



State Advisory Panel

For Special Education

Twin Towers East • Suite 1870 Atlanta, GA 30334

Linda Meiring, Chair
lmeiring@bellsouth.net

Steve Derr, Vice-chair
steve.derr@sccps.com

Minutes Summary State Advisory Panel Meeting October 11-12, 2012 Unicoi State Park Helen, GA

October 11, 2012

| Time | Events | |
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| 1:00 – 1:30 | Welcome Panel Member Introductions and Update | <p>Linda Meiring, Chair, and Steve Derr, Vice-Chair, welcomed members and opened the meeting. GaDOE reported that they were video and audio recording the meeting.</p> <p>Members present included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usoma Anadu • Scott Bales • Chase Bolds • Denise Burrell • Steve Derr • Kristie Johnson-Gregory • Leslie Lipson • Brian Mosley • Candice Norris-Brown • Cynthia Spaulding • Radha Vettrano • Nancy Woods • Wendi Baird • Kyle Berry • Susan Brown • William Butler • Jennifer Dixon • Yashonda Hiles • Linda Meiring • Mike Newton • Cheryl Ngoto • Dannette Rogers • Tanyge Teague • Natalie Whitlow |
| 1:30 – 2:45 | General Supervision | <p>Michael Blake presented an overview of Georgia’s General Supervision process.</p> <p>Dr. Blake reviewed the historical basis for moving to the General Supervision process. When Focused Monitoring data was reviewed over time, the Division for Special Education Services and Supports (DSESS) found that the same districts continued to come up as needing assistance. In 2011, the leadership team at the DSESS developed the process of General Supervision, obtaining stakeholder input through webinars, special education director forums and now the State Advisory Panel. The DSESS believes that compliant practices result in improved performance for students.</p> |

| Time | Events | |
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| | | <p>The General Supervision process was introduced to districts at the March 2012 Spring leadership meeting.</p> <p>Five areas were identified under the State Performance Plan (SPP). These included Identification Processes, Services and Supports to Students, Student Progress, Parent Engagement and Career and College Readiness. The DSESS will work with districts to assist them with developing, reviewing and or revising procedures and practices for each of these areas.</p> <p>Georgia is required to monitor district compliance and has developed a tiered monitoring process. The components of the four tiers within the process were reviewed with the panel.</p> <p>Dr. Blake reviewed the process of using “root cause analysis” to assist districts in determining the underlying causes of noncompliant issues and develop and implement effective procedures and practices for district policies. Procedural tools such as Collaborative Communities, Active Engagement and a compliance rubric have been developed to assist districts in this process.</p> <p>Questions and comments related to the identification of districts at each tier, parent notification of compliance issues within their district, parent involvement and how data is managed were taken from the panel.</p> |
| 2:45 – 3:00 | BREAK | |
| 3:00 – 4:00 | GaDOE Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports Update | <p>Debbie Gay presented updates from the Division for Special Education Services and Supports.</p> <p>The Parent Mentor Kickoff Conference was held in September. The program started in 2001 with 5 districts and has surpassed 100 districts this year.</p> <p>The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) was fully refunded for 5 million dollars. The grant will focus on graduation rate and successful transition for students and will partner with colleges and universities. The DSESS has a strong partnership with school improvement, including funding coaches to use the framework of Graduate First program. One focus will be to support schools with a performance gap in the subgroup of students with disabilities.</p> |

| Time | Events | |
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| | | <p>The DSESS is continuing their partnership with the Marcus Institute on Assessing the Needs of Children with Autism (ANCA). The project has trained 250 teachers in using the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS). This training is continuing this year including all Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) programs as well as a new cohort of teachers.</p> <p>The IEP online framework is continuing with new districts being added. There are 15 districts using the program at this time.</p> <p>The DSESS has webcasts on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) available. This concept is designed for all students, not just students with disabilities, and incorporates building a lesson plan with the goal of designing access for all students from the start, not adding access in at a later date.</p> <p>Mrs. Gay discussed Georgia’s state determination status. Georgia has been moved to “needs intervention” status from “meets requirements” status. This was due to Georgia’s performance on one indicator, indicator 13 – Secondary Transition. Mrs. Gay reviewed how transition data was collected by the state and explained that currently the method of collecting data involved a limited data source, as well as stringent criteria used by the state. The criterion set by Georgia goes beyond what is required by U.S. Department of Education (USED). The DSESS is currently developing a new way to collect and review data from all school districts. Georgia has appealed the current determination designation from the USED and the appeal is currently being considered.</p> <p>Questions and comments were taken from the panel.</p> |
| 4:00 – 4:30 | Public Comment Session | <p>One public comment was made at this panel meeting. The following is a summary of her comment.</p> <p>Carmen Allen, Forsyth County, thanked the GADOE for apologizing for a previous misunderstanding regarding access to the panel. Mrs. Allen stated that she made comment to the panel 2 years ago about Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), a therapy based on the principles of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). She cited</p> |

