



Ken Wagner
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.

October 15, 2015

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

RI Parent Information Network
1210 Pontiac Avenue Cranston, RI 02920

Present: Edward Angilly, Sharon Bissonnette, Eileen Botelho, Cris Brodeur, Jennifer Connolly, Susan Donovan, Cindy Duckworth, Gillian Elliott Pearis, Deborah Garneau, Rosemary Gomes, Patti Hien, Barbara Irons, Heather Kennedy, Robert Mattis, Jennifer Munroe, JoAnn Nannig, Robin Pacheco, Douglas Pierson, Brian Quigg, Paige Ramsdell, Maria Silvestri-Golotto, Sharon Ursini-Quimby

Absent: Tarin Byrne*, Cherie Cruz, Lori DiPina, and Jennifer Gladding*

**denotes that prior notice was given regarding absence*

RIDE/RITAP Attendees: David Sienko & Beth Pinto

Call to Order, Welcome, and Agenda Review: The meeting was called to order at **6:05 pm** by Sue Donovan. Sue welcomed all members, reviewed the agenda.

Announcements:

- Sue Donovan announced that the **2014-2015 Annual Report** has been finalized; the leadership team will follow up with the Commissioner's office to set up a meeting to review the report with him.
- Deb Garneau summarized the upcoming **middle school level Dare to Dream** event

New Business:

- **Ruth Gallucci** of RIDE/OSCAS provided a presentation to RISEAC membership on the **EI/ECSE Comprehensive Assessment System** which include a project overview, described the child outcomes measurement component and informed the group on child outreach screening. Questions and discussion were interwoven in the discussion and Ruth requested an additional opportunity to present further details at a future RISEAC meeting.
- Sue Donovan reminded the group of a letter that RISEAC had developed in the past to be sent in order to reach out to all **Rhode Island legislators** to introduce them to our advisory group and help them become familiar with our mission and goals; Sue asked for feedback on the idea of updating this letter in order to send it on an annual basis as a regular practice. **Motion** by Doug Pearson that RISEAC do this annual outreach to legislators by sending a letter in late January each year (following any elections, so that newly elected officials will receive) **Seconded** by Sharon Bissonnette. All approved. **Motion passed.**

Director's Report:

RISEAC October Director's Report

1. PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day – was October 9th

Learning about PANDAS/PANS (Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections) now can make a life changing difference later. Multiple states have declared October 9th PANS/PANDAS Awareness Day. Please take a moment to explore these new resources: NEPANS/PANDAS School Resources including free key facts posters, symptoms in school and accommodations, information on health care plans, excused absences, home bound services, research links and more –

<http://nepandasparents.com/schoolresources.html>

New PANDAS/PANS Fact Sheet <http://pandasnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-PNETWORK-fact.pdf>

Children's Book on PANDAS <http://pandasnetwork.org/new-childrens-book-on-pandas-and-treatment/>

The link between Anorexia and PANDAS http://nepandasparents.com/images/NEPANS_Anorexia.pdf

Research base: Toufexis Megan D., Hommer Rebecca, Gerardi Diana M., Grant Paul, Rothschild Leah, D'Souza Precilla, Williams Kyle, Leckman James, Swedo Susan E., and Murphy Tanya K.. Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology. February 2015, 25(1): 48-56. doi:10.1089/cap.2014.0063.

Parent Support Group email: r.i.pandasparents@gmail.com

If you have questions or need assistance obtaining further resources, contact Emily.Klein@ride.ri.gov (or at 222-8985).

2. US Department of Justice Consent Decree Update

The following events are planned to continue to support implementation of the Consent Decree:

Middle School - Career Development Scope & Sequence: From Awareness to ITWE's - Friday October 23, 2015

12:00-2:30 pm, West Bay Collaborative Main Conference Room - This training will be similar to the Career Development Scope & Sequence for high school students but this training will be targeted for middle school personnel. Please see the attached flyer for registration information.

