



NASDSE Works!

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A Message from the Executive Director

Welcome to the first edition of **NASDSE Works!**, a new e-newsletter from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)!

I am eager to share with you information about the exciting and valuable work underway at NASDSE through our various projects, publications and advocacy efforts. NASDSE believes strongly in providing effective leadership and resources to support states and the students they serve and it is our wish to use this e-newsletter as a vehicle for wide dissemination of valuable information and resources about NASDSE's initiatives.

Each e-newsletter will center on a theme and we thought it appropriate that this inaugural version of **NASDSE Works!** focus on the theme of leadership. Education is a complex profession and effectively educating students with disabilities is even more complex. NASDSE strives to provide thoughtful, quality leadership to help state leaders and other special education stakeholders, including the students themselves, as they strive to improve the educational experience and outcomes of all students.

In Volume I of **NASDSE Works!** we highlight several initiatives of our projects that are funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). This issue also includes information about NASDSE's popular books on Response to Intervention – an area where NASDSE has played a leadership role by providing clear and concise materials for state, local and school-based leaders. Finally, we also include a brief summary of NASDSE's government relations activities, including a short list of legislation that NASDSE is supported in the 110th Congress, which is now coming to a close.

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A Little Bit About NASDSE...



For 70 years, NASDSE has been providing dedicated leadership to continuously improve educational services and outcomes for students with disabilities in the states and federal territories. Focusing on aligned policies and practices to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities is critical to ensure their full participation and contribution in education, employment and society.

NASDSE's members, the state directors of special education, continue to face evolving challenges of implementing state and federal statutes and regulations while striving for a balanced system of accountability that supports a focus on results for each and every child. NASDSE offers support through a range of activities including: targeted training to address current issues, technical assistance, policy analysis, research, cutting-edge publications, specialized websites, national initiatives and collaborative partnerships to enhance problem-solving at the local, state and national level.

**“Spend your
time with
positive
people”**

**- Bill East
Leadership Principle**

NASDSE Affects!

CHARTER SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Since 1998, NASDSE has become a national leader on charter schools and special education as charter school authorizers and operators try to understand their responsibilities vis-à-vis this group of students. NASDSE's charter schools initiatives have been the primary source of support on this topic for all of those involved with charter schools in the 40 states and the District of Columbia where charter schools are part of the education community.

NASDSE's work has evolved from an initial study that examined special education requirements in charter schools to the creation of a website that contains state-specific *Primers on Special Education in Charter Schools*, copies of state-specific *Primers* for 13 states that have participated in creating those resources as well as many other resources related to this topic. The states that have worked with NASDSE to develop *Primers* are: CA, GA, HI, ID, MD, MI, NJ, NM, OH, and TN. *Primers* are currently pending for MA, MN and WI.

Although the project officially ended at the end of September 2008, the website will continue to be maintained. Whether you are a state official, a teacher or a researcher be sure to visit the project's website, which has been expanded with new and enhanced resources including six new Special Reports, links to state-specific primers and video presentations that summarize each of the *Primers* – the Background *Primer* on legal issues and legislation, the Authorizer *Primer*, the Operator *Primer* and the *Primer* for State Officials who work and oversee charter schools. You can access the website at www.uscharterschools.org/specialedprimers.



NASDSE Affects! (cont'd)

DEAF/HARD OF HEARING EDUCATION INITIATIVE



NASDSE is proud to offer workshops in states to educate practitioners on the following vital issues: the foundations of educating students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH), the characteristics of appropriate administrative and support structures for services, the process for identifying and assessing individual needs, terminology used in the field and federal and state policy as they apply to low-incidence populations.

NASDSE's DHH initiative has provided invaluable leadership through its seminars in the following states since 2007: MI, PA, OH, CA, KN, AK, OK, AL, NM, IO, MD, NC, MI, KN, SD, ID and NC. States have used the seminars in a variety of ways. For example, some are using the seminars to develop state plans for students who are DHH as well as using it as a springboard for on-going community of practice groups. Others are using the seminar to focus on specific issues such as literacy, educational interpreter certification and service provision as well as technology. NASDSE is proud that states have used the seminar for the preparation and advocacy of important legislation around interpreter issues.

