

2011-2012 Annual Report
State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Special Education
Submitted June 2012

Mandated under Chapter 15.377(4), Wisconsin Statutes and 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(21), the Wisconsin State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Special Education serves as an advisory council to the State Superintendent on matters related to statewide delivery of special education programming and related services. The Council also provides input when requested to proposed changes and revisions to state policies, rules, regulations, and initiatives that affect students with disabilities and their advocates.

Council members are appointed by the State Superintendent. They represent a wide range of interested citizens, professionals, and educators from throughout the state. Council members include parents, teachers, administrators, administrators of programs for students with disabilities, and others concerned about the education of students with disabilities. Council meetings covered in this report were held on November 14, 2011; January 6, 2012; April 13, 2012 and June 22, 2012. The meetings were open to the public. Anyone wishing to address the council is always permitted to do so.

The 2011-2012 Council continued its responsibilities of providing input and feedback on the State Performance Plan (SPP) as it relates to the Department's six-year plan for improving outcomes of children with disabilities in Wisconsin. The Council's work centered around understanding the demands and implications of the ongoing budgetary environment, both at the state and federal level. Additionally, Council worked to gain a more thorough understanding of Maintenance of Effort, SPP Indicator Data, Response to Intervention, ESEA Waiver, state legislative activity, Common Core Standards, and ARRA funding.

Reports

The Council heard presentations related to the following topics/issues:

- Wisconsin State Performance Plan (SPP)
 - Several DPI staff presented information critical to the understanding of SPP Indicators, Data Collection, and reporting requirements.
 - Council provided feedback and advice related to setting targets for Improvement Indicators: 14a, 14b, 14c, 2, and 8.
 - Council reviewed data and discussed indicators: 1, 2, 3, 8, and 14.
- IDEA Complaints and Due Process hearing decisions
 - 44 IDEA Complaints were shared with the Council
 - 6 due process hearing decisions were shared with the Council
- Maintenance of Effort (MOE) State MOE and Local MOE. Conversation around the topic centered around gaining a more complete understanding of the issue and the surrounding implications of failing to meet State and Local MOE obligations.
- ESEA Waiver
 - The Department shared information regarding the decision to delay application until the second round for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Waiver. The Department's

application for ESEA Flexibility waiver was sent to the US Department of Education during the second round of applications in the spring. DPI is working with the US Department of Education to begin implementation of the waiver requirements in Fall 2012.

- Common Core Standards
 - DPI shared information with the Council regarding Wisconsin's adoption, implementation and support of the Common Core Standards. Materials from the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers were shared.
- Career and College Readiness
 - The Council reviewed information presented on defining "College and Career Readiness" for Wisconsin students with significant cognitive disabilities. Council discussed and provided verbal and written input.

Public Forum

The Council held its annual Public Forum Listening Session in conjunction with the State Superintendent's Leadership Conference on Special Education at the Marriott West on November 14, 2011. Over the duration of the session there were 31 participants, not including the Council, and 13 speakers. Broad topical areas and specific comment/suggestions are highlighted below.

- Behavioral needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
 - There needs to be more support for training and education of staff to support the behavioral needs.
 - Recommendation that DPI develop a program to employ credentialed autism experts.
 - Appreciation was expressed over PBIS implementation across Wisconsin, but concerns were raised that PBIS doesn't adequately address those students at "the top of the pyramid".
 - The continued use of seclusion/restraint (and other aversive techniques) is an ineffective method to address behavior but is still very commonly utilized by school staff.
 - Teaching social skills is a critical aspect to supporting the behavioral needs of students with disabilities. Social skills need to be deliberately taught.
- Disproportionality of Native American students with disabilities.
 - Educators need to consider traditional and cultural teaching for these students.
 - Testing tools (of all kinds) need to be culturally relevant for Native American populations.
- Family involvement/engagement
 - Parents need to be invited and included in professional development opportunities alongside of educators.
 - Families advocating for the needs of their child need to be heard, respected, and valued.
 - School staff need to ensure that families understand their rights. Schools need to better accommodate family schedules when planning meetings regarding a child.
 - Schools need to take a more active role in building bonds with families.
- Post High School Outcomes
 - Special Education Director shared information about a program for students with disabilities to take classes at the local technical school.
 - Speaker shared information about the YIPPE programs for youth with disabilities and their families.

- Response to Intervention—PBIS implementation
 - Educator shared that she feels that there needs to be more guidance from DPI on screening tools, interventions, etc. for RtI implementation. She appreciated the efforts of the Wisconsin PBIS Network and felt similar resources should be made available regarding RtI.

Council members indicated that they **would like to see the following:**

- More opportunities for the Council to meet, including in informal/social settings
- Consideration of hosting a Council Public Forum in a more “parent friendly” location/event. Perhaps the Circles of Life Annual conference for parents .

The Council **approved the following motions:**

In relation to an items brought to the Council regarding data indicating a shortage of qualified Speech-Language Pathologists, and an ensuing discussion of the relevant issues and concerns, the Council approved the following motion:

“That the Department not take the proposed standards to the Professional Standards Council until there are more data collected, more involvement from IHEs, and a clear and transparent process in place.”

The Council had a very rich and productive year amidst the ongoing challenges of the state climate. Council discussions, which were honest and frank, were enriched by presentations from the Department, outside presenters, and members of the public. By sharing information, taking on new responsibilities, and creating a forum for honest discussion the Council is poised to be productive and impactful for its members and the constituents which they represent.

On behalf of the State Superintendent’s Advisory Council and Special Education, I wish to express our appreciation to Dr. Stephanie Petska, Courtney Reed Jenkins, and Marjorie Schenk for their unwavering work on behalf of the special education community as well as the Council. I also wish to express our appreciation to the other members of the Department who took their time to present information and share their expertise with the Council. Finally, we would like to thank you for your support and for the opportunity to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jenny Stonemeier

Jennifer M Stonemeier, MJ, MT-BC
Vice Chairperson
State Superintendent’s Advisory Council on Special Education