



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)

**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CITIZENS
(GACEC) ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE EDUCATION OF INDIVIDUALS
WITH HEARING LOSS MEETING**

4:15 P.M, January 12, 2011

**George V. Massey Station
Dover, Delaware**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Wendy Strauss**/ Executive Administrator, GACEC; Advisory Committee on the Education of Individuals with Hearing Loss Chairperson **Julie Johnson**/GACEC, also President of Delaware Hands and Voices, and Coordinator of Guide by Your Side; **Deb Trapani**/Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD); **Tina Fredrickson**/DSD, Coordinator of Statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs; **Mark Campano**/DSD, Coordinator of Statewide Deaf/Blind Programs; **Cindy Ferrell**/Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing at Cape Henlopen School District; **Thierry Morlet**/Head of the Auditory Physiology and Psychoacoustics Laboratory at Nemours/Alfred I. DuPont Hospital for Children; **Nick Fina**/CHOICES Project Lead and Principal Investigator, member of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD), **Kyle Hodges**/Director, SCPD; **Janella Newman**/GACEC; **Brian Touchette**/Delaware Department of Education (DOE), Exceptional Children Resources Group; **Della Thomas**/Director of DSD, also Director of Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind

OTHERS PRESENT: **Kristin Mullen**/GACEC (Recording Secretary); **Fran Fletcher**/Facilitator with University of Delaware; **Rob Hemenway**/Karasch and Associates, Captioning Services; **Deborah Monhollan**, Interpreter with Deafinitions, Inc.

MEMBERS ABSENT: **Judy Smith**/GACEC, Parent in Kent County; **Freeman Williams**/Christina School District; **Loretta Sarro**/Delaware Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Wendy Strauss called the meeting to order at 4:23 p.m.

Wendy introduced herself as the Executive Administrator of the GACEC, and thanked the committee and other attendees for coming to the meeting, regardless of the snowy weather. After pointing out the refreshments and noting the presence of her wand to subdue unruly members, Wendy stated that she would be going over the Committee Ground Rules shortly, after a brief statement regarding the reason for the forming of the committee. Since Delaware does not have a Statewide Plan, the committee has been formed to ensure the development of a Statewide Plan. Wendy stated that part of developing a Statewide Plan is to first identify what Delaware is lacking, then work on needs assessment and concentrated advocacy. Wendy noted that with concentrated advocacy, things will proceed more smoothly for the committee, and asked that ideas be shared amongst the group. Wendy stated that Julie would talk more about concentrated advocacy later in the meeting.

Chairperson Julie Johnson then asked the committee to introduce themselves, and to finish the sentence, "it's important today that we..." Julie noted that the committee members could finish the sentence however they wished, and that the answer could be funny, heartfelt, serious, or whatever the members were feeling that day.

Julie Johnson began the introductions by telling the members that she is a member of the GACEC, and is on their Early Childhood Committee. She noted that she will be serving as the committee chair, as well as a representative of the GACEC. Julie stated that she is also the President of Delaware Hands and Voices, which is a chapter of a national organization which provides support for families who have children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Julie stated that she is also a coordinator for the Guide by Your Side Program, which she told the committee is a startup program that the members of the Guide by Your Side group are working diligently on getting up and running by collaborating with different state agencies. She went on to say that, "it is important today that we, from my standpoint, start fresh with this committee and go forward with a positive attitude and a commitment to collaborate effectively. I think that's very important. And everybody's coming to the table for the same reasons, to improve what it is that we do for our children here in Delaware, and I want to start on a very fresh, positive note."

Next to introduce herself was Deb Trapani from DSD. Deb stated that she believes it is important for the committee to work for all of the people, children and adults both, who are deaf or hard of hearing in Delaware.

Tina Fredrickson introduced herself as Coordinator of the Statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs. Tina was suffering from a cold, and her reply to the open-ended sentence "Today I think it's important that we" was inaudible to the CART interpreter and the recording equipment.

Mark Campano introduced himself to the committee as the Coordinator of the Delaware Programs for the Deaf-Blind. He stated that he thinks it's important today that he gets a little reminder that "with the thread that connects the deaf blindness to all of our kids being an extremely small part of the population, but yet there are a lot of similar issues."

Cindy Farrell, a teacher of the deaf at the Cape Henlopen School District, stated that she is also with the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Cindy emphasized, "I think it's important today that our focus be on what is best for children who are deaf or hard of [hearing.]"

Thierry Morlet of A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children introduced himself and said "I think it's important today to come together to establish a plan so we can offer all the options that we can offer today to work with kids in Delaware.

Nick Fina introduced himself as being a member of a number of organizations, including the grass-roots CHOICES group and the SCPD. Nick informed the committee that CHOICES was started last year with a goal to "...increase the number of options for children who are deaf and hard of hearing." Nick then told the committee that he is hard of hearing himself, and that he is bringing that perspective to the table. He then went on to state that, "I think it's important today that we acknowledge that there have been differences, very deep seated differences, among us in the past, and we acknowledge those things and work together to reconcile them and to come to a good solution."

Kyle Hodges introduced himself to the committee as the Director of the SCPD, and as also being with the Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equality. Kyle said that, even though it had already been said, he believes "...it is important that [the committee] establish a framework for how [the committee] is going to move forward with a Statewide Plan that will include all options for the best interest, as Deb [Trapani] said, for all kids that are deaf and hard of hearing."

Janella Newman, who is a member of the GACEC, told the committee that she was attending committee meetings as "...a kind of district rep perspective. I think as we move forward that we stay focused on our direction and respect each other's opinions."

Representing the Delaware Department of Education, Exceptional Children Resources Group was Brian Touchette. Brian serves as the liaison to Tina, Mark, and Della. He conveyed that he thinks it is important for the committee to "realize as we're going forward that there are a wide range of options out there for all students, and we need to be respectful of the differing opinions that are out there for different kinds of students."

Della Thomas, Director of the Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind stated that since she was the last to introduce herself, she got to hear everyone else's statements on what they believed that it was important to accomplish within the committee. She said, " I can't help but feel appreciative of the people who have given up their time to commit to this kind of committee. We're looking at monthly meetings to start with. And talking about people whom all lead very busy lives, and that you feel you're willing to give up this time. I'm very appreciative."

