 5.

CLASSROOM PROJECTORY

The projectory for the LSL Pilot Program is to prepare students to enter a mainstream school setting, with age-appropriate listening, language and school readiness skills. Children who are moved to a mainstream classroom would still receive supports, if necessary.

EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT, PROGRESS MONITORING, AND REPORTING

Thierry suggested several ways to conduct research, so that data measuring the effectiveness of the LSL Pilot Program can be reported. The sub-committee agreed with this idea. Suggested agencies to conduct this research include the Delaware Department of Education (DOE), the University of Delaware (UD), A.I. DuPont, and Delaware Public Health (DPH). In order for this research to take place, written consent from the parents of the children in the LSL classroom would be required. The sub-committee agreed that this would provide valuable data and progress monitoring for Statewide Programs, as well as for the agency conducting the research. The data collected will also be useful when applying for grant funding.

The sub-committee agreed that there should be a standing agenda item on the main advisory committee's monthly agenda to provide updates on the progress of the LSL Pilot Program. Nick suggested that, if having a standing LSL agenda item did not work well, there could be further sub-committee meetings held prior to the main advisory committee meetings. It was agreed that this would be discussed further if the need arose.

REQUEST FOR MEMBERS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE TO CONSULT WITH THE MAIN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The sub-committee asked Dr. Lou Bartoshesky to consult with the main advisory committee in the future. Kristin said that she would send out a formal email invitation for Dr. Bartoshesky to consult with the main advisory committee

TIMELINES.

- Promotional materials ready to distribute-March 2011
- LSL Classroom Teacher hired-May 2011
- LSL Pilot Preschool Classroom open-September 2011
- Evaluation, research, and progress monitoring of the LSL Pilot Program begins-September 2011, on the first day of class

TOUR

The sub-committee agreed that a tour of the new DSD building would be helpful. All members of the sub-committee and the main advisory committee would be eligible for the tour. Thierry and Tina agreed that a private tour should be arranged, so that Thierry

could provide feedback regarding the listening environment within the new DSD building.

NEXT STEPS

- The LSL Sub-Committee has completed their scheduled meetings, and will now be folded back into the main advisory committee.
- There should be a standing agenda item for the main advisory committee to receive updates on the progress of the LSL Pilot Program.
- The GACEC and DSD will work together to schedule a tour of the new school for interested committee members.
- Further meetings of the sub-committee will be scheduled on an as-needed basis.
- The sub-committee requested a one-page summary of the sub-committee's recommendations, to be presented to the main advisory committee for review.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Mullen, GACEC