

## Special Act No. 08-5 Planning Group Summary – July 16, 2008

Attendance: *Dr. Cheryl Norton, President of Southern Connecticut State University; Dr. Mark K. McQuillan, CSDE Commissioner (via telephone); Dr. James Granfield, Interim Dean, School of Education, Southern Connecticut State University; Dr. Ruth Eren, Associate Professor, School of Education, Southern Connecticut State University; Dr. Pam Brucker, School of Education, Southern Connecticut State University; Dr. Jonas Zdanys, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Chief Academic Officer, CT Department of Higher Education; Anne Louise Thompson, Chief, Bureau of Special Education, CSDE; Dr. Jacqueline Kelleher, Education Consultant, Bureau of Special Education, CSDE.*

Timeline: Written Report to Legislature – HB 5590 Statewide Comprehensive Plan

	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Task Lead</b>
Needs Assessment Tools Development/Review	August 2008	
Data Collection	September/October 2008	
Draft to Planning or Review Team	October 23, 2008	
Data Analysis	October/November 2008	
Timeline/Budget	November 1, 2008	
Evaluation Plan	November 1, 2008	
Working Draft to SDE Commissioner	November 15, 2008	
Draft to SDE BOE via Commissioner	November 30, 2008	
Revisions based on SDE BOE feedback and additional data analyses or planning team recommendations	January 15, 2009	
Final Report	February 1, 2009	

### **Planning Group Discussion Highlights:**

- Important to identify all relevant stakeholders and conduct state needs assessment prior to making recommendations for statewide plan – by next meeting we will clarify what we are asking, who are stakeholders [data collection and work group/advisory levels], method of collecting information [i.e. existing data, focus groups, survey], and agree upon action plan. Action plan will indicate who is responsible for tasks identified. Needs assessment ideas included:
  - Asking SERC to coordinate with RESC Alliance to run focus groups.
  - Involving leaders from subgroups used for the Autism Guidelines.
  - Working with statewide groups and other agencies to ensure representative participation in determining major areas of need.
  - Identifying training needs via a statewide survey.
  - Framing content with national teacher competencies in ASD and other existing standards.

- Information which might guide the report and/or planning *after* the questions/focus are determined include:
  - Statewide plans and needs assessment findings/tools: Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Maine, and New Hampshire.
  - Secondary data currently available such as public school enrollment, regional numbers, Birth to Three enrollment, Family Resource Center enrollment, number of statewide trainings and attendance numbers, feedback collected from ASD training sessions at SERC, Iris White information on paraprofessional numbers, St. Joe focus group themes, Jacqui's special educator and teacher group responses, dispute resolution trends, early childhood outcomes, LEARN/Three Rivers evaluation data, suspension-expulsion, placement, ASD specific coursework in IHE, number of transition programs serving individuals with ASD, number of approved private schools serving students with ASD.
- Some concerns or anticipated issues expressed were:
  - The Act's primary focus on teaching methods, strategies which comprise the art and science of teaching, with little reference to other areas of need such as programming, transition services, specialized equipment, extended school year, crisis intervention, regionally-based resources, home-school collaboration, and so forth.
  - Definitions for developmental disabilities and how federal definitions include a number of examples of DD that need to be addressed – cerebral palsy, spina bifida, fetal alcohol syndrome, brain injury, intellectual disabilities, vision impairment, hearing loss, and so forth.
  - Developing items and collecting information only from ASD and not DD communities – perceived equity by different groups.
  - Level of public scrutiny of data collection tools, methods, and representation.
  - Ambitious timeline and limited numbers of personnel to support initial data collection efforts.
  - Lack of expertise to provide training.
  - Alignment with IDEA 2004 components and state certification regulations.

### **Task Details – Deadline July 28<sup>th</sup>**

*BSE* writes draft definition based on IDEA/federal definitions:

- Autism guidelines
- Developmental Disabilities – 1%, assurances to include language on cognitive, behavioral, and physical limitations

*BSE* sends complaints/hearings numbers for ASD if accessible

*BSE* forwards any surveys or recent reports relevant to needs assessment

*BSE* looks at budget and availability of SERC to coordinate focus groups – evenings preferred with the exception of Wednesdays – and build survey tool from items.

