

## **Questions Asked by Special Education Working Group Members in Previous Meetings Still Awaiting Answers as of 5/21/14**

### **March 20, 2014 Meeting**

#### **Topic: Private Special Education Providers**

- To Colleen Hayles, Education Consultant for the State Department of Education (SDE):

Rep. Wood (Co-Chair) asked for an approximate break-out of how many students were attending private special education programs and in which types of programs they were enrolled.

Rep. Becker (Co-Chair) asked how much money Connecticut is spending on the 6.8% of special education students in these private settings versus those in public school settings.

Rep. Becker (Co-Chair) requests a succinct explanation of the private special education provider approval process.

Atty. Klebanoff asked about the cost to local school districts in placing students in private special education programs. He wanted to know the percentage of cost local districts get from the state when they make private placements.

Atty. Klebanoff asked if there was a difference in reimbursing a school district when a student is in a non-approved school but the student qualifies and meets the standards for reimbursement. (Kevin Chambers from SDE should know this answer)

Ms. McCarthy asked how many CT children were educated in non-approved programs.

- To Dr. Russell, Headmaster of the Windward School:

Rep. Wood (Co-Chair) asked what percentage of the Windward School's parents are reimbursed by local school districts. (Dr. Russell did not know because the school tells parents that it will not participate in reimbursement hearings.)

- To Pat Gerrity, President of the CT Assoc. of Private Special Education Providers (CAPSEF):

Ms. Davis asked how CASEF schools knew that a student's education plan was in line with the common core standards and also asked who makes the appropriate modifications.

Rep. Cook (Co-Chair) asked, with all the confusion, when a parent goes forward with a PPT, will the school educate the parent about all the modifications that are available. She said this if this is not the case, it should be legislated because this process is too

complicated and it concerns her that SDE is putting families and students in uncharted territory where teachers are even having trouble adapting.

### **February 27, 2014 Meeting**

#### **Topic: Transition Services**

- To Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Presenters Jordan Scheff, DDS Regional Director and Robin Wood, Director of Family Support Strategies and Advocacy:

Rep. Wood stated that DDS was doing wonderful work and asked for a link to the success stories video online

- To Pat Anderson, State Transition Coordinator for the Bureau of Special Education, State Department of Education (SDE):

Ms. Anderson stated that SDE has a new document called “Easing Into Transition” that was a joint venture with BRS and that is available at most RESC websites. She stated that this document was just finalized this past fall, so SDE is working on these materials and on expanding the capacity of RESCs with regard to transition services. She said that she would send the working group a copy of this document.

Mr. Namnoum asked if SDE had the capability to ensure that the transition conversation starts at grade 6. (Ms. Anderson answered that SDE does not know the answer because they do not monitor this.)

Ms. Davis asked how many children are in transition currently across the state.

Rep. Becker asked for information about indicator 14 (the post-school outcome survey for special education children), including what was and was not covered and why.

Ms. Anderson stated that there is a national study on transition success that has looked tracked students over at least a 10 year period.

Rep. Becker asked if SDE could please send the national study on transition success referenced by Ms. Anderson (tracked students over at least a 10 year period) to the working group.

- To Kathy Marchione, a Regional Director working for the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS):

Atty. Klebanoff asked if there was a standard to determine which PPTs BRS decides to participate in when the school district has identified that a student is eligible for BRS services.

**January 23, 2014**

**Topic: Overview of State and Federal Special Education Funding in CT**

- To Brian Cunnane, Consultant for the State Department of education (SDE) Bureau of Special Education specializing in IDEA funding:

Ms. Richards asked, given the latest reauthorization of IDEA, which allowed districts to use up to 15% of IDEA funds for non-identified students, if OLR or OFA had a sense of how many districts had taken advantage of that new initiative. (Brian Cunnane, a consultant for the SDE Bureau of Special Education specializing in IDEA funding, stated that some districts are required to set 15% of funds aside, whereas others may choose to do so on a voluntary basis. He said he did not have the requested information on the number of districts availing themselves of this initiative with him, but said he would provide it to the working group at a later date.)

- To Mr. Chambers, State Department of Education (SDE) Consultant:

Rep. Cook asked if DCF was required to send any money that follows special education students from district to district.

- To Sarah Bourne, Principal Analyst, Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA):

Mr. Regan called the group's attention to page 14, where the presenters referenced Medicaid. He stated that school districts spend significant time putting together the paperwork to obtain Medicaid reimbursement and asked how much of the reimbursement amount submitted is actually returned to districts.

**January 9, 2014**

**Topic: Overview of the Delivery of Special Education Services in CT**

- To Maria Synodi, Consultant, State Department of Education (SDE) Bureau of Special Education:

Rep. D'Agostino asked how many districts had the capability to handle legal issues in-house in 2000 and how many have that ability now (in context of burden of proof discussion).

Rep. Becker asked what if the issue isn't the behavior of a student, but the fact that the teacher is spending thirty percent of his or her time with one student. In that case, is it the teacher's responsibility to notify the school administration that a PPT is needed to address the situation? He also asked, since all teachers need some training to help them identify and work with special education students, what training and certification is required to become a full time special education teacher.

Rep. Becker asked how many special education courses a regular classroom teacher needs to take during their training versus how many special education courses a special

education teacher is required to take. He then asked, since it sounds like we ask more and more of classroom teachers each year, if we should be recruiting more teachers.

Mr. Namnoum asked if the working group could get information on the break-out of expenditures (similar to page twenty of the SDE report to the working group) and enrollment (similar to page twenty two of the SDE report) going back five years. He would like to see how these figures interact with each other and if, as enrollment has increased, funding increased as well.

Mr. Filchak asked if SDE could provide a break-out of the information contained on page eighteen of the SDE report to show percentages for the number of special education students placed in-house versus those placed outside their home district.

- To Attorney Gail Mangs, Consultant, State Department of Education (SDE) Bureau of Special Education:

Rep. D'Agostino asked how many towns drop the hearing request before notifying SDE because they decide internally that it isn't worth the trouble. (Attorney Mangs answered that she was not aware of situations like this and could not comment on data not collected by SDE.)