

Special Education Advisory Council
Annual Report
July 2000

Bob Vaadeland, Chairperson
Janet Salk, Vice Chairperson

as submitted to:

Norena A. Hale, Ph.D.
Director of the Division of Special Education

and

Christine Jax, Ph.D.
Commissioner
Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

Special Education Advisory Council Of The State of Minnesota

PURPOSE

The Advisory Council shall advise both the Division of Special Education and the Office of Monitoring and Compliance within the State Education Agency (SEA) on the education of children with disabilities. The essence of the Council's purpose is to provide a broad base of input to the Department of Children, Families & Learning staff regarding policies, practices and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities, ages birth through 21.

VISION

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) envisions a public educational system which serves children and youth with disabilities and their families. Through this system, these children and youth will maximize life-long self determinations.

DUTIES/FUNCTIONS

As established in accordance with 34CFR 300.650-300.653, the Special Education Advisory Council shall:

1. Advise the SEAC of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities;
2. Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities;
3. Advise the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under section 618 of the Act;
4. Advise the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act;
5. Advise the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; and
6. Advise on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEMBERSHIP

The State Special Education Advisory Council shall be comprised of twenty members appointed by the Governor or any other official authorized under State law to make those appointments. A majority of the members must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. The members shall be representative of the State population and composed of individuals involved in, or concerned with the education of children with disabilities, including:

- 1.) Parents of children with disabilities;
- 2.) Individuals with disabilities;
- 3.) Teachers;
- 4.) Representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;
- 5.) State and local education officials;
- 6.) Administrators of programs for children with disabilities;
- 7.) Representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities;
- 8.) Representatives of private schools and public charter schools;
- 9.) At least one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities; and
- 10.) Representative from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

The members are:

District 1
Thomas Uecker
Cindy Yess

District 2
Bob Vaadeland
Marge Mann

District 3
Barbara Krig
Kathleen Lubansky

District 4
Rijuta Pathre
Roger Knudson
Julia Washenberger

District 5
Mike Patrick

District 6
James Stocco
Karon Joyer
Mary Rodenberg-Roberts
Barbara Troolin

District 7
Janet Salk
Beverly St. John
Terry Beck

District 8
Kristine Barry
Sharon Belanger
William Hemming

The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) met initially on August 17 & 18, 1999 for the purpose of new member orientation and priority setting. As a result of this meeting, the following meeting dates* and priority areas were established:

SEAC Meeting Dates and Priorities:

September 23 & 24, 1999	Teacher Shortages
November 3 & 4, 1999	Assistive Technology
February 2 & 3, 2000	EBD
March 16 & 17, 2000	EBD (continued)
May 17 & 18, 2000	Parent Involvement
June 26 & 27, 2000	Administrator Training

* At each SEAC meeting, staff from the Office of Accountability and Compliance (formerly referred to as the Office of Monitoring and Compliance) were available to provide updates and reports. A summary of their presentations is listed in a section named Accountability and Compliance and can be found at the end of this report.

Staff assigned to assist SEAC:

Mary McDevitt Kraljic coordinated the agendas, facilitated the compilation of information for reports and meetings, developed meeting arrangements/contracts and worked with individual speakers in preparation for SEAC reports.

Stefanie Moss prepared contracts, mailings and handouts for SEAC meetings.

Peggy Solinsky documented the proceedings of each meeting.

Michael Sharpe wrote the SEAC reports and summaries.

Final Recommendations of Minnesota's Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

*Summary of SEAC Recommendations on Special Education **Teacher Shortages** in Minnesota*

May 2000

Minnesota Special Education Advisory Council

Overview of SEAC

The Minnesota Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is a federally mandated panel appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL). Guided by a vision of a public educational system that maximizes the life-long self determination of children and youth, SEAC is responsible for advising the Division of Special Education and the Office of Monitoring and Compliance. In this capacity, the essence of SEAC's purpose is to provide a broad base of input regarding policies, practices and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities, ages birth through 21. Duties and functions of the SEAC include: (1) providing advice on the unmet educational needs of children with disabilities; (2) publicly commenting on rules or regulations proposed by the State, (3) developing evaluations and reporting on data about children and youth with disabilities; (4) developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports, (5) developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; and (6) advising on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons.

Teacher Shortages in Minnesota

Shortage Issues

Similar to the rest of the nation, Minnesota has experienced a steady growth rate in the numbers of students identified with a disability. This growth has increased the demand for qualified teachers. According to an informal survey conducted by the Division of Special Education, Directors of Special Education throughout the state are reporting increasing problems related to the recruitment and retention of qualified special education staff. Based on the observations of those responsible for recruiting and hiring qualified staff, there are clear signs that some form of augmentation is taking place in Minnesota's special education workforce. One sign has been the dramatic increase in the hiring of unlicensed paraprofessional staff in the past few years. Another has been the large numbers of teachers currently employed through provisional licenses, variances, and waivers.

In addition to these signs of a changing workforce, there is also evidence to support a phenomenon that has been observed on a national scale—the

"exodus" of teachers leaving special education. Although attrition rates can only be estimated, due in large part to the reliability in which teacher positions are reported by school districts, there appears to be an upward trend in the percentage of special education teachers who have changed jobs or left the field entirely. This trend is observed in most disability areas where data is available, but tends to be much higher for those licensed in the areas of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD), Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), and Mild Mental Impairments (MMI). The increase in special education teachers who have changed jobs in these fields is particularly significant when according to 1998 statistics, 18% of teachers in the area of EBD either changed jobs or quit the field altogether, compared with 8% of those employed in the area of Speech and Language Impairments (SLI).

Given the growing signs of an impending shortage of special education teachers that is likely to occur in the next few years, SEAC has engaged in an extensive dialogue to identify current needs as well as generate actionable recommendations that can be implemented by state and local agencies in the future.