*Southern* develops and sends focus group questions and possible survey items by July 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>

*DHE* e-mails time and location for either August 6<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup>

*All planning group members* e-mail the planning team as a group ideas regarding:

- groups to target and ways to advertise stakeholder participation – RESC Alliance, SERC, community colleges, advocacy groups, IHE prep (school psychology/related services), certification, Birth to Three, Guidelines writing group, CT Council of DD,
- names of stakeholders who should be involved and at what level, for example:
  - autism/developmental disabilities
  - survey reviewers
  - data results reviewers
  - report reviewers

## **Special Act No. 08-5 Planning Group Summary – August 8, 2008**

*Attendance: Dr. Ruth Eren, Associate Professor, School of Education, Southern Connecticut State University; Dr. Pam Brucker, School of Education, Southern Connecticut State University; Dr. Jonas Zdanys, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Chief Academic Officer, CT Department of Higher Education; Anne Louise Thompson, Chief, Bureau of Special Education, CSDE; Dr. Jacqueline Kelleher, Education Consultant, Bureau of Special Education, CSDE; Kathy Reddington, Autism Pilot Project Coordinator, Department of Developmental Services.*

### **Planning Group Discussion Highlights:**

- Discussed Definition using Autism Guidelines, IDEA 2004 category definition, Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000.
- Reviewed draft definition statement.
- Reviewed survey item by item.
- Discussed how SERC could support by coordinating survey dissemination using electronic survey data collection.
- Discussed holding public meetings rather than focus groups – focus groups may come later if there are areas that need more in-depth review.
- Agreed letters/correspondence from the study group would be appropriate coming from the group itself – i.e. cover letter with survey, invitation to public meeting, etc.
- Some anticipated issues expressed were:
  - Definitions for developmental disabilities and how federal definitions include a number of examples of DD that need to be addressed – cerebral palsy, spina bifida, fetal alcohol syndrome, brain injury, intellectual disabilities, vision impairment, hearing loss, and so forth.
  - Level of public scrutiny of data collection tools, methods, and representation – we need to ensure credibility of tools and alignment to bill.
  - Involving stakeholder groups – many people are concerned and interested about this Act.

### **Task Details – Deadline August 29<sup>th</sup>**

*BSE revises draft definition based on IDEA/federal definitions:*

- Autism guidelines
- Developmental Disabilities – 1%, assurances to include language on cognitive, behavioral, and physical limitations

*BSE works with Southern on survey instrument and public meeting dates.*

*BSE works with SERC to determine logistic support for September and October meetings, promoting public meeting sessions, and support designing an electronic version of the survey.*

*BSE adds RESC maps.*

*BSE works with Autism Guidelines Group to engage in content validity of survey items.*

*BSE sets dates for public meetings.*

*BSE will outline scope and sequence of the report.*

*Southern continues revision to instruments and investigates how to create a version for parents, individuals, and higher education.*

*Southern will work on guiding questions for use at a public meeting session.*

*Next Meeting: September 4, 2008*

## **Feasibility Study Group Meeting Summary**

*September 4, 2008*

Attendance: Jonas, Jim, Anne Louise, Ruth, Pam, Kathy, Jacqui, Jill  
Guests : Representative Cathy Abercrombie

Meeting Discussion Highlights and Tentative Group Work Plan:

