

CT STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON SPECIAL EDUCATION (SAC)**Executive Committee
Special Meeting**

Wednesday, March 23, 2011
4:00pm – 6:00pm
CT State Department of Education
25 Industrial Park Road
Room MCR2 (Front of Building)
Middletown, CT 06457

I. Call to Order

Member Attendees: John Burke, Beth Hart, Brenda Sullivan, Marcus Rivera.

Guest: Kathy Musto, SAC Legislative Committee.

Dr. Burke called the meeting to order at 4:20pm.

II. Executive Committee Update

Dr. Burke commended the SAC Legislative Committee for reviewing the large number of legislative proposals that may impact students with disabilities.

Mr. Rivera shared OSEP's interest in interviewing SAC members as part of its site visit process. Ms. Sarah Harvey, Bureau of Special Education consultant, will help the SAC to plan for the interview, tentatively scheduled for September 21, 2011 (SAC September meeting).

III. Discussion and Action Items**A. SAC Legislative Committee (SLC) Proposals**

Ms. Sullivan and Ms. Musto presented six bills to the SAC Executive Committee for consideration. Consensus was reached with the SAC Legislative Committee on these bills.

- **Bill 20: An Act Concerning Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids**
 - The SLC requested that the SAC support this bill which extends health insurance coverage for hearing aids to the age 13-18 population. Fiscal impact on the B-12 population has been low. The CT State Department of Education (CSDE) took no position on this bill. SLC noted the academic success that may be afforded to students with a hearing impairment, between the ages of 13-18, if this bill is enacted.
- **Bill 5428: An Act Concerning Prompt Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect in an Educational Setting**
 - The SLC proposed a recommendation to the Committee on Human Services that they add stronger language to the bill – requiring the reporting of abuse or neglect in all educational settings.
 - The Executive Committee discussed with SLC members the need to possibly include examples of “stronger language,” for legislative consideration: e.g., clear timeframes to report suspected abuse; reporting suspected abuse or neglect in a timely manner; and consequences when said reporting is not accomplished in a timely manner. CSDE did not offer testimony on this bill.

- **Bill 6326: An Act Concerning the Response of School Districts and the Department of Education and Children and Families to Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect**
 - THE SLC proposed that the SAC support Section 10-220 of the bill: “f) Each local and regional board of education shall maintain in a central location all records of allegations, investigations and reports that a child has been abused by a school employee employed by the local or regional board of education, as defined in section 53a-65, conducted pursuant to sections 17a-101a to 17a-101d, inclusive, as amended by this act, and section 17a-103. Such records shall include any reports made to the Department of Children and Families. The Department of Education shall have access to such records.”
 - CSDE supports this bill with minor technical changes. The SLC proposed a recommendation that this section also include additional language to specify “in all school settings, public and private.”
- **Bill 930: An Act Concerning the School Entrance Age**
 - The SLC shared that this bill died in committee, but expressed the importance of the SAC stating that it supports “requiring a child to be five years of age by October 1st, before s/he registers for kindergarten.” The Executive Committee discussed the probable reduction in any possible over-identification of students with disabilities due to age-related issues, if more developmentally sound policies are in place – such as kindergarten registration when a child is 5 by October 1 and universal preschool until age 5. The SLC shared that a sample of kindergarten teachers were in support of this bill. CSDE also supported this bill.
- **Bill 1012: An Act Implementing the Governor’s Budget Recommendations Concerning the Transfer of Functions from the Board of Education and Services for the Blind and the Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired to the Departments of Education and Social Services**
 - The SLC requested that the SAC oppose this bill – i.e., that services for the blind and the deaf remain under one centralized agency in order to provide direct services with a high level of expertise. CSDE did not offer testimony on this bill.
 - In discussion, it was recommended that the SAC convey the following:
 - that any change should not impact direct services and that a consumer advisory group be established to advise the administration before, during and after any possible transition from one administration to the next (per SAC 3/16/11 meeting); and
 - that “regardless of the age of the student,” that these services stay in one agency “due to the breadth and quality of the services rendered and agency responsiveness with regard to service delivery.”
- **Bill 6432: An Act Concerning Closing the Academic Achievement Gap**
 - The SLC proposed that the SAC add language that includes students with disabilities in all aspects of the bill. CSDE has no position on this bill.

The SAC Legislative Committee will be considering other bills at its April 11 meeting, including bills concerning juvenile re-entry, adult education and suspensions and expulsions as they pertain to students with disabilities.

The Executive Committee moved to support the SAC Legislative Committee on Bills 20, 5428, 6326, 930, 1012, and 6432 as noted in III.A.1-6 above. Dr. Burke, Ms. Hart and Ms. Sullivan voted in favor; Mr. Rivera abstained because CSDE's position was not determined for some of these bills. The motion passed.

B. Draft SAC 2010-11 Priority Areas / Charge of Proposed SAC Ad-Hoc Committees

The Executive Committee revisited the draft 2010-11 Priority Areas for SAC activity, in light of the recent report on State Performance Indicators at the March 16 SAC meeting.

Restraint and Seclusion. Given the Bureau of Special Education's added effort to communicate to districts regarding the use and reporting of emergency restraint or seclusion, it was determined that instead of calling for a SAC Ad-Hoc Committee to explore this area further, a request would be made for the Bureau to offer a brief summary report to the SAC Executive Committee in May 2011 on the use of the emergency restraint and seclusion data collected by programs, schools, schools districts and the Bureau.

Private Education Programs. With regard to the priority area in "Accountability in Approved Private Education Programs serving Students with Disabilities" (note new title), the Executive Committee proposed to have the SAC consider the following:

- How are data collected on academic and social outcomes for students with disabilities in private programs receiving special education funding?
- Are the data indicators and collections comparable to public school data collections? To the state performance indicators?
- Are the data aggregated by private school as the unit of analysis?
- What are the results when compared to public school students with disabilities?
- Are there indicators that show achievement in academic areas, social/emotional domains, and progress on IEP goals?
- How have these results helped to improve support and accountability?

IV. Adjournment

The Executive Committee tabled the remaining agenda items for a follow-up Special Meeting, proposed for March 31. By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35pm.

Prepared by: Marcus Rivera, SAC Secretary