

Urban Perspectives

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In this Issue

What's New in the ILIAD Project 2

IDEA '97: Examining the New Regulations 3

1999 Harvard Summer Institute 4

The annual appropriations battle, an urban prospective 6

How Far We've Come 7

Building Teacher Practice through Looking at Student Work 8

In Praise of Education: Reflection on a Landmark Event 9

Hehir Joins Collaborative as New Senior Policy Analyst



Tom Hehir, Former Director of OSEP

Dr. Thomas Hehir recently joined the Collaborative and its host organization, Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) in a brand new position as the first EDC "Distinguished Scholar." As many of you know, Tom served as the Director of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education, which sets national policy and allocates millions of dollars per year to improve research and practice for students with disabilities. During his six-year tenure, he helped steer the

reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) through Congress, craft the Department's regulations, and disseminate information about policy and best practice to state and local leaders, practitioners, parents, and individuals with disabilities across the country. Through these and other initiatives, the education of millions of children and youth with disabilities will be influenced for many years to come.

Tom recently left OSEP to join both EDC and the faculty at the Harvard Graduate School of Education as Lecturer. In his new role at EDC, Tom will serve as Senior Policy Advisor to the Collaborative, working closely with David Riley and Collaborative members to improve policy and practice in member sites. In addition, Tom will participate in strategic planning across EDC, focusing primarily on ways to translate research into practice. In this capacity, Tom will write and speak about his lifelong passion—school restructuring and systemic reform aimed at helping all students, including those with disabilities, reach high levels of performance.

continued, page 11

What's New in the ILIAD Project

In 1998, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded four partnership projects to address the IDEA '97 information needs of parents, service providers, administrators, and policy makers. The projects are currently working together to deliver training, information and a common message about the recent amendments to IDEA. One of the four partnerships, the ILIAD Project (IDEA Local Implementation by Local Administrators Partnership) is intended to serve local education administrators.

The Collaborative is one of seven primary partnership organizations working to provide information and technical assistance to its membership in implementing IDEA '97. The highlighted organizations to the right are partners of the Collaborative in this endeavor:

- [Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\)](#)
- [Council for Administrators in Special Education \(CASE\)](#)
- [National Association of Secondary School Principals \(NASSP\)](#)
- [National Alliance of Black School Educators \(NABSE\)](#)
- [American Association of School Administrators \(AASA\)](#)
- [Council of Great City Schools \(CGCS\)](#)

the full text by keywords; select specific parts, sections, or chapters from a topic index; link to specific parts, sections, paragraphs, and clauses that are referred to within the documents; and browse a glossary of acronyms and definitions.

Also included on the CD-ROM are topical briefs prepared by OSEP; interpretations of selected sections of the Part B Regulations; special interest briefs of particular interest to administrators, parents, and teachers; ready-to-use PowerPoint slides, approved by OSEP, to be used in trainings; and links to OSEP Technical Assistance and Dissemination Project Web sites.

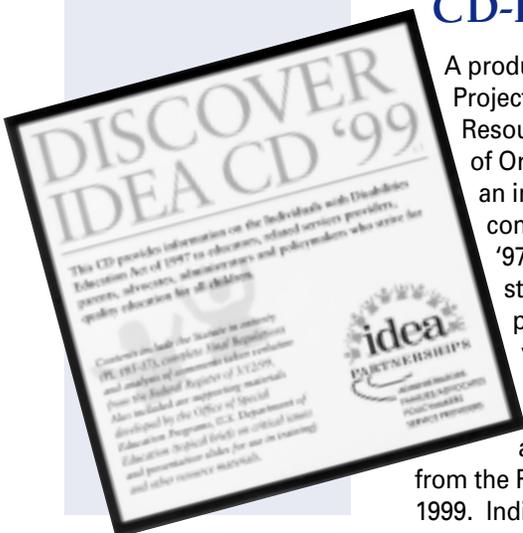
The Collaborative has mailed a copy of the CD-ROM to each of its member districts. Additional copies may be obtained by contacting the IDEA Partnerships by calling (877) CEC-IDEA or TDD (703) 264-9480. CD-ROMs are \$7.95 each, plus shipping and handling. A bundle pack of 10 CDs can be purchased for \$63.60.

