



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)

**GACEC Advisory Committee for the Education of Individuals
With Hearing Loss Meeting
February 9, 2011 at 4:15 p.m.
Margaret M. O'Neill Building
410 Federal Street
Dover, DE 19904**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Wendy Strauss**, Executive Administrator, GACEC; **Julie Johnson**, GACEC Advisory Committee on the Education of Individuals with Hearing Loss Chairperson, also President of Delaware Hands and Voices (DHV), and Coordinator of Guide By Your Side (GBYS); **Deb Trapani**, Elementary School Leader, Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD); **Tina Fredrickson**, Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD), and Coordinator of Statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs; **Mark Campano**, Delaware School for the Deaf, and 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; **Kyle Hodges**, Director, State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD); **Janella Newman**, Director of Special Education, Caesar Rodney (CR) School District; **Della Thomas**, Director of Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD), and Director of Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind; **Loretta Sarro**, Public Information Officer for Delaware Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DODHH); **Freeman Williams**, Assistant Superintendent of Christina School District (CSD)

OTHERS PRESENT: **Kristin Mullen**/GACEC (Recording Secretary); **Fran Fletcher**, Facilitator with University of Delaware; **Rob Hemenway**, Karasch and Associates, Captioning Service; **Pamela Whitney**, Interpreter; **Donna Ellis**, Interpreter

MEMBERS ABSENT: **Brian Touchette**, Delaware Department of Education (DOE); **Nick Fina**, CHOICES; **Jill McKinney**, Child Development Watch (CDW)

The meeting was called to order at 4:20 p.m., and introductions were made. Wendy Strauss went over the Ground Rules once again.

The minutes from the January meeting and the agenda for this meeting were approved by the committee.

AGENDA REVIEW:

Julie briefly went over the agenda items for this meeting. These included:

- Clarification of the wording of the committee’s mission statement.
- Membership- who to invite to take Judy Smith’s place.
- Action item-schedule a tour of the new Delaware School for the Deaf.
- Review of the recommendations of the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Sub-Committee.
- Discussion-thoughts regarding inviting Judy Sexton of the Clarke School to consult electronically with Statewide Programs regarding the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Pilot Classroom.
- Discussion- what action should be taken regarding the open position of Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator with Delaware Public Health (DPH)?

Wendy Strauss added two more items to be addressed that Nick Fina, who was unable to attend, had sent to her via e-mail prior to the meeting. These items were:

- The open Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator position with Delaware Public Health (DPH).
- Addressing a strategic district hiring process for Christina School District (CSD), and how it relates to our needs.

QUESTION REGARDING MINUTES:

Della Thomas asked Julie Johnson a question regarding the need for almost-verbatim minutes of committee meetings. Della said that since there are both audio recordings and transcripts of each meeting, she felt the minutes could be less detailed. Julie said that, moving forward, she felt that the minutes could be more of a synopsis. She then asked the committee if there were any objections to altering the format of the minutes. There were no objections.

CLARIFICATION OF LANGUAGE IN COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT:

Clarification of the mission statement was the next agenda item to be discussed. Kyle Hodges stated that changing “and” to “regarding” would clarify the mission statement. The committee was in unanimous agreement that this change should be made.

PRESENTATION OF DRAFT GOALS 1-4

Draft Goals 1-4 were then presented by Della Thomas. Copies of Goals 1-4 were distributed to all members in their information packets.

Goal 1-Early Identification and Intervention

The development of communication, language, social and cognitive skills at the earliest possible age is fundamental to subsequent educational growth for students who have a hearing loss.