1. Reviewed third draft of definition with revisions (Jacqui) –
  - Concern expressed over the latest revision and the omission of early childhood/birth to three/IFSP references – request to include language from previous drafts and send to Linda Goodman (and Jacqui noted Maria Synodi) for a final revision to the ASD/DD definitions before public dissemination.
  - The following groups were identified to send definition draft after Goodman/Synodi review: Autism Guidelines Writing Group; RESC Alliance; SERC (Donna Merrit/Kate Weingartner); DD Council; ASRC; ASCONN; ARC-CT; CSPD; CCIC;CT-ASRC, CT FEAT, PIRC, CPAC, ASCONN, CT Family Support Network, CT-KASA, ARC/CT, FAVOR, Office of Protection and Advocacy; Yale Child Study; Autism Speaks; Chapel Haven; CCIC; Bob Shea.
  - Allow for 5-6 days turnaround for stakeholder group comment – send out September 9<sup>th</sup> and collect by September 16<sup>th</sup> and share with feasibility study group in preparation for the public discussions (start – Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>)
2. Current FOI request and response (ALT)
  - Special Act 08-5 meetings: where does the feasibility study group fall in terms of formalities for conducting public meetings and having non-members from public attend/participate?
  - Representative Cafero response and Jill’s suggestion that there be four logos of feasibility membership included on the letterhead.
  - Anne Louise will keep Representatives Cafero and Abercrombie informed of activity.
  - FOI request content to BSE – nature of information and FOI.
  - Preliminary drafts are not FOI-able if in draft form as they are undergoing revisions and need to be reviewed by the supervisors of the designees on Act. .
3. Public meetings: discussion questions (Pam/Ruth), dates/times (Jacqui/All), SERC support (Jacqui); Identify public meetings invitees (All)
  - Public meetings will focus on provider training needs. Pam and Ruth developed four questions asking about staff training needs, best methods for conducting training, perceived impact training would have, and open-ended response on training with a five minute time limits on public comment.
  - Invitees to public meetings: SERC will post flyer on their website; SERC will send flyer to CT-ASRC, CT FEAT, PIRC, CPAC, ASCONN, CT Family Support Network, CT-KASA, ARC/CT, FAVOR, Office of Protection and Advocacy, Yale Child Study, Autism Speaks, Chapel Haven, RESC Alliance, for their assistance in reaching parents or other stakeholder groups that these organizations frequently interact with; SERC will announce at Back to School meeting; BSE will send to special education directors, post in Bureau Bulletin, and announce at 9/15 Back to School meeting; DHE will send to CCIC and Bob Shea.
  - Available SERC support was described – logistics, coordination, and facilitation. The feasibility study group noted the following needs to address with SERC team:

- It's possible that up to 80-100 participants could attend based on responses to LRE/PJ public meetings and inquiries from the public thus far. The preference is two rooms at each RESC with room capacity around 50 – one SERC staff and one feasibility study group member.
    - SERC divides participants into one group of parents and one group of practitioners before the meeting (as participants come in) – two rooms or perhaps larger room divided into two areas.
    - If numbers are exceeding any fire code room capacity issues, SERC will ensure that parents have the priority and that school personnel are made aware of the other session options an survey data collection.
    - Study group members will introduce the legislation, purpose of meeting and opportunity to participate electronically (online survey).
    - SERC facilitates the discussion and transcribes any wall posters created with themes and ideas from public.
  - Meeting times and locations shared with team and preliminary sign up for feasibility group member representation.
  - October 2 meeting set up for a formative check of the public meeting process and concerns – recommendations for enhancing the remaining sessions based on initial feedback.
- 4. Survey: Content validity feedback (Jacqui)/revision suggestions for instrument (All), response format considerations (All); Confirm stakeholder groups to receive survey (All), and plan timeline for survey dissemination (All)
  - CV Reviewer initial comments shared with group – respondents state that content seems relevant given the Act and purpose of needs assessment; however, there is an overall concern items may be too difficult or wordy in their current form and that survey participants may have different interpretations of some of the items.
  - Response format – determined language in response ratings would be more effective if using “proficiency” rather than “needs”; Jacqui will send the UConn model and other formatting suggestions. One reviewer did question the effectiveness of a 7 point scale.
  - Groups receiving survey are the same as groups being sent the public meeting flyer (see #3); be sure to announce at IHE meeting on September 23, 2008.
  - SERC can build in a reporting feature that allows for quantitative findings to be calculated as respondents enter their data: descriptive statistics, frequency counts, and percentages. Suggestion that Southern could analyze the survey data using factor analysis, regression analysis, or median response differences by groups for statistical significance.
  - Survey timeline was proposed: Completed September 23; reviewed by group through September 25; configured and tested electronically by SERC through September 30; link disseminated October 1-15; work with data from meetings and survey on October 17 to determine preliminary findings and develop further analytical questions for Southern research team; review of survey data findings on October 23; review of public meeting themes and drafting data findings section of report on October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 5. Discuss information on IRB, confidentiality assurances, data security (All)
  - Still unclear on IRB policies – is this policy research or a needs assessment evaluation study? Do we run through DDS which has an existing IRB council/format or go through SERC as a third party data collector?
- 6. Prepare outline letter to go with Survey from feasibility group (Jacqui)
  - Survey cover letter will include the following items:

