

**State Special Education Advisory Committee
(SSEAC)**

**Holiday Inn Richmond Airport
Richmond, Virginia**

Thursday December 8, 2011

SSEAC Members					
	Present	Absent		Present	Absent
Eva Aikens		x	Sandra Hermann	x	
Judy Averill	x		Mona Holmes		x
Darren Minarik		x	Lori Jackson	x	
Michael Carrasco	x		Bernadette Jones		x
Adam Amick		x	Jackie Fagan		x
Christina Draper		x	Jusolyn Bradshaw		x
Christy Evanko	x		Jennifer O'Berry-Ham	x	
Fran Goforth	x		Scott Kizner		x
Melodie Henderson	x		Cynthia Bauer	x	
Kathryn Hayfield	x				

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Staff			
Doug Cox	Suzanne Creasey	Sharon Siler	Cathy Pomfrey
John Eisenberg			

Guests			
Beth Haw	Jennifer Lockman	Dana Yarborough	Bekah Saxon
PEATC Carolyn Beckett	Maria Frangenberg	Michael Behrmann	Marci Kinan Jerome
Dr. Pat Addison		Aspiring Special Education Leaders	

Call to Order

Ms. Lori Jackson, Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The committee members were asked to introduce themselves.

Business Session

Approval of Minutes

The committee was directed to look over the prior meeting minutes. No changes were recommended. Ms. Fran Goforth made a motion to accept the minutes; Ms. Sandy Hermann seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Review of meeting agenda

Ms. Jackson reviewed the agenda and reminded the committee to not make comments during the public comment period but to wait for the allotted time. Mr. Doug Cox informed the committee that Ms. Gloria Dalton would not be presenting for Family Navigators; however, Mrs. Dana Yarborough was still scheduled to attend and would present that information in Ms. Dalton's absence. The light attendance at this meeting was noted.

Assistant Superintendent Report

*Mr. H. Douglas Cox, Assistant Superintendent
Division of Special Education and Student Services*

Mr. Cox began by welcoming the 4th cohort of Aspiring Special Education Leaders. He noted that the program is popular with local school divisions. He stressed the importance of good, strong leadership to succession planning.

Mr. Cox gave an update on the Autism Center for Excellence (ACE). The initiative continues to expand and has been offering professional development activities for parents and people working with children with autism. These courses have been full within 24 hours of posting.

Next, Mr. Cox discussed a bill introduced at the General Assembly requiring 80 hours of training for Para-professionals who work with children with autism. He reported that the consensus was that 80 hours was inappropriate and since there was a cost factor, the bill did not get past the committee. VDOE has increased the budget at ACE for modules for Para-professionals for autism training. When the bill is reintroduced, it is hoped that these initiatives will show that the VDOE has been proactive. Ms. Hermann asked about the requirements for training of bus drivers and assistants. Mr. Cox replied that there are transportation regulations that require training for drivers and aides. Additionally, Mr. Cox mentioned the Response to Intervention (RtI) initiative in Virginia. With this initiative, the school system is able to respond to reading deficiencies and find the right instructional match so that some children would never need to be considered special needs. Thus, the better the job done with RtI, the larger percentage of special education will be children with more significant

disabilities. He then mentioned Dyslexia and the need to focus on it further with the next set of learning disability guidelines. Dyslexia is more than just a reading problem and should be treated as such.

There was another youth/parent summit recently. Three to four years ago was the first summit, and it was held as part of the transition forum. There were about 20 to 30 people in attendance at the first summit. In the second year, parents were accommodated. Then the group realized that it is too large to be held in conjunction with the transition forum and last year, the first standalone summit was held. This year there were about 100 youth and parents who had come to help each other develop leadership skills and advocacy skills. There were skits performed where the students recalled their worst day in school. Mr. Cox is very proud of the I'm Determined project.

There have been two staff departures recently. Mr. Jerry Mathews has retired. The department relied on him to make sure money was spent appropriately and to make sure funds were coded correctly with IDEA. Ms. Susan Cumbia Clare was selected by the State Executive Council as the new Executive Director for the Office of Comprehensive Services (OCS). This position oversees the agency responsible for administering the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA).

