



NASDSE Works!

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QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS:

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A Message from the Executive Director

We're Better Together: A Spotlight on Collaboration

As the new school year begins and students enter the classroom, it is important to think about how all students, teachers and stakeholders connect. It is imperative that as we work to improve the education system for students and as we think about the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), that as a collective community, we consider to how to best meet the needs of all of our students, including those with special needs. To that end, NASDSE has been hard at work to ensure that we bridge any gaps that may exist within our educational community and engage in continuous dialogue.

As always, NASDSE strives to work with the U.S. Department of Education and various stakeholders to ensure that the needs of ALL students are met. In this edition of *NASDSE Works*, we highlight the various ways in which NASDSE has actively collaborated with our many partners in an effort to ensure that all of our students are college and career ready. We also showcase the recent work of our projects funded the by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) as well as NASDSE's 2011-12 Professional Development Series.

As always, we welcome any feedback or suggestions!

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NASDSE Collaborates!

PROJECT FORUM AND NASDSE COLLABORATE WITH OSEP AND STAKEHOLDERS

NASDSE's Project Forum helped facilitate a policy forum led by OSEP that took place May 11-13. The purpose of the policy forum was to give stakeholders an opportunity to provide input on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reporting system known as the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) process. Participants discussed their assessment of the benefits and challenges posed by the SPP/APR requirements and made recommendations for revisions to improve the process and content of the system. No attempt was made to develop consensus recommendations and all input was accepted and documented. Project Forum produced a proceedings document from the forum that summarizes the recommendations. (See below for the link to the document.)

- Participants concluded the following: From a positive perspective, the SPP/APR:
 - Ensures that specific IDEA program data are collected and provides the opportunity to track progress over time.
 - Increases the focus on outcomes and encourages long-term planning.
 - Makes educational and child development progress information available to parents and the public.
 - Requires necessary correction to take place in a specified time period.
 - Supports communication among all who work with children with disabilities and their families.

- Despite its many benefits, the SPP/APR:
 - Contains too many indicators.
 - Overemphasizes compliance at the expense of outcomes.
 - Does not yield data that can drive policy change.
 - Is focused on data collection leaving little opportunity to use the data for improvement.
 - Lacks clear and consistent definitions for terms such as 'rigorous and measurable' and 'disproportionality.'
 - Frequent revisions complicate state processes, increase costs and cause the loss of ability to track progress over time.
 - Duplicates other federal-level requests for data from states.
 - Serves to further the separation between general and special education.

To read the full report, go to: [State Performance Plan Process and Indicators: A Policy Forum](#)

NASDSE Collaborates! (cont'd)

NASDSE AND TITLE I STATE DIRECTOR'S COLLABORATE ON HELPING STATES PROVIDE SERVICES

Title I of the ESEA and the IDEA are the two largest federal K-12 investments for helping low-income and students with disabilities reach their full potential while they are in school. Approximately 2.5 million students are served by both Title I and IDEA. Because there is often confusion regarding overlapping language, requirements and accountability for implementing these laws, NASDSE and the National Title I Association (NTIA) established the Title I/IDEA Workgroup with members from both organizations to develop recommendations for improved coordination. Their efforts culminated in the release of a report, *Recommendations for Improved Coordination Between Title I and IDEA*, in June at a Capitol Hill briefing. [Click here for a copy of the report.](#)

NASDSE AND CSAVR COLLABORATE

Late this summer members of the NASDSE staff met with staff from the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) to discuss ways in which we can promote better coordination – both between our two organizations and between the two systems – IDEA and vocational rehabilitation - - specifically in the arenas where they overlap. NASDSE looks forward to a partnership between the two programs that will help reduce the silos that currently exist and provide room for a continued dialogue.

NASDSE AND OSEP COLLABORATE

NASDSE provided input to OSEP with respect to its online posting of data from a new IDEA reporting table – Table 8, which includes data on early intervening services and local education agencies' use of funds provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. NASDSE also requested that OSEP hold a conference call with state directors prior to the publishing of this data so that states and local districts could be better prepared to respond to inquiries from the public on the data.

NASDSE TEAMS UP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS (KU) AND CAST

NASDSE has just learned that its partnership with UK and CAST has received funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for a five year cooperative agreement that will create a center on on-line learning and students with disabilities. The project will begin January 1, 2012. We are very excited about this new opportunity to collaborate with our colleagues on what promises to be a very worthwhile initiative.

NASDSE Leads!

NASDSE is always pleased to collaborate with our partners at the U.S. Department of Education through various projects. Below, please find our recent updates of our exciting, collaborative work!