At this time, Fran Fletcher (facilitator from University of Delaware,) Debra Monhollan (ASL Interpreter from Deafinitions,) Rob Hemenway (CART Services, Karasch and Associates), and Kristin Mullen (GACEC/Committee Recording Secretary) introduced themselves to the committee.

Wendy Strauss then went over the Ground Rules, and stated that she believes it is important to gather together to hear the concerns and passions of the committee, and to determine the next best steps forward for the State of Delaware to take. She then thanked everyone again for being part of the committee.

The ground rules, as shown in the PowerPoint presentation (a printout of which was also given to each committee member) are as follows:

- Cell phones must be on vibrate or turned off.
- Only one conversation should be taking place at a time. If a committee member wishes to speak, they must raise their hand and wait for acknowledgment from the Chairperson.
- Listen for understanding.
- Be respectful.
- Communications among the committee members will be kept within the committee.
- Participate in good faith.

At this time, Wendy asked if there were any other suggested ground rules. Mark Campano suggested that due to the fact that some members of the committee are deaf or hard of hearing, and since CART closed captioning services were being used, that committee members identify themselves by their first name before speaking. This suggestion was implemented during the meeting. It was also suggested that tent name tags be made for the committee members, which Wendy asked the recording secretary to make sure were done for the next meeting. Wendy then passed out contact and emergency information forms for the members to fill out, and asked that they be returned at the end of the meeting.

Julie Johnson briefly went over the meeting objectives, which were also listed in the PowerPoint presentation handout that was given to each committee member.

- Understand the role of the advisory committee, and also the relationship between the advisory committee, the GACEC, and Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind.
- Agree on the committee's first year goal, which is the creation of a Statewide Strategic Plan.
- Agreement of timeline to accomplish the creation of a Statewide Strategic Plan
- Understand the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Sub-Committee's role
- Agreement on the next steps to be taken after the meeting.

Della Thomas, speaking on the “A Funny Thing Happened in Iowa” slide of the Power Point presentation (page 8 in the printouts given to each committee member)

Della relayed information to the committee regarding the Council for Educative Administrators for Schools for the Deaf that she attended in 2010 in Iowa. The purpose of this two-day State Leader Summit was to evaluate the State Plan. At the conference, many states sent a representative from the Department of Education, a representative from their School for the Deaf, as well as a representative from their Center-Based Programs. Many states also sent a Hands and Voices Representative and an outreach person. Della elaborated on some of the challenges that the conference attendees were facing when attempting to evaluate their respective State Plans.

Some concerns shared by attendees of the summit were:

- What are we doing in our state for deaf or hard of hearing children educationally?
- What are our foci?
- Is our state in line with national requirements?

Della noted that while there were many knowledgeable and articulate persons representing Delaware in attendance at the summit, they were not able to express what they thought their next steps should be to implement a State Plan.

Della then asked Julie if she could distribute copies of the National Agenda, which is a position paper detailing a series of goals and ideas that articulate how to undertake the design and implementation of a State Plan. The National Agenda takes into account public education for deaf or hard of hearing children, and also contains information regarding personnel education, technology services, and other information. Della pointed out that Pennsylvania, Texas, and Colorado have used the National Agenda to assist them in developing their State Plans. Della then offered copies of the National Agenda to the committee members. Julie stated that the copies could be picked up at the end of the meeting.

The Role of the Committee

Julie reminded the members that the committee is chartered by the GACEC, and that the goal of the GACEC is to provide leadership and improve the lives of exceptional citizens of all ages in Delaware through advice and advocacy. She went on to state that the committee has been chartered to improve the lives of Delaware citizens who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf blind. The primary goal for the committee to accomplish this year is to provide advice and advocacy, and to create and implement a Statewide Strategic Plan. The scope of the committee is the education of individuals with hearing loss. Julie then stated that later in the meeting she wanted to discuss the committee charter, not in exhaustive detail, but highlighting a few key areas. She reminded the members that they had received a copy of the charter prior to the meeting, and that she hoped the members had a chance to review the charter. Julie stated that she wanted to take action on the charter at the meeting, and to vote on its approval so that the committee could move forward.

Mission Statement and Purpose

Per the specifications put forth by the Design Team for the committee, the mission of the committee is to provide input and recommendations to the GACEC and the Delaware Statewide Programs for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind. Julie reminded the members that the committee has no authority to do anything other than make recommendations, which the GACEC will then use to advise the Governor, DOE, and other state entities as deemed appropriate. Julie specified that any initiatives undertaken by the committee must be approved by the GACEC, and that the GACEC would receive a report from her at their monthly meeting regarding the committee's activities, recommendations, and initiatives.

Charter

At this time, Julie conveyed that it is the standard and expectation for all committees which are part of the GACEC to work through all disparate viewpoints in good faith, and to not participate in activity that will undermine the energy or spirit of the members of the committee. Julie noted that she wished to mention this topic in particular, because it is a standard that is upheld by the GACEC. She went on to say that the committee's meetings would be the venue to have discussions and make recommendations so that the group can move forward, and anything that circumvents that is going to undermine the whole process. Julie said that she wants the group to get achieve what they were established to do, and to do so as effectively as possible.

Julie then related that earlier in the day, Wendy, Della, and herself had attended the first House Education Committee hearing regarding Needs Based Funding, and that it was a very rewarding experience. Julie said that members of the Needs Based Funding Ad-Hoc Committee under the GACEC (which she was a member of,) had greatly differing opinions regarding how to best proceed. Julie said that the goal of the Needs Based Funding Ad-Hoc Committee was to discuss those differences of opinion, and come to a

consensus and make a recommendation as a committee. Last year, the issue was tabled and did not make it out of the committee. On the day of this year's hearing, it was the first thing on the agenda that the House Education Committee had to take action on. Julie said that it was wonderful to see the results of everyone's collaborative efforts, and noted that the representatives mentioned how greatly they appreciated the collaboration of all the people who worked on the Needs Based Funding Bill. She said that she hopes that the GACEC Advisory Committee for the Education of Individuals with Hearing Loss will experience the same success as the Needs Based Funding Ad Hoc Committee achieved.

