

**Blind Task Force Meeting
February 13, 2008
Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA)
2100 I-70 Drive, S.W.
Columbia, Missouri**

Members Present: ; Heidi Atkins Lieberman; Steve Berman; Donna Borgmeyer; Michael Evans; Susan Ford; Kent Kolaga; Patti Schonlau; Jim Sucharski; Mike Tarrants; Jacob Wilson; Ella Wolfe.

Members Not Present: Paul Ajuwon; Chip Hailey; Karen Halsey; Kristi Hinton.

Guests Present: Roselie Backer; Julie Brown; Doreen Frapier; Jan Dehart; Elaine Houtman; Jaime Sadich; Mike Merrick-arrived at 11:45.

DESE Staff Present: Lori Conner

Welcome and Introductions:

Roll Call of BTF Members: Patti called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. She introduced the new BTF Parent Representative, Michael Tarrants. Julie Brown and Jaime Sadich were also introduced as invited guests who are awaiting approval of their appointments to serve on the BTF as Special Education Administrator and Public School Building Administrator respectively. Roll call was taken by Ella, the 2008 BTF Secretary.

Review and Approval of February 13, 2008 BTF Agenda: No changes to the agenda were noted.

Review and Approval of November 14 BTF Minutes: Page 1, under the topic "Welcome and Introductions," add a second paragraph, "Patti Schonlau had reported that Heidi Atkins Lieberman sent her a memo stating that Heike Imler would attend today's meeting on her behalf."

Page 2, first paragraph under the topic "BTF Nomination Form Issues/Memo," add to the last sentence, "There was considerable discussion regarding the makeup of the Task Force."

Jim made a motion to accept the above-changes to the minutes. Kent seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

NIMAS/NIMAC: Elaine Houtman, Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT), reported on NIMAS. DESE will send an electronic copy of the power point presentation and CAST consortium activities Aim—Missouri Focused State Activities to the BTF. Elaine reported that materials published prior to 2006 are not required to be in place in NIMAC. Current strategies need to be used.

DESE Update: Paul was unable to attend today's meeting and asked Heidi to share the information on graduate credit and CEUs that he received from Helen Barnett, Coordinator of the MSU Outreach Program (attachment 1).

BSS Effectiveness Information: DESE has not received a good response from the field regarding the Blind Skill Specialists' (BSS) survey that school districts were completing. Those surveys were delivered in person by each BSS as they provided service. To try to improve upon the response, a SELS message (the method of communication between schools and DESE) was sent out to school districts that included a link to an electronic survey. This produced immediate response. Therefore, we will do this on a regular basis so that surveys can be accessed online.

Meeting Protocol and BTF Membership: There are several categories that over the years the BTF decided on its own to add on to the membership (not specifically mentioned in the statutes) for students, Institution of Higher Education, Rehabilitation Advisory Council, and Orientation and Mobility Specialist. There was a discussion regarding whether the BTF had an interest in increasing the employer, special education administrator, and school building principal vacancies.

Ella made a motion to increase the building administrator and the special education administrator to hold two positions on the BTF. Jim seconded the motion and it was approved by majority vote.

There was a discussion regarding qualifications for the employer, etc. Kent motioned to table this discussion. Susan seconded the motion.

Heidi moved to expand the employer category to two positions, subject on the advice of the Rules Committee regarding the criteria for the employers. Jim seconded the motion. Kent moved that the discussion be tabled, pending recommendation of the Standing Rules Committee. Susan seconded the move and it was unanimously approved.

Kent made a motion to expand the student and parent representative positions to three. Michael Evans seconded the motion and it was approved by majority vote.

The Rules Committee will consider if parents and students should be part of the BTF after the student has graduated from public schools.

Vision Summit Revolving Account: DESE reported on the setting up of a grant account instead of a revolving account, as donations cannot go into a revolving account (see attachment 2).

Miscellaneous Information: The BSS has two and one-half (2-1/2) vacant positions; one in Kansas City, one-half in St. Louis, and one in Rolla. Heidi asked for advice from the BTF regarding whether DESE should be more flexible about the qualifications of a BSS in its contracts with the Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDCs); currently the BSS must have a VI teaching certificate, or an O & M license. There was an indication from several members of the BTF that DESE should be open to some exceptions on these qualifications if the person has good experience with students in Braille and O & M. Heidi asked if there were members on the BTF willing to help DESE and/or the RPDC directors review potential applicant resumes with alternate experience or qualifications. Mike Merrick and Patti offered to do this.

Heidi asked for advice on the MAP test accommodations that involves reading of the Communication Arts portion. Stakeholders have questioned why we have it (the oral portion has been eliminated except for visually impaired). The BTF membership indicated they felt that DESE should continue to allow this accommodation.

Standing Committee Updates

Transition Committee: It was reported that the Committee will continue to look at an expanded core-curriculum based enrichment program for 20-30 students and that Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) may be able to help with setting up and funding.

Annual Study Committee: Nothing to report.

Budget/Governmental Affairs Committee: House Bill 1544 and Senate Bill 719 requires publishers to send electronic copies to school districts when requested. Nothing more to report on these two bills as of January 10 to date.

Rules Committee: The Committee met through conference call and developed a list of questions for DESE. Heidi responded.

Ad hoc Committee Updates

MAP Improvement Committee: Nothing reported.

