

The



Monday Update

April 2007

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DD Council welcomes Yasmina Bouraoui as new deputy director

Yasmina Bouraoui has joined the DD Council staff as its new deputy director.

She comes to the Council from her position as coordinator for the Department of Community Health's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Programs.

Bouraoui was born in Detroit to immigrant parents; her mother is Belgian and her father Tunisian. She was raised in Michigan and spent her high school years in Belgium.

The new deputy director earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and international development from Michigan State University, and a master's degree in public health from the University of Michigan. She is presently working on her doctorate in health policy at U of M.

Bouraoui has a daughter, Karima, and is also a refugee foster parent for five children from Sudan, Somalia and Guatemala.

She lists swimming and travel among her interests and hobbies.

“I’m very excited to be joining the DD Council,” she says, “and to have the privilege to work in this important field. It is modeling full integration and inclusion for everyone in the human experience.”

Bouraoui states she is looking forward to working closely with partners in the disability community to further the work of the Council.

Welcome aboard!

Detroit advocates observe DD Awareness Month

As most Monday Update readers know, March, 2007, was Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Michigan.

There was a proclamation from the governor, the Michigan Department of Community Health issued a news release, and RICCs and other local groups around the state observed the month with a variety of events.

In Detroit, the Arc Detroit hosted its 6th Annual Disability Summit as part of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. More than 100 self-advocates attended the summit.

According to Hank Johnson, executive director of the Arc Detroit, also attending were State Sen. Hanson Clarke, and Edith Killins, director of Wayne County Health and Human Services.

Johnson says meaningful dialog was held between consumers and Sen. Clarke and Director Killins. Among the concerns expressed to the policymakers were:

- Creating jobs that don’t require a college education

- Section 8 housing
- Accessible housing
- Safety on city buses
- Intercity mass transit problems
- Michigan's budget shortfall
- No need to tax essential services
- Medicaid only covers generic brand medicines
- Need for useful exercise programs

Johnson says a lot of work and time went into making the summit a success. Among those lending a hand were:

- The DD Council
- BHPI Consumer Link, Goodwill Industries, and Community Living Services
- Detroit Public Schools and Services to Enhance Potential
- People First Movement and the Wayne RICC

What did your community do for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month this year? If your answer is "nothing," maybe you and your fellow advocates should plan activities for next March's celebration...now.

DDI is a vital advocacy asset

The Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) is an important fixture at Wayne State University and the disability advocacy community as a leader in education, outreach and research.

Its mission is to contribute to the development of inclusive communities and the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families.

The DDI is also a sister agency of the DD Council, along with Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services. It is also Michigan's Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

One element of providing education to individuals is an activity called the Detroit Family Support 360° Project. This two-year-old federally-funded project has the Institute serving as a one-stop support center for families with children who have developmental disabilities. Families can come to

the support center to receive education on service navigation through family support navigators.

The navigator is a qualified person assigned to help a family create an individualized plan based on the services and supports required.

The navigator also provides information and referrals to help the child's health and development, as well as coordinating access to services. A navigator meets with the family at a time and place of the family's choosing. The program also offers opportunities for peer support and friendship.

Families report they find having a family support navigator very beneficial as they learn about just what is available in the community.

Elizabeth Janks, associate director at DDI for training and community support, says the only qualifications for the Detroit 360° Project are:

- the family must have a child under 18 years with a developmental disability;
- must live in the city of Detroit; and
- have need of three services.

Fifty families added each year

“At present, the project serves about 60 families,” says Janks. “Each family has a plan that is reviewed each quarter. About 50 new families are added each year. How long a family stays in the program is up to its members. Most families meet their goals within a year. If things change for them and they need new services and supports, they can always come back into the project for help.”

Examples of those services and supports might include navigating the special education system, parenting classes, family therapy, child care, or respite. Help provided by the project, such as the navigator, is not duplicated by state mandated programs.

The program's one-stop center is a product of the partners in the 360° Project, who share information on resources and recommend one another's programs. Among the partners are The Arc, Detroit, Arab Community

Center for Economic and Social Services, Children's Hospital of Michigan, and the Detroit Public Schools.

