

2013-2014 Annual Report
State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Special Education
Submitted July 2014

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 18, 2013; January 10, 2014; April 11, 2014; and July 18, 2014. The meetings were open to the public. Anyone wishing to address the council is always permitted to do so.

The 2013-2014 Council received an update on the Common Core State Standards and WISEDash, software to increase access to educational data. The council also heard information concerning the Deaf-blind Technical Assistance Project receiving renewed funding. Results Driven Accountability (RDA) was presented to the Council including OSEP requiring states to engage in a comprehensive, multi-year State Systemic Improvement Plan.

Reports

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

- Promise grant.
 - Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services received a \$32.5 million PROMISE grant over five years to connect 1,000 youths with special needs to resources that transition them towards economic self-sufficiency and independence. The grant program seeks to increase the education, career, and income outcomes of children with special needs receiving federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their families.
- Common Core State Standards.
 - The CCSS are rigorous, internationally-benchmarked English language arts and mathematics standards that are designed to ensure that students leave school with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and careers. Four public hearings were conducted around Wisconsin related to the standards, the Wisconsin legislature will conduct a hearing on November 19, and a legislative report will be released within the next week.
- WISEDash.
 - The goal of WISEDash is to increase access to education data—and, in doing so, enable more data informed decisions—by providing access to an unprecedented number of reports on a variety of topics. WISEDash will enable DPI to provide a plethora of reports and dashboards—in a single location—directly to districts on topics that draw from our longitudinal data system. Eventually, WISEDash will be

used to provide public reports in addition to secure reports for district users. The reports and dashboards DPI will provide through WISEDash will help build a better understanding of education performance and outcomes for Wisconsin students, and help inform decisions ensuring every child graduates from high school prepared for both college and career pathways.

- Information Update Bulletins, Complaints, and Due Process Hearing Decisions
 - The Council reviewed Information Update Bulletin 13.02, Legal Requirements of Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM)
 - 20 IDEA complaint decisions were shared with the Council
 - 7 due process hearing decisions with the Council
- Deaf-blind Technical Assistance Project.
 - The Wisconsin Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project (WDBTAP) received renewed funding through the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The WDBTAP has been established to provide technical assistance on behalf of children aged birth through 21 who are deaf-blind. WDBTAP provides services to children, families, schools, and communities at no cost. Staff from the WDBTAP will work with schools and families and assess whether a student has functional vision and functional hearing loss of any degree that impacts communication as well as a child's access to educational information and materials.
- Specific Learning Disabilities – eligibility criteria. The final components of the Specific Learning Disabilities rule occurred on December 1, 2013. WDPI has updated technical assistance on its website.
- Maintenance of Effort.
 - The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services published a notice of Proposed Rule Making in the Federal Register on changes the agency plans to make to the IDEA regulations regarding LEA Maintenance of Effort Eligibility and Compliance. DPI has posted an overview webinar on the proposed rules and comments regarding the proposed rules.

Special Report and Stakeholder Input Session:

- Results Driven Accountability.
 - The State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) will be a critical tool for this process. SPP/APR revisions are necessary based on the following principles: alignment with the RDA vision; reduction of reporting burden by requiring only what is necessary in statute/regulation and vital to improvements in results and functional outcomes; and retaining consistent data sources and measurements. OSEP proposes six specific changes to the SPP/APR to align with the RDA vision. OSEP is requiring states to engage in a comprehensive, multi-year State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that consists of three phases:
 - Phase I includes data analysis; identification of the focus for improvement; infrastructure to support improvement and build capacity; and a theory of action.
 - Phase II includes infrastructure development; support LEA implementation of evidence-based practices; and an evaluation plan.
 - Phase III includes results of ongoing evaluation and revisions to the SPP.
 - Phase I, Stakeholder input session 1. Stakeholders reviewed SPP/APR data and participated in data analysis and discussion. The session paralleled a session held for members of WDPI's special education team on November 11, 2013.
 - Phase I, Stakeholder Input Session 2. Stakeholders reviewed SPP/APR data and participated in discussions regarding data, core values/principles, leverage, and infrastructure/supports (see, below, separate agenda in Materials). The session

paralleled a session held for members of WDPI's special education team on December 14, 2013.