- Description of 08-5, feasibility study group, needs assessment and survey purpose
    - ASD/DD definition
    - Statement of confidentiality, use of data, and data security
    - Accessibility statement and/or requests for hard copy document
    - Contact information for group if questions about the survey (Pam/Ruth) or if in need of technical support (SERC).
  - Survey letter will be drafted and reviewed by the feasibility study group by September 26<sup>th</sup>
- 7. Review report Outline draft and study group writing assignments (ALT/All)
  - Group agreed with format proposed by Jacqui and Anne Louise with the following additions:
    - Analysis included in Appendices
    - Format – 12 point font, New York Times, page limits on certain sections
  - Everyone will participate in pulling together information for each section. Group suggested Jonas take leadership on editing and revising the draft as different authors submit sections they are responsible for – individual group members will take a lead on the different sections. **Tentative** section lead assignments include:
    - Anne Louise: Table of Contents, Introduction
    - Pam/Ruth/Jim: Needs Assessment Overview, methods, analyses, findings, Appendices
    - Jacqui: Prevalence data, Next Steps, Timelines, Evaluation Plan (looking at RBA models), List of other state plans
    - Jim: Budget – may not have to be included until January submission to SDE BOE
    - Jonas: Editing for all/Reference pages
    - Kathy: Recommendations
- 8. Timeline/Study Group task assignments (All)

Study Group Action Item	Persons Responsible	Deadline
Revise definition to include the language in the earlier version on birth to three and send to Linda Goodman for review; make any revisions and send to feasibility group.	Jacqui	September 10, 2008
Set up locations with feasibility study group members and get feedback on flyer.	Jacqui	September 10, 2008
ASD/DD Definitions: Revise final draft and send to stakeholder groups for comment.	Jacqui – Kathy?	September 9 – 16, 2008
Content validity review information submitted and summarized for feasibility study group.	Jacqui – Kathy?	September 10, 2008
Confirm public meeting needs with SERC and plan procedures for each session.	Jacqui and Anne Louise	September 11, 2008
Survey draft of items complete and response format determined.	Pam and Ruth	September 23, 2008
IRB policies/procedures to follow or exemption status	Anne Louise	September 23, 2008
Survey cover letter draft complete and reviewed by feasibility study group.	Jacqui	September 26, 2008
Work with SERC to get online survey created,	Pam, Ruth, Jacqui	October 1, 2008

survey link, data collection window opened, anticipate data reports/electronic formats, and e-mail alert to stakeholder groups.		
Work with SERC to compile data for Southern and study group after data collection closes on October 15.	Jacqui	October 16, 2008
Report outline finalized, section writing assignments made, and writing timeline established.	Jonas and Kathy	October 23, 2008

**Special Act No. 08-5 Feasibility Study Group Summary  
October 2, 2008**

*Attendance: Dr. James Granfield, Interim Dean, School of Education, Southern Connecticut State University; Dr. Ruth Eren, Associate Professor, School of Education, Southern Connecticut State University; Dr. Pam Brucker, School of Education, Southern Connecticut State University; Kathy Reddington, Department of Developmental Services; Dr. Jacqueline Kelleher, Education Consultant, Bureau of Special Education, CSDE.*

