

***State of Nevada Autism Task Force***  
***Education Subcommittee***  
**MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 19, 2008  
Teleconference

**Members Present:** Randy Figurski, Diane Branson, Dr. Cathy Scott, Korri Ward, Jan Crandy, Carol Lamkins, and Assemblyman James Ohrenschall.

**Members Absent:** Dr. Elizabeth Moore, Assemblywoman Francis Allen, Gary Kuhre, Cheryl Jung, John Flamm, Frankie McCabe, Cynthia McCray, Debbie Martino, Jennifer Van Tress, Clark Hochstetler and Nicole Kalkowski.

**Staff:** Melanie Stevens

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Ms. Ward opened the meeting at 10:10 a.m., by welcoming those present and asking all to introduce themselves.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

*Mr. Figurski motioned approve the minutes from the December 20, 2007 meeting of the Education subcommittee meeting. The motion was seconded by Assemblyman Ohrenschall and the motioned carried unanimously.*

**DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS:**

The committee discussed the issue of staff retention for paraprofessionals working with students with autism and how to keep them in the classrooms. The committee discussed the possibility of creating a career ladder for paraprofessionals. As they complete training and demonstrate that they understand and can implement autism specific interventions, their pay will increase respectively. Ms. Crandy will resend to the committee a document that models the levels where aids demonstrate their competencies for pay grade increases.

**DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS:**

The committee discussed the issues of training, certification, and staff retention among teachers of children with autism. The committee suggested making two and four day training seminars available to teachers across the state as they are in the Clark County School District. The committee discussed the reasons for teacher turnover and it was suggested perhaps there would be less burn out if the teachers had more support in the classroom. The committee suggested making a recommendation to revise the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) to increase the teacher/aide ratio for classrooms of children with autism. They also recognized a need for specialized training to be made available to the teachers and to have more hands-on training added to the Autism Endorsement Certification. They also suggested proposing that teachers of children with autism be

paid an additional hour per day to compensate them for all of the extra paperwork and data collection and review they are required to do.

**DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS:**

The committee discussed the training they would like to be made available for all parents of children with autism. Ms. Lamkins spoke to the group about the Clark County Connection Center. This center is part of the Clark County School District and is staffed by highly trained professionals for parents of children with autism, ages 3-22 years old. The center trains parents in a one-on-one setting how to implement discrete trail training and how to use Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to address their child's issues. The committee would like to see parent training opportunities made available to all areas of Nevada. The committee suggested recommending a 'parent training fund' be made available. Nonprofit organizations such as Nevada Center for Independent Living (NCIL) and Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents (NV PEP), could then write grants for parent training. They would also like to see the development of a state team to help with providing training for rural areas. **Ms. Ward will contact Ms. McCabe for input on recommendations to be made to the Nevada Autism Task Force and bring them back to the next meeting for discussion.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was none.

**CONFIRM AND RESCHEDULE NEXT MEETING DATES:**

*The committee agreed to meet again on Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, and Friday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 10:00 am, and Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 9:00 am.*

**ADJOURNMENT:**

*With no other business to discuss, Ms. Crandy motioned for adjournment. Mr. Figurski seconded and the meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.*