Needs Identified by SEAC to Address Teacher Shortages

Needs to Address Teacher Shortages

In assessing information about the current status of teacher shortages in Minnesota, SEAC has identified the following local and statewide needs:

1. *SEAC has identified a need to promote activities to increase recruitment and retention of special educators.*

Creative solutions are especially needed in areas where documented shortages have occurred (e.g., EBD, LD, MMI, Blind/Visually Impaired, Physically Impaired). There is a need to stem high levels of "burnout" and increase flexibility in the manner in which job roles are performed and in contracts issued to teachers. In addition, a need exists to explore various support options for currently licensed teachers to reduce clerical tasks associated with managing student caseloads. Specifically, coursework is needed to help teachers manage and supervise the activities of paraprofessional staff involved in providing services to students. In addition, efforts are needed to promote recruitment of "local talent." Similarly, the services of retired educators could also be utilized to assist local districts by acting as substitutes or mentors and would increase the pool of fully licensed teachers available to districts. However prior to this occurring, a need exists to remove barriers that prevent retirees from returning to the workplace. Training for all school administrators is needed to provide them with the solid foundation about a broad range of issues regarding special education. Training must include information about incentives and other leadership strategies that can be used to reduce teacher attrition in special education programs. Also, there is a need to initiate programs aimed at recruiting more diverse populations into special education programs and providing newly licensed teachers with mentoring opportunities

2. *SEAC has identified a need to develop a system that will facilitate the collection of accurate information about teacher shortages.*

Although data collection activities have been conducted to monitor the status of licensed and nonlicensed professional and paraprofessional staff in Minnesota, these efforts provide only a general statistical summary and offer little with regard to specific and in-depth information. A more detailed, systematic data collection and analysis procedures are needed to provide more timely and accurate information that can be used to more reliably predict and help to prevent teacher shortages in the future.

3. *SEAC has identified a need for institutions of higher education (IHE's) to engage in efforts aimed at recruiting and retaining quality students in special education programs.*

Given the shortages anticipated in the next few years, there is a need for institutes of higher education to increase efforts to recruit students into special education teacher training programs. Providing students cohort programs, opportunities for mentorship, and quality student teaching experiences are just some of the many different ways that IHE's can encourage students to enter and complete licensure in special education programs. Efforts on behalf of IHE's are particularly needed to ensure that licensed special education staff reflect the increasingly culturally, linguistically, diverse student populations attending Minnesota schools.

SEAC believes that the next five years represent a critical period in which to address the issue of teacher shortages in Minnesota. It is a period in which there needs to be innovative solutions to ensure that a highly qualified special education workforce will be available to meet student needs as mandated through the requirements of IDEA 97.

SEAC Recommendations SEAC Recommendations for Teacher Shortages

Implement policies and programs to support and promote recruitment and retention of special educators.

- Identify incentive programs that have been used by other states and local education agencies to attract and retain teachers (merit pay, amend pay scales, develop contractual arrangements that allow teachers to move in and out of programs to avoid "burn out," promoting "local talent," etc.). Disseminate ideas about incentives to local school administrators and others involved in recruiting and hiring special education staff.
- Support policies and/or legislation to remove teacher retirement constraints which do not make it feasible for an educator to work after retirement. SEAC recognizes that this group could make contributions as mentors and substitutes and also increase the pool of fully licensed staff to local districts.

- Implement staff development activities that help special education staff to more effectively utilize paraprofessional staff in the ongoing management of "paperwork" and other tasks that reduce time that could otherwise be devoted to providing services to students.
- Mentoring programs that recruit and retain culturally and linguistically diverse populations of educators also need to be implemented to ensure that the teaching workforce keeps pace with the state's changing demographics.
- Support efforts within the Division of Licensing to identify states and training programs that meet Minnesota reciprocity requirements for teachers licensed in other states.
- Support policy or legislation for increased staff development funding to local school districts to provide needed additional teacher training days with financial support.
- Support local efforts to use flexible models for structuring the school calendar, school day, and other innovations with time to promote enriched staff development and planning time.

Implement a data collection system that will facilitate reliable and accurate information about teacher shortages.

- The Division of Special Education and the Division of Personnel Licensing should develop and implement a strategic plan that results in a systematic data collection process used to predict and prevent teacher shortages.
- Establish a co-funded position with the Division of Personnel Licensing to develop and implement data collection activities and to provide technical assistance with regard to reciprocity and certification and licensure issues.

Implement policies and practices that support efforts of institutions of higher education (IHE's) to recruit and retain quality students in special education programs.

- Provide mentoring opportunities to future special education teachers in the early stages of training to increase retention in preservice programs. Also, expand cohort programs to provide students with ongoing support throughout preservice training. Focused efforts are particularly needed to recruit and retain future teachers who represent culturally and linguistically diverse populations.
- The Division of Special Education and IHE representatives should develop and implement Special Education Teacher Training Institutes around the state to: (1) help staff currently teaching on provisional licenses, variances, and waivers to obtain full licensure, (2) provide training to general education staff to support students with disabilities in general education programs, and (3) increase knowledge and awareness among general education administrators about special education issues.
- Advocate for more coursework in both general and special education teacher preparation programs regarding diverse learning styles and strategies to accommodate all learners in general education programs.
- The Division of Special Education should investigate the feasibility of creating and providing summer training opportunities for faculty at the

nine special education teacher preparation programs in the state. The content of these proposed institutes could be personalized based upon changing state needs; i.e., recent changes in laws and rule, updates on due process standards and teacher paperwork requirements, promising practices related to the findings of federal monitoring (e.g., transition, behavioral assessment, parent training) so that Minnesota special education teacher training programs are able to more effectively work with the Division of Special Education and local school districts in addressing state and local needs.

Institutes of Higher Education, staff from the Board of Teaching, Division of Personnel Licensing, and Division of Special Education Staff should examine the feasibility of increasing collaboration and coordination among teacher training programs in Minnesota to facilitate access for current and prospective teachers living in all areas of the state.

Final Recommendations of Minnesota's Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

Summary of SEAC Recommendations on ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

May 2000

Overview of SEAC

Minnesota Special Education Advisory Council

The Minnesota Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is a federally mandated panel appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL). Guided by a vision of a public educational system that maximizes the life-long self determination of children and youth, SEAC is responsible for advising the Division of Special Education and the Office of Monitoring and Compliance. In this capacity, the essence of SEAC's purpose is to provide a broad base of input regarding policies, practices and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities, ages birth through 21. Duties and functions of the SEAC include: (1) providing advice on the unmet educational needs of children with disabilities; (2) publicly commenting on rules or regulations proposed by the State, (3) developing evaluations and reporting on data about children and youth with disabilities; (4) developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports, (5) developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; and (6) advising on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons.

