



Meeting Date: May 12, 2005

Item No.: VIII-A-2

AGENDA SUMMARY SHEET

Title Appointments to the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

Type of Item (check as appropriate)

Action Information
 Request Discussion/Presentation/Commendation _____
 Request Scheduled Time (hearing or out-of CDE guest) _____
 Staff member responsible at Board meeting Lorrie Harkness

Abstract: Summary Statement and Background of Issue

Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that each state establish and maintain a State advisory panel on the education of children with disabilities. In accordance with the Exceptional Children’s Educational Act (ECEA), the Advisory Committee provides for representation and statewide participation in decision-making related to the education of exceptional children by receiving input and making recommendations to the State Board of Education. Members of the Colorado Advisory Committee are appointed by the State Board of Education with recommendations from the Advisory Committee as proposed by the Membership Subcommittee. It is important that members be representative of the State population and be individuals involved in or concerned with the education of children with disabilities. The majority of members need to be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities.

Among the changes in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, are changes to the composition of State Advisory Panels. Specifically membership now needs to include:

- **a representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care**
- State and local education officials, **including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of Title VII of the Mc-Kinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

The Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC) fully supports and recommends the appointment of Mary Griffin, Congressional District 7, as the representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care. Please see the attached nomination form.

Note: The recommendation to appoint a State or local education official who carries out activities under subtitle B of Title VII of the Mc-Kinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act has been postponed until 2006.

Recommendation for Board Action

To appoint an individual to fill the vacancy on the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC), effective July 1, 2005.

Originated by: Lorrie Harkness, State Director, Exceptional Student Services Date: _____

Submitted by: Roscoe Davidson, Deputy/Assistant Commissioner Date: _____

Fiscal Impact: Karen L. Stroup, Chief of Staff Contract Approval

Approved for Agenda: William J. Moloney, Commissioner

CSEAC Nomination for Foster Care Rep.

Nominee: Mary Griffin

Nominator: Kathy Chase

I am nominating Mary Griffin to serve on CSEAC as the representative for State Child Welfare Foster Care, a new position for CSEAC.

Mary has a wealth of knowledge and experience in the area of foster care. She has been a county caseworker and a State Administrator in Colorado for a number of years and understands the unique challenges that are present for kids in Foster Care, particularly as they relate to their education. Children in Foster Care have their whole lives disrupted, including their education. They may move from school to school while their family is receiving treatment, or while a more permanent home is being located for them. This makes it extremely difficult for these children to be successful in the educational environment. Many of these children have special education needs as well. Mary works diligently to resolve these issues on a daily basis.

Mary also has unique experience with very special needs kids, as she worked with kids with Developmental Disabilities for a number of years.

Mary's more recent accomplishments include serving on the Governor's Task Force for Education for Out of Home Placements and Eligible Facility Education Programming. She also is working on a Statewide Education Forum that will be held in May 2005, to discuss the barriers and issues related to education and special education for kids in out of home placement. Stakeholders from throughout the system will be in attendance to contribute to possible solutions to the issues that come up on a regular basis.

Mary is one of the hardest working and most dedicated people to kids' issues as they relate to education and special education. I am very proud and honored to be nominating her to CSEAC.

Kathy Chase
CSEAC Parent Representative
CSEAC Membership Committee Chair

Personal Information

Name: Mary Griffin

Address: 4470 S Cody Way

City/State/Zip: Littleton, CO 80123

Home Phone: 303-933-3175 **Work Phone:** 303-866-3546

Email: mary.griffin@state.co.us

Below please list your experiences with individuals with disabilities.

1. Minnesota: Koochiching County Community Services 1984-1989:
 - As the county adult services social worker, I provided ongoing support and resources to adults with serious and persistent mental illness who were living in the community and for county residents that were in the state hospital system; and,
 - As an ongoing social worker for children with developmental disabilities and their families, I provided support and services for who lived in the community in their homes and through a residential waiver. Part of these services included participating in the development of IEPs for the children.