Julie then discussed positions within the advisory committee. The Chairperson (herself) must be a member of, and also be appointed by, the GACEC. Julie said that the GACEC will also provide a recording secretary, which is Kristin Mullen of the GACEC.

Julie said that the meeting agenda for each meeting would be created by Wendy and herself. She told the committee that if there is an agenda item that they wish to propose, the committee member needs to make sure that Julie and Wendy receive it **two weeks prior to the next meeting**. She then re-emphasized **two weeks**. She noted that if the agenda item that a committee member wished to submit was time-sensitive, she and Wendy would do their best to see what they could do to add that agenda item.

Julie said that agenda items can include announcements, sub-committee reports, and previously tabled agenda items. She stated that old business would be taken care of first, then new agenda items, then public recognition. Agenda items could include a presenter coming in to give a more in-depth report on a certain area or question.

Julie addressed the rules of discussion, reiterating that the rules are in place due to special circumstances of the committee utilizing both interpreters and CART services. One conversation at a time makes it easier for everyone involved to clearly understand what is being said.

Time constraints were then discussed, with Julie reminding the committee of the importance of staying on task and on time. She noted that if a discussion is cut short due to time constraints, this does not mean that it will not be discussed at a later meeting. Rather, by continuing at a later date, it allows for more in-depth discussion.

Decision making will be handled by a vote on some items. There will be a simple majority vote in order for an issue to pass. Julie noted that the committee can read more about this in the rules, if they wish.

Julie then said that procedures for establishing an advisory sub-committee would be discussed, noting that there is a Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Sub-Committee that has already been formed. She said that the sub-committee and its relation to the main advisory committee would be explained in a more in-depth manner later in the meeting.

Julie asked if the committee was finished reading the charter, and the consensus was "yes."

Nick then asked what procedure would be followed for documenting advice given by committee members. He asked for clarification on the procedure for the documentation and response to any advice that may be given to the committee by a committee member. He then told Julie that he was glad that she spoke about the GACEC. He said that in the State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) Policy and Law Committee, there is a formal memo prepared for the members, and also formal letters submitted with the SCPD Policy and Law Committee's recommendations, and formal replies that come back.

Julie explained that the committee would follow the same procedures that are utilized by the GACEC. For example, the committee would make a recommendation that they would like to submit a letter on a particular issue. If the committee decides to take action (such as a letter) on something, the action must first be approved by the GACEC. Julie clarified that all information would first be reviewed by Wendy and herself, and would then be disseminated out to the rest of the committee. Julie said that she and Wendy would, of course, also share with the committee what the outcome of the action was.

Julie said that in this case, the committee exists to provide advice to the GACEC. She reminded the members that they are members of an advisory committee, intended to give recommendations on issues regarding the education of individuals with hearing loss. Julie said that the issue of the education of individuals with hearing loss is a much smaller scope than the GACEC's wider scope, which encompasses advice and advocacy for exceptional citizens of all ages. Julie added that issues that the GACEC as a whole took action on, or discussed, which were relevant to the education of individuals with hearing loss would certainly be shared with the committee.

Nick expressed that he doesn't want advice to be given and then not be acted upon. He noted that some advice which is given in an advisory committee is not accepted. Nick said that he would like to see a formal process in place, to document advice given by committee members. He cited the process used by the SCPD to document advice as a model to be considered for use with this committee. Nick went on to say that a lot of the advice that is submitted to state agencies by the GACEC and DCPD is not accepted. He asked that a procedure be put in place within the committee to acknowledge that the advice was submitted to the committee, that the committee considered the advice, and that a report be given to the committee regarding what action was taken on the advice and why.

Julie replied by saying that she felt that the committee could most likely comply with Nick's request. She said that as the committee members reviewed some of the organizational relationships in place during the course of the meeting, the committee members would see some of the challenges the GACEC was facing. Julie reminded the committee members again that the committee does not have any official "authority." She went on to say that there should be an open dialogue regarding why a recommendation was or was not taken. Julie suggested that there would not be a spoken report given at the meeting, but rather something that would be printed and given to the members, possibly

as part of the minutes. She asked Nick if this answered his question, to which he replied, “yes.”

Fran then asked for clarifying information regarding the procedure that the SCPD uses for documenting advice and recommendations made by their members. Nick stated that Kyle could probably answer this question more effectively, but that he would try. Nick said that he is a member of the SCPD, and also a member of one of the most important committees within the SCPD, which is the Policy and Law Committee. Nick referenced Brian Hartman of the Community Legal Aid Society (CLASI), stating that Brian reviews proposed legislation and regulations. Brian then prepares a formal recommendation memo, which is distributed to all members of the SCPD Policy and Law Committee.

Nick explained that there is sometimes discussion within the SCPD Policy and Law Committee regarding Brian’s recommendations, which are most often accepted. After the discussion by the SCPD Policy and Law Committee, the advice goes on record. Sometimes it is deemed necessary for the SCPD Policy and Law Committee to write a letter to a state agency, cabinet secretary, or someone in a position of influence, stating their concerns. Nick notes that the SCPD Policy and Law Committee receives reports on these letters or actions, which let the members know what action, or non-action, was taken on their recommendations.

Nick elaborated further on his point by saying that he was a member of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) from 1996 to 2000, and that the relationship between the SRC and the Division of Rehabilitation and Vocation (which was the agency receiving the advice given by the SRC,) was not in good standing during that time. Nick reported that the disintegration of the relationship between the agencies was due to the fact that advice given by SRC was not being considered by the Division of Rehabilitation and Vocation at all. He said that he wants to be sure the members of the GACEC Advisory Committee for the Education of Individuals with Hearing Loss felt that their recommendations were being considered.

Kyle thanked Nick for explaining the SCPD Policy and Law processes so well, and added that the GACEC follows the same procedures. Kyle explained that the GACEC keeps track of any responses, and conducts any needed follow-up. He went on to say that any advice given within this committee, and the action taken on that advice, would be recorded in the minutes. Kyle said it is a very collaborative effort.