Assistive Technology Issues

Federal Requirements of Assistive Technology

In the course of carrying out its responsibilities under federal law, SEAC has identified assistive technology (AT) as a priority area where there is a need to target efforts to address unmet needs of students. As outlined in the 1997 reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 97), assistive technology is defined as both a "device" and a "service." Each term is defined below:

Assistive Technology Device—Refers to any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

Assistive Technology Service—Refers to any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. This term includes:

- (A) the evaluation of the needs of such child, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment;
- (B) purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by such child;

- (C) selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing of assistive technology devices;
- (D) coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;
- (E) training or technical assistance for such child, or, where appropriate, the family of such child; and
- (F) training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of such child.

Although the area of assistive technology has been addressed in previous federal initiatives to address the needs of persons with disabilities, IDEA 97 now requires that student planning teams *must* consider assistive technology devices or services for *all* students with disabilities and also stipulates that school districts are required to provide for such devices or services to ensure a free, appropriate public education. SEAC believes this new provision represents a significant change in the federal requirements of IDEA and has strong implications in the manner in which Minnesota special educators must address needs of students with disabilities.

Statewide Assistive
Technology Needs

In

Assistive Technology Needs Identified by SEAC

assessing information about the current status of assistive technology, SEAC has identified the following statewide needs:

1. *SEAC has identified a need to increase knowledge and awareness of assistive technology requirements among stakeholder groups.*

Currently, there exists a lack of trained staff who are capable of assessing, planning, and implementing AT plans for students. Many education professionals, including teachers and administrators, do not have knowledge regarding the current AT requirements. Also, many parents of children with disabilities are unaware of the requirement relating to AT consideration, devices, and services.

2. *SEAC has identified a need to develop state and local policies that support the assistive technology requirements of IDEA 97.*

Many school districts within the state do not currently integrate special education in their technology planning process. Also, few procedures are in place at the state, regional, and local levels to establish and maintain AT lending libraries and equipment trial programs.

3. *SEAC has identified a need to increase dedicated resources to meet assistive technology requirements of IDEA 97.*

There is a critical lack of information available about how to fund assistive technology and how to access funds from such sources as Medical Assistance, insurance providers, and community organizations. There is also inadequate funding for equipment, lending libraries, and trial programs. Because IDEA 97 requires the

consideration of AT for all students with a disability, SEAC believes that the needs of students with high incidence disabilities will increasingly emerge as a priority where additional funding is needed.

SEAC believes that creative solutions are needed to address these areas of concerns. Much can be accomplished through intensive training and information dissemination to inform local educators about the IDEA 97 assistive technology requirements to provide for consideration of AT devices and services. AH too often, educators at the "street level" are last to receive critical information about laws and rules that are required under state and federal laws. In addition, targeted training and information dissemination activities are needed to help educators and parents develop a greater level of knowledge and awareness of assistive technology resources (e.g., lending libraries) and funding options that are available to purchase and maintain identified assistive technology needs.

SEAC Recommendations

Recommendations for Assistive Technology

Currently, several efforts are underway to address some of the issues regarding the implementation of the assistive technology requirements of IDEA 97. A statewide resource manual has been developed that contains guidelines about how to consider assistive technology for students with disabilities. Also, the Statewide Assistive Technology Committee has continued to meet for the past several years to monitor national trends with regard to the application of devices and services. Finally, the appointment of a Division of Education specialist in the area of assistive devices and services can serve as a resource to focus training and technical assistance activities within the state. Specific recommendations of SEAC that are related to the concerns indicated previously include:

Increasing Knowledge and Awareness of Assistive Technology Requirements Among Stakeholder Groups

- Provide training aimed at increasing awareness among special education staff of the assistive technology requirements of IDEA 97 and provide specific information in areas related to consideration, planning, and implementing AT plans for students. Special education staff also need to be informed of funding resources, interagency responsibilities, and sources of technical assistance.
- Provide training for administrators about assistive requirements, the role of special education, and the obligations of schools with regard to funding and maintenance of AT equipment and services.
- Conduct information dissemination activities to inform parents about assistive technology. Parents need to know more about their rights and the obligations of schools to meet the assistive technology needs for their child as decided by the Individual

Education Plan team.

- Conduct joint efforts between Children, Families, and Learning and Minnesota institutes of higher education (IHE's) to develop assistive technology courses, workshops, and seminars for preservice teachers. Joint efforts are also needed to upgrade the skills of special education teachers at the graduate level.

Developing State and Local Policies that Support the Assistive Technology Requirements of IDEA 97

- Develop state policies to ensure that assistive technology issues are integrated into state and school district technology plans.
- Include language on the state recommended IEP form provides clear evidence that the planning team had considered AT for a student, indicating: (1) whether AT was or was not needed, and (2) if AT was needed, specifying where it is referenced in the IEP.
- Develop state, regional, and local policies to establish and maintain AT lending libraries, equipment trial programs, and technical assistance resources.

Increasing Dedicated Funding to Meet the Assistive Technology Requirements of IDEA 97

- Disseminate information to local school districts about how to access funding for assistive technology (e.g., Medical Assistance, insurance providers, and community organizations).
- Increase funding to address preservice and in-service training needs of teachers as well as for assistive technology equipment, lending libraries, and tryout programs.

Enhancing Opportunities for Collaboration in Providing Assistive Technology

- Develop and maintain productive, collaborative relationships with assistive technology providers to ensure ongoing access to the latest information regarding innovative devices, services, and practices.
- Increase collaboration between the state Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), the Minnesota Assistive Technology Loan Network (MATLN) and other agencies to promote awareness of assistive technology issues within Minnesota.
- Increase collaboration with related agencies to reduce duplication of efforts and services.

