

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: November 29, 2010

4:30 p.m. - General Session

Attending: Bill Gibson, Chair & Voting Member
Amy English, Vice-chair & Voting Member
Leslie Castle, Non-voting Member
Scot Ferre, Voting Member
Von Hortin, Non-voting Member
Scott McAward, Voting Member
Kathryn McCarrie, Voting Member
Marla Palmer, Voting Member
Michelle Tanner, Non-voting Member
Cordie Weed, Voting Member

Excused: Linda Braithwaite, Voting Member
Cheralyn Creer, Voting Member
Heather Frost, Voting Member

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

Interpreters: Crystal Cutler
Brad Godfrey
Elizabeth Kocherhans
April Wallace

Administrative Staff Present:

Melanie Austin, Program Director of Blind, Region II
Leslie Buchanan, Program Director of Deafblind Services
Bruce Buland, USDB/DHRM
Tami Gear, Director of Related Services
Jennifer Howell, Associate Superintendent of the Deaf
Carolyn Lasater, Program Director of Blind, Region 1
Marilyn Madsen, Program Director of Deaf South Region
Day Mullings, Program Director of Deaf PIP
Hollie Murdock, Director of ERC/USIMAC
Barbara Petersen, Program Director of Blind PIP
Jill Radford, Program Director of JMS
Michael Sears, Finance Director
Betsy Sutherland, Program Director of Deaf Central Region

Others Attending:

Martell Menlove, USOE
Teresa Omino, USD
BonniLynn Henrie, USD
Denise Colton, Utah Parents of Blind Children
Pat Renfranz, Utah Parents of Blind Children
Jenny Alvey, USDB

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Gibson welcomed everyone in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Weed led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Public Comments

Mrs. Pat Renfranz, who also serves on the board of the Utah Parents of Blind Children, is a parent of a 15 year daughter, Caroline, who has been at Granite since 2nd grade and is now in the 9th grade. She has an IEP where she receives special ed services related to her blindness. They have had issues with the timely delivery of text books since Granite began ordering them way back in elementary school. Caroline's books are prepared using Braille and tactual graphics. She is exclusively a tactual learner.

Mrs. Renfranz expressed concern about timely delivery of text books and other instructional materials. She hopes that the USDB Advisory Council will insure that all visually impaired children will receive their materials on time next year. She explained the new system for ordering specialized versions of Braille through USIMAC. When these textbooks are large and because they are in Braille, they are routinely divided into multiple volumes because of the significant amount of work to produce them. USIMAC

promised that they would receive at least some of Caroline's volumes by the start of the year, and they were able to fulfill that promise. She thanked Hollie and Vali for that. However, providing books piecemeal poses many risks; by fall the next volumes have not been provided. The class moves on and Caroline doesn't have the new chapters yet. Mrs. Renfranz brought this to the attention of districts and USIMAC. Everyone responded well.

She suggested some systematic system wide approaches that USDB and USIMAC can take so these problems are avoided in the future.

- A. A method to track when next chapters are due.
- B. Text book ordering, especially math and science, need to begin earlier in the year; the April 1 deadline is too late to allow enough time to produce it.
- C. USIMAC and USOE need some leverage over districts so textbooks are committed to so they can be produced.
- D. USOE, USIMAC, USDB and the rest of us need to work together so these children don't have to struggle every year not having acceptable materials. Federal law says IEP'd materials should be provided in a timely fashion. It is devastating to a child's progress for them not to have them.

Mrs. Palmer commented on problems with large print items being provided and asked what USDB is going to do to take suggestions and come up with solutions to resolve this issue. This will be put on the agenda as an action item to be discussed at a future meeting.

Consent Calendar Approval

Mrs. McCarrie noted her name should be prefaced with Mrs. Instead of Ms. Dr. McAward should be addressed as Dr. rather than Mr. Mr. Ferre made a motion to accept the Advisory Council minutes of the October 27, 2010 meeting as corrected, the Personnel Actions for October 27, 2010 and the Donated Account Summary for October 2010. Mrs. Palmer seconded. Motion carried.

ACTION ITEMS

Proposal for Survey

Mr. Ferre reported that the committee met on Friday, November 17, 2010 and felt there is enough information to warrant a survey. The committee will work to develop the survey. Mr. Ferre will get input from an unbiased third party and will bring it to Advisory Council for review at the next meeting. Council will need to approve it for distribution.