Nick then wished to clarify once again that he was referring to internal advice given within this committee to the group that the committee is advising, which is “Della’s Group” (DSD). He stated that he wants to be sure that a formal process is in place to document what advice is given, and what action is taken on that advice by the GACEC and DSD.

Brian then asked to speak, at which time he said that he wished to clarify that the committee is not giving advice to Della and DSD. The committee is giving advice to the GACEC, who then determine what to do with that advice. Brian said the GACEC may

very well pass the information on to Della and DSD, but that this decision regarding the dissemination of information will be at the discretion of the GACEC. He then asked for clarification that this information was correct.

Julie stated that information and feedback would go back and forth between the committee, the GACEC, and Statewide Programs (DSD). She then said that this would be better explained when the committee came to the “organizational relationships” portion of the agenda/PowerPoint presentation. Julie reiterated that anything that the committee votes to act upon has to go through the GACEC. Brian thanked Julie, and said that was fine.

Kyle then questioned if there was a need for clarification in the mission statement and purpose, specifically the portion that says “provide advice to GACEC and Statewide Programs.” He said that he feels that this needs clarification. Kyle said that as he understands it, the committee will make recommendations to the GACEC, who will then in turn advise Statewide Programs. At this point, there were murmurs of agreement.

Mark then reminded everyone to state their name *before* speaking, not after. He said that in other deaf-blind projects throughout the country, there was more of an informal process. The members of the committee would communicate their concerns, and then come to a consensus about how to proceed. He said that the processes used in this committee, while he did not disagree with them, were somewhat more formal than he felt were necessary. Mark asked if the original plan for the committee was a bit less multi-tiered.

Julie stated that since all of the necessary “players” were at the table during committee meetings, it was a logical decision to have discussions at committee meetings. She restated that all discussions regarding action would be put to a vote, and that all action carried out must be done through the GACEC. She did say that since all discussions would take place in committee meetings, perhaps Kyle’s suggestion to edit made sense in that case.

Brian said that he felt if Statewide Programs were to hear a great idea during the course of a committee meeting, which they would like to take back and implement immediately, he did not see anything preventing that. However, Brian did add that he believes that at times, there are going to be larger issues which will require the committee’s full involvement. He said that at some point, legislation and regulatory changes will be involved, at which time the support of the GACEC would be crucial. Brian re-iterated that this does not mean that if he or anyone else hears a great idea, that they could not take it back to their organization and act upon it. Thierry said that he agreed with Brian, saying that it makes sense to take action through the GACEC.

Julie then said that she would like to direct the meeting toward the “organizational relationships” item on the agenda. A copy of this chart was given to all of the committee members, as a part of their power point presentation printout.

Before moving on to the organizational relationships item, Fran asked if she could interject, as the facilitator, to clarify some points. Fran said that as she understands it, Mark was saying that he was looking at a bit more of an informal recording of things that happen within the committee. Conversely, she understands the Nick would feel better about a more formal procedure regarding the documentation of advice and actions taken upon that advice. Fran stated that this was an important item to clarify before moving forward, and that everyone should be in agreement about what the procedure should be.

Nick said that he would elaborate a bit on his previous statement, adding that he agreed with many of the things that Mark and Kyle had mentioned. Nick said that he did not disagree with talking about things that make sense, then taking that information back to one's own personal organization and deciding to act upon those ideas. What Nick seeks to avoid is a situation where good advice is offered, and nothing is acted upon. Nick said that he does not want the recommendations of the committee to disappear into thin air. He then re-stated that he approves of a more point-by-point response to the advice given within the committee. Fran thanked Nick for his clarification on that point.

Julie moved on to the organizational relationships agenda item, saying she thought it was important for the committee to understand the different agencies and how they worked together.

Della presented the organizational relationships portion of the agenda. She aided her presentation by walking up to the LCD presentation screen and pointing to the various areas that she was discussing as she went through them. Della stated that educational professionals and LEAs respond to national ideas and initiatives. Many things that come "down the pike" to Delaware are already being utilized in other parts of the nation. The Delaware Department of Education (DOE) receives those initiatives, and then passes those along to the Christina School District (which houses DSD). Della stated that Statewide Programs is "somewhere in the middle" of the DOE and Christina School District. As the Administrator of Statewide Programs, Della has one foot in the DOE, but she reports to the Christina School District.

Della continued, saying that Delaware has a very unique situation in regard to their Statewide Programs reporting to a single school district. However, as unusual as it may be, she stated that this is the framework that must be worked with. Della gave the following example of how the DOE, Statewide Programs, and Christina School District work together. If something that Della wished to take action on were to come to her attention, her first step would not necessarily be to get in touch with Brian at the DOE. Della said that, if she were to go to the DOE first, they would direct her to the Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services for Christina School District (Freeman Williams.) Freeman would then have to propose the idea to either/or the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or the Superintendent of Christina School District. Della said that no matter how fantastic an idea may be, and however much she may want to implement it immediately, she must still go through a system of checks and balances. Della said that this is as it should be.

Della then said that she is fortunate to supervise three very distinct programs that were represented at that evening's meeting. These programs are: Statewide Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (she referred to this as "Tina's Group"), Statewide Programs for the Deaf-Blind (lead by Mark Campano,) and then three administrators of the Center Based Program. These administrators are Deb Trapani (Elementary School Programs), Marianne Bell (Middle School and High School) and Rich Pelletier (Dean of Students). Nick noted that Rich's last name was misspelled in the PowerPoint presentation. This spelling error was duly noted by the recording secretary. Della continued from this point, saying that ideas that come from any of the people she supervises have to go through her. At this time, Della has to navigate the organizational relationships that she just explained in order to try to see results. Della then said that the GACEC comes into play with all of this through the Advisory Committee for the Education of Individuals with Hearing Loss and the Listening and Spoken Language Sub-Committee. She stated that the GACEC has a "lineup to the Governor's office."