Final Recommendations of Minnesota's Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

Summary of SEAC Recommendations on Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

June 2000

Overview of SEAC

Minnesota Special Education Advisory Council

The Minnesota Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is a federally mandated panel appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL). Guided by a vision of a public educational system that maximizes the life-long self determination of children and youth, SEAC is responsible for advising the Division of Special Education and the Office of Monitoring and Compliance. In this capacity, the essence of SEAC's purpose is to provide a broad base of input regarding policies, practices and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities, ages birth through 21. Duties and functions of the SEAC include: (1) providing advice on the unmet educational needs of children with disabilities; (2) publicly commenting on rules or regulations proposed by the State, (3) developing evaluations and reporting on data about children and youth with disabilities; (4) developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports, (5) developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; and (6) advising on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons.

Emotional Behavioral Disorder Issues

Emotional and Behavioral Disorder Issues

The population of students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) has grown on an annual basis in Minnesota, where an additional 2,476 students were declared eligible for services from 1993 to 1998, an overall increase of 16%. In general, Minnesota students with emotional and behavioral disorders are more likely to demonstrate academic problems that lead to school failure and dropping out. In addition, students with emotional and behavioral disorders are also more likely than other special education students to be expelled from school. For example, based on data from the 1997-98 academic year, students with emotional and behavioral disorders accounted for 52% of expulsions from school.

In an effort to address the multifaceted needs of children with emotional and behavioral disorders, some Minnesota school districts have developed collaborative agreements with community service providers (e.g., social services, mental health) to provide what is often referred to as an "integrated system of care." Based on evidence that services to youth with emotional and behavioral disorders are often fragmented and duplicative, a

number of school districts have formed partnerships with other community service providers in order to address the full spectrum of child and family needs. Characteristics of a collaborative service delivery approach include child and family membership on the team, strength-based planning, and a unified service plan that outlines interagency involvement and shared funding responsibilities. While most agree that a collaborative approach to services offers much promise, efforts to develop integrated service systems are clearly *not* the norm statewide and much remains to be accomplished.

Achieving collaborative service systems will require a coordinated training plan for general and special educators, administrators, parents, paraprofessionals, and others involved in the planning and implementation of services- Interagency cooperation, transportation, transition, assessment, and "best practices" interventions are all examples of the range of topics where training needs exist.

An immediate challenge to the development of collaborative service systems and for the field of EBD in general, however, is the growing shortage of a qualified workforce. Relative to other disability areas, Minnesota teachers licensed in the area of EBD are more likely to seek other types of teaching jobs or leave the field altogether. Not just limited to teaching staff—shortages exist with regard to the availability of paraprofessional and related services staff who provide services to students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Needs to Address

EBDNeeds

Identified by SEAC

Issues

In assessing information about the current status of services provided to students with emotional and behavioral disorders, SEAC has identified the following needs:

1. *There is a need to promote strategies and policies that result in increased collaboration of services and shared funding.*

While collaboratives have been implemented in various parts of the state, these efforts have not been widespread and more progress is needed. Specifically, a need exists to identify and replicate promising models of service delivery and to remove barriers that have impeded the development of collaborative services. Training on interagency collaboration, service coordination, and transition is particularly needed for educators and other service providers to ensure that students with emotional and behavioral disorders are provided with a comprehensive array of non-duplicative services.

1. *There is a need to develop statewide guidelines that describe best practices for improving the educational and behavioral outcomes for students.*

Innovative approaches for assessment of students of color and students who speak languages other than English, early intervention and prevention, whole family support, and restorative justice are just some

examples where best practices need to be identified and disseminated for replication. Currently, no statewide guidelines are available to help educators and collaborates implement programs that reflect "state of the art" practices in service delivery. Furthermore, no systems are currently in place to assess the longitudinal impacts of innovative strategies aimed at improving services to students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Such information is critical to a continuous improvement process of identifying and disseminating practices most likely to result in successful outcomes for students.

3. *There is need to develop and implement a coordinated training plan for general and special educators, parents, community service providers, and paraprofessional staff.*

Efforts to develop collaborative services, increase family involvement, and to ensure the availability of highly qualified teaching staff requires the implementation of a coordinated, statewide training plan. A "coordinated" plan is one that articulates specific training components for stakeholder groups. For example, general education teachers need training to better understand their responsibilities in providing students with access to general education. School administrators need to be informed of transportation, transition, and suspension and expulsion issues. Paraprofessional staff need to develop skills in the delivery of effective behavioral management strategies. Special education staff need to develop increased skills in such areas as: supervision of paraprofessional staff, working with interagency staff, conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments, and managing safety and crisis issues. Also, parents need training to promote their active involvement and participation in the planning and implementation of EBD interventions. Parent training should be in the language and environment that takes into consideration the primary language and culture of the parents. These are just some of the objectives that could be addressed through a coordinated training plan.

4. *A need exists to address critical shortages of teachers, paraprofessional staff, and related personnel (e.g., mental health) who provide services to students.*

Given higher than average attrition rates of EBD teachers leaving the field for jobs in general education, retiring, or simply as a result of "burnout," a workforce shortage exists which is expected to escalate in the next several years. To ensure long-range viability of programs that serve students with emotional and behavioral disorders, targeted efforts are needed to recruit new teachers into the field of EBD and to promote the retention of teachers already working in the field. A need exists to collaborate with institutes of higher education to attract new teachers into the field and to work with local districts to develop incentive programs that keep qualified EBD teachers currently in the field. Similar efforts are needed to recruit and retain skilled paraprofessional staff as well as related service personnel.

SEAC Recommendations

SEAC Recommendations to Address EBD Issues

The needs described in the previous section directly bear on the state's capacity to provide high quality services to students identified as EBD. In response to these needs, SEAC recommends the following:

Promote strategies and policies that result in increased collaboration of services and shared funding.

- Identify a model that enables educators and community agency personnel to develop and implement collaborative services. Role clarification and follow-through, shared funding strategies, and co-location of services (e.g., mental health) are some examples of the range of issues that can be incorporated in the model.
- Efforts are needed to identify and amend Minnesota rules and laws that serve as barriers to shared service delivery and funding initiatives.
- Increased funding is needed to provide incentives that lead to the development of collaborative services, particularly with regard to efforts to provide more high quality mental health services.