INFORMATION

A. Budget

1. Mr. Sears reported on the budget and called attention to the Cost Data Report; he hopes the gap will widen and told Council they need to track the total number. He invited members to call him at any time with questions (801) 629-4723. Mrs. Tanner asked about legislative funding. Mr. Sears noted the Governor's budget will not come out until next week. The House did accept federal funding for districts but noted that USDB is not an allowed recipient. He expressed hope that the legislature will not forget us or that we can appeal to USOE for funding.
2. Mr. Ferre asked about layoffs in Washington County. Superintendent Noyce indicated that district has opted not to contract with us and will be providing its own services. Mrs. Tanner asked about IEP'd students. Superintendent explained services which will still be provided. Mrs. Howell discussed concerns and noted that a letter was sent to parents. Mrs. McCarrie indicated that Council cannot assume Washington District is not able to provide adequate services.
3. Mrs. Tanner asked if we were to get any money would we put back positions we RIF'd. Superintendent explained that would not happen if Washington School District does not contract to use our staff. Mr. Sears noted that the state would want us to make ourselves whole and plug whatever holes need to be plugged. He explained the \$700,000 and hoped for discretionary funds to be made available.

B. Deaf National Agenda Committee

Mrs. Howell and Ms. Chris Timothy have been working to form a committee. Those who have been asked and have accepted were noted. Mrs. Howell indicated areas where they are still looking for candidates.

C. Enrollment and Services

1. Mrs. Howell, Superintendent, and Mr. Sears worked closely with directors to prepare a report for the Utah State Legislative Education Interim Committee. They also prepared data requested by Council in the September meeting.
2. Mrs. Howell answered questions on the achievement and enrollment charts. She explained that there are a lot of differences between departments and parental involvement is an issue.
3. There was some discussion on SLP's. Superintendent said we would compile a report on how SLP's have been utilized over the last three years to see how that has changed and present that at the next meeting.

4. Mrs. Howell clarified statistics on blind and visually impaired students. Some statistics exclude certain students for various reasons. Mrs. Howell noted one of the issues is students reading on grade level and those learning Braille later in life (12 years and older). They are proficient readers but not proficient Braille readers. It is hard to weed out.
5. Superintendent said USDB is working to teach Braille earlier in the child's school years.
6. Mrs. Murdock explained the chart on USIMAC. We have had a dramatic increase in workload from last year; 450 orders have been received with no increase in staff. Full textbooks count as one order. It is critical to receive requests by April 1 in order to have them ready for the start of school. Some things are being placed in the "Preferred Braille Network." USDB has advertised nationally for those who would work project by project. That list is growing.

Chair Gibson recognized USDB's positive efforts. He has looked at Braille work from USDB and it is excellent.

D. Future Meeting Dates Changed

Chair Gibson noted that great support was given to change meeting days to the fourth Thursday of each month. Mrs. Hall has handed out a meeting schedule and arranged for meetings to continue to be held at DSBVI except for Utah County in March. He announced the next Advisory Council meeting will be held Thursday, January 27, 2011 at 4:30 p.m. at DSBVI.

E. Future Advisory Council Packets Mailed Electronically

Mrs. Hall noted that several Council members prefer receiving their packets electronically. Sometimes there is a delay in mailing hardcopies in a timely manner. She asked if Council was willing to access their information via e-mail. Everyone agreed to try this method for a few months and then readdress the issue to see if it is working well for everyone. Chair Gibson will work with Ms. Weed who does not have the internet. He also asked that Mrs. Hall mail him a brailled copy of the monthly agenda.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- A. Superintendent thanked Mrs. Howell and administrative staff for the demographics and statistics in their report. He quoted statistics from Gallaudet Research Institute, the Office of Special Education Programs, and USD and noted that USD's statistics exactly match the percentages from the other research. What is happening in Utah is not that unique.
- B. He cited areas USB needs to look at. We need to widen our scope and collect that data. We also need to find a way to track it. The amount of data is difficult

and trying to put it into graphs, so it is understandable is challenging. USDB is trying to get a student information data system. He noted that outcome information is difficult to track. We might coordinate information with DSBVI and DSDHH for some data or we may need to collect data from this date forward.

Chair Gibson commented that national studies show blind/visually impaired folks that have developed essential attributes are those with good jobs, good wages, etc. and are competitive. They contribute more to taxes, etc., than the rehabilitation costs to get them employable. We do need to demonstrate outcomes.

OTHER

- A. Chair Gibson indicated that fellow Council member, Linda Braithwaite, is seriously ill. He suggested that other Council members make phone calls of encouragement and to wish her well.
- B. Mrs. Castle shared her experiences during a visit to the South Deaf Region with Mrs. Howell and Mrs. Madsen. She encouraged the Advisory Council members to take advantage of this great learning opportunity and to make it a first priority. Contact Mrs. Austin or Ms. Lasaster to visit the blind school programs and Mrs. Howell to visit deaf school programs.

Dr. McAward moved to adjourn at 6:22 p.m.