Julie then went on to describe the information work flow agenda item, directing the committee member's attention to the chart contained in the printout of the PowerPoint presentation. Julie said the information work flow is a continuous process to work on the Strategic Plan. She noted that a draft plan would be the first step. That draft would then be revised with input and guidance from the committee considered, and modifications would be made as necessary.

Julie then asked to move on to the Strategic Plan Process agenda item (a copy of which was given to each committee member within the printout of their PowerPoint presentation.)

Della asked Julie if she might briefly interject before the committee moved on to the next item, which Julie approved.

Della stated that she was trying to imagine a situation where she might receive advice from within the committee that she would like to take action on. Della said that this would be a laundry list of suggestions, advice, and recommendations. She said she would do her best to follow up on these items on her list by performing her due diligence, exploring the issues on the list, and would then try to come back with some sort of report for the committee. Della asked that the committee members remember, however, that no matter what, some things will work while others may not.

Della stated that she will do the best she can to respond effectively to advice and recommendations. Della shared that she hoped that the responses to the advice being given were received in the same spirit that the advice was offered. Della then addressed Nick and said, "...if there is advice offered, I really will try to respond to that advice as well as I can and as thoroughly as I can. That there might be points that we disagree, and there might be points that don't get resolved, and that's O.K. Do you understand what I am trying to say?"

Nick replied to Della, “Absolutely. I agree with that. Your job is the run Statewide Programs. And the function of this group is to provide advice. And, advice isn’t always accepted. Or maybe it’s not always workable. There are things that you know that other folks in this committee don’t know. But all I would like to see is that there is genuine consideration of all significant advice that’s offered. And then that there’s some feedback mechanism. If that happens, I’m happy.”

Julie then resumed by saying that, moving forward, the committee had their goals, which are a part of the Strategic Plan process. Julie mentioned that the committee would be hearing from Della again later in the meeting regarding the initial goals that she had put together. Julie noted that the goals that were to be discussed by Della were based on the categories recommended by the agenda, to make sure that all aspects were covered. Julie said that following some discussion and feedback on the goals by the committee, the goals would be finalized.

Regarding the Action Steps agenda item, Julie told the committee that the initial draft would come out at the end of January, and that it would come from Della. The committee will have discussion on, and assign work as needed, for Action Steps 1 through 4 in February. The recommendations for goals 1 through 4 will be presented in March. The presentation of recommendations for goals 5 through 8 will be in April. Julie reminded the committee that the ultimate goal is to have the final action steps completed, and to present a full plan in May 2011. She acknowledged that this is an aggressive goal, but said that the committee had a desire to get things moving and make some recommendations.

Della mentioned a point of clarification, noting that on slide 12 of the PowerPoint presentation, there are a number of references to DSD that should actually be Statewide Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, or in other instances Statewide Programs for the Deaf Blind. Della asked that Kristin make a note of this clarification, which she did.

Kyle then asked for clarification regarding the statement “complete final action steps and present full plan.” He asked if the presentation of the full plan was meant to be to this committee.

Julie answered in the affirmative, saying that the final action steps and full plan would be presented to the full committee. The committee would have to be in agreement (via vote) that the full plan was acceptable. After the committee approves the full plan, it will then be presented to the GACEC.

Kyle asked if Della would also be presenting the final plan to DSD, or if the plan would only be presented to this committee to approve, then to the GACEC.

Julie replied that the committee could have discussions regarding how they wished to present the full plan. Kyle then said perhaps he was thinking too far in advance. Julie said she did not think so at all.

Nick said that he approved of the timeline. However, he questioned whether or not the committee would be able to accomplish their goals in the timeline set forth, especially given the need for research. Nick stated that research is necessary in order for the committee to make effective statements, and that research takes time. Nick said that he is concerned that the committee might not be able to make this timeline.

Julie concurred, saying that she agrees that it is an aggressive timeline.

At this time, Julie turned the floor over to Della, so that she could go over the Strategic Plan Goals. A copy of these goals was provided for each of the committee members in the form of a PowerPoint printout.

Della said that there were 8 goals that deaf and hard of hearing education in the state of Delaware could be grouped into. She noted that she was seeking the committee's feedback on these goals, in case she overlooked something.

Goal One concerns early identification and intervention. Della explained that "looking at the development of communication, language, social and cognitive skills at the earliest possible age is fundamental to subsequent educational growth for students who are deaf and hard of hearing."

Goal Two addresses language and communication access. Della said, "All children who are deaf or hard of hearing deserve a quality communication-driven program, that provides education together with a critical mass of communication, age, and cognitive peers as well as language proficient teachers and staff who communicate directly in the child's language."

Goal Three deals with collaborative partnerships. Della emphasized, "partnerships which will influence education policies and practices to promote quality education for students who are deaf or hard of hearing must be explored."

Goal Four relates to accountability, High-Stakes Testing and Standards-Based Environments. Della elaborated, saying, "Instructions for students who are deaf or hard of hearing must be data-driven and must focus on multiple measures of student performance."

Goal Five concerns placement programs and services. Della said, "Continuing of placement options must be made available to all students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The students learning environments are intricately tied to communication and language."

Goal Six addresses the issue of technology. Della said, "Accommodations, assistive and adaptive technologies and emerging technologies must be maximized to improve learning for students who are deaf or hard of hearing."

Goal Seven deals with professional standards and personnel preparation. Della said that she believes that this goal should also include teachers, related service personnel and

administrators. She said that “new collaborative or initiatives among practitioners and training programs must address the serious shortage of qualified teachers and administrators.”

Goal Eight is to establish a systemic statewide approach to educating [kids who are] deaf or hard of hearing. Della said that, “a centralized approach to providing direct or indirect services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing in the state would guarantee appropriate personnel preparation, language and communication access, relevant technology, continuity of services between Part B and Part C funding, and parity for all children.”

At this time, Deb said that she wanted to make sure that the plan would involve interpreters and support for [children who are] deaf or hard of hearing. Fran then asked Deb if she understood her correctly, asking Deb if she was saying that she wanted to make sure it includes interpreters, paraprofessionals and staff members. Deb answered in the affirmative.