Develop statewide guidelines that describe best practices for improving educational and behavioral outcomes for students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

- Best practice guidelines need to be developed and disseminated to inform educators and interagency personnel of innovative and effective strategies relating to early intervention and prevention initiatives and increasing student access to general education programs.
- Longitudinal and impact studies should be conducted to assess innovations and identify best practices to ensure continuous improvement of services to students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Develop and implement a coordinated training plan to address the needs of educators, parents, interagency, and paraprofessional staff.

- A coordinated training plan needs to be developed that involves input from local advisory councils and ensures that training initiatives reach "all" (e.g., teachers, administrators, parents) who are involved in the planning and implementation of services.
- Conduct EBD institutes to provide training for general and special educators, interagency staff, administrators, paraprofessional staff, and parents. Institute training programs should be designed to address targeted needs of each audience based on the objectives of the coordinated training plan.
- Develop and implement a website dedicated to EBD issues (training, best practices, intervention strategies, assessment, coordinated service delivery, etc.).

Implement policies and practices to address shortages of teachers, paraprofessional staff, and related services staff.

Implement initiatives with institutes of higher education (THE's) to recruit more special education teachers into the field of EBD and to also target initiatives which address recruitment of underrepresented groups including teachers of color. Mentoring options, funding to support educational objectives, and providing preservice teacher with information about opportunities available in the field of EBD are among the various strategies that could be used to promote the entry of qualified teachers into the field.

Develop and implement incentive programs to retain qualified staff currently serving students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Providing staff with added compensation, flexible scheduling options, and extended professional development opportunities examples of strategies that can facilitate teacher retention.

DRAFT Recommendations of Minnesota's Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

Summary of SEAC Recommendations on Parent Involvement Issues in Minnesota

July 2000

Minnesota Special Education Advisory Council

Overview of SEAC

The Minnesota Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is a federally mandated panel appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL). Guided by a vision of a public educational system that maximizes the life-long self determination of children and youth, SEAC is responsible for advising the Division of Special Education and the Office of Monitoring and Compliance. In this capacity, the essence of SEAC's purpose is to provide a broad base of input regarding policies, practices and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities, ages birth through 21. Duties and functions of the SEAC include: (1) providing advice on the unmet educational needs of children with disabilities; (2) publicly commenting on rules or regulations proposed by the State, (3) developing evaluations and reporting on data about children and youth with disabilities; (4) developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports, (5) developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; and (6) advising on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons.

Parent

Involvement Issues in Minnesota

Parent involvement Issues

Although the rights of parents have been a cornerstone of special education in federal legislation over the last two decades, the parent involvement provisions of IDEA 97 mark the first effort to require specific information and training activities to help parents:

- " Better understand the nature of their child's disabilities and their educational needs.
- Communicate effectively with school personnel regarding their child's education.
- Participate in the decision-making and IEP process.
- " Become informed about their rights under IDEA 97 and to participate in school reform activities.

Included in IDEA 97 are specific stipulations requiring parent input in evaluation, eligibility, and placement in addition to procedural safeguards requiring parent participation in *all* meetings and providing *informed* consent. In addition, the law places special emphasis on the

involvement of parents representing culturally and linguistically diverse groups and the participation of parents in local advisory, planning, and decision-making activities.

In response to meeting the federal requirements, SEAC has reviewed Minnesota's efforts to promote parent involvement, examining the results of a statewide parent survey, local improvement plans, and by engaging in consensus building activities among its members. As a result of these efforts, needs were identified and prioritized, accompanied with a series of recommendations for local districts and state policymakers.

Needs Identified by SEAC to Address Parent Involvement

Needs to Address Parent Involvement

In assessing information about the current status of parent involvement activities in Minnesota, SEAC has identified the following local and statewide needs:

1. *SEAC has identified a need to identify and implement effective training and information strategies that promote parent involvement.*

While it is clear that training and information activities must be provided to parents, it is less clear how these activities are to be conducted and who is responsible. Currently, no definition exists of what is meant by "parental involvement" that speaks to the full array of involvement opportunities and neither are there specific guidelines dictating how such activities should be conducted at the local level. Historically, most parent involvement initiatives within the state have been through PACER Center, Minnesota's designated Parent Training and Information Center. For more than two decades, PACER Center has been instrumental in informing parents of their rights and providing them with practical strategies that can be used in the educational planning process. However, SEAC believes that much more needs to be done to support these efforts—making parent involvement a higher priority at the local district level. Based on the premise that informed parents are involved parents, SEAC has identified a need to conduct more extensive training and information dissemination activities within local school districts. SEAC is particularly interested in supporting efforts that include parents as integral partners in this process, particularly parents representing culturally and linguistically diverse populations. SEAC also supports the concept of promoting the involvement of "extended families," adopting a "healthy" families approach to services, and promoting involvement through early intervention and prevention strategies. Training for teachers and administrators is also needed as part of a comprehensive effort to meet the parent involvement requirements of IDEA 97.

2. *SEAC has identified a need to promote parent involvement in local advisory and decision-making activities.*

Even though all districts are required to establish a parent advisory council where *at least half of* the membership is comprised of parents of students with disabilities, little evidence is available regarding how successful these efforts have been to promote parent involvement in local decision-making. With most local districts

having established their advisory groups only in the past few years, is difficult to assess the overall quality of such efforts and whether these initiatives have truly engaged parents in decision making and governance within local districts. One of the difficulties associated in defining what constitutes an effective advisory committee is the lack of information what is considered "best practice". Although such standards do not currently exist, SEAC believes that it is critical that parent advisory committees are provided with a set of best practice guidelines that will inform members their roles and responsibilities and the opportunities available to them to fully participate in the decision making process. Standards of best practice will not only help advisory committee members to gauge current progress, but will also help them plan for the future.