NASDSE will be extending its work with the **National Charter Schools Resource Center (NCSRC)** that started in June 2011. The new subcontract will continue for a year and will include the development of resources for charter school authorizers, school leaders, special education coordinators and state special education departments. Eileen Ahearn will direct this project and two consultants—Beth Giovannetti and Lauren Rhim—will also work on these tasks as well as assisting in planning and presenting at a full day conference on special education in charter schools at the next National Charter Schools Conference to be held in Minneapolis, MN in June 2012. To learn more about the Center, go to: <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org>.

NASDSE also has received a subcontract as part of the **National Center on Educational Outcomes'** (NCEO) renewal of its National Assessment Center project that will provide technical assistance to states regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in assessments and state accountability systems. Eileen Ahearn will direct this subcontract for NASDSE. As part of this project, NASDSE will work closely with NCEO on activities such as assisting in the collection of data for the annual state survey, disseminating Center documents, participating as a partner in the ASES SCASS and serving on the steering committee to set direction for the group, and participating in the Center's Community of Practice. To learn more about the National Center on Educational Outcomes, go to: <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/nceo/>.

PERSONNEL IMPROVEMENT CENTER

The **National Center to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel for Children with Disabilities** (Personnel Improvement Center) is pleased to announce its new state service awards for 2012 to: Florida, Minnesota and West Virginia and continued intensive state services to North Carolina and Oklahoma. Follow-up services will also continue in: Georgia, Louisiana, Nevada , Utah and Texas (Part C only). To learn more about the Personnel Improvement Center, go to: www.personnelcenter.org.



DID YOU KNOW...

NASDSE has only had 6 Executive Directors. The first one was Earl Anderson.

NASDSE Leads! (cont'd)

In addition to the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report described elsewhere in NASDSE Works! Project Forum also recently released the following report:

[Children Who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing: State of the Educational Practices](#)

Eileen Ahearn, Ph.D.

This brief policy analysis is based on surveys sent to two groups of state officials – directors of special education and IDEA Part C coordinators. Findings include information about screening, schools for the deaf, services provided, professional development, funding for local education agencies and Part C local programs, changes since cochlear implants became available and challenges to states in assisting local school districts to provide appropriate services. Analysis indicates some significant variations between and within the school-age and Part C programs. Initial screening is required in only two-thirds of the Part B programs and most of the Part C programs reported relying on newborn screening results.

We here at NASDSE are sad to report that after more than 30 years, Project Forum will be closing down this fall. All Project Forum documents from the last 10 years will continue to be made available on the Project Forum website, www.projectforum.org, which will continue to remain live at least for the next few months and on the NASDSE website, www.nasdse.org.

IDEA PARTNERSHIP

The **IDEA Partnership project** supports collaboration and develops shared messages across stakeholder groups on common issues. The Partnership uses the networks of national organizations to bring important research, policy and practice information to the field quickly and with greater understanding. The goal is to build relationships between state education agencies (SEAs) and the state affiliates of national organizations to address new or persistent problems of implementation.

There are a number of benefits to states working with the Partnership to engage stakeholder networks. The Partnership provides opportunities for SEAs to

1. test **new technology** before investing state funds,
2. use **turn-key tools** developed by groups with a stake in special education issues
3. engage in **forums** on cutting-edge issues that inform state work and
4. lead or participate in national and state Communities of Practice (CoP).

NASDSE Leads! (cont'd)

IDEA PARTNERSHIP, CONT'D

New Technology

The IDEA Partnership covers the website hosting fees for www.sharedwork.org, a collaborative website used to engage stakeholders in Communities of Practice (CoPs) as a way to implement research and policy. States and national organizations can now use features such as wikis, blogs, event calendars, polling and videos to share information and facilitate collaboration among various stakeholders. Recently, the new website was piloted with several states who participated in usability testing. Stay tuned as we launch the third generation of the Community of Practice website used by more than 30 states!

Turn-key Tools

The IDEA Partnership develops tools to promote interactive discussions across stakeholders in States and districts. The tools are intended to raise awareness and encourage action on important issues related to the implementation of research and policy. Partners offer virtual mentoring sessions to help stakeholders use these tools in states and local districts.

- Dialogue Guides consist of a *Topic Brief* based on the work of a federally funded technical assistance center or other key organization on a topic of interest to stakeholders. Representatives of national organizations write *Dialogue Starters* that stimulate conversation among stakeholders (e.g., families, administrators, practitioners, policymakers, higher education faculty and students).
- A Partnership Collection is a stakeholder-developed tool to assist in locating and using the work of a number of federally funded technical assistance centers around a topic of interest to the stakeholders. Collections consist of stakeholder-developed dialogue guides (see above), glossaries of terms, ideas for use, *PowerPoint* examples to introduce the basic ideas and *presenter's guides* to guide users to explore and apply the concepts.