Nick questioned where exactly in the goal framework issues with improving the acoustics of classrooms would be addressed. He said that this acoustically appropriate classrooms are somewhat related to technology, except in a very broad sense. Nick explained that rooms like the one the committee was currently meeting in at George V. Massey Station cause him to need closed-captioning support. He questioned what would be done about classrooms which are not acoustically appropriate.

Della stated that she felt the concern about providing acoustically appropriate classrooms could be addressed under goal number eight. Della said that providing acoustically appropriate classrooms is a part of technology, because it is something that has to be looked at within classroom settings. She went on to say that wherever in the state the child who is deaf is, the goal is to ensure that the child is in an environment that supports what they are learning. Whether communicating and having hearing access or whatever the case may be. She then re-iterated that she feels this issue falls under the umbrella of technology.

It was then suggested that this issue would be better placed under goal number 6, which could be expanded to read “physical environments of learning,” or “technology and physical environments of learning.” Others suggested placing this concern under goal number two, which addresses language and communication access. It was suggested that if there were to be a standard developed regarding what an acoustically appropriate classroom would look like, that would be a good, strong action step under goal number two.

Brian then referenced slide 10 of the PowerPoint presentation, specifically the literacy piece. He questioned whether this issue was being addressed again specifically in the goals portion of the presentation. Brian said that an argument could be made to the literacy piece in under goal number four, which talks about standards-based environments, but points out that it is not structured that way. Brian feels that

communication and literacy go together, and that he would like to see that addressed in the goals. Brian noted that achieving literacy is often a difficult struggle for the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Mark added that he agreed with what Brian said, that literacy and communication go hand-in-hand. He stated that if the committee moved to put literacy in the goals, he would suggest it under goal number four as well.

Kyle had a question about goal number five. He asked, “When it says ‘the recognition that natural and least restrictive environments are intricately tied to communication and language,’ what exactly is meant by that? Are you talking about resources? Are you talking about services? Even interpreters that are in the least restrictive environments? Is that kind of what that means?” He went on to state that the ultimate goal is to have continuous placement options available. Kyle said he would hate for a child not to be placed in his or her least restrictive environment due to the lack of an interpreter, and that the committee should make interpreter services a priority. Mark stated that he supported Kyle’s statement, but said that he didn’t believe that a child would be excluded from placement within a continuum because of the lack of an interpreter. Mark then asked Della if she had anything to add, and she stated that she did not.

Kyle said that he liked Mark’s interpretation. He said that as the committee goes through the process, there would no doubt be the need to add clarifying statements along the way.

It was then stated that “natural and least restrictive environment” would be different for every child. If a child is communicating orally, and are in a classroom where that is the type of communication that is being utilized, then that is the least restrictive environment for that child. There could also be a situation that involves a child who uses interpreter services within a “regular” education setting. Della was then asked what her thoughts were on this.

Della said that since hearing the discussion, she wonders if the term “made available” should be changed to “considered.” She asked if that would be better. Kyle said that as the committee goes through each of their goals, there could be more discussion and consideration of the exact wording.

Della then asked the committee if there were any other questions, or things that the committee felt should be added. She addressed Nick’s concern about the acoustical environment within the classroom, and asked the committee if there were any other things that they felt she had missed within the initial goals.

Nick said that he would like to see something in the goals regarding the referral process for very young children, stating that he does not see anything in the initial goals that addresses that. Nick said he feels the referral process needs to be addressed, as there is a real need for improvement in Delaware. He then questioned where the committee felt this concern would best be listed in the goals. Nick said that addressing this concern within goal number one (early intervention) seemed to be logical. He stated that as the

committee addresses the goals in greater detail, he wants to be sure that the referral process is addressed.

Julie agreed with Nick that the concerns about the referral process would best be listed under goal number one, and that she feels that addressing the referral process should be an action step for the committee.

Mark stated that he thinks there should be a conversation to really break down the goals. He then addressed Nick's concerns regarding the referral process, stating that he would also group it under goal number one. Mark went on to say that oftentimes, children who are referred to the program are beyond five years old. He added that the referral process within the entire state needs to be clarified, saying that he would like to see a clear referral process.

Debbie said that "along with the referral process, also making sure that we match from [birth to age 2 or 3], the span of time up to this age or beyond this age, what should we do, and what should be the process and the treatment. And I think this goes along with goal 5."

Della said that some states go so far as to break down their State Plan into 1.1.1, 1.1.2, etc... and that there may be a need in Delaware to do so when the State Plan is actually drafted. She then said that she would like to address the recommended action steps for each initial goal. Della stated that in her year and a half on the job in Delaware, she has been thinking about each area described in the goals. She said that she would love to have feedback from the committee and to hear what the recommended action steps were. Della asked the committee to suggest resources that they feel she should tap into to get the job done, as well as any other input that they felt would be useful. Della said that she feels that this goes back to the circular process that Julie described earlier in the meeting (i.e. drafting, revising, getting feedback, going back again, revising.)

Julie said, "goal five, we're kind of pulling this out here. And this is kind of the time that I want to go over a subcommittee as a part of our charter."

Della said that she just wanted to add that when she became the director of Statewide Programs, she did very thorough needs assessment. She said that she took into account the Department of Public Health Focus Groups that took place in 2008. She also considered the position paper and research that the CHOICES group submitted, and also conducted research regarding the state itinerary and teachers within the state. Della said that the most glaring concern that came to light was the issue of what is being done in terms of early intervention for deaf and hard of hearing kids.

Della said that knowing where these children are, tracking them, and making sure that they are receiving services early is a primary concern. She said that she would like to address what is being done for children whose parents choose Listening and Spoken Language for their child. Further along those lines, Della said that she wanted to address what is being done for parents who wish for their child to have a bilingual approach, or

what about children who live in southern Delaware? Della said that she wants to committee to know that all of these things, and more, are on her list of concerns. Della said that these very concerns are the reason that the committee and the Listening and Spoken Language Sub-Committee were formed.

Julie then said that the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Sub-Committee has already been formed, and would hold their first meeting that Friday (January 14, 2011.) Julie went over the procedures for the sub-committee, saying that the sub-committee will meet for a limited time, after which they will present recommendations to the main committee. Julie said the need may arise for the sub-committee to continue meeting beyond the initial planned meetings, or that the sub-committee may only meet for a short time for a specific purpose, which was the original intent.