3. *SEAC has identified a need to implement targeted parent involvement activities to address the needs of diverse populations.*

Consistent with the aims of federal legislation, SEAC is interested in promoting parent involvement of parents who represent culturally and linguistically diverse groups. Minnesota's rapidly changing demographics and family dynamics (e.g., extended family issues) require greater efforts to reach out to ensure that *all* parents are provided with the opportunity to fully participate in the educational planning process. SEAC believes that a lack of participation among parents of diverse groups is often found to be linked to negative consequences for students. For example, increased parent involvement among parents of diverse groups would help to address the problem of disproportionate representation of students in special education programs and would also help facilitate early intervention and prevention efforts within the state. There is a particular need to conduct "train the "trainer" activities, where parents from diverse groups are recruited and trained to provide training to other parents.

4. *SEAC has identified a need for institutions of higher education (IHE's) to promote parent involvement and partnership in training programs.*

SEAC believes that IHE's can play an important role in helping to infuse meaningful parent involvement strategies at all levels of the system. Preservice training for future teachers and administrators, along with seminars and workshops for those currently working in the field of education are ways that IHE's can contribute to building a workforce of educators who have the knowledge and skills to promote parent involvement in special education. IHE's can also make a contribution to promoting effective parent involvement efforts by utilizing its resources to conduct research and evaluation activities to monitor the progress of training and to assist with the process of developing curricula and other tools that can be used by parent advisory committees, parent trainers, teachers and administrators.

SEAC Recommendations

SEAC Recommendations for Parent Involvement

One of the most important aspects of special education services is the role played by parents in the education of their child with a disability. Whether their status is that of a "new" parent just learning how to

navigate through the complex processes and procedures, or a "veteran" of numerous planning meetings, involved parents are critical to ensuring the long-term success of their child. In recognition of this important role, SEAC has developed a number of recommendations to meet IDEA 97 requirements in Minnesota:

Implementing Training and Information Dissemination Activities that Promote Parent Involvement.

- Continue to collaborate with PACER Center to identify and disseminate exemplary models of parent involvement to local districts. These models can be used to inform educators about the parameters of "parent involvement" and provide them with a template to use in local districts.
- Support parent-driven involvement activities. For example, using parents as guest speakers to discuss involvement issues can be an effective means of establishing credibility and serving as examples for others who are interested in promoting parent involvement within their district.
- Develop and implement parent involvement training activities that promote the development of family centered IEP's and early intervention and prevention strategies. Training activities also need to focus on effective models of service delivery (e.g., "healthy families") and the application creative approaches to involving families in special education programs (e.g., flexible meeting times).
- In addition to targeted training for parents, ongoing in-service training initiatives are also needed to increase current levels of awareness, knowledge, and skills of teachers and administrators.

Promoting Parent Involvement in Local Advisory and Decision-Making Activities.

- The Division of Special Education should establish "best practices" to support parents of local special education advisory committees. These "best practices" should provide local advisory members and district staff with a means of assessing the current status of their advisory committee and as a tool for future planning.
- The Division of Special Education needs to disseminate information to districts describing the role of the local advisory committee in relation to other groups or committees (e.g., interagency committees, school board).

Implementing Targeted Parent Involvement Activities to Address the Needs of Diverse Communities.

- Provide targeted "train-the-trainer" activities to parents who represent culturally and linguistically diverse populations to ensure that parent involvement training activities are responsive to the needs of all communities.
- Strategies such as "parent-to-parent" peer mentoring should be utilized to help reduce barriers to participation.

Promoting Parent Involvement Training Activities Within Institutes of Higher Education (IHE's).

- The Division of Special Education should work with IHE's within the state to develop training activities that will increase the knowledge and

skills of preservice teachers and administrators.

The Division of Special Education should work with IHE's to develop best practice standards for local advisory committees and assist with the development of curricula/training materials. Infusion of this information into preservice training programs is recommended to increase knowledge with local district staff.

DRAFT Recommendations of Minnesota's Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

Summary of SEAC Recommendations for School Superintendents and Building Principals in serving Children and Youth who have Disabilities

July 2000

Overview of SEAC

Minnesota Special Education Advisory Council

The Minnesota Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is a federally mandated panel appointed by the Commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL). Guided by a vision of a public educational system that maximizes the life-long self determination of children and youth, SEAC is responsible for advising the Division of Special Education and the Office of Monitoring and Compliance. In this capacity, the essence of SEAC's purpose is to provide a broad base of input regarding policies, practices and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities, ages birth through 21. Duties and functions of the SEAC include: (1) providing advice on the unmet educational needs of children with disabilities; (2) publicly commenting on rules or regulations proposed by the State, (3) developing evaluations and reporting on data about children and youth with disabilities; (4) developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports, (5) developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; and (6) advising on the education of eligible students with disabilities who have been convicted as adults and incarcerated in adult prisons.

Issues for School Administrators

School Administrators and the IDEA 97 Requirements

Special education and its related services and supplementary aids and services are subparts of the general education system. Every district in Minnesota has a director of special education who has the major responsibility for the provision of services to children and youth who have disabilities. The vast majority of special education services are provided in public schools under the overall general supervision of superintendents of schools and under the general leadership of building principals. In recognition of their essential roles in shaping special education services and the coordination between special education and general education in their buildings and districts, SEAC has engaged in a process to identify training and information priorities for school principals and superintendents.

Even though special education directors have the major responsibilities, general education administrators make decisions critical to outcomes for students with disabilities in areas such as: services to be provided,

fiscal and interagency coordination, access to the general education curriculum, accommodations for assessments, the provision of FAPE, and staffing. General education administrators, along with special education directors, are also legally accountable for the provision of special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services, including: provision of services by qualified staff, due process protections, privacy rights, and the provision of FAPE in the least restrictive environment. According to Smith and Colon, "The most complex and difficult task for administrators today seems to be understanding and implementing special education."¹

In spite of their critical authority and responsibility for students with disabilities, few principals and superintendents have either training in special education or time to identify and learn the details of their responsibilities. Many administrators feel frustrated by having insufficient knowledge of special education to actively lead special education in their district or school and therefore must rely on their staff to make critical decisions with serious consequences. SEAC has observed that insufficient high quality training for administrators, a dearth of opportunities for administrators to discuss their special education questions and concerns out of the public spotlight, and widespread misconceptions and biased information about special education laws have contributed to unnecessary confusion and to some unintended mistakes that have had negative consequences for individual children with disabilities, for other children, for staff, and for administrators.