Discover IDEA '99 CD-ROM

A product of the IDEA Partnership Projects and the Western Regional Resource Center at the University of Oregon, "Discover IDEA '99" is an interactive CD-ROM containing complete information about IDEA '97. The CD-ROM contains the statute in its entirety, the complete final regulations in a variety of downloadable formats (text, Adobe PDF, and large print), and an analysis of comments taken from the Federal Register of March 12, 1999. Individuals are able to search

Making Assessment Accommodations: A Toolkit for Educators

A second product, "Making Assessment Accommodations: A Toolkit for Educators" is a tool to help guide the practitioner's understanding of the types of accommodations that should be available for students participating in statewide and



continued, page 3

Collaborative's Online Event:

IDEA '97: Examining the New Regulations

The Collaborative conducted its second online event from June 1 through June 30, 1999, entitled "IDEA '97: Examining the New Regulations." Along with Collaborative Director David Riley, Sue Gamm, Chief Officer of Specialized Services for the Chicago Public Schools, and Art Cernosia, legal consultant/trainer with LRP, hosted the event.

The goal of the event was to assist urban education leaders in understanding the implications of the newly published regulations, prepare school leaders to meet the challenges of implementing the regulations, and initiate a dialogue regarding successful implementation strategies. ATLAS Communities, a comprehensive school reform model, the Council for Administrators in Special Education (CASE), and the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) joined the discussion as well.

The discussion narrowed to two major areas surrounding the new regulations: (1) screening protocols and (2) general education teachers' participation in IEP team meetings. In terms of screening protocols, participants pondered the question, "What are the policy, procedural, and operational implications of

IDEA's special provision around students being assessed as not having a disability if the determinant factor for eligibility is a lack of instruction in reading or math, or if the students are English language learners?" Facilitator Sue Gamm discussed this issue, sharing a screening protocol developed for use in the Chicago Public Schools to assist teachers in considering factors that determine whether a student should or should not be assessed for special education services.

The second discussion topic explored how districts are interpreting the final regulation that requires a regular education teacher of a student who is or may be participating in the regular education environment to participate as a member of the IEP Team to the extent appropriate. Co-facilitator Art Cernosia led off the conversation by asking, "How are districts determining the extent of a teacher's participation?"

Although you may have missed the three-week discussion, you can read through the event's discussion archive at: <http://www.edc.org/collaborative/event.html>

The Collaborative is planning future Web- and email-based events. If you would like to suggest a potential topic, please email David Riley at: driley@edc.org.

"What are the policy, procedural, and operational implications of IDEA's special provision around students being assessed as not having a disability if the determinant factor for eligibility is a lack of instruction in reading or math, or if the students are English language learners?"

Continued from page 2

What's New . . .

other large-scale assessments. Produced by the Collaborative, ILIAD and ASPIRE (Associations of Service Providers Implementing IDEA Reforms in Education) Partnership Projects, the Toolkit is designed to help practitioners and families understand the various types of accommodations and why they are requested, the principles that steer decisions, and ways that administrators can support their staff in the decision-making process.

Intended for trainings, inservice, and information sessions, the Toolkit includes a videotape, guides for administrators and practitioners, staff development activities, and an informational pamphlet for parents. The Toolkit will be available early this year, at which time the Collaborative will disseminate single copies to each of its member districts. Additional copies will be available by calling (877) CEC-IDEA or TDD (703)-264-9480 or by emailing: ideapractices@cec.sped.org.

1999 Harvard Summer Institute



ment of special education in urban settings." This session revolved around accountability and whole school reform (i.e., adopting a model for instruction and organizational change as a basis of school improvement). At the end of his session, participants had a better understanding of the implications and consequences of school reform for

Representatives from more than 30 Collaborative member districts traveled to Cambridge, MA last July to attend the 7th Annual Harvard Summer Institute on Critical Issues in Urban Special Education, co-chaired by Collaborative Director David Riley. Members mingled with more than 160 individuals and panelists nationwide to consider the Institute's "Whole-School Change and Students with Disabilities."

Designed for education leaders involved in school reform, including both special education and general education leaders, parents, advocates, attorneys, and LEA personnel, the goal of this year's Institute was to discuss competing agendas and different perspectives with a focus on promoting solutions at an early stage.

Dr. Richard Elmore, Professor of Education at Harvard University and Co-Director of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, greeted the Institute participants by connecting the "context of school reform in the United States with specific issues of quality and improve-

students with disabilities, and garnered ideas on how to balance the demands for instructional improvement and performance accountability with meeting the needs of these same students.

On the second day, Dr. Richard Zeller, Director of the Western Regional Resource Center in Eugene, OR, reviewed significant implications of IDEA '97 for local district policy and whole school reform models. Zeller considered the alignment between special education and general education a critical one, as is evident by the emphasis that every student must have access to and demonstrate progress in the general education curriculum. He believes, however, that the approach to this alignment needs further refinement, since many states look at standards in terms of content alone. He suggested that the educational community needs to consider what "general education curriculum" means for students with more intensive needs, and assess these students' growth in accordance with this measure.

continued, page 5

Dr. Gerry House, Superintendent of the Memphis, TN, City School District, framed her discussion around Memphis' systemic reform initiative. She identified critical elements of the school district's reform process, speaking about the implications of school restructuring on students with disabilities. House feels a sense of urgency since "schools have not kept pace with educating [all] children to meet those expectations."