Janks says the major reason families seek the project's help is "they don't know how to get connected to state services. There are many barriers that may prevent a family from learning of services and supports."

Janks adds that if it's language that is a barrier, the project has a Spanish-speaking navigator and all materials have been translated. For Arabic-speaking families, translators are readily available. Also, project navigators are all members of families that have children with special needs.

How does the project find families in need? "Through grassroots outreach," Janks replies. It all started with a massive public relations effort, including marketing help from the university, a mass mailing to faith-based organizations, and articles in the 'Michigan Chronicle' publication. I go to schools and meet with parent groups. I've put up flyers in such places as nail salons, grocery stores, and laundermats."

She adds a vital component of the outreach effort is the Consumer Advisory Team, a group made up of parents who have been through the system and can provide valuable ideas on how to reach other parents. Other input comes from members of the Administrative Resource Advisory Team.

Success of the program is measured through an evaluation.

Other projects from DDI include:

- Did You Know, a grant from the DD Council; and
- People First of Oakland County, funded by the Oakland RICC

Being located at Wayne State University, DDI also conducts a graduate certificate program for master's degree students. The program helps students learn to be better advocates for people with disabilities and expand career options.

For more information on the institute, call them toll-free at 888-978-4334. Or email Elizabeth Janks at e.janks@wayne.edu.

Marsha Moers, Capitol Area RICC chair, reappointed to commission

Marsha Moers, chair of the Capitol Area Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC), has been reappointed to the Michigan Long-Term Care Supports and Services Advisory Commission.

Self-advocate Moers is one of 17 commission members. She also serves on the commission's executive committee. Until reappointment, she also served as the commission's first chairperson. A native of Alpena, Moers works as community advocacy coordinator for the Capital Area Center for Independent Living (CACIL) in Lansing. On the commission, she represents primary or secondary consumers of long-term care supports and services.

The commission was created by a Governor's executive order in 2005 as one recommendation of the Michigan Medicaid Long-Term Care Task Force, on which Moers also served. The task force's job was to identify strategies that will enable people with disabilities to obtain long-term care services in an environment suited to their individual needs...rather than leaving their homes and communities.

Serving as a forum

The commission is an advisory body within the Michigan Department of Community Health and serves as a forum for the discussion of issues related to the provision of long-term care supports and services in Michigan.

Membership on the commission is comprised of people representing primary and secondary consumers, providers of Medicaid-funded services, direct service providers and the general public. One half of the members represent consumer interests.

Moers says the basic commission duty is to provide oversight of the task force's recommendations, to make certain they are implemented and to continually review their status. This includes the Single Point of Entry

program, a service designed to simplify the process of getting Medicaid-funded services, plus the Long Term Care Supports and Services Office, another task force recommendation.

To learn more about the commission, Single Point of Entry, and the Supports and Services Office, consider attending a monthly commission meeting. The public is invited to attend and provide input, either in-person or by telephone. Moers says you can contact her at CACIL for meeting dates and times. Her phone number is 517-241-0399. Her email address is: mmoers@cacil.org.

Federal grant money available for local transportation services coordination; action required

Thanks to federal transportation grant money, local transit providers may have the chance to coordinate transportation services in their communities.

That's news in itself. What's equally newsworthy is the fact that if local transportation providers choose not to work on coordinating services, area citizens can form a coalition and find another agency to apply for the grant money and conduct the project. The result would be the same: coordination of local transit services to benefit all area citizens, including people with developmental disabilities.

Such coordination works. Monday Update readers may recall several years ago the federally-funded project called United We Ride. Conducted by the Michigan Department of Transportation – with valuable help from DD Council members, staff, and RICCs – United We Ride was a series of forums held around the state.

The resources to hold the forums went away the following year but not before coordination programs were established in several communities.

A two-step process

The process during the forums was nearly the same as it would be under the new program:

1. Identify all local transportation assets
2. Coordinate the assets into a useful program that benefits all of a community's transportation users.

To put it in terms of the Federal Transit Administration, source of the grant funds, the results of the project would be “a coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan (that) identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation.”

What to do next?

