

CSSEAC	June 3, 2008
Attendees	Chris Cockrill (New Vision Charter School), Jen Brittenham (CDE), Pam Bisceglia (DPS), Rob Miller (Vanguard Classical School), Karen Rutledge (PEAK), Wanda Wilson (DCSD), Becky Minnis (SE BOCES), Cg LaScala (ARC of Arapahoe/Douglas Counties), Stephanie Lynch (CDE), Peg McMillen (Parent/Charter School Developer), Lucinda Hundley (LPS), Nadine McHugh (COVA)

Topic	Discussion Points	Action Items
ESLU / Charter School CDE Updates	<p>Jen Brittenham introduced herself to the committee. Jen is a Consultant working with Denise Mund in the Schools of Choice Unit and will be attending CSSEAC meetings.</p> <p>Stephanie Lynch is now a Consultant with CDE in the Exceptional Student Leadership Unit.</p> <p>The IEP Manual and State recommended forms have been completed and should be available on the CDE website this week. CDE is providing a Training of Trainers in different regions of the state over the next two weeks and will be offered again in August. This training discusses changes in the IEP process and developing a legally compliant IEP. A concern was raised that some Administrative Units do not provide training to the charter schools within their unit. A request was to have the IEP Trainer of Trainers training information posted on the Charter Schools list-serve so that charter schools may access the training if not otherwise provided by their district. It was noted that the metro area directors would be receiving an overview of the Trainer of Trainers at the upcoming Metro area directors meeting, and that parent trainings would be provided in the fall.</p>	<p>Stephanie will obtain the information and post it to the list-serve.</p>
Membership	A question to the committee was what might be done to involve members who have not attended meetings. A suggestion was to contact members who have not attended and extend an invitation to attend the next meeting and to determine if their roles have changed.	
Administrative Unit/Authorizer communications	A question to the committee was how administrative units and authorizers communicate about compliance issues, and how administrative units communicate compliance issues to charter schools.	

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Administrative Unit/Authorizer communications	<p>One district has dedicated staff for schools of choice and charter schools around special education who are dedicated to compliance issues. The district is working to make charter contracts more definitive and require more information around different topics such as special education. There is strengthening around special education compliance and compliance issues are communicated to charter schools through verbal and written notice that includes language about the potential for noncompliance to result in the revocation of the school's charter. The district also provides technical assistance and training about rules changes to charter schools through network meetings. Another district addresses compliance issues through regular monthly meetings with principals.</p> <p>From the charter school perspective, it was noted that it can be easy to become an island in different areas of education including ELL and Gifted and Talented programming and that a school should make efforts not to become isolated. For this particular school, the special education teacher was an employee of the administrative unit and had direct access to district level advice and to district resources when needed.</p> <p>It was noted that some districts and their charter schools were still negotiating their way through compliance communications, and that working relationships between charter schools and districts can vary within a district or from district to district.</p> <p>A question was raised about who should be contacted, the district or CDE, when a charter school has questions about compliance. Depending on the issue, the district should be contacted because special education compliance policies are often decided at the district level, but CDE is always available to answer questions.</p>	
Action Plan Update	<p>Action Item: The special education flow chart developed by the Special Education and Online Task Force. A copy of the flow chart was obtained and it was noted that another flow chart of the special education process appears in the IEP manual. It was also noted that it would be good to align the flow charts for</p>	

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<p>Action Plan Update</p>	<p>consistency. It was unclear if the flow chart was ready to be posted to the website because it is a draft. A related issue was whether the special education and online task force was still working on the draft, or if the task force was still meeting. A suggestion was that it would be valuable to include a narrative along with the flow chart.</p> <p>Action Item: Charm Paulmeno presentation on special education finance. In order to proceed, the committee needs to find out specific dates of the annual Charter School Finance Seminar and to propose a list of topics that might be covered. Topics discussed by the committee included: funding for Rtl; whether there are proposed changes in special education funding and the impact those changes might have on charter schools; what funds are available for special education funding and how they may be accessed; how funds flow from administrative units to charter schools and what options are available; how funding is distinguished for online students; and excess costs for out of district students.</p> <p>Action Item: Online Special Education Study. A budget proposal has been made to conduct the Online Special Education Study. It would be a 2 year project with the first year spent in developing the study, and the second year spent conducting the study and compiling results. If approved, the committee is needed to help develop study areas. The question to the group was “what questions would you like to see answered by this study?” This same question would be proposed to the special education and online task force. Overarching ideas for topics included: what do online programs look like (e.g. learning centers)? What are the outcomes for online programs with parents as coaches? How are special education services provided (e.g. via illuminate, asynchronous class)? How are related services such as OT/PT delivered? How does the special education identification process work in an online program? How are initial evaluations and reevaluations conducted? How is the appropriate placement for a special education student in an online program determined? How is the IEP process conducted? What does special</p>	

