

MNEA State Board Report

Notes from April 24, 2008 meeting of the State Board of Education

Report on Autism Spectrum Disorder

Dr. Janet Farmer, UMC Thompson Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders reported on current services for autism spectrum disorders in Missouri. Autism project centers in Columbia, St. Louis, Kansas City, Cape Girardeau and Springfield are operated by the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH). The Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism recommends including a DMH coordinator at IEP meetings when transition from high school is discussed, with parent permission. One current project is working to align diagnosis and treatment so they are more helpful when IEPs are created. UMC has partnered with Johns Hopkins University to create Interactive Autism Network, a national registry designed to aid further research and practice. Project Access at MSU is working to develop best practice guidelines. Brochures for parents, screening signs, state resources, programs and reports on autism can be found on the Department of Mental Health website at <http://www.dmh.missouri.gov/mrdd/progs/autism/autism.htm>.

Heidi Atkins Lieberman, asst. commissioner, Division of Special Education, discussed differences in how eligibility for special education services is determined. These differences can cause confusion on the part of parents and educators. First Steps operates under part C of IDEA, where some medical diagnosis, like autism, automatically qualify for services. Once a child reaches 3 years of age, IDEA part B applies. A medical diagnosis does not automatically qualify for services. The school must determine there is an adverse educational impact, and provide a free and appropriate education. Dr. Atkins Lieberman does monthly webinars on special education topics with administrators as the target audience. Past webinars can be viewed at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/mnthlywebstrmHAL.html>.

[At Missouri NEA's Good Teaching Conference, participants can choose *Autism: Applying Useful Techniques and Instructional Strategies to Maximize Learning*. The conference will be Tuesday, Oct. 21 in St. Louis. *The Puzzle of Autism* book can be ordered from the NEA bookstore, Member Price: \$6.95, Non-Member Price: \$11.95]

Report Heard on Missouri Academy of Mathematics, Science and Computing

Located at Northwest Missouri State University, the Academy allows high school juniors and seniors to graduate from high school with 68 to 72 college credits. Students take traditional college classes. Often the professors can't distinguish the high school students from regular college students. Missouri resident students do not pay tuition, and 65 percent of these students do not pay room and board. The Academy is for high achieving students interested in STEM areas: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Missouri uses the term METS. The academy sometimes accepts students who have been in a little trouble and mentors them. The Academy has not reached its capacity of 250 high school students. Dr. Cleo Samudzi gave the presentation. His email address is samudzi@nwmissouri.edu.

Dr. Schulte Reports on Education Bills in State Legislature

This legislative session, it seems any bill with any chance of passing has been loaded with other issues. An example is SB 762, proposed by Sen. Yvonne Wilson. The original bill added two words to the definition of bullying in school district policies, *cyberbullying* and *electronic* communication. The House added 11 pages of amendments. Sen. Wilson no longer supports the bill. Dr. Schulte gave the board 25 pages of education bill summaries proposed this year, with an average of seven bills per page.

SB 1066 was Truly Agreed to and sent to the Governor. This is the ABCTE bill which also transfers control of DESE professional development moneys to a special legislative Joint Commission on Education, created by this bill.

Report on Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Requests

The budget conference committee has pulled \$5 million of the \$20 million in DESE professional development monies. This money funds the RPDCs, accreditation of teacher education programs, STARR teachers, NBC support and other programs. So far the conference committee has agreed to the following: 3% cut across the board to equipment, bus safety pilot program removed and closed, Scholars and Fine Arts Academies \$100,000 increase, \$62,500 of requested \$200,000 to study the effectiveness of charter schools, no increase in E-mints, GED testing increase removed and a increase for First Steps. Sheltered workshops will get a \$2.6 million increase, which will keep total funding below the level authorized in statute last year. The increase is enough to allow a full draw down of federal matching funds.

Peter Herschend said it looks like no increase in revenue for future. He recommends DESE staff start looking at possible future budget cuts.

Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for Educators (MACCE)

Dr. Donna Gardner, chair of the education department at William Jewell reported on the work of MACCE. Seven Missouri NEA members serve on MACCE: Melissa Albright, Donna Collins, Karen Davis, Barb Dozier, Tim Ema, Judy Webb and Darryl Johnson. In addition to reviews of certification requirements, MACCE subcommittees worked on three issues this year. Tim Ema from Ferguson-Florissant chairs the Redesign Committee. They looked at how teaching practice and working conditions can be redesigned to improve achievement. Donna Collins of Grandview chairs the Rubric for Accepting Standards subcommittee. The Higher Education subcommittee made recommendations about student teaching and mentoring for beginning teachers. One recommendation was to limit extra duties assigned to new teachers. MACCE was disappointed teaching standards were not included in the mentoring rule.

One District Provisionally Accredited; One District Dissolved

Accreditation of Jennings School District was changed to provisionally accredited because they did not meet AYP for two years. Jennings will remain provisionally accredited for two years, when accreditation is up for review. The commissioner reported Jennings has experienced an increase in student mobility, and the district is working with the RPDC to support improved student performance.

Statute requires reorganization of districts when unaccredited for more than two years; Wyaconda C-1 has been unaccredited for three years. Wyaconda C-1 is a K-8 district with about 35 students. Students who live in Clark County will attend Clark County R-1 at Kahoka, and those who live in Scotland County will attend Gorin R-III school. A public hearing was held in January of 2008, and in April a vote to move the entire district to one school district was defeated.

Other Actions:

On site reviews of twenty-two high schools resulted in A+ High Schools designation. The board enjoyed viewing a video created by the Ritenour High School video course about the A+ program.

One waiver was approved for the issuance of a teaching license. One teaching license was revoked and action was stayed on two, pending successful completion of probation.

The next State Board of Education meeting will be held May 22, 2008 in Jefferson City. Missouri NEA will be there! If you have questions, contact Ann Jarrett at ann.jarrett@mnea.org.

Respectfully submitted,

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