Local transit authorities have already been notified of this program by the Michigan Department of Transportation. The next step is for Monday Update readers:

1. Contact your local transportation providers to find out if they are going to take the grant money and participate in the program under the “Safe, Affordable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users.” (SAFETEA-LU)
2. If they do plan to participate, offer to help with the project where possible. As a transportation user, your input is valuable.
3. If they do not plan to participate, this throws open the door to allow other types of agencies and organizations to step in and do the evaluation and coordination. Call a meeting of those you think might be interested – RICCs, CILs, Arc, residents who need such services, etc. – to find another agency to apply for the grant and develop a plan to apply for the grant money.
4. If your area does not have public transportation services, go ahead anyway and organize a meeting of local interested people and groups.

Using the grant, the agency could evaluate what transit resources may exist and draw up a plan for creating new ones.

If your transportation providers will not be participating, or if you have no official providers, find out more about this opportunity for improving or establishing local public transportation. Contact:

Sharon L. Edgar, Administration
Passenger Transportation Division
Michigan Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 30050
Lansing, MI 48909

Or contact Edgar at edgars@michigan.gov.

Disability Caucus promotes advocacy issues at the Capitol

One of the presenters at the DD Council's Annual Legislative Reception on Feb. 13 was Patrick Baker, a member of State Sen. John Gleason's (D-Flushing) staff.

In discussing Sen. Gleason's interest in disability advocacy issues, Baker briefly discussed the Michigan Legislature's Disability Caucus.

The caucus is made up of both Democratic and Republican legislators from both the Senate and the House of Representatives. They meet once a month to discuss common issues and concerns confronting people with disabilities across the state, and to learn how they, as legislators, can pull together to make a difference.

Each meeting is an hour and takes place the second Wednesday of the month and starts at 8:30 a.m. You are welcome to attend. Joining a Disability Caucus meeting is an excellent opportunity for self-advocates to meet legislators who share their interests and who are willing to take the time each month to learn more about disability issues.

Planning to attend? Call ahead first

Attendance by senators and representatives may vary according to individual schedules. If you plan to attend a caucus meeting, you may wish to contact your own senator and representative in advance to let him or her know you will be there and hope they will, too!

Baker says in addition to items of business and general discussion, most meetings feature a presentation by an informed speaker from outside the Legislature. March's meeting, for example, offered a talk by Chris Hunter, director of the state's Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Meetings are usually held in the Capitol Building, but this is subject to change. It is important to check on the meeting's status before heading for the Capitol; if legislators are called away for House or Senate business, the meeting may be cancelled.

Baker says the best methods for learning about caucus meetings are: (1) sign up for his monthly email meeting notice; or (2) call Sen. Gleason's office during the week before the meeting. The direct telephone number for Patrick Baker is 517-373-5133. You can also write to Baker and ask to be placed on the email list:

Sen. John Gleason
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536
Attn: Patrick Baker

Sen. Gleason managed the Disability Caucus during his two terms as a state representative. He was elected as senator to Michigan's 27th Senate District last November.

Council work group and committee meeting minutes

Multicultural Committee

Feb. 12, 2007

Present:

Terrie Hylton (chair); Mae Golden (phone); Cynthia Patterson (phone); Jacqueline Day (phone); Rick Van Horn; Karen Schrock; Tony Wong (phone) Yasmina Bouraoui; Vendella Collins; Patrick McSherry; Pam Hall; James Gulley; Duncan Wyeth; Mitzi Allen; Andre Robinson (phone).

Call to Order: by Chairperson Hylton at 1:05 p.m.

During introductions, a special welcome to guests Karen Schrock, CEO of Adult Well-Being Services, and a member of its board of directors, Mr. James Gulley, plus new Council Deputy Director Yasmina Bouraoui. January's minutes and today's agenda approved after Golden added the social equity topic to New Business.

Old Business

A. Wong represented the Committee at the Feb. 7 RICC regional meeting in Gaylord. He explained to the 20 members that the Multicultural Committee is always available to RICCs as a resource for work plans and support for outreach activities in their communities. He emphasized that outreach is not a one-time event, nor is it just one person's job.

The next regional meeting is in Marquette on April 3. Hylton expects to cover that one for the Committee. Collins said there will be a second round of regional meetings, providing the Committee with additional opportunities.

