

# **State Advisory Committee (SAC) For the Education of Children with Disabilities**

**Advising the NH Department of Education per RSA 186-C: 3-b**

**NHDOE, Room 15**

**4:30pm – 7:00pm**

**March 14, 2018**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Attended: SAC Members**

Maureen Shields (Chair), Bonnie Dunham (co-chair), Lisa Beaudoin (co-chair), Nicole Varasteh, Elizabeth Casey, Kevin Cushing, Jason Henry, Janet Reed, Kerri-Lynn Kimner, Moira Ryan, Karen Rosenberg

### **Guest(s):**

Santina Thibedeau, Administrator, Bureau of Special Education

### **Absent:**

Representative Jim Grenier, Representative Tamara Le, Senator David Watters, Senator Jay Kahn, Lisa Hinson-Hatz, Heather Worthen, Ada McDowell, Le'Ann Milinder, Kathleen Olden, Naomi Schoefeld, Lynda Thistle-Elliott, Mary Ellen Pantazis, Eileen Mullen Kennedy, Violetta Lortie, Dr. Anne Davis, Kim Carter, Mackenzie Burke, Patrick Curtin, John Curtin, Rebecca Mitchell, Donna Curtin, Tom Grinley, Michael Pinard, Heidi Cloutier, Jacqueline Kelleher, Jill Hartmann

### **Welcome, Introductions of SAC Members & Guests**

Maureen began meeting at: 4:40pm

SAC members introduced themselves and stated their role on SAC

### **Approval of Minutes**

Whereas a quorum was not available during the meeting, attending members were unable to approve the January minutes.

### **Public Comment & Announcements**

Moira mentioned that she heard that the special education committee is looking to reduce funding to states that have had no complaints (she will send additional information to the SAC). Basically, the rationale is that because things are working well in the state, the state does not need any additional federal funding. This seems to indicate that federal funding is to be reduced over time, with local sources required to provide the necessary funding.

## **Announcements:**

- Lisa Beaudoin announced 2 events being sponsored by ABLE NH (Lisa is the Director of ABLE NH). She encouraged SAC members to attend:
  - May 17, 2018 – ABLE NH is holding their annual night of fun and celebration. The event will be held at the Discovery Center, with Randy Pierce as the keynote.
  - March 31, disability dialogue and diagnosis, in Manchester from 2pm-4pm.

## **Legislative Updates**

Bonnie Dunham briefly reviewed a handout of NH bills impacting children with disabilities/special education, and the status of the bills.

- Bonnie and Santina have highlighted the following bills:
- SB 193 – establishing education freedom savings accounts for students.
- HB 1432- requiring certain schools to establish nondiscrimination and employee background check policies.
- HB 1439- relative to requirements for private schools that contract with school districts.
- HB 1637- requiring school districts to establish policies relating to suspensions and expulsions.
- HB 1744 – authorizing a parent to exempt his or her child from participating in the statewide assessment program. Keri-Lynn Kimner and Santina discussed the Pace Assessment which is being used by some districts.

Bonnie and Santina reviewed proposed revisions to Ed 1100, the NH Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities to reflect changes in language made by State and Federal laws, including removing the definitions of “highly qualified teacher” and “core academic subjects,” and changing the terms, “catastrophic special education aid” and “catastrophic aid” to “special education aid.” Since one of SAC’s responsibilities is to comment publicly on proposed changes in rules that would impact the education of children with disabilities, but SAC did not have a quorum at this meeting, SAC members present agreed to provide input to the State Board supporting the initial proposals to revise Ed 1102, Ed 1113.12, and Ed 1128, being very clear that the comments reflected the input of members present and not of a quorum of the SAC. SAC’s input would also note that the proposed revisions addressed language changes and technical issues, but would not affect current policy or practices. Bonnie offered to draft written comments to that effect and to present them at the public hearings. All SAC members present were in support.

## **Update from the Bureau of Special Education ~ Santina**

Santina presented on “The Alternate Diploma” via a PowerPoint. She also briefly discussed NHDOE initiatives that support the involvement and success of students with disabilities in the general curriculum and in general education settings:

- The Awarding of State Diplomas
- State Laws Governing Diplomas
- NH State Law 193-E Adequate Public Education, Students May Exit from Special Education
- NH State Law 186-C Special Education
- The Awarding of a High School Diploma
- The Administration of Minimum Standards in Public Education ED 306
- The Components of a Diploma
- Graduation Requirements in the Minimum Standards ED 306.27 (t)(u)
- Awarding a Diploma in the Minimum Standards ED 306.27 (q)
- School Board Policies in the Minimum Standards ED 306.04
- Another Option for the Diploma- The Alternative Diploma-Who is it for? What are the benefits?
- Assessment Standards- ESSA Requirements
- New Hampshire’s Alternate Assessment- using DLM (Dynamic Learning Maps)

- Every Student Succeeds Act
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Competency-based and Personalized Learning
- ELOs (Next Steps NH)

SAC members present agreed that Bonnie would write a draft letter endorsing these initiatives and recommending that the NHDOE provide resources to support and expand upon these and other initiatives that may increase the ability of children with disabilities to participate in all parts of the general curriculum, including advanced placement and college-prep courses, and to be educated in general education settings. The draft letter will be distributed at the next SAC meeting so that members can provide input for the final letter making recommendations to the Commissioner.

**Nominations, Old Business, Emerging Issues, Announcements, Current Events, Public Comment:**

**Old Business:**

Need to fill positions on SAC: one to two parents, home school and DHHS foster care and delivery/funding of Special Education, Santina requested Maureen reach out to Commissioner Meyers. Tom Grinley resigned. Bonnie will e-mail a list of updated members to Shari and Barbara.

**New Business:** Bonnie raised a concern with one or more private ABA programs that do not provide any special education to participating children, but that are only offering their services during the school day at the program's site. This essentially requires the parent to choose between having their child attend school to receive a FAPE, or attend the ABA program full-time. Parents who make the latter choice must either decide to withdraw their child from school to home-school the child, or to seek a waiver from the commissioner exempting their child from school attendance. Several members discussed the background, reasons, and implications of this emerging issue.

For next meeting:

- Votes to be held to approve the minutes for January and March
- A presentation will be provided on the issue of Significant Disproportionality leading to SAC voting on a recommendation or recommendations related to this issue.

7:05pm meeting adjourned.

Next meeting ~ Wednesday, April 4, 2018, 4:30pm-7:00pm ~ NHDOE, Room 15