



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)

**GACEC Advisory Committee for the Education
of Individuals with Hearing Loss Meeting
Margaret M. O'Neill Building
410 Federal Street
Dover, Delaware 19901
April 13, 2011**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wendy Strauss, Executive Administrator, GACEC; Nick Fina, Choices; Jill McKinney, Child Development Watch (CDW); Cindy Farrell, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing with Cape Henlopen School District; Tina Fredrickson, Coordinator, Statewide Programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Della Thomas, Director, Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind Mia Papas, Coordinator for Guide by Your Side (GBYS), parent of a child who is deaf, and member of Choices; Kyle Hodges, Director, State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD); Debra Trapani, Elementary School Leader, Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD); Brian Touchette, Department of Education (DOE), Thierry Morlet, A.I. DuPont; Loretta Sarro, Council for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Equality; Janella Newman, GACEC and Director of Special Education for Caesar Rodney School District

MEMBERS ABSENT: Freeman Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Christina School District; Mark Campano, Coordinator of Statewide Programs for the Deaf-Blind

OTHERS PRESENT: Terri Hancharick, GACEC Chairperson; Fran Fletcher, Facilitator from University of Delaware (UD); Rob Hemenway, Karasch and Associates CART Services Provider; Pamela Whitney, ASL Interpreter; Donna Ellis, ASL Interpreter; Kristin Mullen, GACEC Staff and Committee Recording Secretary

Wendy Strauss called the meeting to order at 4:21 p.m. Introductions were made, and ground rules were re-stated.

Wendy asked for the committee to vote on approving the March 9, 2011 minutes. Kyle Hodges pointed out a spelling error in Secretary Rita Landraf's name. Kristin Mullen made a note of this, and will correct it in the March 9, 2011 minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved with this correction.

The agenda for the April 13, 2011 agenda was also unanimously approved.

Wendy suggested that, moving forward, a 5-minute public comment period be instated at the beginning of each meeting, since meetings are open to the public. The committee agreed to this suggestion.

Update on response to GACEC letter to Secretary Landgraf:

Wendy reported that she had received a response from Secretary Landgraf regarding the vacant Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator position at Delaware Public Health (DPH). While meeting with Secretary Landgraf regarding a separate issue, Wendy discussed the position with her. Secretary Landgraf said that she was discussing the vacant Newborn Hearing Screening Coordinator position with her staff, and that she would ask her staff to get in touch with Wendy. As of the meeting, Wendy had not received any information or been contacted by any members of Secretary Landgraf's staff.

GACEC vote on LSL Sub-Committee recommendations for the pilot classroom:

Next on the agenda was the report on the GACEC's vote on the LSL Sub-Committee's recommendations for the LSL Pilot Program. Wendy reported that the Executive Board of the GACEC approved the recommendations.

Systemic change on IEP forms:

Regarding systemic change on IEP forms, Wendy informed the committee that she and Brian Hartman, Esq., had met with Martha Toomey of the Department of Education (DOE) regarding this question. The question is, is there room for more than one disability to be listed on the IEP form, with both (or all) disabilities being given equal consideration on the child's IEP? Martha said that she would be reaching out to local special education directors for their feedback on this suggestion. Wendy reported that she is not sure if Martha has scheduled those meetings yet.

Brian Touchette stated that DOE has already met with New Castle County and Kent County special education directors. He said that he is unsure if the online IEP form will allow room for more than one disability, but that he will check into it. Brian noted that the issue is complicated by trying to figure out how to change the evaluation summary report. He said that the way the evaluation summary report is currently set up; there is only room for a single disability. Wendy asked Brian to report back to the committee at the May 11, 2011 meeting on what he finds out. Brian agreed to do so.

2011 National Deaf Education Summit Webcast; "Digging Deep to Make Systems Change":

Della Thomas shared information regarding the 2011 National Deaf Education Summit Webcast; “Digging Deep to Make Systems Change.” The webcast is being held on April 28, 2011 at the Statewide Programs for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind (hereafter referred to in these minutes as “Statewide Programs”)/ Delaware School for the Deaf. Delaware School for the Deaf has purchased the \$500.00 site license to host the summit webcast, as there is no “in person” summit this year. Della said that there will be two 90-minute presentations. One presentation is from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., the second presentation will take place from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. One presentation will focus on “Effective Itinerant Services for Students Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH)”, while the other presentation will deal with “Developing a Statewide Program in a Time of Chaos.” Della said that there will be a room set up with a large screen, and that they tend to do real time captioning and also offer interpreters in those kinds of environments. Those who wish to attend the summit webcast should let Della know by Monday, April 25th.

