



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

Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

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.

December 20, 2012

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

RI Parent Information Network
1210 Pontiac Avenue Cranston, RI 02920

Meeting Minutes

Present: Ann Brockmann, Cris Brodeur, Amy Canario, Jennifer Connolly, Susan Donovan, Deborah Garneau, Rosemary Gomes, Patti Hien, Craig Levis, Cynthia Notarianni, Pamela O'Brien, Mary Pendergast, Robert Wall

Absent: Donna Alqassar*, Lori Barden*, Kate Barnas*, Wilfred Beaudoin*, Princess Sirleaf Bomba*, Eileen Botelho*, Lynn Bouvier-Kapiskas*, Allyson Dupont*, Joanne Eichinger*, Gillian Elliot Pearis*, Laura Laviano*, Melissa Moniz, JoAnn Nannig*, Robin Pacheco*, Ann Rudman*, Louise Tillinghast

RIDE/RITAP Attendees: David Sienko

Guest: Elizabeth Pinto

** Notes that prior notice was given regarding absence*

Call to Order, Welcome, Agenda Review: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Susan welcomed everyone and reviewed some brief announcements.

Announcements:

- The Parent Conference: Transition 101 on November 30th had over 170 parents who attended. The night before, Nov. 29th, also had about 170 people in attendance for the screening of Dan Habib's film "Who Cares About Kelsey?"
- The next College Forum for students with disabilities, the 9th forum, is scheduled for March 9, 2013 to be held at Providence College. The specific location on the PC campus has yet to be determined.

Approval of Minutes: Since there was not a quorum present, the approval of minutes was tabled to the end of the meeting in case more members arrived to constitute a quorum. One correction was noted: Pam O'Brien indicated that she had called prior to the last meeting for an excused absence.

New Business:

Guest Speaker: Alice Woods with update on ED/OHI (Emotional Disturbed/Other Health Impaired)

workgroup- The following are highlights of her presentation:

- The workgroup will produce guidance, not policy
- ED now represents 1.54% of RI students which is 8.7% of all students receiving special education
As a point of comparison, the following rates are for every 10,000 students:
National-63 Rhode Island-154 Hispanic Rhode Island-180 Black Rhode Island-341
- Seven (7) districts were identified as disproportionate
- Workgroup made up of various representatives
- Topics to be included in guidance:
 - Rationale
 - Definition of ED
 - Social emotional & behavioral supports through RTI perspective:
 - Shared responsibility
 - “CORE” Tier 1 strategies
 - Problem-solving strategies
 - Organization/whole group strategies
 - Referral
 - Functional behavioral analysis (FBA)
 - Evaluation process
 - Interventions
 - Etc.
- Looking at guidance from other states (i.e. Wisconsin & Florida)
- Cultural awareness to be embedded within document (to include examples)
- Format of “document” – will be web-based (for flexibility of order of sections, portability, access)
- Timeline to include review with Special Education Directors in February & to be up and running for 2013-14 school year

A period for Q & A with members of the RISEAC followed Alice Woods presentation.

Guest Speaker: Midge Sabatini on Rhode Island Bullying policy and resources – The following are highlights of her presentation:

- The statewide policy is available on the RIDE website – THRIVE – through the coordinated school health program.
- 2004 – the initial school bullying policy
- 2011 – old law repealed, new law Safe School Act; some of the major changes include:
 - ALL schools in RI are subject to this law
 - A number of descriptors have changed such as bullying to include cyber-bullying
 - Language is aligned with US Dept. of Justice
 - Includes social climate. i.e. to include social-emotional learning
 - The law must be included in district safety policies and strategic plans, and must be included in all school handbooks
 - Includes clearer explanations about reporting
 - Includes disciplinary actions to insure discipline is aligned with bullying incident
- Q&A period followed her presentation. Some points covered:
 - No funding available to implement policy (unfunded mandate)
 - Districts do not have to provide professional development (PD) around the policy
 - PD is available around bullying and a tutorial will shortly be available (Thrive e-academy)

Director's Report:

- RIDE participated in the Youth at Risk Coalition forum on truancy prevention. The forum included a panel which discussed effective and positive practices in Rhode Island.
- The presentation by Dr. Joy Zabala from the National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials originally scheduled for Nov. 1 has been rescheduled for Thursday, Jan. 10 from 8-10 am at the New England Institute of Technology. This is part of the recent award for direct technical assistance received by Rhode Island for developing accessible materials. This is an opportunity for special education administrators, curriculum directors, and teachers to learn about improving access to instructional materials for students with print disabilities (visual and learning disabilities). This is a free presentation for the RI community with a capacity of 50 persons. You can register at <http://tinyuri.com/cyp7ony>.
- OSEP funds new national center – SWIFT (School Wide Integrated Framework for Transformation). The SWIFT Center will focus on improving the knowledge and skills of classroom educators to implement inclusive school wide reform; increase the capacity of schools to implement fully inclusive reform in academic, extracurricular, and school-based settings; and increase family and community engagement in school wide reform. There is a website that only has a little information posted currently, but will have more – <http://www.swiftschools.org/>.
- Parent Support Network (PSN) will host an Advocacy Workshop for families new to the process of advocating or for families in need of a “refresher”. This free workshop is intended for parents and family members and will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 15 at the Parent Support Network in Johnston. Call 467-6855 to register. The information covered includes the role of an advocate, the importance of documenting information, and basic communication skills.
- OSCAS finally received instructions from OSEP for completing the SPP/APR (State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report) and states have until Feb. 15 to submit it, since the instructions were delayed in being sent out. Some of the changes had to do with reducing paperwork, redundancies and how responses are reported back to states. Susan Wood will share those more completely when she presents the SPP/APR to RISEAC in January.

Old Business:

- Presentation of the RISEAC Annual Report and meeting with the Commissioner is scheduled for Jan. 3 at 11:30 am. Sue Donovan and Mary Pendergast will present on behalf of RISEAC to Commissioner Gist.
- Work Groups were asked to submit any changes to their action plan to Mary. Next month the groups should be able to meet in breakout sessions.
- Members were asked to respond to the Agenda Listserve reminder rather than individual RISEAC leadership emails so that a paper trail of names can be established and no members will be omitted when they provide notice of their upcoming absence.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Bob and seconded by Pam to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Recording Secretary: Ann L. Brockmann

RISEAC website: www.riseac.org