



**Board of Cooperative Educational Services**  
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*Leaders for Educational Excellence*

Special Education Division Director  
Inge Jacobs  
7 Wembley Court  
Albany, NY 12205

**To:** All Special Education Division Staff

**From:** Inge Jacobs

**Date:** October 23, 2009

**Re:** Special Education Advisory Committee 2009-2010

I am writing to provide you with information on the discussion that took place on Wednesday, October 21 at our first Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting (SPAC) for the 2009-2010 school year.

Membership is included below so you will know who is representing you and/or your strand on the committee. Please feel free to communicate with any of these individuals to provide your thoughts, comments and suggestions as we move through this process.

It was generally agreed that the primary focus of the committee's work this year will be to look at and understand student enrollment trends for the past five years. The purpose of this is to anticipate how and in what ways we may need to evolve in order to stay vital and remain leaders in providing special education services to our region. To that end, we reviewed the following data: student enrollment by year, student enrollment by disability classification, current enrollment status by strand, and a sample program cost analysis.

#### **Student enrollment by year:**

When looking at student enrollment trends, we identified that the following strands have seen increases in enrollment over the past few years:

- Comprehensive Development Skills (CDS II);
- Intensive Comprehensive Development Skills (ICDS II); and
- Intense Management Needs (IMN II).

The following strands have seen a decrease in enrollment:

- Comprehensive Development Skills (CDS);
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH);
- Fundamental Specialized Instruction (FSI);

- Diagnostic Development Program (DDP);
- Integrated Vocational/Educations Skills & Transition (INVEST);
- Intermediate Development Program (IDP);
- Interdisciplinary Skills Program (ISP);
- PASS
- Primary Management Intervention (PMI);
- Skills Development (SD II);
- Social Emotional Development (SE; and
- Specialized Literacy Instruction Program (SLIP).

Of the strands that have decreased, the following have decreased to the point where the strand no longer exists: INVEST, SE and PASS.

The following strands have held enrollments that are fairly steady over the past five years:

- Intense Management Needs (IMN II);
- Intensive Comprehensive Development Skills (ICDS II);
- Life Employment Applications Program (LEAP);
- Maritime Academy;
- Pathways;
- Performance Expectancy Preparation (PEP); and
- Social Emotional Development (SE II).

The SPAC committee discussed these trends and ideas on why these may have occurred.

### **Student enrollments by disability classification:**

When looking at student enrollments by disability classifications, there did not seem to be any significant changes over the past three years, although there was some surprise that we had as many as 78 students in our programs that are on the Autism Spectrum. The group felt that this population may be an area of future focus and specialty for our division.

### **Current enrollment status by strand:**

We also looked at our current enrollment status; based on our capacity, there are still 59 student openings available. These exist mostly in the CDS strand (13 openings), the DDP/IDP strand (10 openings), ISP (5 openings), and SE II at the middle and high school levels (11 openings).

### **Sample program cost analysis:**

The group also had a chance to review sample program costs from one of our largest contributing districts. It was interesting for the group to see that annual costs per student ranged anywhere from \$30,000 up to \$105,000. We agreed that this was an area that warranted further study and discussion, as it's one of the issues that our districts consistently express concern about.

### **Special Education study:**

Finally, the committee discussed the recently announced planned study of the Special Education Division. Members reported that there was some anxiety about the future of our division, and concern about what might be recommended.

The group discussed that we have already done some difficult cost savings measures over the past few years, and that having an independent set of eyes on our operations might yield some positive, and as yet unconsidered, suggestions for helping us continue to grow and to be responsive to the needs of our districts. The group thought it would be a good idea for the consultant to participate in at least one of our SPAC meetings, as well as to talk with as many of the division staff as possible in order to get a thorough understanding of our programs.

This meeting concluded with an agreement to discuss any of the above items in more detail if needed, and that next meeting we would include discussion of the possible reasons for changes in student enrollment.

### **2009-2010 Special Education Advisory Committee (SPAC) members**

Please contact any of the members listed to provide input into or feedback on any of the above items.

Diane Bruins- TA, [dbruins@gw.neric.org](mailto:dbruins@gw.neric.org)

Christine Carpenter- communications specialist, [ccarpent@gw.neric.org](mailto:ccarpent@gw.neric.org)

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### **2009-2010 Special Education Advisory Committee (SPAC) meeting schedule**

All meetings will be held at 3 p.m. the Special Education administrative offices, 7 Wembley Court, Albany.

October 21, 2009	March 25, 2010
December 1, 2009	April 29, 2010
January 13, 2010	May 26, 2010
February 24, 2010	June 16, 2010