



State Advisory Panel

For Special Education

Radha Vettraiño, Chair
radhavettraiño@bellsouth.net

Nancy Woods, Vice-chair
Nancy.woods@polk.k12.ga.us

Twin Towers East • Suite 1870 Atlanta, GA 30334

Minutes Summary
State Advisory Panel Meeting
March 24- 25, 2011
The Georgia Center – UGA Conference Center & Hotel
Athens, GA

Thursday, March 24, 2011

Time	Events	
7:00 – 8:30	BREAKFAST	
8:30 – 9:30	Welcome Panel Member Introductions and Update	Radha Vettraiño, Chair, and Nancy Woods, Vice-Chair, welcomed members. Panel members introduced themselves and updated the panel on events that occurred since the last meeting.
9:30 – 10:00	GaDOE, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports Update	<p>Radha Vettraiño, Chair, officially opened the meeting and listed the members attending the panel meeting. Attendees were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uzoma Anadu • Scott Bales • Lori Brown • Debbie Cheatham • Kathy Everrett • Deborah Fields-Harris • Jennifer Harris • Kristie Johnson-Gregory • Linda Meiring • Stephanie Moss • Sue Riner • Karen Thrasher • Lynda White • Donnie Winokur • Kyle Berry • Wendi Baird • Karen Baron • Denise Burrell • Jennifer Dickson • Dru Fentem • Cody Fontenot • Kimwana Hardnett • Leslie Lipson • Brian Mosley • Reva Pierce • Cathy Smith-Jackson • Radha Vettraiño • Natalie Whitlow • Nancy Woods <p>Panel members were asked to indicate whether they were recording the meeting. Recordings were being made by Scott Bales and Debbie Gay. Brian Mosley asked if a copy of Debbie Gay’s recording could be provided to him after the meeting.</p> <p>Debbie Gay presented an update from the Divisions for Special Education.</p>

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	<p data-bbox="678 138 1495 352">Mrs. Gay discussed the Special Education Spring Leadership Conference that was held prior to the Panel meeting and thanked panel members who attended the meeting. The technology theme of the conference was mentioned and panel members were invited to visit the Facebook page developed for the conference.</p> <p data-bbox="678 394 1495 793">A proposal to change graduation rule for rising 9th graders was discussed. End of Course Tests (EOCT) scores will be used for AYP calculation. The EOCT tests will stand for 20% of a class grade and students have to pass the class to earn credit for the course. This provides students with disabilities with the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in other ways than one test. Several rules will have to be changed by state board in order to change the graduation rule, including the assessment rule. The student assessment rule will be heard at public hearings in April and adoption of the rule would be in May. The credits that students need to graduate are not changing.</p> <p data-bbox="678 835 1495 1119">Another change approved by the state board involves math credits in high school for students who are now Juniors and Seniors, they will be able to receive core course credits if they pass Math 1 and Math 2 and Math 1 and 2 supports classes. Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) now have the option to choose between integrated math courses or more traditional math curriculum. The math standards will remain the same. The decision on which math curriculum will be a local decision.</p> <p data-bbox="678 1161 1495 1665">Common Core Standards will be rolled out next year for Georgia. Current standards in Georgia (GPS) and the Common Core Standards are closely aligned. 43 states will be utilizing the Common Core Standards. This will align standards across geographic areas. Special education will be looking at the Common Core Standards and helping to build support for common core standards for teachers. Panel members commented on the Common Core Standards and stated that they would like to learn more on how the standards will be implemented and how the panel can help push the standards out. Next year the standards will be introduced and staff trained; then the standards will be utilized with students the following year. Reading, English/Language Arts and Math standards will be introduced first.</p> <p data-bbox="678 1707 1495 1854">New assessments including the Common Core Standards are being developed by 2 consortiums. One consortium is developing an alternate assessment. Questions from the panel were answered.</p> <p data-bbox="678 1896 1495 1923">The Online IEP pilot program will be provided for the state in</p>