Statewide Programs reaching out to Delaware legislators:

Della also gave an update on how Statewide Programs reached out to Delaware Legislators to thank them for their work on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bill of Rights. On May 10, 2011, many students from Delaware School for the Deaf will travel to Legislative Hall in Dover. The students will lead the legislators Pledge of Allegiance in American Sign Language (ASL).

“Update 2011: Managing Listening and Spoken Language Outcomes for Today’s Children with Hearing Loss”

Nick Fina shared information regarding “Update 2011: Managing Listening and Spoken Language Educational Outcomes for Today’s Children with Hearing Loss.” The Symposium will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2011 at the Ammon Education Center in Christiana Hospital. A link containing information about the symposium, as well as a link to register, was emailed out to all committee members. Nick said that there were approximately five speakers from around the country, as well as a panel discussion (which would include Brian and Della). Matt Denn is scheduled to give the opening remarks. There are different registration fee schedules, depending on what type of registrant you are. Registration is free for parents of children who are DHH. Nick encouraged all present to register for the symposium, and to also share the information freely.

Nick noted that he had attended a symposium at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), which was also attended by Tina Fredrickson, Mia Papas, and Debra Trapani. Nick said that the Update 2011 symposium would be more educational in nature than the symposium that was held at CHOP. There will be more presentations from speakers, rather than breakout sessions. Loretta Sarro asked if interpreters would be provided. Tina answered that there is a spot on the registration form to check if an interpreter is required. Nick stated that CART providers would also be present at the symposium.

LSL Pilot Program Report:

Next on the agenda was the LSL Pilot Program Report, which Wendy asked Tina to lead off on. Wendy noted that the LSL Pilot Program Report would be a monthly standing agenda item.

Thierry Morlet's observations of the new DSD building:

Tina said that Thierry Morlet had taken a tour of the new Statewide Programs and DSD building, and asked him to share his observations. Thierry said that he had three main comments. 1.) The new building is very nice, and he is impressed with the acoustics and that there are sound panels on almost all of the walls. 2.) Thierry is still concerned that the family outreach center in the Statewide Programs wing is too small to sufficiently separate children who use ASL from children being taught to use LSL. 3.) Thierry is concerned with the size of the sound booth, specifically the door. If a student who uses a wheelchair were to come into the sound booth, the Statewide Programs Audiologist would be unable to close the door. Thierry is concerned that this may impact the effectiveness of the booth for that student. Thierry thanked Tina very much for the visit, and said that he believes everyone will be very happy in the new school.

Kyle Hodges asked how a person in a wheelchair would be accommodated in the sound booth, and if the sound booth had been built to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Della said that she was sure the architects had to consider ADA guidelines when designing the school. Nick said that oftentimes, contractors merely build to "code," not to what is ideal. He went on to say that it is very likely that there is not a "code" for wheelchair accessibility to a sound booth. Kyle noted that while one would hope that ADA guidelines were considered when designing the school, this is unfortunately not always the case. Thierry stated that the sound booth is wheelchair accessible; the audiologist will just not be able to close the door fully.

Status of hiring a classroom teacher for the new LSL Pilot Program:

Next to be discussed under the LSL Pilot Program agenda item was the status of hiring a classroom teacher for the new pilot preschool program. Tina deferred to Della regarding this question. Della said that there is an in-district transfer process occurring right now, and that until the in-district transfer is completed, they cannot post any new positions. Della explained that within the Christina School District, they are going through the unit count process for next year and looking at anticipated numbers. Della explained that the vacant in-district positions have to be filled before she can post new positions for the following year.

Janella Newman asked if this means that Della is obligated to fill the new position with someone already on contract with Christina School District. Della said that they would choose the best applicant for the position. It does not matter if they are already under contract with Christina School District or if they are not.

Promotional materials for the new LSL pilot program:

Wendy asked Tina to address the promotional materials. Tina passed around a rough draft of the new promotional materials. Tina noted that the promotional materials are still in draft form, and not for distribution therefore she would need them back at the end of the meeting. The name of the new Delaware Statewide Programming is FACES, which stands for Family Advocacy Child Educational Services. Tina said that once the promotional materials were finalized, they would be distributed via mail and also giving them to teachers of children who are DHH.