Julie said that she would serve as the Chairperson of the LSL Sub-Committee as well as for the main advisory committee. She explained that the sub-committee members have been invited to participate, and that others have been invited to attend on a consultative basis. The sub-committee will make a recommendation to the main advisory committee. The main advisory committee may accept, reject, or modify the recommendations that are put forth by the sub-committee. Julie then re-emphasized that the sub-committee was put in place to look at things more in-depth, and then to make recommendations to the main committee.

Julie then addressed the Listening and Spoken Language Program that is being developed by DSD and Statewide Programs. She stated that this is the sub-committee's only focus. Julie then directed the committee's attention to the slide in the PowerPoint presentation that dealt with the charge statement to the LSL Sub-Committee, stating that the committee must take action on approving the LSL Sub-Committee's charge statement before the meeting was adjourned. Tina and Nick developed the charge statement. She then went over the charge statement to the LSL Sub-Committee, a copy of which was given to each of the committee members.

Janella then asked if it would be beneficial to the committee to see the results of the survey. Julie said that the committee members had received copies of the survey, but she would be happy to send it out again so that it would be fresh. Wendy then said that the document should be sent to the GACEC. The GACEC will then send out the document along with the minutes.

Brian then questioned the need for a separate sub-committee from the main committee to discuss the specific topic of the LSL pilot classroom. He said he raises this concern particularly because "we started off saying that this whole group needed to be part of the process, and not having disparate groups or other groups that are working down a different path." Brian said that with all of the member's busy schedules, trying to stack meetings on top of one another is somewhat of a challenge. He asked if there was a reason the LSL pilot classroom could not be handled within the main committee, as it is set forth as one of the goals.

Julie stated that, due to the specificity of the topic, as well as the tight timeline for the implementation of the LSL pilot classroom, the sub-committee is necessary. She said that in order to have promotional information out for parents to make an informed decision for the proposed September 2011 start date, decisions must be made quickly. The scope of the main advisory committee is much larger, and discussion of the LSL pilot classroom may be lost in the discussion of other items of concern. She then noted that the sub-committee would be meeting more frequently, with less lag time between each of their meetings, in order to accomplish this timeline.

Brian sought further clarification. He said, “so, it sounds like we’re giving recommendations, that the sub-committee is basically giving recommendations to the Statewide Services of how to implement a program, rather than it be something that flows up through GACEC in terms of giving recommendations to some bigger. It may be services but it may also be....I’m actually hearing a different purpose of the sub-committee than what I thought was the original [purpose]. I’m not trying to be argumentative here, I’m just trying to understand how these things flow. If that ‘s the purpose of giving information to the Statewide Services seems that it could be done in a different way, not necessarily through this committee. It may involve some o f the same people. Or maybe I’m not understanding something.”

Nick then said, “Just a comment on the question. I think you raise a good point. When I look at the host of things that this committee is taking on, just going through the Delaware agenda, then looking at the things that are charged to the sub-committee, there really are too....there may be too much to accomplish without going to having this whole committee meet every two weeks instead of every four weeks. I think...there’s just a lot to get done. I think have a sub-committee focusing on the issues relation to enlisting a [LSL] program is appropriate. That is my opinion.”

Kyle said, “ I thought the process wasn’t just for that committee to go right to Statewide [Programs]. I thought it was going to be funneled up with the same process of this group and then the full GACEC. So it’s not going...recommendations from this smaller sub-committee [are] not going right to Statewide Programs. It’s still going to be funneled up through the same process.”

Brian added, “I would agree that is true. However, this already has a specific...even before this committee has weighed in on whether...I’m not disagreeing with this being an important program. The committee hasn’t had a chance to say that this is something we think needs to be implemented by September 2011. So there’s already a belief that this program has to be created, so how are we going to create it, and we haven’t had a chance to say ‘yeah, we think that’s a good idea.’ I’m not trying to slow this process down. It’s just that it’s already been created with a belief that what needs to b e created. So, does this need to be a sub-committee, or is this something that needs to be handled some other way?”

Mark added his opinion, saying, “I understand the need of it coming through the committee. And I’d agree with that. Especially if we’re going to be a cohesive group.

Everything should be started and finished here and then moved on. At the same time, looking at what's on the plate for both of those committees, and getting established and running forward from here, how could we process? Setting all the goals for the state, and as well as getting this program is clearly [a priority]. I can see why there would be a sub-committee running, just to get the ball rolling, and bringing it back and us playing catch up. 'The sub-committee did this.' 'We agree.' 'We don't agree.' I was thinking the same thing at first, but realizing that there is so much on our plates, this might be the only way to get that ball rolling."

Tina gave her input, saying, "I think the...committee possibly might have jumped the gun a little in assuming that you all would agree that we needed this committee. And so I'm on the fence either way. If we don't want to fold this LSL Sub-Committee into the main committee and talk about it amongst all of us. [inaudible] I'm fine with. I have that design concept done. I've shared it with the CHOICES group. They have given me feedback. I've met with consultants at CHOP. They have [given] feedback to me. I'll have ongoing meetings with them. The reason we jumped the gun a little bit was because we were approached. Statewide Program was approached, and asked if we wanted to start a program like this. And Christina School Districts and the new Early Childhood Center. That's what started this ball rolling, and had the snowball effect. We have the space, let's try for September [and etc...]. So, I guess, if we want to put it to a vote at the committee [whether or not to fold the sub-committee] back in. If you think we can accomplish all of these other goals along with the Listening and Spoken Language Sub-Committee. We can do all that. I think Della and I, we have two big huge lofty goals. So, that's kind of my viewpoint [on it]."

Brian responded to Tina, saying, "Now I'm even more confused. When we go back to this committee forwarding recommendations to the GACEC, and where it seems to go that doesn't seem to fit in that plan at all. That seems to be a decision by your school district. So, it doesn't seem to be...so if we bring it up to the GACEC, what are they going to do, turn around and Christina says 'no.' Or we support it, or we don't support it. It doesn't seem to flow with the intention of the committee."

