



Deborah Gist  
Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Shepard Building  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

### ***Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee***

*The Rhode Island Special Education Advisory Committee is an active voice in advocating that all students receive superior educational services enabling each student to achieve optimum success throughout the school years and into the world of adulthood.*

**February 25, 2010**

**6:30pm – 8:30pm**

New England Institute of Technology  
Hall of Fame Room  
2500 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Present:** Jeffrey Aubin, Wilfred Beaudoin, Ann Brockmann, Mike Burk, Amy Canario, Barbara Chadwick, Sheila Collins, Joanne Eichinger, Kathy Kuiper, Dorothy McDonough, Jane Morein, Marty Morris, JoAnn Nannig, Pamela O'Brien, Ralph Orleck, Walter Sage, Lisa Shea, Paul Stroup Jr., Sharon Terzian

**Absent:** Denise Ahern, Deborah Ambeault\*, Kim Chouinard\*, Marie Cummiskey\*, Steven DiBiasio\*, Deborah Garneau, Deborah Goessling\*, Craig Levis, Kelly Marie Martin, Richard Moore, Robin Pacheco, Mary Pendergast\*, Kellie Piche-Tatro, Sharon Schubert, Jane Slade, Louise Tillinghast

\*sent advanced notice

**RIDE:** Melissa MacDonald

**Guests:** none

**Call to Order, Welcome, Agenda Review,**

#### **Announcements:**

- Ralph included in the member's packet a letter he received from the ODL regarding a work group for the development of guidance for identification of students with Emotional Disabilities and Other Health Impairments. RISEAC is looking for someone to serve as representative on that work group. (Kathy Kuiper indicated she would be willing to serve in that capacity.)
- There will be a leadership forum led by Peggy Hayden, consultant, which will be a workshop 101 and network opportunity. Six advisory groups have been invited to sit-in. It will be a networking opportunity to assist each other in running advisory groups. No charge. Tentative date will be a full day, May 11 or 12.

- The Membership group according to our by-laws needs to solicit for new members as approximately 5-6 people have terms that will be expiring at end of this year (Steve DiBiasio, Richard Moore, Jane Morein, Sheila Collins, Ralph Orleck). The Membership group needs to know if any other current members will be terminating their membership. A possible ad hoc committee needs to nominate officers for next year. These candidates could attend the leadership forum mentioned previously.

**Approval of the January 21, 2010 Meeting Minutes:** A few spelling corrections were made as well as a correction in the discrepancy of dates about the Autism meetings. The minutes were then unanimously approved as amended.

### **Director's Report:**

- Attached is a written report from Ken Swanson shared with the membership by Melissa MacDonald.
- There was some follow-up discussion about parental signatures which are no longer part of the IEP document. Some members still have a question about the legality of the document without any signatures. It was suggested that with the "re-opening" of the regulations, the RISEAC could take that opportunity to present its advice regarding this area. Use of the issue form may be an option for this. Several questions were posed during the discussion:  
 Q – Did RI originally have a required parental signature?  
 Q – Is the IEP a legal document without any signature?  
 Q – Will the RISEAC get a copy of the proposed changes in the regulations in a timely manner?  
 Q – Has there been a change in requests for due process – any trends since use of the new IEP form? Could the RISEAC have an update next month to include the call center data?
- Commissioner Gist is scheduled to attend the RISEAC meeting in May. It was suggested that perhaps this concern (above) could be an additional question to add to the compiled list which we will present to the Commissioner.
- Additional question for Ken was from Ralph who attended an adult ed. conference with Roy Seitsinger. At that meeting, Roy indicated a re-organization of RIDE. Ralph would be interested to hear from Ken how this will impact delivery of services for students with special needs.

### **Old Business**

- **Upcoming meeting guest confirmations**
  - David Sienko is scheduled to speak to the RISEAC at the April 29<sup>th</sup> meeting about "gray-area" kids, drop-out rates, and High School graduation reform.
  - Commissioner Gist is scheduled to speak to the RISEAC at the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Members are requested to review the questions as developed and included in the packet.
  - The March meeting agenda has yet to be developed and is open for suggestions regarding any possible speakers/guests. It was suggested that during the work group break out sessions, members could discuss and report back on any ideas for March.
- **Thank you to Dr. Wood** - A copy of the letter to Dr. Wood for her presentation of the State Performance Plan to the RISEAC is included in the members' packets.

- **Physical restraints** – Dot shared some information about a call from a parent regarding use of a chair with a belt that was being used to help students to attend and not only for its established use for personal safety and health reasons. Dot spoke with Alice Woods who checked on the chair's use. The response from those at RIDE was surprise at the improper use of the device. The concern was that laws/regulations needed clarity about when/how the device could be used. The suggestion was made that the RISEAC could make a possible request from RIDE's legal team to craft language for the use of this device, and in its capacity, RISEAC could then provide advice on that language. Dot and the restraint work group will craft an issue form to address this concern.

## **New Business**

- **Medicaid Meeting**
  - Sharon shared information about a new program which has been approved – an “assisted living” program – starting as of June. Young people with disabilities could be funded up to \$ 30,000 to live with a family.
  - Task force group – They have had monthly meetings. Recommendations for budget cuts as well as cutting rates for hospitals have been made. It appears that all the work done by the work group has been virtually ignored by DHS. Sharon indicated that any comments or input are still being accepted. Comments can be forwarded to Sharon.
- **Family Voices Conference** – Kathy Kuiper encouraged parents to attend. Scholarship money is available. Deadline was March 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- **Procedural safeguards work group** – The group has completed its work and a one-page draft for layout is done. Pam reports that progress has been made.
- **David Sienko** will update RISEAC on transportation when he comes in April. A request was also made that David speak about alternative pathways in his update on gray-area kids, those not eligible for alternate assessment but who will not “pass” NECAP. What is happening with diploma and graduation?
- **Parent Survey update** – Melissa reported that the survey will be going out on March 29, 2010. A report out from last year's survey was completed in November and action plans were developed by the districts. There is a new FAQ form as well as a new Spanish form of the Power point presentation. There will be a pre-mailing alert as an extra reminder about 2 weeks prior to the actual mailing of the survey. There will be a two week return time as well. A copy of a “backpack reminder” was given to schools to use. There were 2 screenings to check on accuracy of the current student address lists. Through those screenings, they were able to obtain 500 more addresses. There are/will be PSA's, an ad in the Providence Journal and ads on RIPTA buses to promote the survey.
- **Military opt-out** – The work group is still waiting on the report about each district's policy.
- **Drop-out** - The work group has requested that RISEAC members look at the Race to the Top request which is on RIDE's website to see how/if students with special needs are included.
- **March presentations** – A couple of suggestions surfaced. Melissa will check if Kim C. could give information on Title I and Homelessness. Ralph suggested that RISEAC members who are professionals could give an update on their own area.
- **Basic Education Plan** – Members were encouraged to review this which is available on the website at RIDE.

**Public Comment** – The College Planning Forum will be held at Providence College on March 20<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. Brochures were distributed and more are available through JoAnn Nannig. The forum assists parents in planning for college.

Anyone interested in joining the Membership Committee should let Sheila Collins know.

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

2/25/10 Recording Secretary:  
Ann Brockmann

RISEAC website: [www.riseac.org](http://www.riseac.org)

**Next Meeting: March 18, 2010**

**Telephone** (401)222-4600    **Fax** (401)222-6178    **TTY** 800-745-5555    **Voice** 800-745-6575  
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