

Texas Education Agency
Division of NCLB Program Coordination

Title I Committee of Practitioners
Tuesday, June 10, 2008
MINUTES

Members Present: Martha Anderson, Mark Beaty, Ronald Cavazos, Carole Hagler, Jean Carrell (for Mike McCallum), Margaret McGettrick, Margaret Parks Conner, Linda Roper, Terri Stafford, Jayne Tavenner, Mary Thomas, and Michael Turner

Members Absent: Mitzi Doggett, Vicki Holland, Barbara Martin, Richard Mik, and Belinda Rojas

TEA Staff Present: Cory Green and Anita Villarreal (Was Becca present to take the minutes?)

SIRC Staff Present: Sally Partridge

The meeting was called to order by Terri Stafford. She thanked the COP members present for being there to read the SES Provider applications. The minutes from the March meeting were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes as read. The motion passed.

AYP Update - Cory Green, TEA Division of NCLB Program Coordination

The TEA Division of Performance Reporting chose the options for the 1% and 2% Federal Cap that COP recommended. The options and their descriptions can be found on the Performance Reporting web-site. USDE approved the amendments Texas had requested for its AYP Plan on May 19, 2008. Originally USDE had stipulated that, if they accepted the amendments Texas was requesting, schools eligible to exit SIP in 2008-2009 would not be allowed to exit. However, in the last sentence of the approval letter from USDE it indicates that those schools will exit. TEA has requested clarification on this issue. This is confidential until clarification is received from USDE and should not be shared with schools yet.

Supplemental Educational Services (SES) Update – Cory Green and Anita Villarreal, TEA Division of NCLB Program Coordination

The June 2008 publication of *Thompson's NCLB Advisor* carried an article concerning ways to increase SES participation in grades 9-12. Mary Liz Singleton from SIRC contributed to this article. The rest of the nation is looking to Texas for guidance on how to deliver SES to secondary students.

Discussion regarding SES in Texas followed. Anita Villarreal pointed out that SES is a federal requirement, and that principals and federal program directors can help teachers understand that SES is an added assistance to them. Outside providers are only approved when they have evidence of effectiveness. The SIP unit at TEA called the districts, conducted Parent Forums, created an SES task force, and will be coming to the LEAs for help on marketing SES to the parents and students.

Mr. Green added that the success of the SES program in an LEA depends on how it is sold by the LEA. Texas has some LEAs who are embracing SES and some who fight it every step of the way. Michael Turner stated that he had heard that some states pay their students to attend SES. Mr. Green said that was not allowable.

Ms. Villarreal said that TEA knows there are challenges. The phone calls received by the SIP unit are split about 50-50 from LEAs and SES providers.

Mr. Cavazos mentioned more of the challenges associated with SES and getting parent participation. Mr. Green then discussed some of the issues at the state level that the TEA has been facing related to SES. Texas has about 10% of SES eligible students taking advantage of SES. Texas has contracted for an evaluation of the SES program. It is called CREP. This evaluation will look at student TAKS scores. There will be a control group who did not take SES. The evaluation will compare the TAKS scores of the students who participated in SES with the TAKS scores of the students who did not participate in SES. The evaluation also will look at the effectiveness of the individual SES provider. If students assigned to a provider do not make progress over a two year period, the provider is removed.

Mr. Green added that USDE has agreed to let us put some flexibility into our SES Guidance on the following points:

- Parent signature on the Student Learning Plan (SLP);
- Online providers allow parent to view SLP online;
- Multi-year contract between parents & SES providers; and
- LEA signing contracts with providers early, then submit an amendment when students are added.

USDE already has given flexibility in the Parent Notification Letters (PNL). They no longer have to be US mailed.

The TEA is in the process of having procedures in place to remove any SES provider who violates their Provider Application with the state. Mr. Green planned to have a draft for the COP to view, but it was still being analyzed by the TEA legal department. Mr. Green will email a copy to COP, SES providers, and LEAs for public comment. He is hoping to get a wide range of comments.

Reading First Update – Kathy Stewart, TEA Reading First Initiative

The Reading First Initiative had a 61% budget cut across the United States for 2008-2009. Cycle 1 Reading First (RF) LEAs thought they would not be funded for a 6th year, which would be 2008-2009. However, Cycle 1 LEAs had the opportunity to submit a continuation application for 2008-2009. The decision on whether to grant the application was based on those LEAs:

1. making the most gains in student reading achievement from 2003 (baseline year starting RF) to 2007;
2. submitting a sustainability plan; and
3. implementing RF with fidelity.