Acoustic readiness of the classrooms at the new DSD building:

Wendy asked Tina if the rooms in the new school building were ready, acoustically, to receive students. Tina reported that the classrooms and school are ready. Mia Papas said that she wished to state for the record that she is disappointed in the fact that there is not an observation window in the classroom. Mia said that an observation window would allow parents, teachers, and anyone else interested in how the pilot classroom was doing to observe the class without disrupting it. Tina said that Statewide Programs would consider using a TV camera and monitor for observation purposes. Deb said that due to the way the classrooms are designed, an observation window would be structurally impossible.

Discussing the relationship of A.I. DuPont and Statewide Programs:

Deb and Thierry provided the committee with some background on the working relationship of A.I. DuPont and Statewide Programs. Deb said that she was a part of a work group focused on this topic in the past, and that after many meetings and much discussion, a MOU was drafted. Unfortunately, after the MOU was completed, nothing further was done to build on the good work of the work group. There was supposed to be a retreat for the work group, but that never came to fruition. Deb said she feels the existing MOU would be a good place to start from when discussing the working relationship of A.I. DuPont and Statewide Programs.

Thierry said that he agrees that the two groups need to start over. He said that quite some time is needed to address the issues that they are dealing with. Thierry stated that he feels quite some time is needed to address the topic of improving the relationship between Statewide Programs and A.I. DuPont. He emphasized that he wants to create a strong collaboration between the two institutions; however he felt that in order to do so, some past issues needed to be discussed.

Following further discussion between committee members, it was determined that a break out work group would be formed to contain representatives from Statewide Programs and A.I. DuPont. Tina made a motion and Thierry seconded the motion. The motion carried. Representing Statewide Programs would be Della, Tina, and Deb. Representing A.I. DuPont would be Thierry and two others, to be determined. Wendy issued a deadline of submitting a MOU to the committee of August 2011. She stated, and many committee members agreed, that this group should consist of Statewide Programs/A.I. DuPont representatives only. Tina volunteered to chair the group.

Draft Goals 7 and 8

- A copy of Draft Goals 7 and 8 was provided via email to each committee member via email. There is also a printed version in the information packets for today's meeting.
- Please refer to the aforementioned document for a complete description of Draft Goals 7 and 8.
- If you would like to another copy of Draft Goals 7 and 8, or if you wish to obtain a full transcript of the meeting, please contact the GACEC Office.

Synopsis of Goal 7, "Professional Standards and Personnel Preparation"-Overview, and Committee Member Responses:

New collaborations and initiatives among practitioners and training programs must address the serious shortage of qualified teachers and related service providers.

1. Develop professional standards (as they relate to the Least Restrictive Environment [LRE] and need for natural language) for teachers of bilingual education, spoken English-only education, and ASL Instruction.
2. Work with the State of Delaware to develop clarifications on the roles of educational interpreters vs. paraprofessionals.
3. Work within State of Delaware regulations that itinerant staff working with hard of hearing children throughout the state must be teachers of the deaf, not hearing specialists.
4. Produce database of information for each district regarding child change.
5. Institute a sign language requirement using a standardized assessment for professionals working with ASL users Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI).
6. Develop a calendar of professional development opportunities statewide for teachers, paraprofessionals, residential assistants, psychologists, related service staff members in the areas of DHH.
7. Education (i.e. visual access-environmental print, use of interpreters, note taking, attention getting), Deaf Blind (DB) Education, (i.e. establishing meaningful communication systems), students with multiple disabilities and cross-categorical disabilities.
8. Develop a partnership for teaching placements with bilingual as well as spoken English teacher training programs.
9. Explore the possibility of working in partnership with distance learning interpreter training programs to deliver interpreter training programs.
10. Take on supervisory/evaluative duties for educational interpreters and signing paraprofessionals throughout the state.
11. Establish ASL classes/workshops to heighten awareness of ASL as a recognized language-world language requirements in secondary/post secondary settings.

Committee Member Questions/Statements Regarding Goal 7:

- Mia Papas asked if the fact that not every district has a teacher of the deaf and an educational audiologist to support them, could this be added to the goal? Mia said she learned in her IEP meeting that the teacher of the deaf for Christina School District has 50 students on her caseload, which she feels is too much. She feels that there need to be measures put into place to attract more qualified individuals.