B. McSherry looked into the Committee possibly participating in MSU's Global Festival in the fall. He will be getting more information and pass it along to the group. Hylton said the purpose of Committee involvement would be to make certain the festival included people with disabilities in the

global community. Could the younger RICC members somehow connect with the students via the festival?

Bouraoui said most of the vendors are MSU students from various countries and the festival is an excellent place for students with disabilities to link with them.

Wyeth asked about RICC involvement with the Arab community in the Dearborn area. He thinks there is a great RICC opportunity there. Robinson agrees that the Wayne RICC can conduct outreach there. He also suggested contacting radio show host Roger ? His show has an exclusive disability focus and he may be glad to have Robinson on the show talking about the DD Council and the RICCs.

C. Van Horn provided a list of the year's disability activities from the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), in response to Hylton's request to find established lists of activities the Committee may be interested in. The list is mailed/emailed from SILC the last Monday of every month. Van Horn will distribute the list at each meeting for a review of the events within. Hylton said there may be events at which the Committee should be present or even be a presenter.

D. Hylton discussed the role of the diversity coordinator as a publicity and public relations person for the RICC. Supporting this might be a poster created by the Committee to be distributed through the coordinators. If it's an attractive and useful poster, the RICC will get requests for them.

Allen said the Committee's poster committee was not able to meet since the last Multicultural Committee meeting in January. She said the poster committee will develop a product that will positively portray persons of color with a disability. It may be different posters each with a different ethnicity portrayed.

The poster will be used to express outreach and give the local RICC some exposure. The committee hopes to have the poster available for Investing in Abilities Month in October and beyond. The poster committee will meet before the Committee's March meeting and Allen will have a report at that time.

Wyeth would like to see a headline on the poster that says something like “Inclusive Communities Celebrate Diversity,” which might speak to the fact that “inclusion doesn’t mean everybody being the same. It means including a wide range of characteristics.” Wyeth said that while there are a lot of posters out there, none really speak to diversity.

Bouraoui showed an attractive calendar and suggested a calendar might be the way to go.

New Business

A. A presentation by Gulley and Schrock. The latter introduced the former, who has a significant interest in trying to look at innovative ways of bringing funding to services for developmental disabilities. Besides being on the board of Adult Well-Being Services, Gulley serves on its advocacy committee and a parent of an adult child with developmental disabilities.

Gulley discussed a developmental disabilities trust fund and collaboration with universities for training for people with developmental disabilities. He talked about the State of Washington’s developmental disabilities trust fund. Every family can enroll a child for a certain amount of money and pay a small premium every month, much like life insurance. The state will match that. The state’s Arc is the trustee of the fund. Gulley said the fund helps with other elements, such as realizing an independent living situation and transportation. The trust acts as a backup for the child in case something should happen to the parents or guardian.

He said the benefit for the state is less supportive costs in the future.

Gulley has encountered many, many parents who have concerns about their children in this regard....senior citizens raising grandchildren with disabilities for whom no plans have been made.

To train for jobs, Gulley would like to see a series of regional “universities” that would assist consumers with training in order to get jobs. This would help, among others, those with disabilities who are locked into the education system until age 26 - with training, they could get jobs rather than languish in the education system.

He visualizes an “empowerment university” that brings together many of the non-profit organizations to train people for jobs, plus train the job-preparation trainers. Money from insurance companies and other large corporations might help as seed money for the state trust fund. The university would charge a tuition. Such a plan cannot detract from full inclusion objectives.

Day liked the idea and sees the possibility of somehow linking it with long-term care coverage under one system. Or would this issue become lost in the huge long-term care project? Such a program would look at the whole person rather than just long-term care considerations.

Gulley said this idea is, so far, just that and he was presenting it to the Committee for its reaction. Hall said to talk to Calvin College about the program they are starting. Hylton said the proper venue for Gulley’s proposals might be the Council’s Executive Committee, rather than the Multicultural Committee.

B. A presentation by Dr. Saturnino Rodriguez, publisher of Adelante Magazine of Lansing. He told the Committee about the magazine, its sensitivity, social responsibilities and diversity. The latter subject is featured in one issue.