The Virginia Department of Education is considering applying for a waiver for Title One. It is uncertain whether No Child Left Behind will be amended with regard to teacher accountability in the near future, so Secretary Duncan indicated that he would entertain waivers. In the language for this waiver, VA DOE will continue to disaggregate special education so students with disabilities will not get lost in the bigger picture and special education teachers will have separate accountability. That was the strongest, most important thing NCLB brought to the table. Mr. Cox stated that there will be public comment after first draft. The Board has already invited some groups to provide overall input. He does not expect a lot of change for students with disabilities and encourages anyone to make public comment.

Mr. Cox was very pleased that Virginia was asked to present twice at the annual meeting of State Directors of Special Education regarding ACE and the Aspiring Leaders program (with Maryland). He did not recall Virginia ever being asked to present before.

There has been much interest over the last several months through Just Children – a legal advocacy group from Charlottesville that represents children who are at risk individually but also provides public advocacy - they have been pleased with the Effective School-wide Discipline (ESD) initiative (Positive Behavior Supports). The group has been to the board of education to encourage more school divisions to get on board with ESD because results are positive. Mr. Cox offered to update the SSEAC on ESD at a future meeting. He noted that discipline referrals for minorities and for those with disabilities have decreased in ESD schools. There may be legislation sponsored by Just Children that will encourage ESD or other evidence-based options over suspension.

Mr. Cox then noted that Mr. John Eisenberg would be late, because Dr. Wright sent him to attend a multistate meeting about issues regarding teacher performance and utilizing student performance as evaluation for teachers. It is difficult to see how special education and, for that matter, any teacher other than reading and math will fit in.

Presentations

Family Navigators

Mrs. Dana Yarborough, Center for Family Involvement

Ms. Maria Isabel Frangenberg, Cultural Liaison to Latino Community

Mrs. Yarborough gave a presentation on the Family to Family Network of Virginia – a Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU. The presented slides were distributed to the SSEAC.

Mrs. Dana Yarborough, Director, Center for Family Involvement at the Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU, presented on the Center's Family to Family Network. The Network, an initiative funded in part by the Department, provides emotional, informational and disability systems navigational support to families of children with special health care needs and disabilities through a cadre of trained, volunteer Family Navigators. Network hubs currently operate in the Southwest, Piedmont, Hampton Roads, Petersburg, Richmond and Quantico regions and are supported by 40 Family Navigators, two cultural liaisons, and a military specialist.

Ms. Frangenberg then spoke about Anecdotal – State of the State for Latino Families of Children with Disabilities. The information contained in this presentation was a compilation of situations that have taken place here in Virginia. They are experiences that families, school personnel and service providers have shared with the Latino Cultural Liaison at the Center for Family Involvement at VCU. First, the difference between the terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" is clarified, followed by some brief statistics of the worldwide distribution of Spanish speakers.

Language has been identified as one of the greatest barriers to accessing the educational and healthcare systems. Families, children, teachers, a school nurses, related service providers and school leadership are all being affected by the challenges that having LEP (limited English proficient) families present in the delivery of special education services. A few examples were presented, taken from specific situations that have taken place in Virginia. The examples and challenges described point to the imminent need to develop a statewide guidance document that addresses and unifies policy on the provision of interpretation and translation services for children and their families. The presentation ended with a suggested plan of action to develop such a document, citing specific national resources. It was also mentioned that the Virginia Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services has specifically offered to collaborate with VDOE to develop a curriculum to train educational interpreters.

Virginia Severe Disabilities Consortium

Dr. Michael Behrmann and Dr. Marci Kinas Jerome, George Mason University

Dr. Behrmann and Dr. Jerome presented information on the Virginia Severe Disabilities Consortium. The presentation described the development and implementation history of the consortium which includes GMU, VCU, RSU, NSU and UVA. The presentation addressed the instructional strategies used in distance education delivery and the philosophy of the program in

providing high quality, synchronous, hands on learning experiences for students. The presentations concluded with a discussion of issues currently being addressed by the consortium, including meeting the needs generated by the dramatic increases statewide of students with autism.

Public Comment

There were no public comments made at this meeting.

Presentations Continued

Alternate and Alternative Assessment Program Updates

Dr. Sharon Siler, Office of Assessment and Reporting

Dr. Sharon Siler, Lead Alternate Assessment Specialist in the Division of Student Assessment and School Improvement provided an update of Virginia alternate/alternative assessment programs.