Dare to Dream for Middle School Students will be held on Nov 17, 2015 from 9:30-12:00 at the Showcase Cinema in Warwick, RI. This ½ day high energy and interactive event is geared toward Middle School students ages 12-14 that have a chronic health condition or an IEP. The session will feature national motivational speakers Eric Rowles and Monique Johnson from Leading to Change (www.leadingtochange.com) who will highlight the importance of students being involved in the IEP process. Teachers and students will leave with a delicious boxed lunch, the new updated Rhode Island Youth Transition Workbook and strategies to take advantage of all the support available in Middle School. Middle School educators are encouraged to register their students for this new event under the Dare to Dream Initiative. Any questions, please contact Kathy Kuiper at Kathleen.Kuiper@health.ri.gov or 222-5887. See attached flyer for Registration link.

Please note: Dare to Dream High School will take place May 25, 2016 and that event will be reserved for students in High School and Transition Programs. Sponsored by the RI Department of Health, RI Department of Education, RI Regional Transition Centers and RI Parent Information Network.

3. Assistive Technology Conference

The AT Conference of New England is on **November 19 & 20, 2015**. The Early Bird registration ends September 30th. The website for the conference is <http://www.assistivetechconference.com>. Please share this announcement with your teams.

4. Recent OSEP News

OSEP has released a handful of guidance and news items recently. I have provided the topics, correspondence from OSEP and links below.

Music Therapy as a Related Service

Melody Musgrove sent the following to State Directors on September 21, 2015:

I am writing to address questions we have received regarding the inclusion of music therapy as a related service under section 602(26) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and §300.34(a) of the Part B regulations. Related services means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Attached for your reference is OSEP's June 9, 2000 Letter to Farbman. (Note that Letter to Farbman includes citations to the 1999 Part B regulations.) This letter reiterates the Department's long-standing position that the list of services in the definition of related services is not exhaustive and may include other developmental, corrective, or supportive services (such as artistic and cultural programs, art, music, and dance therapy) if they are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. If the IEP Team determines that music therapy is an appropriate related service for a child, the Team's determination must be reflected in the IEP, and the service must be provided at public expense and at no cost to the parent. This position was restated in the 2006 Part B regulations at 71 Fed. Reg. 46539, 46569 and in Question E-1 of the document "Questions and Answers On Individualized Education Programs, Evaluations, and Reevaluations" September 2011 available at <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CQaCorner%2C3%2C>

Inclusion in Early Childhood Education

On September 14, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released a [policy statement](#) highlighting the importance of making sure that all young children with disabilities have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the new policy statement in Kansas City, Missouri, during the first stop of his back-to-school bus tour. The policy statement sets a vision for [States](#), [local educational agencies](#), schools, and public and private early childhood programs to strengthen and increase the number of inclusive high-quality early childhood programs nationwide. As the country continues to move forward on the critical task of expanding access to high-quality early childhood programs for all young children, it is imperative that children with disabilities be included in these efforts. The Departments crafted the guidance with the input of early learning professionals, families and early learning stakeholders. The policy statement also includes free resources for states, local districts, early childhood personnel and families. You can find more information regarding the policy statement on ED's Early Learning [webpage](#) or view the press release [here](#).

DOJ Releases Testing Guidance

The Justice Department (DOJ) issued technical assistance on September 8 regarding the obligation of testing entities, both private and public, to ensure that the test scores of individuals with disabilities accurately reflect the individual's aptitude, achievement, or the skill that the exam purports to measure, rather than his or her disability. The document discusses who is entitled to testing accommodations, what types of testing accommodations must be provided, and what documentation may be required of the person requesting testing accommodations. The document also discusses prohibited flagging policies and how test scores for test-takers receiving disability-related accommodations should be reported. The [guidance document](#) is available on the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) website. The DOJ also manages a toll-free ADA Information Line at 1-800-514-0301 or 1-800-514-0383.

English Learners with Disabilities – Additional Guidance

States and local educational agencies (LEAs) have raised questions to the Department related to the participation of ELs with disabilities in the annual State ELP assessment and the inclusion of their ELP assessment results in Title III Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). Accordingly, OESE and OSERS are issuing the attached guidance to help States and LEAs understand how Part B of the IDEA and Titles I and III of the ESEA address the inclusion of ELs with disabilities in annual State ELP assessments. Attached you will find the initial letter from OSERS and OESE, the initial Q and A document shared previously (and covered in the OSCAS joint ELL and SE Director Forum last year) and the recent addendum Q and A document.