2. Colorado: Denver County Department of Human Services 1990-1996
 - As a Child Protection Intake Worker (1990-1991), I received referrals on behalf of families that needed additional services to maintain their infants, toddlers, and children with delays and/or disabilities in the home. On some occasions, families requested that they receive out-of-home services for their children with developmental disabilities because they needed additional assistance that was not available in the home. The majority of these cases were served on a voluntary basis.
 - As a Child Protection Ongoing Worker (1991-1996), my workload was solely dedicated to working with families with children with disabilities. Most involved children with severe developmental disabilities. The Department worked with many of the children and their families on a voluntary basis. The focus of the interventions was to advocate for and facilitate children and families to locate and access community services.
 - In all situations, I participated with the family and the school district(s) to address the educational needs and services of the child(ren), primarily through Part B, and in some situations, child find. At that time the structure of Part C was not as developed as it currently is.

3. Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Welfare Services 1996-current:
 - Children's Habilitation Residential Program (CHRP) Waiver Administrator and Child Welfare liaison to the Colorado Department of Education, (1996-2001). The purpose of CHRP is to provide a venue for county departments to facilitate services in of out-of – home placement (in foster homes), which meet the individual needs of each child with severe developmental disabilities who is enrolled in the waiver. This is part of the foster care system.
 - a) I served on the interagency workgroup/committee for Part C of IDEA and participated on the Colorado Interagency Coordinating Council (CICC).
 - b) We partnered with Part C and other CDE staff, and the Center for People with Disabilities and Older People in writing agency letters, which set policy for county departments. The policies provided instruction and information regarding educational surrogates (Part B and Part C), informing counties about Part C, and how to partner with local Early Childhood Connection (ECC) organizations.
 - c) We developed rules so that county departments engaged with early childhood resources such as Part C and/or other community agencies to assure young children and their families who are being served in the child welfare system are linked to appropriate resources.
 - d) We organized a monthly group for county caseworkers and local Community Center Boards (CCB) staff to network to educate themselves about their respective roles and responsibilities and to develop working relationships. This process has enhanced the referral system, particularly for young adults with developmental disabilities who are exiting the child welfare system to enter the adult system.
 - e) We developed an education policy workgroup with CDE, county, school district, and state staff to identify the gaps and barriers that occur between child welfare and the education for children and youth that are in foster care. This group developed an issue paper with recommendations.
 - Foster Care Supervisor and Child Welfare liaison to the Colorado Department of Education, 2001-current: My responsibility is to provide oversight, technical assistance and training to county departments regarding issues related to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children/youth in foster homes. In addition ongoing communication with private provider agencies that certify foster homes is maintained. We know that many children/youth who are in the child welfare foster care system have special educational needs, and in addition, there are inherent barriers for all children/youth in out-of-home placement to be successful in their education.
 - a) Appointed to the Governor's Task Force regarding Eligible Facilities. This group has looked at many of the same issues that were outlined in the final recommendations of the education policy workgroup.
 - b) Currently partnering with CDE to complete the Interagency Agreement between CDE and the Colorado Department of Human Services (including child welfare, mental health, and the Division of Youth Corrections [DYC]).

- c) Currently partnering the National Resource Center for Organizational Improvement (through the University of Southern Maine[USM]) to implement two projects in order to improve the educational outcomes of children and youth who are in out-of-home placement.
1. Development of ongoing state training for caseworkers and supervisors regarding educational advocacy. A core group representing CDE and state child welfare staff, county departments, providers, and the Colorado State Foster Parent Association (CSFPA) are overseeing the project. The implementation target is June 2005.
 2. Spring Education Forum in May 2005. This two-day forum will bring Child Welfare and DYC (state and county), education (state and school district) judicial, foster parents and other providers, as well as other constituents to identify the key educational outcomes for children/youth in the foster care system. The forum is intended to facilitate incorporation of the systems' values and mandates to better meet the needs of the children/youth.