Some LEAs did not participate the first year that the Reading First Initiative began, so they are in Year 5 of Cycle 2 and will be funded at 60% as planned.

The original \$1 billion has been put back into the budget by President Bush. Many LEAs are coordinating efforts between RF, Rtl and Title funding which benefits all students.

The main areas of focus for 2008-2009 are:

- Ongoing Progress Monitoring;
- Building Reading Plans based on data (data-driven instruction);
- Sustainability Plan beyond funding; and
- Strategic Leadership Meetings.

Ms. Stewart then shared the results of an impact study that was released concerning the effectiveness of Reading First. Ms. Stewart then referred the COP to the graphs on the back of her handout. The graphs

show that RF is being effective, and she believes the graph depicting 2008 data look even better. Ms. Stewart believes that RF is very helpful for struggling readers.

Margaret Parks Conner requested that Ms. Stewart speak about how RtI works with RF. Ms. Stewart responded that she thinks RF is RtI and that they work hand in hand, but she would incorporate more writing in it.

Mary Thomas shared information regarding the use of RF by private nonprofit (PNP) schools. Ms. Thomas pointed out that Austin ISD has seven PNPs that have used RF since the beginning year of 2003. Ms. Stewart responded that RF has taken a couple of years to take hold. RF needs to develop a tool to evaluate its effectiveness. Right now, the RF Initiative is trying to build capacity within the schools for when the funding runs out.

Even Start Update – Elizabeth Thompson, Even Start State Coordinator

Even Start is a competitive grant, and the application is due July 8, 2008. For the first time in Even Start history, USDE has allocated funds to train evaluators to review the applications. The reviewer training will be held through a TETN on July 9, 2008. The reviewers will read and score the applications from July 11-25. Ms. Thompson's goal is to have the application negotiations, and NOGAs distributed by September 1, when the Even Start fiscal year begins. Ms. Thompson asked if any COP members knows someone who would be interested in being trained to be an application reviewer.

Terri Stafford asked if the reviewers can read the applications at their office, or would they have to meet in Austin. Ms. Thompson responded that the applications can be reviewed in a variety of ways including being read on-line or on a paper copy. They can be reviewed wherever and whenever is convenient. Each reviewer will probably read five applications.

Ms. Thompson is completing the response to USDE on the monitoring visit. The two main items from the audit are:

1. Training for Even Start coordinators – in all of Texas, only one coordinator had not completed her training. That coordinator had to find her certificate to prove she had been trained. Procedures are now in place for training to occur before the coordinators are placed in their position.
2. Training in all four Even Start components – USDE is concerned that parents are not participating in all four components. Ms. Thompson found they were, but not at the same rate. She said it was a training issue and a data analysis.

The National Even Start Conference will be held in Austin, Texas from October 19-24.

Cory Green added that the three major National Conferences will be held in Texas this year.

- The National Even Start Conference in Austin
- The National Title I Conference in San Antonio
- The National Migrant Education Conference in San Antonio

He encouraged everyone to take advantage of these professional development opportunities.

Proposed Rule Update – Anita Villarreal, Division of NCLB Program Coordination

Proposals for Accountability, Assessments and Transparency:

- Strengthening State Assessment and Accountability Systems
 - Creation of a national Technical Advisory Council to advise the secretary on key technical issues related to state standards, assessments and accountability systems. This Advisory Council would focus on significant, complex issues that affect all states.

- Minimum Group Size and Inclusion of Students in Accountability
 - Require states to explain in the accountability workbooks how the minimum subgroup size and other components of their AYP definitions combine to provide statistically reliable information.
 - States would also be required to ensure that the maximum number of students and subgroups are included in AYP determinations
- Inclusion of NAEP Data on State and Local Report Card
 - Require states and districts to report the most recent available results from the state NAEP reading and mathematics assessments on the same public report card that they use to report the results of state assessments.
- Graduation Rates Within *NCLB*
 - Establish a uniform definition of the graduation rate that is consistent with the definition agreed to by the National Governors Association.
 - Graduation Rates & AYP – states would be required to set a graduation rate goal that represents the rate they expect all high schools to meet, and define how schools and districts may demonstrate continuous and substantial improvements from the prior year. States would also be required to disaggregate graduation rates to be taken into account in AYP determinations.

