



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)

**GACEC Advisory Committee for the Education
Of Individuals with Hearing Loss Meeting
George V. Massey Station
516 West Lookerman Street
Dover, Delaware 19904
May 11, 2011**

***Please note: These minutes represent a condensed version of what occurred in the meeting, and are not intended to be all-inclusive. For a full verbatim transcript of the meeting (91 pages), please contact the GACEC office at 302.739.4553.**

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; Mark Campano, Coordinator of Statewide Programs for the Deaf-Blind; 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

OTHERS PRESENT:); Rob Hemenway, Karasch and Associates CART Services Provider; Pamela Whitney, ASL Interpreter; Marybeth Tkach, ASL Interpreter; Kristin Mullen, GACEC Staff and Committee Recording Secretary; Eileen Reynolds, Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf and member of Choices

Wendy Strauss called the meeting to order at 4:25 p.m. Introductions were made, and ground rules were re-stated.

Public Comment Period:

Wendy opened the floor for the five-minute public comment period, at which time Eileen Reynolds, an educational audiologist, asked if she could address the committee. Wendy gave her approval for Eileen to speak. Eileen shared some thoughts, points and concerns regarding her opinion of the current status of the education of individuals with hearing loss in the state of Delaware. She also urged the committee not to vote on draft goals 1-9 yet. Della Thomas agreed that she feels voting on the goals should be postponed until June.

Nick Fina voiced concerns over the Statewide Plan for Delaware being based on the National Agenda. Nick feels that there is no research base for the National Agenda. He asked Della to provide references to the appropriate research that supported the propositions. Nick said that he will not vote in favor of moving ahead with voting on the final version of the Statewide Plan until references to research are included in the document.

A discussion regarding American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and regulations took place between the committee and Eileen.

Mia Papas spoke regarding the referral system. She shared that Hands and Voices (HV) will now be the initial referral for families of children who are identified as having hearing loss. From there, HV will be referring children to Child Development Watch (CDW), their home school districts, or Statewide Programs. Mia encouraged any interested parties to attend the HV meetings, during which the staff will be preparing packets of information for families of children with hearing loss. She noted that these packets will contain unbiased materials from the Hands and Voices National Chapter.

More discussion regarding the referral process then took place.

Approval of Agenda:

Wendy directed the committee's attention to the next order of business, which was approving the agenda. Due to a late-developing charge from the Lieutenant Governor to resolve certain issues in this meeting, and the previously discussed delay in voting on goals 1-9, Wendy asked for a motion to change the agenda. She proposed putting the Lieutenant Governor's charge to the committee before all other business. The motion was passed to alter the agenda.

Comments on the FACES Brochure from Nick Fina:

Nick expressed concern that committee members were not allowed to keep the draft brochures. He also said that he feels that statements within the brochure such as "much of the research shows" should cite specific research if they are being mentioned. Nick said that he does understand that the brochure is not to be considered a scholarly document.

Since the brochure is geared toward parents, it shouldn't be written like a research paper, but should still cite the sources of the aforementioned research.

Nick said "having a single publication that describes a foundation based on the premise that early sign language exposure is beneficial to all regardless of the parental choice of primary languages is unwise. Because I don't believe the research supports that." Nick suggested that the committee look at documents on the Choices website, with research and citations. These documents cite research that does not support early sign language exposure.

Finally, Nick said that by looking at what is written in the FACES brochure, it does not appear as if Statewide Programs is planning to implement a "true" Listening and Spoken Language (LSL) Program. Nick shared that LSL is a "forced mark" Nick said that it does not appear that Statewide Programs is planning to have a true LSL program. He also pointed out that he does not see the term "LSL" anywhere in the FACES brochure.

Discussion took place between committee members regarding a spoken English program and a LSL Program. Nick stated that in order to call the program a LSL Program, the A.G. Bell Academy Standards must be adhered to. If Statewide Programs is not going to follow the A.G. Bell Academy Standards, then they will not have a true LSL Program, and this causes Nick to be concerned.

Discussion took place regarding the merits of research and citation.

Spoken English/LSL Debate:

More discussion then took place regarding compromising on the wording of the brochure. Kyle Hodges asked if "spoken English" could be replaced by the words "LSL". Nick said that as it stands, this is not a true LSL Program.

Della said, "If LSL as the methodology is really strict and there are a lot of guidelines that you have to follow...I don't think that is where [Statewide Programs] are right now. Because I don't think that it encourages the best development for the whole, holistic development for a child. I think it focuses on one element and one element only of a child, but we're in the business of a whole child."

Mia Papas asked if the FACES brochure is a Delaware School for the Deaf (DSD) document, or a Statewide Programs document. Della answered that the FACES brochure is a Statewide Programs document, at which time Mia said that she objects to the document.

Brian Touchette said that in his career as a teacher and at DOE, he has never seen a single program work for an entire population. However, it is our responsibility to make sure that whatever methodology we say "works" for a particular population is backed up by the proper research

Nick addressed Statewide Programs, saying, “if you’ve got families that want what is in the [FACES] brochure, great. Provide it for them. But please provide a Listening and Spoken Language option according to the published standards of the A.G. Bell Academy. You do that and we’re happy.”

It was agreed that the program that Statewide Programs is currently planning to offer in September cannot currently be considered an official LSL Program.

Age Groups of the Children in the Pilot Program:

Statewide Programs reports that they have a large number of students in the four to five age group who use spoken English. As a result, the Pilot Preschool Program will serve children ages four to five. All children will still receive services. Children from birth to 18 months will receive services from Early Intervention Educators. There is one Early Intervention Educator that serves the northern part of the state, and one who serves the Southern part of the state.

The committee discussed this proposed method, and had concerns with children from birth to 18 months not being a part of a center-based program. The committee discussed how Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) would impact how a child receives services.

LSL Sub-Committee Recommendations:

The GACEC approved the list of LSL Sub-Committee Recommendations for the Pilot Preschool Classroom in March. Following discussion in this meeting, the committee determined that this list of recommendations is no longer valid and needs to be revised. It is the opinion of some committee members that this list must be revised prior to moving forward.

Charge to the Committee from the Lieutenant Governor:

The committee meeting exhausted its normal meeting time without getting to all of the agenda items, and without coming to a consensus regarding the Lieutenant Governor’s charge to them to come up with a compromise.

Since the regular meeting time was already over, Wendy asked the CART provider, interpreters, and committee members if they would stay to discuss the matter further. The committee, interpreters, and CART provider agreed to do so.

Discussion took place regarding the placement of an observation window in the LSL classroom. It was agreed that closed-circuit TVs would be provided by Statewide Programs for anyone wishing to observe the classroom.

Following a lengthy discussion of the desired qualifications for the LSL classroom teacher, and the job posting for that position, Statewide Programs stated that they would work on revising the posting. Committee members provided input on what the exact wording and placement of wording should be.

The committee requested that Statewide Programs and Christina School District place a parent of a child who is deaf on the hiring committee. A motion was made and passed to ask Freeman Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Christina School District, to reconsider having a parent of a child who is deaf on the hiring committee. Della abstained from voting on this motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.