Virginia has four alternate/alternative assessments, including:

1. Virginia Modified Achievement Standard Test (VMAST)
2. Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP)
3. Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA)
4. Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)

The creation of these assessments is evidence of Virginia's commitment to provide students with disabilities a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Program Updates are as follows:

- The VMAST will be operational for Mathematics starting this year (2011-2012) and will be operational for Reading in 2012-2013. A VMAST reading field test will be conducted in spring 2012. Passing VMAST scores for Algebra I and EOC reading may be used for verified credit or for the numeracy and literacy certification required for the Modified Standard Diploma.
- VSEP has been expanded to grades 3-8 mathematics for a small number of students who require an evidence-based assessment to demonstrate their knowledge and skill. All VSEP rules and scoring apply to coursework compilations submitted under the Expanded VSEP mathematics program.
- VGLA mathematics is no longer available for students with disabilities. Reading will be phased out for students with disabilities in 2012-2013. VGLA will continue to be available in Reading for LEP students and in Science, History and Writing for students with disabilities.

- The Virginia Board of Education approved a VAAP schedule for 2011-2012 similar to that of previous years. Collections of Evidence will be due in early May 2012. This year, VDOE is allowing school divisions to exercise flexibility in the submission of high school VAAP Collections of Evidence. Thirteen school divisions opted to exercise flexibility and 117 did not.

Discussion ensued which questioned how needs could be met for students who need multiple sessions might be addressed, the differences between the on-line and paper versions, and differences between the regular on-line version and the VMAST.

Lunch

Presentations Continued

Virginia Aspiring Leaders Program

Dr. Pat Addison, Consultant

Dr. Addison gave an introduction on the Aspiring Leaders program and then six groups gave presentations on the following topics: Leading self; Leading others; Leading learning; Leading implementation of policies, laws and regulation; Managing operations and resources; and Leading results.

Ms. Hermann asked if there was a list of the school divisions that have not had representation in the program so that they could be contacted. Dr. Addison noted that Mr. Eisenberg could provide the list.

Ms. Cynthia Bauer asked about the internships. Dr. Addison said that the Aspiring Leaders sign up for two internships – a 3-day winter internship, and a 40-hour summer internship. They choose the departments where they wish to intern.

Constituency Reports

Name	Report
Adam Amick	absent
Eva Aikens	absent
Judy Averill	The Virginia Transition Forum will take place in Roanoke Virginia, March 12-14 2012. This conference brings together students, parents, educators, rehabilitative professionals and others to guide youth with disabilities to achieve successful employment and life outcomes.
Cynthia Bauer	oral
Jusolyn Bradshaw	None
Michael Carrasco	oral
Christina Draper	absent
Christy Evanko	<p>Colonial Heights asked if there would be funding for all-inclusive playgrounds and if there would be funding for additional training in working with children with special needs. Mr. Cox responded that there will be funding cuts in the future as the federal funds are cut, so those items are not likely to be funded.</p> <p>Hanover County held a “411 Fair” to highlight services for children with disabilities and their families. There were over 120 attendees, 30 people representing 21 area agencies, and 9 volunteers.</p>
Jackie Fagan	absent
Fran Goforth	The CASE conference was held in Williamsburg last month and many directors were impressed with the overall conference and presentations. The directors would like to thank the Virginia Department of Education for their continued support for RtI with the division –wide cohorts that were selected. Directors continue to be concerned about the budget for the 2012-13 school year.
Kathryn Hayfield	oral
Melodie Henderson	none
Sandra Hermann	oral
Mona Holmes	absent
Lori Jackson	oral
Bernadette Jones	absent
Scott Kizner	absent

