



Special Needs Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes for April 1, 2010

1:00am-4:00pm

Ohio School Boards Association
8050 North High Street Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43235

Members in Attendance

Robyn Essman, Chair
Thomas Babb
Dayvenia Chesney
State Rep. Randy Gardner
David Huelsman
Jan Kennedy
James McClure
Dr. Jan Osborn

Dr. Roger Saurer
Ann Sheldon

Members Not in Attendance

N/A

Staff

Daria Shams
Emily Nemeth

Opening:

Chair Essman began the meeting at 1:02p.m. by addressing two questions from previous meetings regarding the consortium model under HB1 in relation to ELL education and the connection between poverty based assistance and community school funding.

Ms. Sheldon motioned to approve the minutes from the March 25th 2010 subcommittee meeting and Dr. Saurer seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Presentations by New Subcommittee Members:

Ann Sheldon, Executive Director of Ohio Association for Gifted Children (OAGC), presented her background in finance and educational policy as well as her current work with OAGC. Ms. Sheldon discussed the ways in which the experiences of her children and children around the state have influenced her passion for gifted education. She highlighted some of the key characteristics of gifted children and discussed the current state of gifted funding and accountability in Ohio.

Ms. Sheldon pointed subcommittee members towards the OAGC website for additional information (www.oagc.com). OAGC is currently working on a survey to which the Special Needs subcommittee is welcome to contribute survey questions. Ms. Sheldon indicated she believes the most important issue for gifted education in relation to HB1 is accountability of gifted education funds.

Dr. Jan Osborn, Superintendent of Putnam County Educational Service Center, discussed his background in special education as a teacher, advocate and administrator and representative of the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities. Dr. Osborn asked the subcommittee to keep in mind that special education funding is complex, services are underfunded and that ultimately the burden to meet the needs of special education students falls back on the local districts. Dr. Osborn underscored accountability for funding in special education as an area of special concern.

A question was asked regarding over-identification of gifted and special education children, which prompted a discussion about the truths and myths in these particular areas of education. ODE staff members responded to questions about the difference between the funding models for traditional public and community schools and the purpose of the transitional aid guarantee.

Thomas Babb, Treasurer for Constellation Schools, presented his background as a CPA, his experiences in both the private and non-profit sectors and his role as a representative of the Ohio Coalition for Quality Education. Mr. Babb is a co-founder of Constellation Schools and discussed the ways in which the experiences of his children have influenced his interest in community schools.

Mr. Babb discussed the differing funding components of the evidence-based model (EBM) that are applied to community schools versus traditional public schools. He is interested in seeing the animosity between the two schools types dissipate. The subcommittee engaged in a conversation about direct funding of community and traditional public schools and how this might help the tension between the two. The committee also discussed gifted funding in community schools.

Dr. Roger Saurer, Superintendent of Copley-Fairlawn City Schools, described his diverse experiences in education over the past thirty-nine years, including positions in the public and private sectors as well as higher education and K-12 education. He is a representative of the ODE English as a Second Language (ESL) Advisory Committee.

Dr. Saurer discussed important statistics in ELL education and the ways in which his own district approaches their work with ELL. Dr. Saurer suggested the subcommittee focus its attention on increasing funding for ELL and making the language in HB1 clearer regarding the funding component ratio.

Dr. Saurer noted that he will not be attending the April 27th subcommittee meeting.

Additionally, Ms. Kennedy discussed the implications of underfunding special needs students in non-public schools and Ms. Chesney discussed special needs populations in the pre-K setting. Members requested that both Ms. Kennedy and Ms. Chesney present additional information on their areas of expertise during the next subcommittee meeting.

Closing:

In a discussion about the timeline of the work in which they are engaged, the subcommittee agreed to report their findings to the larger Council on July 28th. In order to adequately research and address special needs issues by the 28th of July, subcommittee members requested that more time be spent in subcommittees than in the larger council. The subcommittee agreed that outside speakers will not be necessary for their work moving forward.

Mr. Babb made a motion to adjourn at 3:48pm, which was seconded by Ms. Chesney and passed without objection.