**Time: 1:10 – 3:25 pm**

Agenda

1. Meeting Minutes
  - a. As of October 1, 2008 – public meeting minutes and agenda are to be posted for the public to view/access.
  - b. Reviewed and approved structure and content of meeting minutes September.
  - c. Agreement Jacqui would continue documenting minutes – she will look for where these documents need to be posted or displayed.
2. Calendar Meeting Dates
  - a. October dates/locations confirmed: 10/17
  - b. November dates set: November 6<sup>th</sup> 1:00 DHE (Kathy to confirm with Jonas); November 17, 2008 9:00 SCSU.
3. OCali
  - a. State networking opportunity in November in Columbus, Ohio – Ruth encouraged ways to find support for a state team since it’s extremely beneficial to learn from other states doing similar work and learning first hand about new policies and procedures in development at the national level – example of National teaching Competency development.
  - b. Ruth can use AAUP funds to support but needs state “endorsement”
  - c. Kathy noted travel unauthorized for state agencies at this time.
4. Report Structure
  - a. Jonas agreed to coordinate/edit the writing on September 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. Reviewed September 4<sup>th</sup> notes for tentative writing assignments. Each study group member needs to begin their sections. We need to begin organizing our sections so we can spend more time looking at themes in data findings, triangulating with additional/other information, and developing a set of recommendation. We also need to think about costs and timelines for our areas.

- c. Jacqui can go ahead and get started on the prevalence/incidence statewide data snapshot. Anne Louise may have to request through Bureau of Data Collection for us to include 07-08 data.
- 5. Definition Status
  - a. Mostly positive comments from reviewers – one reviewer requested more Birth-21 language regarding the education population the bill was intended to serve.
- 6. Survey Status
  - a. Dean survey
    - i. Pam, Ruth, and Jim brought up the need for a survey meeting the audience needs of deans/higher education. They agreed to create items and asked if Jacqui/SERC could use the recent electronic survey template to house this new instrument.
  - b. Current survey
    - i. Survey deadline is October 23<sup>rd</sup> (11:59 pm) – Jacqui will work with SERC to pull an extract of the raw data for the October 17<sup>th</sup> meeting in order to begin framing data findings sections and framing questions of survey data.
    - ii. Still planning on working with Mike from SCSU for the analysis.
    - iii. Need for qualitative software to help with analysis of written feedback and comments. Jacqui noted that she’s collecting e-mail communication from stakeholders as another data point and could use the software for future analyses.
    - iv. Late feedback – may not be appropriately capturing BCBA and behavior analysts with the demographic choices and not asking questions about *who* needs training in district.
- 7. Public Meeting Findings
  - a. Review ACES notes
    - i. Group thought the content and details were what was expected/needed for looking at themes.
  - b. Working/Not working
    - i. Identified that the facilitation is working well – ice breaker, visual highlights, oral summary, guiding questions, publicity/outreach; need to make sure that SERC redirects off topic comments or emotional contributions that distract from the questions.
  - c. SERC Information Needs
    - i. Documentation of numbers in attendance and the current role they sign up as – not present in ACES notes draft.
- 8. Reader reviewer participants
  - a. Discussed having a reviewer reader group on individual sections – drawing from those who have already participated in the definition/survey assistance. Jacqui showed list she’s keeping on those who have actively participated (see additional attachment). She cautioned that the list is constantly being updated and may not have every name at this point. She’ll make sure this is confirmed by the end of the month.
  - b. More opportunities for RESC involvement – only one member from the RESC Alliance has contributed fully.
  - c. Autism groups have been excellent – need more perspectives from DD and paraprofessional communities.
- 9. Meeting ended 3:25 pm

October 17, 2008

## Feasibility Study Group Meeting Notes

*Attendance: Kathy, Jim, Ruth, Pam, Jacqui - joined by Michael Ben-Avie from SCSU Assessment and Planning*