5. New report highlights importance of relationships in keeping students in school

A new report from Grad Nation and the America's Promise Alliance, "Don't Quit on Me: What Young People Who Left School Say About the Power of Relationships," looks at some of the reason why students leave high school without a diploma – and what we can do to keep high-school students in school. The authors of the report surveyed nearly 3,000 young people and spoke with about 150 to reach their conclusions. The essence of their findings: Relationships matter, but a single caring adult cannot be the sole support. For a look at the report and at the Grad Nation website, go to:

Full report:

http://gradnation.org/sites/default/files/FullReport%20DontQuit_2.pdf

Executive summary:

http://gradnation.org/sites/default/files/DQOM_Execsummary.pdf

Website:

<http://gradnation.org/report/dont-quit-me>

6. RIDE issues Commissioner's decisions on home schooling, schooling out of residency zone

Homeschooled student is entitled to attend on a part-time basis career-preparation program offered at career-and-technical center

<http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2015/012-15%20B.%20Doe%20%20v.%20South%20Kingstown%20School%20Committee%209-2015.pdf>

Student is not entitled to attend a school outside of his residency zone because of insufficient evidence to establish one of the policy exceptions for issuance

http://www2.ride.ri.gov/applications/RideDirectory/DOCS/2015/013-15_%20B._%20Doe_v._Cranston_091415.pdf

7. EDChat (sent out on list)

The chat will take place on Sunday, November 22nd at 8pm at the hashtag #edchatri . If you are new to twitter chats, the website tweetchat can make it super easy-just enter the hashtag and write your responses, it does the rest. <http://tweetchat.com/>



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The questions drafted so far include: 1. Define parent engagement (e.g. versus parent involvement) 2. What "works" (acc to research) for parent engagement? 3. Is the engaging something WE do (school) or something THEY do (parents)? 4. What obstacles prevent us from accomplishing authentic parent engagement? 5. What data could we use to evaluate our current parent engagement/evaluate progress? 6. What practices lead to more authentic parent engagement? 7. How can systems support consistent parent engagement?

For more information contact Nicole Bucka, Education Consultant-Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered System of Supports at Northern RI Collaborative. Cell (909)553-068 Twitter @nbucka

8. State Systemic Improvement Plan - Update

OSCAS staff will be putting the finishing touches on the SSIP Implementation Plan and hosting stakeholder opportunities to review and input in November.

Old Business:

- **Update on Strategic Planning Event:** Sue Donovan reviewed the September 19, 2015 day long RISEAC strategic planning event that took place at Save the Bay and was facilitated by Ellen Reinhardt. Sue informed the group about the results of the feedback survey that each participant had completed and summarized the success of the event, the overall satisfaction with the facilitator and announced the three priority areas that RISEAC work groups will focus on the for the 2015-2016 year: Multiple Pathways, Assessments and Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

Advisory Time: Jennifer Connolly acknowledged the value of the planned improved screening of early childhood students (such as DLL) that was described by Ruth during the EI/ECSE presentation but expressed concerns about the LEA's ability to serve students who are now going to be identified during the more sophisticated screening process; districts will see an increase in the number of students to serve and Jennifer wanted to discuss what supports might be provided in order to assist. A discussion followed and the general conclusion

reached is that LEA's have always had the obligation to serve these students and that there is work to be done in order to establish a strategy to serve them.

Work Group Action Plan Review: The three workgroups met to review and finalize work plans. Members who were not at the Strategic Planning event where the teams were formed and the plans were drafted were invited to join whichever of the three topics that they had an interest in, and their names were added to the workplans as well as updates of any action steps completed.

Public Comment: None

Motion to adjourn made by Sharon Bissonnette; seconded by Doug Pearson. All approved.

Meeting was adjourned: 8: 04 pm