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		<p>2011-2012. The first rollout was introduced at the Spring Leadership conference. This program is an electronic IEP that is integrated with the state data system. Mrs. Gay explained how that would be done by systems. This system will allow systems to examine their data earlier. Comments and questions were taken from the panel.</p> <p>The Division for Special Education Supports and Services will be offering trainings this summer. The Autism Project and the Georgia Project for Assistive Technology Summer Institute will both be conducted in June.</p> <p>Questions from panel members were answered by Mrs. Gay.</p>
10:00 – 10:15	BREAK	
10:15 – 11:30	Focused Monitoring Update	<p>Julie Moilanen presented an update on the state Focused Monitoring Process.</p> <p>Mrs. Moilanen shared information from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) on how Focused Monitoring looks across the nation. She reviewed what has worked and what has not worked over the past 7 years, and how they relate to what OSEP is saying.</p> <p>Georgia has moved towards a more continuous process of monitoring. Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (GCIMP) is only one item that is done with the Focused Monitoring process. Georgia has adopted a process similar to OSEP. OSEP conducts verification visits where every state will be on a cycle for visits.</p> <p>Over the past 7 years, approximately 96 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have been visited. If the department continues to use the same indicator, some systems may never be touched. If the division used the same process as OSEP and visited 20 LEAs per year, it would take about 9 years to review, analyze and provide supports for all systems. Mrs. Moilanen requested feedback from the panel.</p> <p>Mrs. Gay stated that this is really a best practices approach, to be able to suggest resources and connect to other systems. This would give the department the advantage of working with systems that have great things going on that can be shared with other districts. A comment was made that the DOE has this information and know who is doing well, but individual LEAs don't have that information, so being able to use a collaboration model will benefit all.</p> <p>State & local determinations were discussed. Data is collected</p>

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		<p>on 20 indicators. OSEP takes information that is submitted in February and makes a determination of the state’s performance based on those indicators. The time frame of 5 years utilized with the determinations process is expiring and the department is seeking input from the panel on making adjustments to the determination rubric currently in place.</p> <p>Comments and questions were taken from the panel.</p>
11:30 – 12:00	Public Comment Session	<p>Public comment was made via telephone by Carmen Allen. The procedures statement that is read at state meetings was read prior to Ms. Allen’s public comment. Ms. Allen asked for extended time and was given eight minutes to speak.</p> <p>Ms. Allen requested that her comments be made part of the SAP meeting minutes and a part of public record. (A summary of her comments is provided in the public comment committee report.)</p>
12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH	
1:00 – 2:45	GAA and CRCT-M Assessment Update	<p>Lynn Holland and Kayse Harshaw presented an update on the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) and the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test – Modified (CRCT-M) assessment programs.</p> <p>Lynn Holland and Kayse Harshaw discussed general tests at each grade level. The types of general testing and the 2 types of alternate assessment were discussed.</p> <p>An alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) is an assessment that covers a narrower range of content and reflects a different set of expectations. The Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) is considered an AA-AAS. The GAA is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities. It is comprised of a portfolio based on progress towards the standards. The GAA meets No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates.</p> <p>The type of students that would use the GAA was discussed. These students require substantial adaptations; substantial supports to access the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), and require instruction focused on application of state standards through relevant life skills. Examples of how instruction might be adapted were given. Scoring of the GAA was discussed.</p> <p>An alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards (AA-MAS) is an assessment that covers the same grade level standards as the general assessment, with the</p>

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		<p>expectations for content mastery modified. This assessment represents grade level content, however, is not as rigorous. It may not assess off grade level standards or lower learning expectations.</p> <p>The CRCT – M was discussed. Only students in grades 3-8 with an IEP are eligible to participate in the areas of math, reading, and English/language Arts. At this time Science and Social studies are not included. The differences between CRCT and CRCT M were discussed. The same domains are included, but with 10 fewer items per content area. The CRCT-M uses test items and reading passages from the CRCT. The types of students who would utilize the CRCT-M were discussed.</p> <p>The participation guidelines were reviewed. Students may move in and out of the modified assessment depending on their performance. Students may also only need to take the modified assessment in one area.</p> <p>Questions and comments were taken from the panel.</p>
2:45 – 3:00	BREAK	
3:00 – 5:00	Successful Inclusive Strategies for Students with Disabilities	<p>Gail Wilkins, of Gail Wilkins Educational Consulting, presented on a project of Georgia’s Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Initiative. This project focusing on the process of building LRE for two students with severe and profound cognitive disabilities in inclusive classrooms.</p> <p>Ms. Wilkins discussed the background of the LRE project including what teachers, administrators, schools and students were involved. She observed the students and the classrooms the students were going into. She met with the staff at the 2 schools selected and completed a modified MAPS plan. They looked at training needs for personnel and she visits each school every month to look at progress.</p> <p>She discussed what successes and problems have been encountered in the program. The primary problems revolve around attitude. Ms. Wilkins stated that the teachers who work with the students are great; however, other teachers in building have difficulty with inclusion. Attitude is still a huge barrier.</p> <p>What will happen in future with project was discussed. Another student will be added to the project and they are trying to expand the project to other schools, including the high school level.</p> <p>Questions and comments were taken from the panel.</p>