“Adelante” means “going forward.” It has printed five quarterly issues so far and is distributed free in Ingham County. Schools, colleges and churches receive a number. Each article appears in both English and Spanish.

Seven thousand copies of Adelante Magazine are printed. Articles may be submitted but there is a fee for doing that. Each article is translated. To be a partner and have a one and a half-page article is \$500.

Ongoing sponsorship and articles are from the local intermediate school district, Lansing Community College, Lansing School District, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

The magazine also sells ad space. Gulley suggested finding a sponsor to pay for DD Council ads in the publication. The Committee agreed that sponsors would be a way to go, given the Committee’s limited budget.

Both the January, 2007 and June, 2008 issues will be devoted to disabilities. Partners will write the articles. A partnership is for articles in three issues.

Hylton likes the look and substance of the magazine. If that is a way to outreach to the Latino community, to get them involved in Committee activities, remains to be seen. Getting out and actually talking to people may be a more effective means of communication.

Golden reported on a project – the Social Equity Group - to get diverse populations active in walking and biking. The group is part of the Thunderhead Alliance, a national coalition of state and local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations working in unison to break down the barriers to safe bicycling and walking in North American communities.

Hylton said she's adding an item to March's meeting agenda that will look at Proposal 2 and how it might affect Committee outreach efforts. She asked members to think about the issues in the meantime. Hall would like to hear a representative from the Department of Civil Rights talk on the subject before anything is decided. The Governor has charged Civil Rights with developing a program and it should be nearly ready. The Committee will ask member Sophie Baker of Civil Rights to look into the matter.

Updates and Announcements

McSherry announced the annual Walk N Roll event, March 24 at Holt High School. At the event, which takes place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and benefits disability rights awareness campaigns and services, participants are invited to walk or roll around an indoor track in the school's gym. Vendors, music, food and activities also will be available. Money is raised through pledges to participants.

Allen announced that the DD Council is recruiting candidates for an opening on the Council and Committee members are encouraged to name potential members from minority groups, particularly those with developmental disabilities from American Indian, Arab American, Asian Americans, and Hispanic groups. Contact Allen for information on what it means in terms of time to be a Council member.

Allen also asked members to be sure to respond to the Monday Update newsletters survey that is due in the office by March 1.

Allen wishes to set a date for the Committee's poster subcommittee. All agreed March 9 at 1:00 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Council office would work.

Education Work Group

Feb. 28, 2007

Attendance: Jane Spitzley, Esther Onaga, Glenn Ashley, Paul Palmer, Yasmina Bouraoui, Vendella Collins, Mark McWilliams, Patt Clement
Phone: Karen Massaro-Mundt, Andre Robinson, Stacey Diekevers, Sandi Koskie

1.) Jane S. moved to accept the January 24, 2007 minutes. Esther seconded, and the motion carried.

2.) Universal Education Mini-Summits
Reviewing and approving budgets

2a.) Transition summit – Arc of Kent County

Patt described the changes since the last meeting. The Arc Michigan is doing a Transition Summit at the Arc conference in Ann Arbor, but does not want funding. The Arc of Kent County is now planning to do another one on the west side of the state around the middle of September.

Parents and students will be invited, by calling all transition coordinators throughout the state.

The Arc of St. Clair is also doing a conference on community based transition on March 23.

We need a strategy for contacting students and families who are not in school any more. Some are involved in Special Olympics or other recreation activities. Some may be connected with CMH, UCP, Arc chapters.

What will the Summit lead to in terms of Universal Education? Will we creating action teams at the Transition Summit? We need to build some synergy among high school students to get action for that age group. Schools and classrooms aren't structured for transition. We

should look at ways for putting the education money into another place in the community. The summit and follow-up action teams could create a different model of what transition means. This could then be presented to legislators and policy makers. Funding is an issue. Region 1 in Kent Co. has a RITS program for students over age 18 doing something in the community, not in classrooms.

2b.) Early childhood inclusion summit – MSU

The plan is to hold it at Lansing Community College West on Monday, April 23.

What will the Summit lead to in terms of Universal Education? It will create action teams around 3 areas: finance, best practices for classroom instruction, and parental involvement. Early childhood is a great place to start in promoting Universal Education.