One of the committee members (who did not identify themselves for the CART transcriptionist or the recording equipment) said, "I agree with you. And I think what at least from this standpoint initially we had thought of the advisory committee. And then from that, somehow it got from the advisory committee to the sub-committee. And that's kind of just how it was presented as we started this."

Another committee member (who did not identify themselves for the CART transcriptionist or the recording equipment) went on to say, "I think the fact that we can make recommendations, the fact that Christina has said yes, we're going to do this,' before it's all just done without us having any advice or input into that, that this gives a venue to be able to have that advice and input. Whether or not Christina takes any of it is one thing. But, they said 'yes, we are going to do this.' Well, in order for us to kind of get to where we're going with this, and go through the bigger group, and get to May with recommendations as a larger group going through those channels, they may have already

said, 'well, it's too late. We've already got things set up and established and we're moving forward.' So, in order to make sure that we at least had some input from members of this committee, I believe that's the reason why we are having a sub-committee."

Cindy said that she, being one of the only representatives from Sussex County, would like to see discussion on the reasoning behind creating the preschool program in Christina School District. She pointed out that this in no way benefits students in Sussex County. Cindy said she did not believe that parents with small children would travel all the way to New Castle County in order for their child to attend a half-day preschool program. Cindy said she felt there was a need to discuss centralized locations, so that all students in Delaware could benefit from the program.

Cindy went on to say, "That's pretty much true with all the Statewide Programs. But it's all within Christina School District, right? You have this point that you made before. I believe that it is a big picture that we need to address at some point, not just for this program, but just to see where you're actually reporting to." She then said that she understands Brian's point, but in the interest of making recommendations more quickly, she felt that it would "only benefit this full group if some smaller groups did some ground work, brought it up to here, and then funneled it through the process."

Thierry then said that he had a comment. He said, "I know the sub-committee was created to work on this program, specifically for the Christina School District and DSD. I see that also as an opportunity for this committee to create some guidelines on how to create spoken language programs in the State of Delaware, which would answer your concerns about the other. And I think it's normal for this committee to go back to this main committee, and then to the GACEC, because then we will make the recommendation to other school districts. That's the way I see that. I want to use what we want to do in a very short period of time to also be able to plan ahead, and think about other programs for 2012 in other school districts. And I think that's what we should be doing, and how I see the work of the sub-committee."

Brian said that he agreed with Thierry, regarding the GACEC being the political will and force behind things. He questioned why the GACEC would be involved with giving advice to DSD for a program that DSD has already decided would go forward. He said he understood that there could be recommendations regarding specific ways that the program would be created. He asked if the sub-committee's purpose was just to review the LSL pilot classroom plan and to say, 'that's good, here's a couple of tweaks.' Brian said he always viewed the GACEC as a political force in the state of Delaware. Brian asked if the GACEC would have the political clout to suggest that the LSL program be made available throughout the State of Delaware. Brian stated again that he felt the work of the LSL sub-committee could be done within the confines of the main advisory committee.

Nick said, "I think there needs to be a sub-committee. Because there [are] a lot of details that are going to be involved in getting this thing created correctly. The CHOICES

organization has already received the preliminary design document. We've already issued a set of comments on that. So, I think there is a lot of work that's going to have to be done to bring us together. And, by the way, the first draft is a good, solid draft. What we're working on is making sure that we're addressing things either in the short term or the longer term, to make sure that we cover all these things like [geographic location]. It's recognized right from the start that we're not covering Sussex County at all with this first design. But the other reason I support having a sub-committee formed is the urgency. This issue has been a point of contention between different parts of the community, the Department of Education, and Statewide Services for a long time. So, I think the fact that we're moving in the right direction is a positive thing. But, we want to make sure that there is something in place that we can build on by September.

Nick went on to say, "Because every kid for whom a family wants listening and spoken language, every month that goes by from birth is a potential loss of opportunity. So it's important to do something for those kids as soon as possible. So, being expeditious about it and skipping the step of having the committee create a sub-committee when we know there is a lot of work to be done, I think it was the right thing to do."

A committee member then asked if there was a need for an official sub-committee, or if the Christina School District/Statewide Programs/DSD would be better served to simply seek informal feedback from other sources.

Fran then reminded the committee that it was 6:00 p.m., and that the issue of next steps had not yet been addressed.

Wendy said that sometimes, a group within the community will seek the advice of the GACEC before even planning to do something within the realm of the disability community. She re-emphasized that this advice is sought because sometimes, the GACEC will be able to tell a particular group that their plan will most likely not be successful, and/or offer suggestions to enhance it so that it will be successful.

Tina then clarified that this is a pilot LSL classroom in the northern part of the state. The ultimate goal is to have these LSL classrooms across the State of Delaware, and that Statewide Programs is already looking ahead at having classrooms in the southern part of the state. Tina said they are trying to implement those classes in the southern part of the state as soon as possible.

Julie asked that a formal motion to accept the sub-committee moving forward, as well as to accept the main advisory committee's charter statement.

The GACEC Advisory Committee for the Education of Individuals with Hearing Loss Charter was voted in unanimously by the committee.

The proposal to proceed with the Listening and Spoken Language Sub-Committee was also approved unanimously by the committee.

Julie then directed the committee member's attention to the meeting schedule, which was listed in the packets each committee member received. She stated that the minutes from all meetings were to be distributed by the GACEC. Julie said that Della will send the initial draft of action steps two weeks prior to the committee's February meeting, so that the committee members could come ready to discuss the draft. Julie noted the sub-committee meeting would take place to address the program elements through the program surveying. She said that she would be the chair of the LSL sub-committee as well.

She also touched on the subject of e-mail distribution, saying that all e-mail was to be sent to the GACEC first, and that the GACEC would then distribute or act upon the e-mail as necessary. She said this process was being implemented to avoid confusion, and that having e-mails coming from a centralized location is a more orderly way to go about communicating than having e-mails coming from multiple persons.

Julie then thanked the committee members, CART provider, the interpreter, and the facilitator for coming, reminding everyone that they have "homework" to complete before the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristin Mullen