Friday, March 25, 2011

Time	Events	
7:00 – 8:00	BREAKFAST	
8:00 – 9:15	Committee Meetings	The following committees met: Public Comment, Family Engagement, Dispute Resolution, and Membership. Policies & Procedures committee did not meet.
9:15 – 10:00	Committee Reports	<p>Committees reported to the panel on current activities and recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Family Engagement</u>: The committee discussed several items. Members of the committee discussed seeing gaps in family participation. They reviewed information that 50% of children in the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) have IEPs. They brainstormed ideas for providing support for DJJ and revisited finding available, low cost attorneys for families. They suggested creating a list of available attorneys. <p>The committee also discussed the parent satisfaction survey. Patti Solomon, the Family Engagement Specialist at the DOE participated in this discussion via phone. Patti will look at making sure survey results are accessible to families. Parents are able to access the parent survey on the Parent to Parent website; however the results of those surveys are not incorporated into the survey results report. If parents are able to complete the survey, the results should be able to be counted. The committee was informed that the official report can only include surveys that are a part of the sampling plan. A way to capture survey results that are not a part of the sampling plan could be investigated.</p> <p>IEP participation was also discussed. The committee requested that a report on IEP participation be provided at next SAP meeting.</p> <p>The committee looked at the parent mentor website and would like to see if districts can put a link to the Parent Mentor website on the school websites as well as other resources, such as PTA newsletters, to get information out. A link to the Parent Mentor website is on the Parent to Parent website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Membership</u>: The committee reported that there are panel members that are rotating off the panel. They have reviewed membership applications, looked at district representation and representation of parents and persons with disabilities. If the new applications are approved they

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	<p>will be able to increase the ratio of parents of students with disabilities and persons with disabilities to 58% of the panel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="678 254 1479 646"> <p><u>Dispute Resolution</u>: Two decisions were reviewed by the committee. Both decisions related to jurisdiction. Families cannot sue a school where the student is not enrolled. In other words, if a child is at school that a family feels is unsafe and they move them, then they can't sue the system that they feel has violated their child's rights because the child no longer attends there. Mrs. Gay reported that due process contemplates the system's opportunity to improve services. So if the child is moved and then due process is filed, the system doesn't have chance to fix the issue that created the difficulty.</p> <p>The committee discussed the trending of due process complaints. The trend is moving downward. Mrs. Gay provided clarification of the trends, stating that the number of complaints filed is up; however, the number of due process hearing requests is down by approximately 30. Another piece of data shows that mediation agreements are up. For the first time this year, Georgia met the target for successful mediation. The process for mediation is improving.</p> <p>The panel asked about ways to let parents know that due process exists. Parent to Parent has assisted families with the process and have had successful mediations.</p> <li data-bbox="678 1205 1479 1640"> <p><u>Public comment</u>: The committee reports that one public comment was made via phone by Carmen Allen. A hard copy of her comment was obtained from Scott Bales. The main concern shared in the comment was regarding her denial to make public comment at the SAP at other times. Another concern was that public comments are not posted on the DOE website. The committee reviewed the policies for submitting public comment. They were able to find the link on the DOE website. Public comments policies were sent to Ms. Allen earlier. The committee recommended developing a form letter to send to any individuals who make public comment.</p> <p>The panel discussed the fact that public comment has generally been an effort to communicate concern about the function of the DOE. This comment was directed at panel itself, thus it bears discussion. We want to make sure we have identified specifically what we are doing or not doing. If we are in breach, then we need to fix the problem. The</p>

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		<p>question of whether we need to discuss whether to publish public comments was raised. Panel members commented that it is felt that people have hard time understanding the purpose of the panel. If public comments are done orally, a request was made that the comment be provided in writing as well so it could be considered for inclusion in committee records. If a public comment is submitted in writing, it needs to be received 3 days prior to the meeting as the procedures state. The question regarding how the SAP will respond to comment was asked. The SAP has the responsibility to acknowledge the comment; any changes have to come from DOE.</p> <p>The panel discussed the ability for individuals to phone in public comment and discussed making this a standard option for making public comment. In the future, every facility will be checked to see if this option is available. The panels function as an advisory panel was reiterated. The panel does not have the power to act, their role is to advise. A suggestion was made to include that statement in any form used to acknowledge public comment that was made.</p> <p>The committee also looked at issues that we can address with the state. Our policies and procedures are in accordance with other states. Public comments need to be in accordance with what the panel does. The panel also needs to diversify public comment and provide information on how to make public comment, such as where individuals can get help to make public comment and available resources. Stephanie Moss indicated that Parent to Parent would help with that. A suggestion was made regarding producing a webinar on Parent to Parent on how to make public comment.</p> <p><u>Policies and Procedures:</u> The Policies and Procedures committee did not meet, therefore did not report on activities.</p>
10:00 – 10:15	BREAK	
10:15 – 12:00	Legislative Update	<p>Lynda White provided an update on legislative actions currently being considered by the House and Senate. She stated that she was not a legislative expert, but was providing information on current legislation. The following legislation is being considered by the House and/or Senate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House Bill (HB) 181 – Gives the State Board of Education (SBOE) authority to waive attendance in a public school for one year to qualify for a special education scholarship. • HB 257 – Requires a Reduction in Force (RIF) policy based