Dr. Gerry House

In order to ensure that children with disabilities are learning within the redesigned structure, House stressed that districts must engage in systemic cultural change by redefining the system holistically.

The district must also adopt a vision, strategic plan, central beliefs about all children, and supports so that all kids are able to succeed.

Dr. Rebecca Herman, a Research Analyst at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in Washington, DC, explained what is known about systemic reform models. Herman outlined the elements of 24 of the most comprehensive school reform models in the country, and the types of information available about these models. Participants learned about the findings from the *Educators' Guide to Schoolwide Reform*, a report of recent AIR research. The research focuses on performance data of students in schools that have adopted these models.

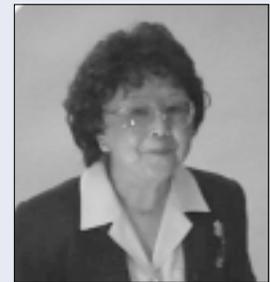
Dr. Margaret Wang, Professor of Educational Psychology and the founder and Director of the Center for Research in Human Development and Education (CRHDE) at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA, talked with participants about how schools today are serving a number of diverse student learners. Many of these students are academically at risk, as well as have low self-esteem, stressful life experiences, and highly

fragmented patterns of support services. Wang maintained that solutions for these problems should be drawn from the insight and expertise of many disciplines, professions, and collaboration between family, school, and community. Wang summarized recent research advances and applications for making learning more productive for students with disabilities. Wang also reviewed necessary information which can be incorporated into effective programs to improve student learning.

"...schools have not kept pace with educating [all] children to meet those expectations."

— Dr. Gerry House

Dr. Margaret McLaughlin, Executive Director of the Kennedy Foundation in Washington, DC, closed the Institute with a summary of findings from a four-year research project entitled "Building Capacity for Reform in Urban Schools: Lessons Learned Through Special Education." This project studied six urban schools that were engaged in systemic school reform. Research findings pointed to key factors of building capacity for reform, and how these factors are related to individual schools and districts. McLaughlin shared data and conclusions within the context of broader school reform and the 1997 amendments to IDEA.



Dr. Margaret Wang



Dr. Margaret McLaughlin

2000 Harvard Institute on Critical Issues in Urban Special Education

July 23-28, 2000

TOPIC: Assessment and Students with Disabilities

For more information, contact:
Programs in Professional Education
Harvard Graduate School of Education
339 Gutman Library, Cambridge, MA 02138
Tel.: (617) 495-3572 or (800) 545-1849
Fax.: (617) 496-8051

Looking Back to DC:

The annual appropriations battle, an urban prospective



Tom Hehir

Tom Hehir, Senior Policy Advisor, The Collaborative

For the first time in seven years, I have the opportunity to look at the annual federal funding process with a bit more distance and from my perspective as an educator with deep urban roots. In the interest of full disclosure, I must inform the reader that I was deeply involved with the preparation of the President's budget request, given my recent position as Director of OSEP. However, that process goes through many hands and many interests must be balanced before it leaves the President's desk and heads to Congress in the early months of the year. Suffice it to say that the final product looks very different from the one that left my desk in June, 1998; although there are aspects that did survive the process which I care deeply about.

By way of background, the education budget is part of a huge appropriation bill — there are only 13 appropriation bills that fund the whole government — that also funds all of Health and Human Services and Labor. Though special education may consume all of our lives, it takes a relatively small bite out of this appropriations bill. As things stand now, the education appropriation bill has been signed by the President after lengthy negotiations with Congress on an array of issues. So, here's my take on the FY 2000 budget.

There is some relatively good news for special education in the FY 2000 budget. The bill has an increase of 700 million for the Part B program, the money that goes to you to help fund IDEA services. The President sought no increase in this line. This pattern of increase- in the range of half a billion- has held steady for the last three years and is slowly increasing the relative share that the federal government is

assuming for special education, from an estimated 8% to 11%. However, these increases, welcome as they are, do not move us very quickly to the 40% authorization level included in IDEA. Though we don't have good cost data, (OSEP is conducting a study now) some estimate that \$15 billion would meet this level. Given the likely best case scenario, the Senate bill, in year 2000 would reach an appropriation level of \$5 billion. You can do the math. At the average increase of the past few years, it will take us twenty years to reach \$15 billion. And that figure does not include inflation or any child count increases. I think most of us will have gone onto other pursuits by then.

