

UTAH SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

Advisory Council Minutes

Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
250 North 1950 West, Suite B
Salt Lake City, Utah

Training Rooms 218 & 219

Date: October 27, 2010

4:30 p.m. - General Session

Attending: Bill Gibson, Chair & Voting Member
Linda Braithwaite, Voting Member
Leslie Castle, Non-voting Member
Cheralyn Creer, Voting Member
Scot Ferre, Voting Member
Heather Frost, Voting Member
Kathryn McCarrie, Voting Member
Michelle Tanner, Non-voting Member
Cordie Weed, Voting Member

Excused: Amy English, Vice-Chair & Voting Member
Von Hortin, Non-voting Member
Scott McAward, Voting Member
Marla Palmer, Voting Member

Also Attending:
Steve Noyce, Superintendent
Betty Hall, Executive Assistant

Interpreters: Dawn Duran
Mickelle Myers
Crystal Cutler
Elizabeth Kocherhans

Administrative Staff Present:
Melanie Austin, Program Director of Blind, Region II
Leslie Buchanan, Program Director of Deafblind & Specialty Services
Bruce Buland, USDB/DHRM
Tami Gear, Director of Related Services
Jennifer Howell, Associate Superintendent of the Deaf
Marilyn Madsen, Program Director of Deaf South Region
Day Mullings, Program Director of Deaf PIP
Barbara Petersen, Program Director of Blind PIP
Jill Radford, Program Director of JMS
Trena Roueche', Program Director of Deaf North Region
Michael Sears, Finance Director
Betsy Sutherland, Program Director of Deaf Central Region

Others Attending:

Martell Menlove, USOE
Dave Rodemack, DHRM/USOE
Chris Timothy, USOE
Jan Ferre' LCPD
Brian Thornsberry, USD
BoniLynn Henrie, USD
Teresa Owino, USD
Craig Radford, WSBBC
Jenny Alvey

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Bill Gibson welcomed everyone in attendance and asked Advisory Council members to introduce themselves.

Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Linda Braithwaite led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Public Comments

None

Consent Calendar Approval

Ms. Cordie Weed made a motion to accept the Advisory Council minutes of the September 22, 2010 meeting, the Personnel Actions for September 2010 and the Donated Account Summary for September 2010. Ms. Kathryn McCarrie seconded. Motion carried.

Establish the Deaf National Agenda Subcommittee.

Mrs. Jennifer Howell reported that a letter was sent to people that had been recommended to assist with the Deaf National Agenda. Next month they will report the membership which will have an emphasis on deaf adult participation. She hopes Council will establish a subcommittee to go forward with this effort. She estimated it will take approximately one year to establish the groundwork, collect data, address the eight goals and take action to address areas of need. By fall of next year they plan to have a final product which Council could take to the USBE if so desired. It was noted that Deafblind is included in the Blind School and will be covered in their agenda.

Mr. Scot Ferre made a motion to establish a subcommittee of the USDB Advisory Council to address the goals of the National Agenda for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The subcommittee will prepare an action plan, including goals and objectives with timelines for achievement, to present for review by the USDB Advisory Council. This subcommittee will be chaired by the USOE Program Specialist for Sensory and Severe Disabilities, Christine Timothy, and the USDB Associate Superintendent for the Deaf, Jennifer Johnson Howell. Ms. McCarrie seconded. Motion carried.

INFORMATION

1. Budget

- Mr. Michael Sears commented on the budget report and the Cost Data for September 30, 2010. This report also goes to the USBE.
- He explained a reduction in force (RIF) that went into place three weeks ago. USDB will not see actual savings until the October and November reports. A number of vacant positions were eliminated. He noted the original budget vs. the revised work budget as a result of the RIF. There may be additional RIF's.
- USDB has had a good working relationship with USOE and their support in determining how to address the shortfall from districts that did not pay for services.
- Mr. Ferre inquired about school contracts. Mr. Sears reported on outstanding invoices for instructional services and USIMAC production provided last year. Some districts in the 3% rule have signed and returned their contracts, others are finalizing their contracts now. November 1st is the deadline.
- The Special Education Compliance Division at USOE was going to take a request back to the finance committee that any discretionary funds that could be found within USOE Special Education be made available to pay for those districts that have not paid. The same request is going to be made at the USBE for their discretionary funds. We are still waiting for that information.
- Mrs. McCarrie pointed out that only services provided to students on IEP's can be paid out with special ed dollars.

2. Conference Report

- Mr. Ferre reported on his attendance to the National Training Forum for State VR Coordinators of the Deaf and Deaf-Blind. The theme was "Hundreds Building Bridges." The purpose is to bring agencies together to provide services for deaf and hard of hearing. Some students are transitioned into USDB; so some materials will be of interest to the School. They have a model state plan which is used to describe and advise what to do. Anyone interested should contact Mr. Ferre for the link. He noted a website module link "PEPNET" which is a useful resource to help transition students to prepare for college. He will also provide a copy of a worksheet for low functioning deaf and hard of hearing to anyone interested.
- Mrs. Leslie Castle requested that, in the future, we hear more about what we can be doing to increase our numbers of students going to college. Mr. Ferre indicated it is a complicated process which he will address at a future meeting.
- Mrs. Howell noted that USDB has already built a relationship with PEPNET. They visited the School for the Deaf a couple of years ago and we are using the *i-Transition* program to create portfolios for our students and that is being used in

several of our programs with students who are 16 and older. PEPNET has come back over the years and trained teachers.

3. Update on Athletics/WSBC

Mrs. Howell noted the athletics program is struggling to stay alive. There is difficulty in getting enough students to participate and getting enough funding. Mrs. Jill Radford, Program Director of JMS, oversees that program. The main cost is transportation; she is looking for ways to reduce that cost. Volleyball and basketball programs are underway.