Name	Report
Darren Minarik	<p>I sent the email below on November 17th to all college and university faculty who were identified as program leaders for special education in their schools</p> <p>I am sending out this email to let you all know that I was recently appointed to serve as the higher education representative for the State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC). Our previous rep, Mike Behrman, finished out his term this past summer. Thank you Mike for your service.</p> <p><i>The SSEAC is organized and functions in accordance with state and federal requirements. The Committee's functions include the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>defining plans for identifying children with disabilities;</i> • <i>formulating and developing long-range plans that will provide services for children with disabilities;</i> • <i>determining the unmet needs of children with disabilities within the state;</i> • <i>developing priorities and strategies for meeting identified needs of children with disabilities;</i> • <i>reviewing and making public comment on the State Improvement Plan, the procedures for the distribution of funds under Part B of IDEA, and any rules or regulations proposed by the state regarding the education of children with disabilities;</i> • <i>review findings and decisions regarding due process procedures for parents and children;</i> • <i>advise the state in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports; and</i> • <i>prepare and submit an annual report to the Virginia Board of Education.</i> <p><i>Retrieved from http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/committees_advisory/special_ed/</i></p> <p><i>During our quarterly meetings I'm asked to briefly share the work being done by Virginia's higher education institutions, successes or concerns regarding teacher preparation programs, and any other issues we feel are important for the public record, including any comments you all may have regarding minutes from the previous meeting. I'm inviting you all to contact me with any information you feel is relevant for the SSEAC public record. Minutes can be found at the Website I referenced above.</i></p> <p><i>The next quarterly meeting is December 8-9, 2011. If you have any information you wish to share, please send it to me no later than December 2, 2011. My plan is to send out an email request such as this one month prior to each quarterly meeting. There is no requirement for you all to provide comment, but I am here as our liaison if you wish to address any issues or share any insights.</i></p> <p><i>If you have received this email in error and wish to be removed from this list, please reply to this email and let me know who would be the contact or contacts at your institution. I know this list may not be comprehensive or completely accurate but I hope to have a strong working list by this spring.</i></p> <p><i>Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions!</i></p>
Jennifer O'Berry Ham	oral
(PEATC) Carolyn Beckett	oral

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Friday, December 9, 2011

SSEAC Members					
	Present	Absent		Present	Absent
Eva Aikens		x	Sandra Hermann	x	
Judy Averill	x		Mona Holmes		x
Darren Minarik	x		Lori Jackson	x	
Michael Carrasco	x		Bernadette Jones		x
Adam Amick		x	Jackie Fagan		x
Christina Draper		x	Jusolyn Bradshaw	x	
Christy Evanko	x		Jennifer O’Berry-Ham	x	
Fran Goforth	x		Scott Kizner		x
Melodie Henderson	x		Cynthia Bauer		x
Kathryn Hayfield	x				

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Staff			
Doug Cox	Suzanne Creasey	Susan Trulove	
Cathy Pomfrey	John Eisenberg	Pat Haymes	

Guests			
Beth Haw	PEATC-Carolyn Beckett		

Call to Order

Ms. Lori Jackson called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee's Meetings

Members of the Ad Hoc Subcommittees met.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee's Reports

Response to Intervention (Rti)

Ms. Lori Jackson reported.

The RtI Sub-committee met under the direction of Susan Trulove (DOE). We were given a refresher on what RtI is and its implementation for the new members of the sub-committee. The sub-committee was briefed on the current RTI cohort schools. The current cohort had their first training session of the year November 29-30, 2011, in Richmond, with 19 of the 23 cohort divisions attending (120 participants). Participants for cohort training sessions are the central office RtI leadership team members and principals. Larry Tihen, retired Superintendent from Lee County, Florida, was brought in as a presenter. Under Tihen's supervision, RtI was successfully implemented in Lee County, a division of more than 80,000 students in grades K-12. The next cohort training will take place Jan 31-Feb 1 at the Hotel Roanoke. There are currently 4 RtI coaches, who are paid contractors by the DOE to oversee the cohorts.

A new guidance document is in the pipeline, and there has been a contract to provide web based training modules that should be online by the end of the 2012 school year so that divisions can begin using them during their summer professional education training days.

October saw a higher education conference called "Connecting RtI to Higher Education." 20 of 37 Virginia's institutions of higher education (IHE) were in attendance. It is very important to have that IHEs understand RtI so that they will be able to educate future educators on the components of successful RtI implementation.

The name RtI will be replaced in Virginia with the moniker VTSS which stands for the Virginia Tiered System of Supports.

Interactive, Inc. is still contracted to oversee the progress of the implementation of the pilot and cohort divisions and schools. Dr. Dale Mann of Interactive, Inc. will give a three year update to the SSEAC at a later date.

Personnel Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Mr. Michael Carrasco reported.

The personnel subcommittee discussed the following three items:

1. Issues related to the sustainability of the Severe Disabilities Consortium with the retirement of Dr. Martha Snell and participation of the University of Virginia,
2. Discussion of future funding issues related to supporting teacher preparation programs vs. continued funding of tuition reimbursement programs,
3. Discussion was had about the new teacher, principal and superintendent evaluation systems, including the new resources that are now available on the VDOE website. Additional information was requested by member at future meetings.
4. The higher education representative questioned possible effects of evaluation systems on school systems accepting pre-service teachers in subjects/grade levels where there is SOL testing. Will evaluation systems support acceptance of pre-service teachers as part of the evaluation process to counteract potential concerns over student performance on SOL tests in classrooms containing a pre-service teacher. Has the state considered this issue when teacher evaluations are tied to student performance? Also, how will co-teaching teams be considered in the evaluation systems in terms of accountability?