Time: 10:00 am – 2:45 pm

### Meeting Topic Highlights –

- Public posting of minutes
  - Reviewed Anne Louise Thompson's e-mail summary regarding how this study group should share meeting minutes with the public in light of Sec. 11. Section 1-225 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes, as amended by section 2 of public act 08-18, *effective October 1, 2008*)
  - Pam will write a paragraph description of the study group and overarching purpose that can go on SCSU Education website that others from the group can model and post to their agency sites.
  - Jacqui will resend meeting minutes to the group and have copies sent to the Secretary of State through Anne Louise or Jill F.; after this posting, she will send the URL address back to the study group for inclusion with any agency postings. Each designee will check into posting this URL address from their website. Jacqui will post this address in the Bureau Bulletin.
- Stakeholder involvement for report writing
  - Reviewer needs: Invite RESC Alliance and SERC representative (Kate W.) to November 6<sup>th</sup> discussion on draft findings and recommendations for meeting with RESC Alliance and SERC representatives. Also so invite Ed Malin from AACTE – Jacqui will send him the invite to the RESC Alliance. One representative from each agency. Have an RSVP with who will be in attendance. Will invite next week.
  - Reviewers from the survey content validity team will be asked to provide feedback on draft sections. Additional reviewers: Include the reviewers who submitted previous information (see reviewer support list) and add Mary Eberle and Robert Shea to the final draft review group. Will invite through e-mail next week.
- Discuss remaining data collection
  - Deans survey – Pam will send to Jacqui who will work with SERC to get online and linked before October 22<sup>nd</sup> – will give two week turnaround. Jim will announce at IHE meeting next week.
  - Over 300 participants have completed the online survey. Group wants to send a reminder with link to the survey to all groups contacted by SERC – Kathy to work with Linda Goodman on the Birth to Three. Jacqui will send a personal message with the survey link to go out to the districts in her Bulletin database. Jacqui will ask if Certification can send the link and

- information to teachers using addresses in the Certification data system – may need to keep survey link open through the end of the month.
- Identified new groups to send survey link given respondent demographics – there was concern that representative voices were not present and additional outreach to stakeholder groups was necessary. Jacqui will send request to SERC to send a reminder e-mail notification in addition to sending the original information to the following groups:
    - Sped Net: [info@spednet.org](mailto:info@spednet.org)
    - Connecticut Federal of School Administrators
    - Connecticut Association of Public School Administrators
    - Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
    - ConnCASE
    - Common Cause Connecticut (aka CAUSE) - Andy Sauer
    - Statewide related service provider organizations – be sure to include Speech & Language
    - Send to FOCUS with the invitation for individuals with disabilities to participate or perhaps give feedback on building an instrument appropriate for completion in the future.
  - Data questions and preliminary view of data
    - Overarching concerns with current data survey collection included interpretation of survey items by parent respondents compared to professional staff. Pam and Ruth will begin looking for themes and categories emerging from public meeting notes – may need to work with Kate. Kathy has offered to support these initial analyses.
    - Group identified ways to break out data for analysis, triangulate for generating findings, and presenting in the report:
      - Request data breakdown by participant categories and RESC regions.
      - Seek ways to look at response differences with appropriate weighting strategies for different sample proportions.
      - Comparison of items based on need and priority ratings – any relationships.
      - Connections between themes in survey data and public meeting notes.
    - Michael listed needs on his end to run data for the group including:
      - Coding scheme – how items were coded such as “Yes” “No” “Don’t Know” and so forth – Jacqui will put him directly in touch with John Mercier at SERC.
      - Skip patterns – how info was coded and where on survey participants had options to not input information. Wants to verify or confirm which participants were responding to ASD, DD, or both. Visual displays that include numbers or counts may help determine this break down.
    - Jacqui will send prioritization criteria from other states to the group.
  - Writing the report

- Jonas needs to send out a report writing template to group and prepare to organize the section drafts.
- Pam and Ruth can begin writing sections describing the methods and approaches for the data sections; Jacqui and Anne Louise can begin work on the introductory sections and data available through the SDE on special education students.
- Ruth anticipates attending the OCALI conference November 19<sup>th</sup> and understands Kate Weingarten from SERC will be able to attend – will keep us posted if this is confirmed.
- Content of the next meetings
  - October 23 – Pam, Ruth, and Kathy will meet to discuss data categories and initial writing.
  - October 31- Look at the data from survey and themes from focus group; interpret information for initial findings – November 6<sup>th</sup> planning. Invite Michael to this meeting.
  - November 6 – Review findings and draft recommendations with the RESC Alliance – James Street; stay after the meeting (lobster dinner) to discuss Deans survey. Invite SERC notetaker.
  - November 13 – Identify recommendations and set priorities from data.
  - November 17 – Bring draft sections to meeting and report out on what’s missing and next steps; read through as a group; send to external reviewer team for 4 day turnaround.
  - November 24 – Review drafts and make final revisions and edits based on reviewer feedback; generate timeline and budget draft.
- Need review of extension possibilities for submitting the final report later than December 1, 2008 – will revisit this anticipated need October 31, 2008 meeting.