PERSONNEL CENTER

NASDSE is pleased to announce that our Personnel Center has been refunded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for another five years! The Personnel Center, at NASDSE since 2003, works to address the shortage of special education personnel through direct work with states. The Personnel Center accomplishes this goal through, increasing state and local capacity to retain new special educators and related service personnel through building level supports, focusing the conversation at the national level on personnel data systems and improving states' responses to high-need local communities by creating partnerships between local education agencies and higher education institutions (LEA/IHE) partnerships for the preparation of personnel.

The Personnel Center's work with states has proven to be invaluable in addressing a very real concern. The Personnel Center is currently working in the following states: AR, GA, KY, NJ, NC, ND, NH and SC

As one of those involved in New Hampshire's work stated: *"The Personnel Center at NASDSE enabled the state of New Hampshire to utilize evidence-based practices to increase the capacity to recruit, prepare and retain special education personnel for students with disabilities. The Center's work supported the state of New Hampshire to align its many efforts into a measurable plan regarding the support and development of high quality teachers and personnel. The New Hampshire Personnel Center Plan included specific action statements developed by members of the statewide leadership workgroup to promote a personnel system to support a qualified workforce to meet the needs of the education of our students."*

NASDSE is excited to continue its work on addressing personnel shortages. Be sure to visit the Personnel Centers' website for many valuable resources (including a list of institutes of higher education that offer degrees in special education), research and tools to address personnel shortages in your area at: <http://www.personnelcenter.org/>.

NASDSE Affects! (cont'd)

PROJECT FORUM

Project Forum has been a fixture at NASDSE for more than 25 years. They provide valuable research and information to practitioners and policy makers on a variety of current special education issues. The topics researched recently range from “the state of the states” to local implementation of universal design for learning (UDL). The topics researched are generated from practitioners and policy makers and are recommended by an advisory board to OSEP for consideration. The Project Forum website features a section for “topic suggestions”, so if you have an area of concern or confusion, feel free to let Project Forum know. This is your research project!

Don't forget to register to attend the sharedwork universal designs for learning .

Project Forum and CAST are excited to announce that they are conducting a month-long online policy forum on universal designs for learning (UDL) implementation! A kickoff webinar provided background on UDL. To register for this exciting and informative online event and to view all of Project Forum's relevant documents please visit their website at: [www. Projectforum.org](http://www.Projectforum.org)

Project Forum also recently conducted a forum on meeting the needs of students with disabilities who are homeless. The policy forum discussed ways of improving collaboration between those with responsibilities under the McKinney-Veto Homeless Act and those with responsibilities under IDEA. A summary of the issues and recommendations generated by the participants will be available soon on the Project Forum and NASDSE websites.

IDEA PARTNERSHIP

NASDSE is pleased to announce that the IDEA Partnership has been refunded for another five years through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)! The IDEA Partnership facilitates interaction and shared work across professional and family organizations around common interests. The IDEA Partnership works with leaders in 33 states to facilitate a new, deeper type of leadership and partners with 55 national organizations to facilitate collaboration across stakeholder groups in an effort to facilitate a deep understanding of and share in work on “big issues” in education.

One way in which the IDEA Partnership accomplishes its goal is through *Communities of Practice (CoP)*. A *CoP* is quite simply a group of people that agree to interact regularly to solve a persistent problem or improve practice in an area that is important to them. *CoPs* exist in many forms, some large in scale and dealing with complex problems, others small in scale and focused on a problem at a very specific level. *CoPs* are a way of working that invites the groups that have a stake in an issue to be a part of the problem solving. The *CoP* develops its own schedule or ‘rhythm’ for interacting and creates mechanisms to communicate that give access to all the members. The IDEA Partnership's *CoP*'s are broadly based around the following themes: NCLB/IDEA collaboration; school behavior health; transition, dispute resolution/creating agreement and teacher quality.



NASDSE Affects! (cont'd)

IDEA PARTNERSHIP (CONT'D)

A recent and exciting example of IDEA Partnership work surrounds school-based mental health. For the last five years, 21 national organizations and 5 federal technical assistance centers have annually joined with 13 state teams to bridge education and mental health and through the national CoP on School Behavioral Health. The community members represent those working at the policy, practice and consumer level and work together on an array of issues.