Recommended Action Steps/Resources Needed/Parties to Involve:

- Guide by Your Side (GBYS) program established for Delaware, involving a Hands and Voices (HV) contracted provider.
- Single point of entry established and utilized to streamline flow of identifying families in need of support. This would involve Delaware Public Health (DPH) and Guide by Your Side (GBYS) acting as co-coordinators.
- System for data collection for deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students statewide to track services for students. This would require establishing a database program and training on the program. The Statewide Coordinator for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) and the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Elementary Coordinator should be involved.
- American Sign Language (ASL) mentor to work with families of children from birth to age 3 statewide, as identified by the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). This would require unit funding for a paraprofessional position, and training for the paraprofessional position. Statewide Programs should be involved.
- Establish Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) classes for families of children from birth to age 7 in southern and northern Delaware. This would require a hosting site and participation from Statewide Programs staff.
- Establish a bilingual program in southern Delaware for children ages 18 months to 2 years. This would require a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Partnership Agreement with the host school district, and a teacher to staff the classroom. Statewide Programs should be involved.
- Classrooms in northern and southern regions of Delaware for children ages 3-5, as identified through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This would require a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) and a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Identification and referral process for children from birth to age 3 for Part B services. The Statewide Deaf Blind Program should be involved.

(A full list of questions, suggestions, and concerns offered by members of the committee regarding Goal 1 is available in the transcript of the meeting, and also in a document provided by Deb Trapani. To obtain a copy of either document, please contact the GACEC office.)

Goal 2-Language and Communication Access

All students who have a hearing loss 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.

Recommended Action Steps/Resources Needed/Parties to Involve:

- Create a summer program for children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) statewide. Help from Statewide Programs and possibly District Representatives would be needed, as would funding allocation and space.
- Offer regional meeting opportunities for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Assistance from Statewide Programs would be needed. Funding would have to be secured, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with participating school districts would be necessary.
- Host a Deaf/Blind Family Weekend. Involvement from Statewide Programs and federal and/or state grant money could make this a reality.
- Provide statewide Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) training for classroom teachers of children from preschool up to age 21. To achieve this, there would have to be involvement from the Statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Program, and partnerships with school districts would have to be established.
- Publish guidelines for optimal listening environments for public school classrooms. This would involve consultation with audiologists, the Statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Coordinator, and the Statewide Programs audiologist.
- Offer training for school districts, related to guidelines for optimal listening environments in public schools. The Statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Coordinator and Statewide Programs Audiologist would be needed to achieve this goal.
- Create a Communication Plan for all students, based on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Bill of Rights. There would have to be training held for school districts statewide, and both the Director and Coordinator of Statewide Programs would be consulted.

(A full list of questions, suggestions, and concerns offered by members of the committee regarding Goal 2 is available in the transcript, and also in a document provided by Deb Trapani. To obtain a copy of either document, please contact the GACEC office)

Goal 3-Collaborative Partnerships

Partnerships which will influence education policies and practices to promote quality education for students who have a hearing loss must be explored.

Recommended Action Steps/Resources Needed/Parties to Involve:

- Participation in State and National Hands and Voices (HV) Organizations by both the Statewide Coordinator and Early Childhood Education (ECE) Leader.
- Publish a Statewide Programs Annual Report in both English and Spanish. The Director of Statewide Programs would spearhead this initiative.

- Ongoing meetings involving Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) personnel, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Leader, and the Statewide Programs Coordinator.
- Statewide Programs to collaborate with the Laurent Clerc (CLERC) National Deaf Education Center.
- Deaf Blind Statewide Program Coordinator to collaborate with the Helen Keller National Center on Deaf-Blindness.
- Directors of both Statewide Deaf-Blind and Deaf/Hard of Hearing Programs to participate in statewide Special Education Director Meetings.
- Deaf Blind Statewide Program Coordinator to attend meetings, trainings and topical conferences.
- Director of Statewide Programs to participate in Conference of Educational Administrators Serving the Deaf (CEASD) National Conferences and Meetings.

(A full list of questions, suggestions, and concerns offered by members of the committee regarding Goal 3 is available in the transcript of the meeting, and also in a document provided by Deb Trapani. To obtain a copy of either document, please contact the GACEC office)

Goal 4-Accountability, High Stakes Testing and Standards Based Environments

Instruction for students who have a hearing loss must be data driven, and must focus on multiple measures of student performance.