Cory Green pointed out that the issue with the graduation rate is not a major issue. States might calculate one way, but count another way. Mr. Green thinks the Agency will comment on that proposed rule.

Ms. Villarreal continued:

- Differentiated Accountability Pilot Program – announced March 18, 2008
 - Differentiated accountability means creating a more nuanced system of distinguishing between schools in need of dramatic intervention, and those that are closer to meeting goals.
 - This flexibility will help states do what is necessary to enable all students to read and do math at grade level by 2014 in a more effective and efficient manner.
 - In return, states must commit to: build their capacity for school reform; take the most significant actions for the lowest-performing schools, including addressing the issue of teacher effectiveness; and use data to determine the method of differentiation and categories of intervention.

Cory Green commented that this is like an expanded growth model pilot. Texas might decide not to participate in this model right now.

Proposals for Strengthening Choice and Free Tutoring (SES)

- Timely and Clear Notification to parents, no later than 14 days before the start of school
- Public Access to Information on District Implementation of School Choice & SES on District website
- State Monitoring of Districts' implementation of SES
- SES Provider Approval Process
- State Monitoring of SES Provider Effectiveness
- Districts' Allowed to Count Cost of Parent Outreach toward the set aside of the amount equal to 20% of the Title I, Part A for School choice and SES
- Before Reallocating funds marked for School Choice and SES, Districts' would have to Provide Satisfactory evidence to the state that is has demonstrated success in:
 - Partnering with community-based organizations to inform students and parents of SES and School Choice options

- Ensuring that students and their parents have had a genuine opportunity to sign up to transfer to a better-performing school or obtain SES by
 1. Providing timely, accurate notice to parents
 2. Ensuring that sign-up forms are readily available and have been distributed to all eligible students and their parents
 3. Allowing eligible students to sign up for SES throughout the academic year
- Ensuring that SES Providers are given access to school facilities on the same terms as other groups seeking to use school facilities.

Cory Green added that this does not change anything; it just puts into regulations what USDE has said since the beginning of the School Improvement Program.

Proposals for Restructuring

USDE wants to see a more rigorous plan for restructuring than what exists currently

- Restructuring must address the reasons why a campus is in SIP.

Mr. Green asked for a discussion of the Timely and Clear section of the proposed regulations to determine if the State will write comments.

1. Linda Roper – 14 days before school starts is too long. Some districts don't have secretaries until five or ten days before school starts. It sounds like a good idea, but not sure it can be done.

Mr. Green said it would cause a problem between Statute and the Regulations

2. Linda Roper asked if the state could give the districts a paragraph about the advantages of SES.

Mr. Green answered yes; it will be included in the required letter.

Ms. Villarreal then asked what the COP thought about giving public access to information on the district implementation of School Choice and SES by posting that information on the district website.

Mr. Green added that if there are no reasons not to post this information on the district website, then TEA will support this regulation.

3. Carole Hagler – the problem with listing the number of students, or students' names eligible for SES is the free and reduced lunch information is confidential.

Mr. Green said yes; if a district has small numbers, the information would need to be masked.

4. Mary Thomas – numbers change throughout the year, would that be a problem?

Ms. Villarreal replied that last years numbers would be what is posted.

5. Ronald Cavazos asked Sally Partridge if the CAMs and TAPs know about SES.

Sally Partridge answered that SES is discussed at every training the CAMs and TAPs attend.

6. Mark Beaty asked if the SES Providers have to let the district know how many students they serve.

Ms. Villarreal answered yes; through the EZSES monitoring system that the Providers have to use. The EZSES system enables the State to monitor the LEAs implementation of SES.

The State also has to monitor the effectiveness of SES. The State could also ask for parents to complete a survey to help monitor the effectiveness of a Provider.

7. Linda Roper – would the provider collect the parent surveys?

Ms. Villarreal responded no: the LEAs would collect the surveys – I will put that in the comments.

8. Mary Thomas – remember that some LEAs are SES Providers too. They probably would not show themselves negatively.

Ms. Villarreal responded that the surveys could be part of the CREP

There were no more comments on Timely and Clear Parent Notification, so a discussion began on Costs for Parent Outreach. USDE is proposing to allow districts to use part of their 20% set aside for parental outreach. Mr. Green reminded the COP that the original thought on reauthorization was “use it or lose it”. The new proposal is a little more district friendly. Ms. Villarreal and Mr. Green approve of this proposal because it gives children help they deserve. Mr. Green requested comments on this topic.