| Time | Events | |
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| | | <p>research indicating that these therapies are an “experimental analysis of human behavior”. She stated that these therapies have not been successful and that parents should be informed of the harm data resulting from these therapies and Functional Analysis (FA). She stated she has research about PBS and any persons who would like this information are welcome to contact her.</p> |
| 4:30 – 5:00 | <p>State Advisory Panel Planning for Future Meetings</p> | <p>Panel members indicated which committees they desired to serve on this year.</p> <p>Panel members provided input on topics for future meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma options for students with disabilities • How to incorporate training for special education teachers in higher education • A presentation from the Kennesaw State University Able club • Maintenance of Effort • The new PARCC assessments for 2014-15 • Manifestation determinations for out of school suspensions • A presentation from Hall county about partnerships for success for middle and high school clubs • Transition planning – what is it, what’s being done as well as monitoring for success • Discussion on what the benchmark is for students leaving school and not going to college – what is our success with these students • Pathway for independent living centers to assist with transition for students with disabilities • An update on restraint and seclusion– what has gone well, what has happened as well as struggles – would like to hear from teachers • A presentation on the school to prison pipeline and school initiated juvenile court charges • Student employability work such as the Discovering Jobs process and Employment First Georgia • How to help students with disabilities realize their potential to help others – how to plan with them and not for them |
| 6:00 | DINNER | |

October 12, 2012

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| 7:00 – 8:00 | BREAKFAST | |
| 8:00 – 8:30 | Committee Meetings | <p>The following committees met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispute Resolution • Family Engagement • Operating Procedures • Public Comment |
| 8:30 – 10:00 | State Wide Initiatives Update | <p>Dr. Reichrath presented an update on the College and Career Readiness Index (CCRPI) and the Flexibility Waiver.</p> <p>Dr. Reichrath gave an overview of the development of the index. The GaDOE is developing rigorous standards for Georgia, working with a strong focus on united strategic planning with everything highly connected. Georgia looked at developing a curriculum with rigor and that provides opportunities to all students. This resulted in the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). She discussed the Common Core standards and how they were developed by governors across the country. The GPS fit well into the common core and Georgia added additional items. Dr. Barge brought in a focus on careers and work force needs, working on an international workforce initiative where teachers and business' from other nations shared information involved in what is needed for students entering workforce. Students with disabilities were included in all discussions as well as English Language Learner students. Georgia has showed improvement in high stakes testing including the SAT, ACT, AP and NAEP.</p> <p>Literacy standards have been included in all Common Core standards. There are three big shifts in English Language Arts Common Core Georgia Performance Standards: 1. building content knowledge through rich non-fiction, 2. reading, writing and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literacy and informational, and 3. regular practice with complex text and its academic language. The three big shifts in Math include: 1. Focus – strong emphasis on priority concepts, 2. Coherence – connectivity across grades and linkage to major topics within grades, and 3. Rigor – requires solid conceptual understanding, fluency and application.</p> <p>Dr. Reichrath reviewed Common Core for science and Social Studies. Georgia will begin testing for Common Core in 2014-15.</p> |