These challenges are not unique to Minnesota. The U.S. Department of Education has called for the special education field to work more closely with school administrators to achieve "a common goal of creating an environment for all children that will promote continued progress in the achievement of educational equity."² Among other concerns, it is essential that school administrators have the supervisory skill and knowledge to oversee that:

- staff are appropriately prepared
- funds are used appropriately
- children with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum
- FAPE is provided in the least restrictive environment
- all aspects of the IEP and due process procedures are implemented
- regular education personnel participate in the planning and provision of special education services
- parents/families are active members of appropriate decision-making teams
- students with disabilities participate in state and district-wide assessments
- services with other local, state, and federal agencies and private schools are coordinated and provided.

To address these issues, SEAC has identified priority training needs and offers a series of recommendations aimed at ensuring that general education administrators are well-equipped with the information and support they need to lead the special education portion of the schools in a manner consistent with good practices and with applicable policies.

School Administrator Needs

Needs of General Education Administrators Identified by SEAC

In assessing information about the roles and responsibilities of general education administrators under IDEA 97, SEAC has identified the following statewide needs:

1. *SEAC has identified a need to develop and implement collaborative training and retraining programs for general education administrators.*

Organizations such as the Minnesota Administrators of Special Education (MASE), Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP), Minnesota Association of Elementary School Principals (MESPA), and the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) represent a variety of perspectives that can be used to design and implement training and retraining programs for general education administrators. Through the collective efforts of these organizations, along with the collaborative involvement of other key stakeholder groups (e.g., PACER Center, Education Minnesota), SEAC believes that much can be accomplished to provide school administrators with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet federal IDEA 97 requirements. SEAC itself can also contribute to this process by maintaining ongoing communications with stakeholder organizations and by utilizing resources to disseminate information to broader special education communities and policymakers within the state.

Training that promotes IDEA 97 compliance needs to be given highest priority, concentrating on areas that increase the knowledge of state and federal laws and rules (e.g., IDEA 97, Section 504). Training needs to have an applied focus, where school superintendents, principals, and others can use the information to improve decision-making at the local level. Among the expected outcomes of training should be the increased participation of students with disabilities in general education programs and a decline in the use of such practices as suspension and expulsion. Other areas that might be addressed through collaborative training include such topics as leadership resiliency, strategies for creating positive meetings, facilitating the implementation of best practices policies for programs and services and strengthening partnerships with special education directors.

2. *SEAC has identified a need to review and revise state licensure requirements to increase the skills, knowledge, and awareness of general education administrators.*

SEAC finds that current licensure requirements for general education administrators are insufficient to cover the broad range of knowledge needed to ensure compliance with IDEA 97. For example, licensure requirements indicate that school

superintendents and principals demonstrate competencies in three areas (i.e., learning environments, staff development, and legal and regulatory information). However, there are numbers of other competencies related to special education that need to be demonstrated as well. To achieve this goal, it may be necessary to increase the number of credits earned in the area of special education. Currently, most general education administrators meet licensure requirements by enrolling in only one special education course at the graduate level. SEAC believes that coursework requirements need to be increased in order to provide school administrators with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively implement IDEA 97 mandates in local schools. The complexities of child and service issues are such that they cannot be covered in one course.

3. *SEAC has identified a need to increase the awareness of general education administrators about special education issues in relation to the needs of diverse populations.*

SEAC has often found that challenges encountered in the field of special education are often compounded when considering the needs of Minnesota's growing culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Whether the issue involves disproportionate representation in special education, limited English proficiency, or involving parents and families in the educational planning process, SEAC believes that it is essential that school administrators have the knowledge and skills necessary to address diversity in relation to special education issues. These skills represent core competencies needed to ensure that all students are provided with effective and appropriate educational services. Promoting the participation of culturally and linguistically diverse families, establishing comprehensive prereferral policies, and supporting assessment practices that help to reduce bias and inappropriate placements are just some examples of essential skills needed by contemporary administrators in Minnesota schools. SEAC also believes that efforts are also needed to attain a broader level representation of diverse populations within the ranks of school administrators within the state.

SEAC Recommendations

SEAC Recommendations for General Education Administrators

The knowledge, skills, and attitudes of general education administrators have had, and will continue to have, a significant impact in the quality and effectiveness of services and programs provided to students who have disabilities and their families. In recognition of this important role, SEAC has developed series of recommendations that directly relate to identified needs. These recommendations include:

Developing and Implementing Collaborative Training and Retraining Programs for School Superintendents and Building Principals

- Form a committee comprised of representatives from MASE, MASSP, MAESP, MASA, Division of Special Education (DSE)

and other stakeholders (e.g., PACER Center, SEAC, Education Minnesota) to identify staff development priorities for school superintendents and building principals.

Conduct a statewide needs assessment of school superintendents and building principals to identify training and technical assistance needs from the perspective of the field.

Design and implement institutes and training academies to provide superintendents and building principals with needed training, technical assistance and information dissemination activities. Also, utilize peer-to-peer mentoring strategies (including partnerships with special education directors) to supplement training activities.

Revising State Licensure Requirements for General Education Administrators.

- Review current licensure requirements for general education administrators and identify additional competency areas needed to fully implement IDEA 97 mandates.
- Conduct joint efforts among representatives of state school administrator organizations, DSE and institutes of higher education (IHE's) to develop courses, seminars, and workshops that increase the knowledge and skills of general education administrators in the area of special education.

Increasing the Awareness of Superintendents and Building Principals About Special Education Issues in Relation to the Needs of Diverse Populations.

- Conduct meetings with the Statewide Diversity Committee to identify competencies needed by superintendents and building principals to effectively address diversity issues within the realm of providing special education services.
- Provide incentives to local districts to recruit school administrators who represent diverse cultural and linguistic groups.