1. Ronald Cavazos – What would be considered satisfactory evidence of parental outreach?

Mr. Green – documentation to show it was done. Districts can talk about it, but if they cannot prove they reached out to the parents in an attempt to encourage participation in school choice and SES, obviously they would not have satisfactory evidence. USDE’s thoughts are that if you do not have documentation something happened, then it did not happen.

2. Ronald Cavazos – Our districts have a problem with setting aside 20% for school choice and SES. It is a huge amount.

Mr. Green said there is not a district in Texas that even comes close to using their 20%. The question becomes what time of the year can you reallocate it. But USDE would ask, if the 20% is reallocated too soon, and you have small participation numbers, why did you reallocate instead of trying to use the money to reach out to the parents in order to increase your participation numbers.

Ms. Villarreal commented that there is a large district that has senior students who are panicking about graduating. They want to attend a summer program of SES, but their district had already reallocated the 20%, and now has no money for SES Summer School.

Terri Stafford reminded the COP that comments can be made to the web link on top of the front page of the handout.

Response to USDE Monitoring – Cory Green, TEA Division of NCLB Program Coordination

Mr. Green gave a summary of the findings from the January 2008 USDE monitoring visit. He said the findings were what we expected except that there were findings added concerning Charter Schools, and that USDE did not include some of the good things we were doing that they mentioned during the exit conference.

Major Issues:

- USDE did not like the Performance Based Monitoring System TEA is using. They liked it three years ago when it was first implemented.
- NCLB Report Card
 - a. USDE wants a state report card in one document.
 - b. USDE wants TEA to create a template.

- c. LEA report card must be disseminated to stakeholders annually.
 - d. Assessment performance data must be disaggregated for all required subgroups.
- TEA has not ensured that all instructional paraprofessionals hired in Title I schools are highly qualified.
- TEA must ensure that charter schools operating a Title I program fully implement parental involvement activities.
- TEA must ensure that SES Providers begin service delivery in a timely manner.
- TEA must ensure that charter schools operating Title I Schoolwide programs have fully met the planning and annual review requirements.
- TEA must ensure that children participating in a Title I-supported preschool program are selected for services based on multiple, educationally related, objective criteria.
- TEA must ensure that its LEAs correctly calculate funds to provide equitable services for private school teachers and families of private school Title I participants.
- TEA must ensure that its LEAs distribute 95% of the one percent to the schools as required by statute.
- TEA must ensure comparability of local and state funds on Title I schools and non-Title I schools.
- Private Nonprofit Schools
 - a. Consultation;
 - b. LEA must maintain control of PNP program and equipment;
 - c. Evaluation for effectiveness of program;
 - d. Multiple, educationally related objective criteria to identify students for Title I services; and
 - e. Collect written, signed affirmations of consultation.
- COP must be composed of required stakeholders.
- Even Start
 - a. Staff training; and
 - b. Participation by all families in all four core instructional services.
- TEA must ensure that LEA data on education needs of homeless children are provided to ED in a timely manner.

Mr. Green informed the COP that TEA is addressing the PNP issues, and the COP membership issue. TEA will re-issue guidance letters and will provide technical assistance through the ESCs. He said that USDE thinks Texas had a very good monitoring visit.

Mr. Green will send emails to the COP members on these two issues:

- The process to remove SES Providers; and
- Copy of the Response to USDE.

Terri Stafford directed the COP members to look at the dates for next year's COP meetings. Two days are scheduled in January for reading SES provider applications.

A motion was made by Linda Roper to accept the calendar as it appears on the agenda.

Michael Turner seconded the motion. The motion passed.

SES Provider Application Training/Review – Mary Liz Singleton, School Improvement Resource Center (SIRC)

Mrs. Singleton and her assistant, Cindy Watson passed out binders to be used when reading the SES Provider Applications.

All COP members signed a confidentiality oath.

Mrs. Singleton gave a review on reading the SES Provider Applications to the COP.

She then presented a full training in a separate room to the three COP members who were not present last year for the training.

All of the SES Provider Applications were read on June 10, so the June 11 meeting was cancelled.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.