The afternoon will be dedicated to finance. They are thinking about inviting legislators, but don't have something specific to ask them to do.

A priority is getting enough parents to attend to compose 1/3 to 1/2 of the group.

Physical integration is occurring to a much greater extent than social integration.

On the day after the Summit, Michigan 4-C has a legislative day at the capitol, and we will be having a table at that event.

We will also be working with the ECIC on funding.

Paul moved that we approved the budgets as amended. Glenn seconded. Motion carried.

3.) Advise Council on Education Issues

3a.) Accessibility of meetings

Work group members will track this at the legislative reception, and report on this issue to the Council at the March meeting.

It was hard to get to the UP RICC in the back of the room, people had to move around to let him get in and out of the room. It was still too crowded, and the tables were still too close together for wheelchair access.

Since a number of people cancelled, maybe we could have asked the Radisson to set up fewer tables.

The presenters were understandable.

The keynote speaker gave good information about current politics in Michigan. He didn't have anything in writing, which would have been helpful.

Were handouts available in alternative formats.

There were plenty of seats available in the front of the room, but those would not have been with the person's RICC. People would have needed to move to their RICC table for meeting with their legislators. As the new chair of the Council, Andre will keep this before the Council.

The Council is looking at the RICC certification packet, and how to make it more user friendly.

The pace needs to be slowed down at the Council meetings, which means that the amount of subject matter may need to be reduced.

RICC hosts are helpful.

4.) Presentation at the May DD Council meeting.

The Education workgroup is responsible for the program portion of the Council meeting.

Esther will be available on May 8 for a presentation. She should talk about Early Childhood Inclusion, the Summit, and about the results of the grant.

Mark has 2 conflicts on that date, so he is not likely to be available. Mark may be able to find someone to come talk about the hot policy issues. No Child Left Behind reauthorization is a big topic, but is nearly impossible to explain.

Everyone Together could provide information about what they are doing, sustainability, and a report from Stephanie about the evaluation. The RICCs could be informed about the networks, given contact information, and how they can build relationships with the network in their community.

Sometimes the presentations go on for so long, presenting too much information, people lose concentration.

A workgroup priority is demonstrating how to make presentations more accessible.

We have done a good job in the past of helping the audience interact and participate in the presentations, and that is very important.

We will ask Stacy and Esther to come to the March 28 meeting with an outline of the

5.) Collaboration with Grantees

Everyone Together has been working with the evaluation team, and getting the networks to meet with them.

Sustainability is a priority. This was discussed at the Advisory Committee meeting, and will be discussed more at the network leaders meeting. They also discussed building the network libraries.

6.) Tracking of Policy Issues

6a.) Federal issues

The biggest thing is the NCLB reauthorizations. Lots of recommendations are floating around about how it will look. Changes will probably affect testing. Schools want flexibility to ignore requirements for groups like students with disabilities.

The state alternative assessment has been rewritten to align with the general curriculum.

Some schools tell students to stay home, or that they do not need to take the tests. That is illegal. One standard for adequate yearly progress is 95% of students taking the test.

Head Start is also being reauthorized. There are few changes that affect children with disabilities.

Congress has essentially adopted last year's budget as this year's budget, replacing the continuing resolution.

6b.) State legislature

There are 3 or 4 bills on bullying, that are all in the Education Committee.

Harassment or bullying based on disability is covered in all the bills.

They all require schools to adopt policies, with some specific requirements. The state board adopted a policy last fall, and it is part of the vision statement.

They include both positive and negative requirements, to improve the environment, prevent bullying, and what to do when it occurs.

Items on the legislative agenda include charter schools, schools that don't make AYP for several years. Nothing on students with disabilities.

6c.) Michigan Department of Education

Has told the Special Ed Advisory Committee (SEAC) that they are to submit rule changes in the fall. Many are related to the change in federal definitions of learning disabilities.

They will be putting a rule that goes beyond federal requirements, to begin transition planning at age 14.

There will be public comment. We need to get input on the rules before they are released. The Arc Michigan has a representative on SEAC, and MPAS is sending observers.