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	<p>on teacher performance over past 3 years. If district is using a reduction in force policy, they can't enforce "last hired first fired" as sole source of the RIF. Many systems look at a variety of factors, such as how long staff has been with the system, student achievement, and/or teacher performance. This is a local decision. If this bill is passed the decision would be legislated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HB 271 – Addresses students in charter schools being able to participate in after school activities at their public school. • HB 280- Provides funding for math and science teachers. This adds funding to drive the hiring of math and science teachers. It would be retroactive to the beginning of this school year. • HB 305/SB 79 – Sets local school board terms to 4 years • HB 314 –Provides for foster children to be counted present when they have to be in court • HB227 – Extends the use of epinephrine pens in case of an emergency. This refers to the ability for a responsible adult to administer an epi pen to a student that has a prescription for epi pens, when the student can't provide or do themselves, such as when in shock. • HB158 – Moves nonpartisan elections back to July • HB 192 – Creates a state education finance study commission. The finance commission body will look at funding of education in GA and make recommendations to the governor. • HB 173 – Allows the Professional Services Commission (PSC) to expunge records after an investigation of an individual that has been referred to the PSC if the individual is exonerated • HB 172 – Extends the flexibility deadline to June 30, 2015 • HB 186 – Expands career pathways – changing career pathways so when students exit high school they are either college or career ready. Standards for this would be embedded in the curriculum. • HB 381 – Provides for additional moratorium to limit valuation increases of property. This bill is dead for this year. • HB 326 – Hope scholarship reform and changes to prekindergarten • HB 285 – Revises procedures for criminal background checks for the PSC. Requires that the PSC revise certification renewal procedures. • Senate Bill (SB) 38 – Permits the state school superintendent to enter into contracts up to \$250,000, hire and fire employees and set the agenda for State Board of Education meetings • SB 87 – Voucher bill that expands the special needs voucher

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		<p>to 504 students, those in foster care and those who have a parent in the military</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB 153 – Clarification of professional development plan and impact on the retention and evaluation of employees • SB 49 – Raises compulsory school age to 17 years of age • SB 219 – This bill was passed last year, but not signed by Purdue. – provides an interstate compact on educational opportunities for military students. It has to do with exchange of records, working with families because of parent(s) being in the military. <p>Questions and comments were taken from the panel.</p>
12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH	
1:00 – 2:30	State Advisory Panel Planning for Future Meetings	<p>Panel members provided input on meeting locations and topics for future meetings.</p> <p>The panel was asked about changing the meeting time from 2 days to one day for meetings 2, 3 and 4. Meeting 1 will continue to be held for 2 days. A show of hands indicating agreement with the change was requested. A show of hands indicated majority agreement.</p> <p>Suggestions for meeting locations were discussed. The meeting locations for next year will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September– Brasstown • November – Macon/Georgia Academy for the Blind • January – Valdosta • April/May – Athens <p>The panel suggested topics of interest for next year. These included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A presentation from school districts that aren't suspending • Information on practices that have been used to improve overall test scores • Disproportionality • Visioning project • Monitoring at alternate schools • Changes in Focused Monitoring process • Transitioning from high school to work environment • What babies Can't Wait is doing for transitioning from that program to school • Information on parent survey analysis • Conduct an intensive survey of special education teachers and complete a high level analysis of the survey • Investigate the census bureau tracking of disability data to

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		<p>see if it might help in child find index</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up on teacher retention program • Teacher training related to common core • Presentation on the roll out of common core standards • Presentation on IEP Online • Presentation on career pathways • CTAE • Invite Dr. Barge, the state school superintendent • SB10 • RTI - examples of districts with good programs • IEP participation by parents <p>Panel members who are at the end of their first 3 year term included R. Pierce, J. Harris, D. Burrell, K. Johnson, N. Woods and C. Jackson. Some are reapplying for another term. Deborah Fields Harris was thanked for her 6 years of service. Nancy Woods will be panel chair next year and Linda Meiring will be vice chair next year.</p>