Between annual face-to-face meetings, the community interacts through web meetings, conference calls and an interactive website sponsored by the IDEA Partnership, www.sharedwork.org. Currently, 1,700 stakeholders work together on the shared work site and 13 states have teams that are working across agencies and across groups to apply the community strategy at the state and local level.

A major accomplishment of the community has been to completely plan, review proposals, select presenters and host the National Conference on Advancing School Mental Health, which is attended annually by more than 700 participants. During the recent 13th Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health that took place on September 25-27, 2008 in Phoenix, AZ, the Community's Youth Practice Group sponsored the opening keynote Ross Szabo of the National Mental Health Awareness Campaign who delivered a personal reflection on depression and suicide drawn from his book, *Behind Happy Faces*. In the second keynote, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), a founding member of the national CoP, framed talking points for participants to engage their members at the local level by concretely making connections between school-based mental health and the high school reform principles articulated in its publication, *Breaking Ranks*. To learn more about the National Community as well as all the communities of practice and follow the work of the states and the practice groups, register at www.sharedwork.org.

NASDSE Meets!

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

NASDSE will be hosting its annual conference in Kiawah Island, SC. from October 18-21. The theme this year will be "Formula for Success: Providing a Highly Capable Workforce." Speakers include leading national experts who will help inform states about how to ensure that individuals who work with students with disabilities are effectively trained to meet diverse student needs. For more information please visit the NASDSE website at www.nasdse.org (click on 'Events'). After the conference, presentations will be available on the NASDSE website.

NASDSE Meets! (cont'd)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

NASDSE is pleased to offer a new series of four professional development conferences. These conferences are purchased by the state directors of special education and are available for unlimited viewing and use in those states. This series of four telecasts brings nationally-recognized experts to your state using technology, providing an affordable means of quality, cutting-edge personnel development for a variety of stakeholders. Subscribing states receive unlimited rights to rebroadcast and reproduce these conferences for in-state, non-commercial use, providing maximum flexibility to utilize the series to best meet local and statewide professional development needs for state directors of special education, state education agency staff, local administrators, teachers, related service providers, higher education faculty, families, youth leaders, community leaders and other stakeholders. The topics to be covered in the 2008-2009 schedule include:

News You Can Use: Resources and Supports for Students with Autism and their Families – October 10, 2008

Partners in Progress: Youth/Young Adult Leaders for Systems Change – December 5, 2008

From Computers to Classrooms: Tackling Bullying in Today's Schools – March 20, 2009

Understanding the Big Picture: Federal Policy and its Impact on the Classroom – May 1, 2008

For more information and to find out how to access this invaluable professional development series, contact your state department of education or visit the NASDSE website at: www.nasdse.org.

NASDSE Publishes!

Recognizing that Response to Intervention (RtI) is an emerging and groundbreaking initiative, NASDSE offers a series of publications in an effort to inform and guide the field at the national, state, district and building level. Take a moment to visit NASDSE's website to view these documents as well as our large collection on additional publications on varied aspects of special education at: www.nasdse.org. Click on any title below to view additional information.

- [Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation](#)
- [Response to Intervention Blueprints for Implementation: School Building Level](#)
- [Response to Intervention Blueprints for Implementation: District Level](#)
- [Response to Intervention: Research for Practice](#)

To learn more about meeting the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, click on the link below.

Meeting the Needs of Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing: Educational Services Guidelines

Below are links to the most recent Project Forum documents. To access the documents, click on the relevant link below.

- [Coordinated Early Intervening Services \(CEIS\): Policy Forum \(Sept. '08\)](#)
- [Financial Responsibility for Students with Disabilities: A Special Case \(Sept. '08\)](#)
- [State Eligibility Requirements for Specific Learning Disabilities \(July '08\)](#)
- [Universal Design for Learning: Implementation in Six Local Education Agencies \(June '08\)](#)

NASDSE Advocates!

NASDSE advocates on behalf of its members, the state directors of education, to promote the legislative agenda agreed upon and adopted by the board of directors each January. To view a copy of NASDSE's legislative agenda go to: www.nasdse.org and click on 'Government Relations.'