Personal Curriculum – parents or students can choose their own curriculum, if teacher says the person can't meet the general standards. The curriculum has to be closely linked to the standards. The language is in the new high school graduation law. Information is on the MDE website. It is not specifically for students with disabilities, but it can apply to them. Schools are just starting to figure out how it works.

It can be good, and also has the potential for abuse. It is not a basis for changing placement, it is a basis for modifying the graduation requirements for a specific student. It opens up the option for some students who did not receive a diploma in the past to get one. This could also lead to giving diplomas so people won't continue to be eligible for Special Education.

6d.) State Board of Education

The task force on pre-service, teacher education requirement has been convened. It is mostly university people, with one parent. They do not see people with disabilities as an important issue. They are supposed to come back with recommendations on May 8

NCLB and IDEIA set requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers. Both require Special Education teachers to have content area expertise. Schools are moving away from resource rooms toward general ed settings, with teacher consultants or co-teachers.

6e.) Detroit Public Schools issues

MPAS has seen some progress on the complaint they filed about 3 years ago.

7.) Announcements

The next MPAS Exchange will feature education issues.

8.) The chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:50 am

Public Policy Committee

Jan. 9, 2007

Present

Andre Robinson, Jacqui Day, Jane Spitzley, Paul Palmer, Theresa Squires, Melinda Haus-Johnson, Judy Webb, Pam Hall, Robin Sefton, Tandy Bidiger, Dee Florence, Terry Hunt, Cynthia Farrell, Rob Lewakowski

Welcome/Introductions

Chair Andre Robinson called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

Approval of Minutes from November meetings

Jacqui Day moved that the minutes from the December meeting be accepted as written. Paul Palmer seconded. CARRIED.

Federal Updates

The 110th Congress has converged on Washington. For the first time in history, a women, Nancy Pelosi, is Speaker of the House.

Congress is in the process of reviewing the DD Act. DD Council's throughout the United States are concerned that funding may be cut, due to the expenses of the war. A copy of the DD Act was given to committee members to review and make recommendations of any changes, etc.

State Updates

Single Business Tax

The Single Business Tax generates \$2 billion dollars to the general fund each year. With this tax expiring at the end of the year the state faces a major budget deficit for the upcoming. It is essential that the legislature find a revenue neutral replacement for the Single Business Tax. There have been suggestions of creating a tax on services, such as, hair cuts, car repairs, entertainment, lawn care, etc.

Single Point of Entry

Governor Granholm signed PA 634, Long Term Care Connections.

Merit Scholarship Update

This was signed into law. Now all students will receive \$4,000 to attend college. The funds will be dispersed to students gradually during their college years.

Grant Updates

Informed Communities

Melinda Haus-Johnson stated that the first topic they have chosen to pursue is housing. A list of potential topics is being compiled and will be forwarded to the Committee to endorse. It was stressed that Medicaid is very important, especially medication. The Common Disability Agenda is also a great resource to find topics.

Oral Health Project

The RFP is out and the DD Council has gotten a few phone calls from providers with question concerning the project.

State Board of Education Update

1. Restraints & Seclusion Policies

The State Board of Education set a policy that *restraints and seclusion* should only be used in an emergency situation. Each school district may make their own determination as to whether they will follow the policy or not.

PPC Subgroup on Awards

The nomination forms will be widely distributed. Staff will be sending out the forms shortly. A committee needs to be formed to review the awards nominations.

Legislative Event Planning Committee

Bill Ballenger has been chosen as the speaker for the DD Council's Legislative Reception. He will address RICC members at 10:15 am, with the legislators arriving from 11:00 am –1:00 pm. A DD Council meeting will immediately following the reception. There will be two guest speakers; Glenn Ashley from UCP will be speaking about the All Aboard grant and Darrell Preesley from Rossman and Associates will address how to get your message across to legislators.

Talking points on key issues will be completed and mailed out shortly.

Other

United Nations Disability Treaty

An international treaty that will give greater rights and freedoms to disabled people around the world has been agreed to at the United Nations.

The world's disabled population is estimated at 650 million. This is the first human rights treat of the 21st Century and the UN hopes it will mark a significant improvement in the treatment of people with disabilities.

The United States have chosen not to sign on stating that the US already has comprehensive laws on disability rights. The Vatican has also chosen not to sign on.