Vision Summit 2008 Committee: The Committee reported the following:

- This year's theme, "Math Counts," has a full list of presenters
- "Shared Vision" will be a new topic
- Tote bags have been purchased for \$1.89 (Convention Bags Inc.)
- Delta Gamma Sorority may volunteer
- An electronic message was sent out on SELS for nominations for five (5) students grade three through high school to attend the Summit. Grades 3-5 will attend with a parent(s); grades 6 and above will participate
- 300 folders are ready to be stuffed; labels assembled and candy inserted into the bags
- Participants will receive a certificate of attendance
- Total limit of 100 hotel rooms
- Governor's Council booth may include posters from the journalism contest

Governor's Council for Disabilities Update:

- Applications are now be accepted for the July 25-28 Youth Leadership Forum at the University of Missouri in Columbia.
- February 28, 2008 is the Poster Journalism contest deadline.
- The Legislative Education Project was started last week. People from Centers of Independent Living are encouraged to sign up.

Current Workshops/Events Within the State:

- "Mission Belief," a weekend activity that serves up to 16 middle-school students and their parent(s) is planned this summer at Camp Windermere.
- The National Center for the Blind Youth in Science (NCBYS) will be offering a Junior Science Academy (JSA) targeting children in grades 3-6 and their parent(s). This four-day session which involves hands-on experience using tactile materials and innovative non-visual teaching methods will be held July 23-27, 2008 in Baltimore, Maryland.
- Statewide invitations have been sent for the February 28, 2008 Missouri Regional Braille Challenge (a two-stage academic

- competition designed to support and enrich the reading and writing of Braille). Last year the Braille Challenge was hosted by 22 regions and is expected to double this year.
- There was a discussion regarding having the National Braille Challenge fall on Mondays (next to a weekend) to make it easier for students to attend. Jim will mention this to the planning committee.
 - Several students have enrolled in the KEYS (Knowledge to Empower Your Success) program--short-term services for students who are blind and visually impaired who are attending local school districts. Michael Evans is currently attending the KEYS program. He attends a foods class and is also doing three hours of intensive mobility, assistive technology and transition skills with Patti. Michael has an on-campus job and is seeking on-off campus.

Agenda for Next Meeting: Topics to include in the May 14, 2008 agenda include all tabled items: BTF employer position discussion.

Action Items: Heidi moved to expand the employer category to two positions, subject on the advice of the Rules Committee regarding the criteria for the employers. Jim seconded the motion. Kent moved that the discussion be tabled. Susan seconded the move and it was unanimously approved.

Jim made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Michael seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 pm.

The next BTF meeting will be held Wednesday, May 14 at 10:00 AM at the MSBA in Columbia.

Minutes by Lori Conner, Administrative Assistant
03/04/08

Attachment 1:
Graduate Credit/CEUs, Helen Barnett, MSU Outreach Program

Credit

The amount of credit we can award is based on the contact hours of the program. One credit hour equals a minimum of 15 contact hours (750 minutes). Thus if your program is comprised of 15 contact hours, we can grant one (1) hour of credit; 30 contact hours, two (2) hours of credit, etc.

Within this structure, there is another rule: We cannot award more than one (1) credit hour in a week, so if your session involves 30 contact hours in one week, we can still only give one (1) credit hour. If you do, in fact, meet for 30 hours, I recommend you have a follow up day or an additional class session in the following week in order to award two (2) credit hours.

What I need to set up the credit course: I will need a syllabus reflecting course objectives, method of assessment, and the project(s), assignments, etc. that will make the course "credit worthy." When I get that, I can write up the proposal to accompany the syllabus and we'll move it through the academic channel. It usually takes about one and one-half (1.5) to two (2) weeks from initiation to completion. Continuing education will assign a course section number.

Registration

The registrations can be handled either before the class or "on site." I would be happy to assist you with getting the registration materials ready and so on.

Fees

The standard MSU fee for 500 level courses is (at least until FA 08), \$179 per credit hour. If there are no instructor fees or costs to the university, we can apply for a reduced fee (for other classes, we have requested and been granted a reduced fee of half (1/2) the standard amount/\$90 per credit hour. If this is what you decide to do, I can provide you a sample of the memo that you will need to get to me so that I can apply to the Provost Office for the reduced amount.

CEUs

We can set up CEUs. This would involve preparing sign up sheets (again, I have samples), having those interested sign up for each session they attend, and then also having the participants fill out a

CEU form. I would collect the sign up sheets, and either the attendees can mail in the forms, or we can collect them at the program. We mail out the CEU certificates. The number of CEUs would be determined by the length of the sessions. The CEU fee is \$25 for the certificate.

Attachment 2: Vision Summit Revolving Account

Vendors can make checks payable to "Treasurer, State of Missouri" and send to Shelley Witherbee, or a better option would be "Direct Pay." Shelley will advise Mike Merrick via electronic message that a check was received and that it will be placed into the grant account.

Instructions for BTF Vision Summit:

- Instruct all vendors wishing to contribute to the Summit to make a check payable to: Treasurer, State of Missouri.
- Mail all checks to: DESE, Attn: Shelley Witherbee, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102.
- DESE will send Mike an e-mail notifying him of the contribution.
- DESE will deposit it into the "grant" account.
- DESE will pay hotel invoice from "grant account."