September 23 & 24, 1999

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

Tom Lombard reported the following:

Minnesota Special Education Dispute Resolution Systems

- Tom reported on the dispute resolution system presenting a paper which shows a breakdown of dispute resolution systems used, resolutions pending, issues addressed, etc. and Issues Addressed in the Dispute Resolution Systems which is a breakdown of requests and issues and shows a broad range of complaints.
- Mediation is encouraged because there is not a decision-maker in the process. The mediator is trained to facilitate an agreement between the two parties (parent and school system). Mediation is less intense and more of a lower level of controversy. Mediation is much less expensive. Two years ago the average cost of a hearing that resulted in a decision (most are settled or withdrawn) was \$65,000 to \$70,000. That cost does not include reimbursement of legal fees of the parent if the parent prevails. Now, the state pays for a portion of the cost so that the overall cost is lower. The cost in terms of the participants is very high - cross-examination by attorneys is tough.

The following ideas were given regarding collection of Conciliation process data:

- In order for SEAC to see data on Conciliation we will need to identify when Conciliation is being done and have a memorandum filled out for reporting.
- Need to define when using it (Conciliation).
- Conduct an informal survey and work up to a formal study. Start with an informal survey (email, etc.)
- Counting Conciliation's may not be a problem but adding more paperwork might meet some resistance.
- There already exists a sample form for the memorandum (memorandum contains: what did you do and what was your action).

Tom presented a memorandum dated September 29, 1999 which outlines of changes or clarifications regarding the state's management of the special education complaint system.

- **District Access to a Complaint Letter.** Previously, complaint letters were not accessible until a case was closed. Monitoring and Compliance would like to make them available in some cases. In some cases, the letter is an education record and cannot be made accessible. If a complainant's letter is not an education record, it can be released. If the letter contains data about an individual student, it would require a release by a parent. IF it does not contain personal information, it can be released. One caution is that letters are often incomplete and

CFL frequently has to further clarify with a telephone call. It seems fair for districts to have access to the letter to know what is being

- **Complainant Access to District Responses.** Because districts have sometimes objected to the requirement that they provide complainants with copies of written responses to CFL regarding complaints, Monitoring and Compliance is dropping the requirement and complainants may request copies of the districts responses.
- **Additional Compliance Findings Upon Investigation.** Occasionally other areas of non-compliance are found during an investigation. In the past, if a new area was discovered, time was allowed for the District to comply. Issues of non-compliance must all be addressed in the sequence of the complaint involved. If the findings is germane to the issue being investigated, and there is conclusive evidence in the record, all relevant non-compliance will be addressed in the final decision without delay.
- **Student Transfer After Compensatory Education Order.** Students do not lose their entitlement to compensatory services for past harm if they transfer to another Minnesota school district. The new school district is obligated to provide the compensatory services, but may bill the previous district for the cost. If a parent expects the services, they have a right to demand them. If the new district bills for services at 52%, they cannot then bill the previous district at 100% - safeguards are in place to prevent double billing. Federal law is very strong regarding residential district responsibility.

November 3 & 4,1999

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

Tom Lombard presented the "**Special Education Complaint Resolution Process**":

Generally, complaints are made within three years. A complaint only goes back three years if Compensatory Service Award is involved (in the complaint system). In the Hearing system, if the complaint is an ongoing complaint then the complaint can go back up to three years.

February 2 & 3,2000

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE REPORT

Bonnie Carlson reported. She presented an overview of the staff at Monitoring and Compliance.

- The focus at OMC is to put forth a new face, more user friendly.
- OMC is gathering data on outcome indicators.

- OMC is focused on monitoring for the minimum legal requirement with a focus on quality (encourage best practice and quality education)
- OMC is working hand-in-hand with the Division of Special Education (training monitors on the areas of expertise for Special Ed)

Bonnie reviewed OMC's Self Study Monitoring 1999-2000:

- Districts selected were self-selected
- Information will be available to districts in the spring for the next school year
- OMC is hoping the study data will develop into a Continuous Improvement Plan compatible with the Federal Improvement Plan

Bonnie also reviewed:

- The Local Plan for Implementation of IDEA 97 and Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement
- State of Minnesota Special Education Goals
- Monitoring & Compliance: Final Monitoring Report - which includes federal monitoring areas

March 16 & 17, 2000

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE UPDATES AND ISSUES RELATED TO CASES INVOLVING MALTREATMENT OF MINORS

Tom Lombard and Barbara Jondahl, Office of Monitoring and Compliance reported on the Maltreatment of Minors reporting system:

- We have a system of mandatory cross reporting for the maltreatment of minors.
- Teachers are mandated to report to police, etc.
- A Task Force looked at how to improve the Maltreatment of Minors Act and determined some cases were "falling between the cracks" - some cases reported at school did not go beyond the social worker or police looked at the report and could not determine criminal activity.
- A system was developed for where CFL became responsible for reports of maltreatment within the schools.
- The present caseload is 98 cases from a broad range of reporters, which validates the need seen by the task force for a single agency reporting/responsibility system.
- The system uses weighted, objective evidence to determine if there is a case. Each case is assessed, investigated, if necessary, and then corrective action is taken. CFL has the authority to assess and statute to investigate a case.
- When a determination of maltreatment is made, there is a detailed system of reporting in the statute.
- If a determination is made that maltreatment did not occur at the hands of school personnel, there is a mechanism in place for cross reporting to the proper agency.

- Data is being kept regarding each case to identify whether a child is in Special or Regular Ed, who was involved (teacher, Para, bus driver, etc.).

June 26 & 27, 2000

REPORT FROM THE OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPLIANCE

Bonnie Carlson, Office of Accountability and Compliance, reported on the following:

- In regards to the Charter schools, our office will assign someone to monitor them specifically. There is an increasing number of Charter schools and an increasing number of complaints. Charter schools need to be brought into compliance with regards to Special Ed. There are many wonderful, successful, Charter Schools, but those having difficulties will be closely monitored.
- The Office of Accountability & Compliance will be doing additional monitoring concerning correctional facilities.
- Our office is offering training at the Director's Forum on the new monitoring system. There will also be a session for new Directors to explain how monitoring works and what the process is.
- The issue of the federal self-assessment will also be addressed at the Forum.
- Accountability and Compliance will be involved in new Director training that takes place throughout the year.
- Accountability & Compliance is focusing on the model of Continuous Improvement of monitoring and it will be offered in two options for Directors.