Below is a list of some of the issues and bills supported by NASDSE during the 110th Congress:

THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

In anticipation of the upcoming reauthorization, NASDSE's board of directors has begun to examine its reauthorization principles. Once the principles have been adopted, they will be posted on the NASDSE website.

NASDSE supports the following IDEA full funding bills:

- H.R. 821 (Van Hollen) "Everyone Deserves Unconditional Access to Education"
- H.R. 526 (Larson) "Full Funding for IDEA Now Act" and
- S.1159 (Harkin/Hagel)"The IDEA Full Funding Act"

To read NASDSE's response to the recent Part B Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued by the U.S. Department of Education, click on the following link:

<http://www.nasdse.org/Portals/0/IDESASuppl%20regs%20-final%20072808.pdf>

THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT (NCLB)

Although 2008 did not see the reauthorization of NCLB, a great deal of legislation was introduced in the 110th Congress. Below is a list of proposed legislation that NASDSE has publically supported.

- H.R. 3430 (Napolitano) "Mental Health in Schools Act"
- H.R. 4100 (Woolsey) "Instructional-Level Assessment Pilot Project"
- H.R. 1424 (Kennedy/Ramstad) "The Paul Wellstone Mental Health & Addiction Act"; and
- S. 3573 (Murray) "Promoting Innovations to 21st Century Careers"

To read NASDSE's response to the Title I Notice of Proposed Rulemaking recently issued by the U.S. Department of Education, click on the following link:

<http://www.nasdse.org/Portals/0/CommentsonTitleIregs0608.pdf>

MEDICAID

- H.R. 5613 (Dingell/Murphy) "Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008"
- S. 2819 (Rockefeller/Snowe) "Economic Recovery in Healthcare Act"

NASDSE Speaks!

NASDSE staff members are widely recognized as national leaders in their areas of expertise and are often asked to present at national, state and local conferences. Below is a list of some of their recent presentations.

Dr. Bill East – Executive Director, NASDSE

The Future is Now! National Updates and Leadership Challenges (FL and MI)

Rtl Myths, Truths & Musings (KS)

Rtl: National Perspective and Other Stuff! (RTI Innovations Conference)

The Future is Now! (AR)

Nancy Reder – Deputy Executive Director, NASDSE

Congress 101 and School Based Services (NAME Conference)

A National Perspective on Special Education (DC OSSE)

Dr. Eileen Ahearn – Project Director, Charter Schools and Special Education

Special Education for Charter School Administrators

Special Education Law for Sped Coordinators and Sped Teachers

Special Education Law for General Education Teachers

Dr. Joanne Cashman—Project Director, IDEA Partnership

Cross-stakeholder Support for RTI in AZ

Building a Statewide Communities of Practice around Transition in North Dakota

A Cross-walk between School-based Mental Health and High School Redesign (with NASSP)

Behind Happy Faces: Looking Back at Depression, Suicide and Stigma (with the National Practice Group on Youth Leadership)

A Stakeholder Developed Model for Family Engagement (with the National Practice group on Family School Partnerships)

RTI at the Secondary Level: What Does It Look Like?

Dr Phoebe Gillespie – Project Director, Personnel Center

“Using Higher Education/Local Education Agency Partnerships to Drive Systems Change: Georgia’s Plan to Increase Preparation Program Accessibility for Hard to Staff Schools” - OSEP Project Directors Conference

“Improving the Induction of Beginning Special Education Teacher: National Center for Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development “ - OSEP Project Directors Conference

NASDSE Goals!

NASDSE members, supported by NASDSE staff, will:

- Improve educational results for children with disabilities through education reform.
- Bring about aligned, continuously improving educational services.
- Promote educational equity for all children.
- Strengthen ongoing professional development.
- Design efficient, cost-effective, flexible administrative systems and practices.
- Nurture partnership-based, whole-systems collaboration.
- Create school environments conducive to learning.
- Build effective family-school partnerships.
- Advance public engagement in educational reform efforts that support high achievement for all children.

To learn more about NASDSE and the valuable resources we provide, visit the following websites:

www.nasdse.org

www.ideapartnership.org

www.projectforum.org

www.personelcenter.org

www.uscharterschools.org/specialedprimers



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