- Committee-wide discussion took place regarding measures the State of Delaware is taking to try to attract and keep qualified educational personnel.
- Nick asked Della to prioritize the action steps, saying that he does not feel she will get to all of them. Deb interjected that Statewide Programs is currently in a brainstorming phase. Della concurred, saying that it is hard to say at this point in time which goal is most important.
- Fran reminded the committee members of the Charter, which states that this committee exists to make recommendations to the GACEC.
- Deb submitted a list of recommendations addressing her recommendations for Goals 4 through 8. This item was emailed to each committee member. Deb's comments are highlighted in yellow.
- The subject internships with Statewide Programs was discussed. Deb reminded everyone that Statewide Programs currently offers internships.
- Nick suggested that Statewide Programs reach out to the Center for Disabilities Studies.
- Jill said that she does not see a lot of school districts that are eager to hire a teacher of the deaf, and asked if anyone was aware of any such positions being advertised. Janella answered, and said that the recruitment piece is a problem. Often, districts "recycle people".
- Jill pointed out that without districts requesting teachers of the deaf and related service personnel, colleges and universities in Delaware would be hesitant to start a program. The cost of the program, compared to the demand for the graduates, would most likely not be feasible.
- It was pointed out that Delaware students can attend out-of-state colleges at in-state rates with selected partner states. This applies if a course of study is not available here which a potential student would like to pursue.
- The problem with this is, there is no incentive for the student to return to Delaware once they earn their degree out of state.
- Tina suggested targeting high school guidance counselors and the Higher Education Commission.
- Nick shared that at the University of Delaware (UD), there is a movement under Patrick Parker to have educational departments "pay their own way."
- Deb pointed out that since deaf and hard of hearing students make up a low-incidence population, it is difficult to convince people with specialized training to come to such a rural area.
- Nick suggested the creation of Intermediate Units like they have in Pennsylvania. He went on to say that "if the problems of serving other types of low-incidence disabilities could somehow be integrated with hearing loss and to come up with some ways of saving resources and sharing resources somehow."

Synopsis of Goal 8, "Creation of a Systemic, Statewide Approach to Educating Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children-Overview, and Committee Member Responses:

A centralized approach to providing direct/indirect services to DHH children in the state would guarantee appropriate personnel preparation, language and

communication access, relevant technology, continuity of services between Part B/C Funding and parity for all children.

- Meet with legislative champions who can assist us in this process.
- Buy-in needed from CSD, DOE, families, special ed directors and legislators.
- Regular itemized budget report from Christina School District (CSD) to monitor funds.
- Access to statewide numbers/database.
- Exploration of autonomy of statewide services?
- Code changes needed to reflect a statewide approach.
- **Create a sub-committee for this?
- White paper creation outlining the benefits of a statewide approach.

Committee Member Questions/Statements Regarding Goal 8:

- Following much discussion by the committee, it was determined that there is a possible need to form a sub-committee to fully address this goal. Wendy suggested that the possibility of creating a sub-committee would be added to May's agenda.

Comments from Della:

Della asked if she could share some comments, which she said she hoped the committee members would take back and share with their constituents. She said that she cannot speak to what Statewide Programs/DSD did prior to June of 2009; rather she can only address what has happened since she became the director of Statewide Programs.

- Developed and implemented spoken language family workshops in both northern and southern regions of the state.
- Added a family educator for the southern region of the state.
- Developing a LSL classroom in the northern part of the state for September 2011.
- Speech Language Pathologists have attended A.I. DuPont for development.
- Conducted school wide training in bilingual bicultural education for all staff and paraprofessional staff.
- Family education and outreach staff have attended bias training twice, through Hands and Voices.
- Worked to pass the bill of rights with emphasis on communication, not emphasis on signing only, but an emphasis on communication for kids who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Worked to create a state supported advisory committee.
- Visited several regional programs with varying language choices.

Della said that she believes this list shows how much progress has been made in deaf education in Delaware within the past two years.

Conclusion of Meeting:

- Wendy said that she sees progression in deaf education in Delaware, and that our committee meetings are helping even more to move the process forward.
- Wendy stated that she also thinks that there is a need for a sub-committee to discuss Goal 8. She said that there is also a need for a position paper.
- Following a brief discussion of the drafts of the promotional materials, Tina and Deb consented to letting the committee members take the draft copies of the promotional materials with them. Tina asked that the copies not be distributed, as they are not a representation of the complete product.
- Wendy told the committee that if there were suggestions or comments regarding the draft promotional materials, to please send them to Kristin.

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

The next meeting of the GACEC Advisory Committee for the Education of Individuals with Hearing Loss will be held on **Wednesday, May 11, 2011, from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. at George V. Massey Station, 516 West Loockerman Street, Dover, DE 19904**

Respectfully submitted,
Kristin Mullen, GACEC