Mr. Craig Radford and Mr. Brian Thornsberry gave a presentation about the Western States Basketball Classic which is being hosted here in Utah January 26-30, 2011. More information is posted on the website www.wsbc2011.com. Contributions and sponsorship was encouraged. Mrs. Howell noted that USDB is the host site and is helping with logistics but no USDB funds are being used. It is supported with sponsors, donations, ticket sales, etc.

4. Staff Evaluations

Mr. Ferre commented that morale at USDB is a problem and asked if there was a way to find out how the staff and teachers feel about the school. Mr. Bruce Buland indicated that any survey would be expensive and noted it should be done by an objective and unbiased third party to design, conduct, and report the results. Mrs. Tanner noted that USDBEA has been discussing a survey of teachers. Mr. Buland indicated neither teachers nor administration should conduct a survey. He asked, after collecting the data, if the information will be used effectively. It needs to be something that gives this group useful information as to how staff feels. Mr. Ferre indicated he has knowledge and experience with surveys and offered his assistance.

After a lengthy discussion, Mrs. Creer made a motion to form a subcommittee which will include Mr. Ferre, Mrs. Tanner, Chair Gibson, Mrs. Creer and Mrs. Frost to narrow the focus of a survey that would be presented to USDB administration, teachers, staff and parents. Mrs. Creer accepted Ms. McCarrie's amendment to the motion that the information would come back to the Advisory Council at its next meeting before any further action is taken. Ms. Braithwaite seconded. Motion carried.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Noyce commented that things change almost daily. This reports the current status:

3% rule

- He explained HB 296 and noted that it was passed in December 2009 and made retroactive. Schools had not budgeted for this expenditure. When invoices were sent out in the spring, some districts could not or would not pay, yet it had to be put into USDB's budget projection as a revenue source.
- In the spring and summer of calendar year 2010, USDB began the contract process for the 2010-11 school year. We have continued to provide services to

districts the same as last school year. Districts not signing contracts with USDB force us to RIF those consultants because we don't have the money to pay for services already provided and their services are no longer needed in the future.

- He explained funding issues related to IEP's, 504's, or consultant services and noted that Special Education can only pay for services identified on IEP's. 504 students are paid for by general education and need a separate contract.
- They had a meeting with districts on Monday. There has been a lot of miscommunication. It is a significant dilemma for past and future services. In addition to providing services to children on IEP's and 504 accommodations, we have provided technical assistance, consultation and professional development to staff within districts as a statewide resource. There is no funding vehicle. We need to look at State Board Rules and see if the state wants us to serve those who are not 504 or special ed.

Placement of Students

Parental preference in their child's placement was discussed.

Multi-disabled Students

Decision trees are part of the Board Rule and should be used by the IEP team in placement decisions. It is a process to identify required services for children with disabilities. Districts are not familiar with that piece. The Rule is law and we must be compliant.

USIMAC

- Board Rule states that USOE oversees the operation of USIMAC. USDB is the fiscal agent and operates USIMAC to "the extent of funds received annually from the Utah legislature." Funding limits cannot be an issue for special education IEP students. Negotiations need to continue and solutions need to be found to ensure USIMAC is properly funded to provide quality materials to meet our children's needs.
- Ms. Weed said she had been told that students with multi-disabilities are being served by USDB because we have more money. Mrs. Timothy explained that the child would need to be deaf, blind or deafblind to qualify for USDB services. She also discounted the money issue and explained the funding process. Mrs. Timothy will bring copies of the USOE outlines to the next meeting.
- Mrs. Creer asked about a USIMAC employee recently let go. Superintendent will discuss this with her privately.

OTHER

- Rescheduling the November Advisory Council meeting date was discussed. It currently falls the day before Thanksgiving. The date was changed to Monday, November 29, 2010 at 4:30 p.m. [at DSBVI].

- Mrs. Tanner asked Council to consider going back to meeting the fourth Thursday of the month. It had been changed to Wednesdays to accommodate individuals who are no longer on Advisory Council. Those in attendance agreed that they could attend future meetings on the fourth Thursday. Mrs. Betty Hall will contact those members not in attendance to be sure that will be acceptable to them as well. It is critical to preserve a quorum in attendance.
- Mrs. Creer asked about an Associate Superintendent for the Blind School. Superintendent noted the position has been advertised. One interested individual would not be available until next school year.
- Mrs. Creer inquired about visiting classrooms. Superintendent asked that advance notice be given to the director of that specific program so arrangements can be made and to be sure that students aren't involved in other activities.
- Mrs. Creer indicated she did not feel comfortable about the Blind School presentations last month. Not all of the items reported on were USDB instruction based. She would like to know what quality of instruction is given by USDB and how the kids are progressing. Mrs. Creer will e-mail her specific questions to Superintendent to follow through and answer at a future meeting.

Enrichment Committee

In Mrs. Marla Palmer's absence, Mrs. Tanner reported on the enrichment program subcommittee meeting. Mrs. Creer made a motion that the enrichment program funds be suspended and used for USDB operating costs for this fiscal year. The Advisory Council enrichment subcommittee will review annually in April or May, prior to the authorized budget year, to determine if there are funds available to support enrichment activities. Mrs. Frost seconded. Motion carried.

Executive Session

Ms. Braithwaite made a motion to go into executive session. Mrs. McCarrie seconded. A roll call vote of voting members was taken and a unanimous vote to convene was given.

Ms. Braithwaite moved to go back into Advisory Council general session. Mrs. Creer seconded. Chair Gibson took a roll call vote and received a unanimous vote to return.

Ms. Braithwaite made a motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.