| Time | Events | |
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| | | <p>The complexity of the CCRPI was discussed by Dr. Reichrath. Georgia has established 17 career clusters as compared to 16 clusters nationwide. Georgia added an energy cluster due to the number of energy jobs in the state.</p> <p>The new accountability system was reviewed. There will be a CCRPI grade for schools which will address progress in schools as well as achievement. There are 19 indicators at the high school level, 14 indicators at the middle school level and 13 indicators at the elementary level. The performance flags system for subgroups was also reviewed.</p> <p>Questions and comments were taken from the panel.</p> |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | BREAK | |
| 10:15 – 11:00 | Committee Reports | <p>Committees reported to the panel on current activities and recommendations.</p> <p><u>Dispute Resolution</u>: Statistics for the 2011-12 school year were reviewed. 95 complaints were filed with 73 complaints issued with reports. 35 of those complaints resulted in noncompliant findings. There were 79 requests for mediation, with 66 mediations being held. Two due process hearings were held this year. A due process hearing involving Cobb County resulted in findings that the student’s IEP did not offer FAPE and the family was entitled to partial reimbursement for private school and for related costs of vision therapy. Other findings found that the family was not entitled for reimbursement for OT and that the district did not withhold access to student records. A due process hearing involving Henry County involving multiple issues resulted in findings which indicated the burden of proof fell to complainant and that the complainant did not provide sufficient proof. Due process hearing decisions are posted on the DOE website.</p> <p>The link to due process hearing decisions is below:</p> <p>http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Due-Process-Hearing-Decisions-.aspx</p> <p><u>Family Engagement</u>: Last year the committee worked on a list of acronyms. That list has been finalized and the committee recommends that Parent to Parent (PTP) and</p> |

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| | | <p>the GaDOE publish the list. The committee did not get a chance to look at the parent survey data. This data will be sent out to committee members to review prior to the next SAP meeting.</p> <p><u>Operating Procedures:</u> The committee made revisions to the operating procedures last year. They will begin looking at the current procedures in January for any additional changes.</p> <p><u>Public Comment:</u> One public comment was made. The committee will send the individual a letter to acknowledge their comment.</p> <p>The committee made the recommendation to increase the public’s awareness of the opportunity of public comment. The panel discussed the history of difficulties in getting individuals to make public comment. Suggestions to increase the number of comments included making an announcement to districts regarding the dates of the SAP meetings including the opportunity to make public comment, and have SAP members contact professional groups to get the word out regarding public comment. For example, sending out an email to their members 2 weeks prior to the 3 day deadline for requesting the opportunity to make public comment by mail or phone. Additional suggestions included creating a sample comment so individuals would know how to make public comment and change the time for public comment to earlier in the day to make it easier for individuals to attend the meeting. The committee also discussed reviewing the current panel procedures for making public comment.</p> <p><u>Membership:</u> The membership committee did not meet.</p> |
| 11:00 – 11:45 | Collaborative Communities | <p>Kim Simmons presented on the process of Collaborative Communities. This process was introduced to GLRS Directors at the Spring Leadership conference. In September, the GaDOE and GLRS directors established a framework of meetings for collaborative communities involved special education directors in each GLRS region. The meetings will be conducted around 5 focus areas identified in the General Supervision process: Identification Processes, Services and Supports to Students, Student Progress, Parent Engagement and Career and College Readiness.</p> |

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| | | <p>The concept of a collaborative community was defined and the roles of the GLRS director, the DOE district liaison and district special education directors were reviewed. The goal of the Collaborative Communities process is for participants to share expertise and work together with local teams to determine appropriate procedures and practices to implement district special education policies.</p> <p>Questions and comments regarding the composition of the stakeholder groups, including family members and others, the need to develop procedures that would assist students with disabilities in developing self-advocacy skills, the focus areas, and how the department will determine the effectiveness of these communities were taken from the panel.</p> |
| 11:45 – 1:00 | LUNCH | |
| 1:00 – 3:00 | Active Engagement | <p>Felecia Peavey presented an overview of Georgia’s Active Engagement Process.</p> <p>The active engagement process is a new process developed by the Division to assist 14 districts in improving their special education processes.</p> <p>The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) mandates that all districts in the state are monitored every year. The Active Engagement process was created to help districts identify their problems and work towards solutions. This process can take from 1 to 3 years depending on the level of need in the district.</p> <p>The first step in the process was a data review to identify districts that needed support. Three factors were used to identify these districts: 1) districts that did not meet current year determinations; 2) districts that met determinations for the current year, but did not meet determinations for the previous 2 years; and 3) data trends.</p> <p>Districts were identified and notified and each district was asked to put together a local stakeholder group. A root cause analysis will be conducted for each district with the district and stakeholder group examining their data to identify problems. The use of probing questions as a means to assist in the root cause process was also discussed. The district will then develop a targeted improvement plan based on their identified problems.</p> |

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| | | <p>At the end of the process, districts need to provide data to show improvements in compliant practices and student achievement are occurring.</p> <p>Questions and comments regarding the active engagement process, stakeholder groups, and parent notification of the active engagement process were taken from the panel.</p> |