- After considering data, state-held values/core principles, and leverage, Council members recommended the department continue to analyze and discuss the following indicators: 3, 4a, 5, 7, 8, and 14.
- Results-Driven Accountability: Stakeholder Input Session
 - Results-Driven Accountability introduction, infrastructure analysis update
 - General Supervision System Overview
- Monitoring system: general supervision authority, special education model forms/policies/procedures, procedural compliance self-assessment, IDEA complaints/due process
 - Stakeholder input for Procedural Compliance Self-Assessment Results Driven Accountability system. Stakeholders addressed the following topics in their discussion: IEP development, review and revision; data-based decision making; IEP implementation, including location of services; family involvement; and barriers to success; goals and progress, including progress reporting; universal design for instruction.
 - State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR): Stakeholder Input Session and Target Setting (Indicators 4a and 7)
 - Indicator 4a
 - Recommendation: Target of 2.5% static over the next 5 years.
 - Indicator 7
 - Indicator 7a
 - SS1 Recommendation: Target of 1% increase over 5 years.
 - SS2 Recommendation: Target of 2.5% increase over 5 years.
 - Indicator 7b
 - SS1 Recommendation: Target of 1.75% increase over 5 years.
 - SS2 Recommendation: Target of 1% over 5 years.
 - Indicator 7c
 - SS1 Recommendation: Target of 2% over 5 years.
 - SS2 Recommendation: Target of 1% over 5 years.
- **DLS Report: Information and Discussion**
 - Maintenance of Effort. On September 18, 2013, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) published a notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) in the Federal Register on changes the agency plans to make to the IDEA regulations regarding LEA Maintenance of Effort Eligibility and Compliance. DPI submitted comments regarding the proposed rules
 - *Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility* (draft)
 - Common Core State Standards and Special Populations
 - WSPEI Family-School Partnership Stories – request for stories
 - Data collection system – update
 - WISEdash – primary disability now available
 - Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project – free resources
 - School discipline guidance package
 - State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR): Stakeholder Input Session and Target Setting (Indicators 2, 5, 6, 18, and 19)
 - State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR): Stakeholder Input Session and Target Setting (Indicators 2, 5, 6, 18, and 19)

- State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR): Stakeholder Input Session and Target Setting (Indicators 4a, 7, 8, 14)

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 18, 2013, with 71 in attendance. Broad topical areas and specific comments/suggestions from the public are highlighted below.

- Response to Intervention - Rtl
 - Delay in identification, less data
 - Parents need more information
 - Post-Secondary Transition Plan
 - Course of study, training and education, life skills
 - IEP includes coordination with other outside agencies
- School District Report Cards
 - Schools downgraded if they keep students until age 21 on Special Services
- Quality of teachers entering Special Education
 - Provisional licenses increasing
 - Hiring non-qualified teachers
 - Mental Health issues for many students
 - Problems with cross categorical classification
 - Accessing post-secondary services
- Classroom
 - Parent support for inclusion, self-contained classroom sometimes appropriate
 - Mental Health needs to be addressed in schools
- Residential Services for Special Education students
 - Lack of parent input
 - Parents have no access to teachers
 - Are Rtl services being provided to children in the 3-6 year old age range?
- Early Intervention
 - Concerns about teaching Social Skills
- Autism
 - Parent concern that inclusion does not work for her Autistic child
- Concern that schools are not engaging parents enough
- Advocate for policies to protect students with disabilities from harassment
 - Bullying vs harassment
 - Children extremely vulnerable to harassment
 - More help for parents dealing with harassment issues and their special education children
- Collaboration between regular education and special education teachers
- Mental Health Awareness
 - Children with mental health disabilities don't always get to contribute in school or society
 - Current services to children with mental health disabilities is inadequate
- Confusion and conflict regarding expectations of graduation

- Monday after graduation for Special Education students, options?
- Job skills readiness, self-determination skills, concerns with getting adult services
- Early Intervention
 - Transiting Birth -3 services to schools
 - K4, successful or not?
 - Difficulty in accessing appropriate education for young child with disabilities
- Speech & Language
 - Advocate for DPI Speech Therapists with a Master's Degree rather than assistants

The Council had a very rich and productive year, Council discussion included presentations from the Special Education Department and 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 our new Director Barb Van Haren, retiring Director Dr. Stephanie Petska, and Courtney Reed Jenkins 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,

Carla Witkowski

Carla Witkowski, Vice Chairperson
State Superintendent's Advisory Council on Special Education