DID YOU KNOW...

NASDSE will celebrate its 75th
Anniversary in 2012.

NASDSE Leads! (cont'd)

IDEA PARTNERSHIP, CONT'D

Three new Collections have been through the vetting process and will appear soon on the Partnership website:

1. The Role of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) in Student Achievement
2. English Language Learners in a Multi-tiered System of Support; and
3. Overview of the Common Core and New Assessments.

Thought Leader Forum

The Partnership hosted a Thought Leader meeting for national organizations and federal technical assistance centers to 'crosswalk' initiatives under the larger agenda of 'Cradle to College and Career.' Several new tools and activities will help the field to undertake similar conversations in states and local districts. The annual Partnership meeting in January 2012 will continue to explore the interconnections from early childhood through post-secondary and across special and general education.

Communities of Practice

The IDEA Partnership leads or co-leads a number of Communities of Practice (CoPs) to address persistent and complex implementation problems. The CoP issues are:

- Autism Spectrum Disorders;
- Early Childhood;
- Response to Intervention;
- School Behavioral Health;
- Transition; and
- Universal Design for Learning.

In September, the 8th National Community of Practice on School Behavioral Health meeting brought together more than 100 participants representing 15 states, 17 national organizations and 9 Technical Assistance Centers. The participants focused on mental health and education to find their common agendas, build communication mechanisms and stimulate allied action. Each of the 15 state and 12 practice groups created a work plan for 2011-2012. The National CoP members review the conference proposals and put together the program for the 16th Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health, which followed community meeting.

NASDSE Leads! (cont'd)

IDEA PARTNERSHIP, CONT'D

The conference offered opportunities to network and learn more about best practice in school mental health. CoP practice groups led a number of conference sessions and coordinated the youth keynote, which was based on a documentary film exploring inclusion of youth with complex emotional/behavioral challenges, and Youth Day, which included 30 youth from across South Carolina. As a follow-up to the Annual Transition Community of Practice Meeting (held in May, 2011), the national community is developing learning sites on five important topics:

- *Cradle to College and Career* (P-16/P-20) and the impact that this framework has on our work in self-determination, academic preparation, career preparation and transition processes along the grade span;
- *Common Core (College and Career Ready) Standards and Transition* and the likely impact of new assessments on transition;
- *Behavioral/Mental Health and Transition* connections across transition under IDEA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration initiatives;
- **Self determination and youth investment beliefs about the youth role, identifying key tenants, sharing a model for promoting and developing a list of initiatives undertaken by various agencies and organizations; and**
- *Transitioning Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)* learning site to create ongoing intersections between the Transition CoP and the Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) CoP on issues related to finding and retaining employment.

The CoP on Autism Spectrum Disorders and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) will be co-hosting activities during the upcoming Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence annual conference in mid-November. Other highlights include growing interest in a CoP dedicated to early childhood and ongoing work on the issue of Response to Intervention in states with collaboration among multiple technical assistance and national organization partners.

For more information on the IDEA Partnership, please go to www.ideapartnership.org.

NASDSE Leads! (cont'd)

2011 – 2012 NASDSE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

The **NASDSE Professional Development series** is a set of four web-based professional development conferences that are provided via a fully accessible, state-of-the-art web delivery system that includes features such as a searchable knowledge base of information, conference chapters for easy navigation and accurate transcription of all conference content. The series is available only through state education agency subscriptions. The subscribing states can, in turn, provide access to the conferences to all stakeholders in their states, thus providing easily accessible professional development for teachers, administrators, parents and other interested stakeholders. The conferences will be available online 24 hours/7 days a week once they are released. For more information about the 2011-12 series, contact Christine Cashman via email at christine.cashman@nasdse.org or by phone, 703-519-3800, ext. 323.

SPOTLIGHT ON GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

NASDSE's Government Relations activities continue to focus on reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the FY 12 appropriations. Together with the National Association of State Title I Directors, NASDSE staff has met with both Administration and Congressional staffers to focus on recommendations in the report. In addition, NASDSE staff continues to push for the inclusion of language on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Response to Intervention (RTI) in the legislation. In addition, NASDSE has joined with the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities and a new Medicaid Coalition to protect Medicaid in the upcoming budget battles. Medicaid is critical to providing services for children and youth with disabilities. NASDSE staff also provided input on a Senate draft of seclusion and restraint legislation and provided support to House members on the charter school bill that recently passed the House of Representatives. We continue our work to support specialized instructional support personnel (SISPs) in the ESEA.



DID YOU KNOW...

NASDSE was incorporated in 1952 in the state of Florida.



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EDUCATION, INC.**

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