Constituency Involvement Ad Hoc Subcommittee

Ms. Sandy Hermann reported.

Dr. Suzanne Creasey shared the status of regional meetings to include the LSEAC chair and Director of Special Education including budget, proposed locations, and month, and the draft agenda. Modifications to the agenda were made. Ms. Christy Evanko and Ms. Sandy Hermann agreed to develop a facilitator's guide for use during the breakout session. Dr. Creasey offered to develop a PowerPoint for use in the introductory session and will send out (to the SSEAC Parent Representatives) the regulations that apply. It was also agreed that the regulations pertaining to the SSEAC and LSEAC will be provided as a handout at the meetings.

Bylaws Discussion

Ms. Pat Haymes brought copies of the changes to the bylaws suggested by the committee.

There was discussion about the end of terms and whether members who took over terms that had not ended would be able to serve two consecutive terms. Mr. Cox said that in the past, unexpired terms were not filled, but terms were started early. The committee agreed to continue this practice as it was approved by the Board of Education, and the sentence "A member filling the unexpired

term of a member who resigned or was removed from the SSEAC may be appointed to another consecutive three year term.” was struck.

There was discussion as to how many meetings can be missed before removal efforts are made. It was decided that the term “meeting” in the bylaws referred to the two-day event.

Ms. Melodie Henderson made a motion to vote at this meeting. Ms. Christy Evanko seconded the motion. The bylaws were voted upon and approved unanimously with the changes discussed.

Ms. Sandy Hermann recommended that the nominating committee meet to nominate the fourth at-large member (as referenced in the newly approved bylaws to fill the vacancy left by Dr. Mike Behrmann’s retirement). Only one member of the nominating subcommittee was present so it was postponed to the next meeting and will be built into the next agenda.

Public Comment Review

There were no public comments from Thursday to review.

Future Agenda Items

Ms. Hermann suggested that the committee discuss the VMAST and the inability to take it over multiple days. Mr. Darren Minarik suggested breaking the test into 5 sections or so and then giving the test in sections so that it can be taken over numerous days. Mr. Cox noted that there may be issues with the Pearson platform and extraneous costs. He suggested adding someone who is a technical expert on the test to the next agenda.

Additional future agenda items:

- More info on bus aides and their training, whether or not they are considered paraprofessionals; also someone from transportation department to talk about guidelines
- New speech and language guidelines, as well as distance therapy for speech – approved by Medicaid – incorporate both issues
- Principal and Superintendent new evaluation overview
- Legislation changes – Mr. Cox to send out info to the SSEAC to let them know what legislation will be discussed
- Effective School-wide Discipline Initiative update

Future Meeting Schedule and Locations

- March 22-23, 2012
- June 21-22, 2012
- September 27-28, 2012
- December 6-7, 2012

Meeting Adjourned

Ms. Sandy Hermann motioned to adjourn, and Ms. Fran Goforth seconded. The meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m. As agenda items had been discussed, there was no need for an Executive Committee meeting.

The Parent Representatives in attendance met with Ms. Suzanne Creasey to discuss the upcoming regional meetings.

Meeting Attendance

MEETING DATE	2/10	4/10	7/10	10/10	2/11	4/11	7/11	9/11	12/11												
THURSDAY/FRIDAY		T	F	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	F	T	F
Eva Aikens						A	A			A	A			A	A						
Adam Amick														A	A						
Judy Averill			A	A						A	A										
Jusolyn Bradshaw														A							
Michael Carrasco													A	A							
Christina Draper										A	A			A	A						
Christy Evanko														A							
Fran Goforth																					
Melodie Henderson		A	A							A	A			A	A						
Sandra Hermannn										A	A										
Scott Kizner											A										
Mona Holmes			A	A										A	A	A	A				
Lori Jackson										A	A			A							
Bernadette Jones		A	A			A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A				
Jackie Fagan														A	A						
Jennifer O'Berry-Ham			A	A										A	A						
Darren Minarik														A							

MEETING CANCELLED - SNOW