

Members

Rep. Cleo Duncan, Chairperson
Rep. Phil Hinkle
Rep. Vanessa Summers
Rep. Dennis Tyler
Sen. Marvin Riegsecker
Sen. Ryan Mishler
Sen. Allie Craycraft
Sen. Connie Sipes
Don Bayne
Mary Rosswurm
Herbert Grulke
Hugh Beebe
Michael Carmin
Leah Helvering



INDIANA COMMISSION ON AUTISM

Legislative Services Agency
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

Francine Rowley, Attorney for the Commission
Sarah Brooks, Fiscal Analyst for the Commission

Authority: IC 12-11-7

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: August 24, 2006
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Cleo Duncan, Chairperson; Rep. Phil Hinkle; Rep. Vanessa Summers; Rep. Dennis Tyler; Sen. Allie Craycraft; Sen. Connie Sipes; Don Bayne; Mary Rosswurm; Herbert Grulke; Hugh Beebe; Michael Carmin; Leah Helvering.

Members Absent: Sen. Marvin Riegsecker; Sen. Ryan Mishler.

Representative Cleo Duncan called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Members of the Indiana Commission on Autism (Commission) introduced themselves.

Autism Training for Teachers

Bob Marra, Indiana Department of Education, Special Education Director, discussed the strategies and areas of interests that a teacher training program should include in order to

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

better prepare teachers in grades K-12 to educate students with autism. The strategies and focus areas discussed included: (1) curriculum, (2) assessments, (3) method classes, (4) the federal individuals with disabilities act (IDEA), and (5) behavior modification and behavior management. In response to Mr. Marra's presentation, Commission members discussed: (1) strategies used for autistic students having an impact on regular students, (2) specific content training in autism spectrum disorders (ASD) for teachers, and (3) a designated school for autistic children and its funding.

Mr. Marra presented information concerning the Indiana Autism Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force was organized through the Department of Education, Division of Exceptional Learners (DEL) to improve the academic and functional skill development of children with an ASD through the development of regulations and standards of practice pertaining to: (1) the minimal training required for individuals working in an educational placement with these children, (2) the guidelines for collaboration between disciplines working in the educational placement (i.e. special educators, instructional assistants, general educators, administrators, and resource therapists), and (3) recommendations for bridging services for children with an ASD across care givers in the academic, medical and home environments (inclusive of primary care givers and other family members), and (4) information that will help to inform policy making in the legislature surrounding these and other issues. Mr. Mara also stated that the federal government has decreased its special education funding about of 2% - 3% while the state of Indiana has increased its funding by 1.8% over recent years.

Autism Issues Update from the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA)

Peter Bisbecos, Director of the Division of Disabilities and Rehabilitation Services, FSSA presented a handout (Ex. A) to the Commission members and discussed the following information: (1) the conversion of state funded services to waivers, (2) the three thousand people currently on the autism waiver waiting list, and (3) the plan to remove 650 people off the autism, developmental disabilities, and support services waivers waiting lists. Mr. Biscebos stated that the comprehensive plan for autism for the state of Indiana should be completed by September 10, 2006. The Commission members asked Mr. Biscebos to make a presentation at the next Commission meeting that includes specific information on services and funding for individuals with autism in the state of Indiana through FSSA.

Report and Needs Assessment Survey Results from the Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA)

Dr. Cathy Pratt, Director of IRCA, presented a handout (Ex. B) to Commission members and discussed IRCA's final report that documents the accomplishments of the IRCA from July 2005 - June 2006 in the areas of local capacity building, information development and dissemination, research, interdisciplinary training, technical assistance, and miscellaneous areas. She stated that during the last year, IRCA has disseminated over 4,292,517 informational materials concerning ASD and over 20,377 family members, professionals and individuals with ASD received training or consultation services through IRCA. Dr. Pratt stated that autism is one of the fastest growing disabilities with incidents numbering 1 in every 166 births. In response to Commission members questions concerning the increase in incidents of autism and what is being done about it, Dr. Pratt and Susan Peoples, IRCA, discussed the introduction and passage of legislation last year in the U.S. Senate. The Combating Autism Act would increase funding for autism research. The legislation is currently eligible for consideration in the U.S. House of Representatives. Representative Duncan asked Dr. Pratt to send details about the legislation to the Commission members as soon as possible for their review and in order for her to determine if she would, as chairperson of the Commission, send a letter to the Indiana Congressional Delegation to

encourage passage of the legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Susan Peoples, IRCA, presented Commission members with a handout (Ex. C) concerning the results of the 2006 needs assessments survey. Eight hundred fifteen families participated in the survey that assessed the following categories: (1) information sources used, (2) school placement (i.e. public, private, college or university, separate special needs school, home school, or residential program), (3) classroom placement (i.e. full-time general education class, full-time self-contained class, full-time resource room, or combined placement), (4) discipline issues (i.e. suspension or expulsion from school), (5) employment issues, (6) insurance and expenses, and (7) medicaid waivers (i.e. applying for waivers, receiving waivers, time on waiting lists for waivers, and satisfaction with waived services). Ms. Peoples also discussed the need for increased respite care, mandated teacher training, increased early diagnosis, and a decreased waiting period for services.

Helping Answer Needs by Developing Specialists in Autism (HANDS in Autism) Program

Dr. Naomi Swiezy, Director, Christian Sarkine Autism Treatment Center, presented Commission members with handouts (Ex. D, E, F, and G) concerning the HANDS in Autism program. She discussed the clinical, research, and education missions of the program. She also discussed the philosophy of the program that includes: (1) applied behavioral analysis (ABA) based philosophy at the core representing "evidence-based practice", (2) blending of methodologies emerging from ABA-based principles, (3) various integration of methodologies to individualize to child strengths, and (4) programming informed by ongoing data and assessments. She stressed the key factors leading to successful programs, which include: (1) early intervention, (2) intense intervention, (3) family involvement, (4) staff training, (5) ongoing assessment, (6) planned curriculum, (7) supportive environment, and (8) individualized intervention. She included information concerning other key factors that include the following: (1) comprehensible/structured environment, (2) systematic instruction, (3) process, (4) activities, (5) curriculum, (6) approach to problem behavior, and (7) classroom choreography.

Representative Duncan asked and Dr. Swiezy agreed to host the next Commission meeting. The Commission agreed to meet on September 21, 2006, at the Riley Hospital for Children at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.