Recommended Action Steps/Resources Needed/Parties to Involve:

- Delaware Comprehensive Assessment System (DCAS) Accommodations Subcommittee participation and subsequent training. Participation and training would be for Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD) Literacy Specialists, DSD Leadership, Statewide Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the Department of Education (DOE) Assessment Committee.
- American Sign Language (ASL)/English Language Arts (ELA) Framework utilized by DSD school leadership at a center-based program.
- DSD leadership to participate in curricular training for center based programs, regarding Limited Formal Schooling (LFS) and Core Components as well as topical best practices for schools.

(A full list of questions, suggestions, and concerns offered by members of the committee regarding Goal 4 is available in the transcript of the meeting, and also in a document provided by Deb Trapani. To obtain a copy of either document, please contact the GACEC office)

LSL SUB-COMMITTEE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Julie Johnson then directed the committee's attention to the Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Sub-Committee's list of recommendations for the LSL Pilot Classroom at the Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD). Each member was given both an e-mailed and a printed copy of the list, and asked to review it and come prepared to discuss it at the next meeting on March 9, 2011. To obtain a copy of the list, please contact the GACEC office.

CONCERNING THE NEED TO FILL THE VACANT POSITION OF NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING COORDINATOR AT DELAWARE PUBLIC HEALTH (DPH):

Julie Johnson informed the committee that the position of Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator at Delaware Public Health (DPH) has been vacant since the end of July 2010. There is currently a hiring freeze, so the position is not open for applicants. If the position is not filled, the federal grant money allocated to pay the salary of Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator will be lost.

Julie asked for a motion requesting that the GACEC write a letter to DPH, with a cc to Lt. Gov. Matt Denn, asking for the position to be opened for applicants, and emphasizing the importance of having a Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator. Kyle Hodges made a motion. Mark Campano seconded the motion. All present were in favor and the motion was passed. Wendy Strauss and Julie Johnson stated that they would discuss taking action on writing the letter at the next GACEC Meeting, held on February 15, 2011.

PROPOSED TOUR OF THE NEW DELAWARE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (DSD):

Discussion took place regarding the best time for all interested committee members to take a tour of the new Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD). Deb Trapani suggested having the tour prior to the next committee meeting on March 9, 2011, and having the committee meeting take place after the tour in a room in the existing DSD. It was determined that a poll would be taken of the committee members to see if this date and time was agreeable to the committee and the leadership of DSD.

PROPOSED NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Discussion took place regarding who to nominate to the committee to replace Judy Smith, an original committee member who is unable to participate due to unforeseen circumstances. Julie nominated Mia Papas, Coordinator, Guide by Your Side (GBYS) Program, and a parent participant in Hands and Voices (HV). A motion to approve Mia's nomination was requested by Della Thomas. Deb Trapani made the motion, Kyle Hodges seconded the motion. All present were in agreement, and the motion was passed. Wendy stated that the GACEC would e-mail Mia a formal invitation to join.

DISCUSSION REGARDING INVITING AN OUTSIDE EXPERT TO CONSULT ELECTRONICALLY WITH STATEWIDE PROGRAMS ON THE LSL PILOT CLASSROOM:

The committee determined that further discussion on this matter would take place at the March 9, 2011 committee meeting. In the meantime, investigation into possible consulting fees was to take place.

DISCUSSION REGARDING CHRISTINA SCHOOL DISTRICT'S HIRING PROCESS:

Wendy Strauss asked Freeman Williams if he would be willing to discuss Christina School District's hiring processes with the committee. Freeman said that he would have no problem whatsoever with that. A brief discussion took place regarding the basic hiring procedure. After this discussion, Wendy noted that the GACEC would reach out to Nick Fina, and ask him to draft a document containing specific questions regarding the hiring process. The document could then be sent to Freeman to fill out and send back to the GACEC, and would be shared at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.