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<p>Action Plan Update</p>	<p>education in an online program look like for students at the elementary level or high school level? What are the demographics of special education students in online programs (e.g. where are the students located? What types of disabilities do students in online programs have?) If the committee has other specific topics to be answered by the study, email them to Stephanie at lynch_s@cde.state.co.us.</p> <p>Action Item: NASDSE online and special education study. NASDSE recently posted “Demystifying Special Education in Virtual Charter Schools” to its website www.nasdse.org. The same report is also available on the US Charter Schools website www.uscharterschools.org. It was noted that Lu McDaniel of the Charter School Institute was on the list of acknowledgements. Based on a very cursory review, highlights include that a virtual school can be an excellent fit for a student with a disability, but there is a dearth of data on students with disabilities in virtual charter schools. The report also had considerations for special education in virtual schools and information on special education operations in a virtual school environment. It would be good for committee members to review this report to refine ideas around the special education online study action item.</p> <p>Action Item: Promote Awareness of Current Resources. In the February meeting, the committee discussed different methods of promoting resource information to charter schools, such as a mini video conference or possibly the use of online Blackboard courses for charter school developers and operators on Charter School Special Education projects. The idea for using Blackboard as a tool for disseminating information has been embraced by CDE and has been proposed for the budget in the coming year. Some proposed topics are “Best practices for special education planning for charter schools, charter school marketing and nondiscriminatory enrollment, authorizers and charter schools: improving collaboration and ongoing communication. The committee is essential in assisting in developing the modules.</p>	<p>Stephanie will provide link for posting on the list-serve and website.</p>

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	<p>Action Item: Charter School Special Education Break Out sessions for the Directors meeting. At the previous meeting a suggestion was to provide such sessions at the regional meetings. At today's meeting, a concern was raised about whether the IEP regional trainings would leave little time for presentations at regional directors meetings. It was noted that the charter school special education sessions would probably be well received regionally even though there are additional trainings on other topics, and that many regions are having summer retreats. Another suggestion was to look at the purpose of the break out session to determine the best option. If the purpose of the break out session was to impart information, then it might be best to have the break out session at the director's meeting in the fall. If the purpose of the break out session was to get information, then it may be better to have the break out session at the regional meetings.</p>	<p>Stephanie will check on the timelines for getting on the Fall Director's meeting schedule.</p>
<p>Charter School Special Education Guidebook</p>	<p>A few of the CSSEAC members were able to review the guidebook prior to the meeting despite having only received it a few days prior to the meeting. It was noted that the guidebook was voluminous, but the intent was to create a resource that could be referenced by charter schools when they need information on a special education issue. One member felt the study portion of the guidebook could be deemphasized. It was also noted that the Nondiscriminatory Enrollment section still seemed unclear and it was suggested that discussion of the continuum of alternative placements be included for clarification. It was noted that some of the language around "counseling out" was also confusing in the Nondiscriminatory Enrollment section. One reason for this confusion may be that the information for that section was adapted from the Charter School Operator Primer from NASDSE. The language will be reviewed for clarification on enrolling v. applying to enroll. One suggestion was when the guidebook is posted online, the online table of contents would take the user to the particular section when they clicked on the topic.</p> <p>The CSSEAC was asked to continue to review the guidebook and to consider: (1) could/should certain sections become stand alone documents (e.g. the finance</p>	

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Charter School Special Education Guidebook	section)? (2) What sections can be simplified? and (3) what would make this more useful to schools? Please email Stephanie with comments and suggestions at lynch_s@cde.state.co.us by August 1, 2008.	
Other Discussion	The CSSEAC had an impromptu discussion about the purpose and role of the committee. One concern was that there are so many CDE committees out there that our committee seems to overlap some of the others (e.g. special education online task force, however, it was noted that because some charter schools are online programs, there necessarily is some overlap). A request was made to get a list of the roles and responsibilities of the specific task forces/committees to see where CSSEAC fit in and how all of these committees communicate to one another. Another question was that since we are an advisory committee, who is it that we are advising (e.g. the State Board, ESLU, Schools of Choice)? A related question was whether the State Board found this committee necessary. Another question was what does CDE see as the function/purpose of this committee? It was noted that if the committee overlapped others and/or was not needed, that it could be dissolved or continue to meet on an Ad Hoc basis, rather than regularly. It was reiterated that there were several proposals in process that would require the work and input of the committee. It was also noted that the committee is valuable because of the wisdom of its current members.	
Future Meetings	It was noted that the CSI would not be available for Tuesday meetings. The consensus was that the best day of the week to meet would be Wednesday and towards the end of the month. Because of the earlier discussion of the committee, it was decided to set only one date for the future meetings rather than scheduling all upcoming meetings for 2008-09.	
Next Meeting	Wednesday, September 24, 2008 from 1:00 – 3:00 at the Colorado Talking Book Library. Agenda will include discussion of the purpose/role of the committee.	