“there are only 13 appropriation bills that fund the whole government”

Though some may be pleased with the increase for special education, there is also bad news in the FY 2000 budget. To begin with, neither bill increases support programs in IDEA. These vital programs sponsor research, teacher training, parent education, technology development, and technical assistance. As we move to improve educational results for students with disabilities, we need better trained teachers utilizing up-to-date research. Of particular concern to me, is the lack of increase for the State Improvement Program, and the failure of Congress to fund a new program in the President's budget for the Primary Education Initiative. The latter program would provide funds to local school districts to provide earlier intervention for students experiencing significant reading and behavior problems in K-3.

continued, page 11

How Far We've Come

**Phil Ferguson, Co-Director,
National Institute for Urban
School Improvement**

A few days ago, I asked the students in one of my classes to point out what they saw as the biggest changes for people with disabilities and their families over the last 25 years. (This was a graduate level course, so I wasn't the only one old enough to remember that far back!) Your list would probably be similar to the one my students came up with: landmark legislation and court cases, deinstitutionalization, advances in medicine and technology, inclusion, self-advocacy, community accessibility. As we discussed the items on the list, however, it seemed that they all pointed toward one overarching development: increased presence and familiarity.

Many of us today don't look twice when we see someone with Down syndrome walking down the street or a school hallway. We might admit to occasional envy as we watch the person in a wheelchair getting out of a van, but this familiar scenario would have been unusual 25 years ago. If I go to a public event these days, I only notice the sign language interpreters when they are missing. People with disabilities are simply much more visible, much more an expected part of the daily life in our communities, than was true in all but a few settings in 1975.

What does that have to do with schools and educational research? Let me suggest several possibilities. First, it reminds me that "inclusion" has never been simply a proposal for educational reform. The emergence of the disability rights movement has popularized the effort to build inclusive settings in all domains of community life. For years, the specialized services that surrounded people with disabilities were characterized by what might be called an "edifice complex": when in doubt, build something! Whether it be a self-contained school, a sheltered workshop, or an institution, the best demonstration of our professional expertise was thought to be in a separate facility or setting. The push for community inclusion has reversed that tendency.

At the behest of both individuals with disabilities or their families, both practitioners and researchers now try to demonstrate our expertise by clever alterations of the existing setting. How can we insert supports into the workplace to accommodate a more diverse workforce? How can we use the mix of formal and informal resources already present in our neighborhoods to allow people with disabilities to live on their own? How can we rearrange the general education classroom to encourage the success of an increasingly diverse student population? In many ways, we have seen more progress in answering those questions for settings outside of school than inside.

That gets me to a second point. The answers to some of our questions about "how to do inclusion" may well have been answered by innovative research and practice in the domains of life outside of education. I know someone who spent 20 years of her life in a large institution for people with severe intellectual disabilities who is now working side by side with nondisabled employees at a company that makes the defibrillator paddles for cardiopulmonary resuscitation machines. Vocational rehabilitation research can now point to many such examples about how to arrange "supported employment" so that people with significant intellectual or behavioral disabilities can work successfully in integrated settings doing real jobs, for real pay. Yet, my guess is that few general educators, and not that many special educators, are aware of that research and how information on human resource management, task sequencing, social support, and organizational restructuring might generalize to schools and classrooms. Similarly, there is a lot of impressive research over the last two decades demonstrating how to arrange the physical environment and social support system so that people with challenging behaviors, physical disabilities, or sensory impairments can live successfully in integrated neighborhoods rather than "specialized housing." Yet, it often seems to me that we

continued, page 10



Phil Ferguson

For years, the specialized services that surrounded people with disabilities were characterized by what might be called an "edifice complex."

The Action Reflection Process:

Building Teacher Practice through Looking at Student Work



Lori DiGisi

“That’s the other thing about the Action Reflection Process. It’s made science less scary. And so there was a science workshop about a month ago. And I went. I never would have done that before. I would say, ‘Oh, no, no. I’m Special Ed, not science. They have nothing to do with each other.’ And I don’t feel that way any more. So that’s been very valuable.”

***— H. Yessner,
Special Educator***

(Reprinted with permission from an article entitled, “Teachers and Technology Specialists Team Up to Improve Science Education” by Caroline Miller in the September issue of What’s Working in Special Education, Vol. 1, Issue 5)

ASSIST (All Students in Supported Inquiry-based Science with Technology) taps the unique and diverse expertise of special educators, teachers, technology specialists and science specialists to develop the most effective ways to teach science to students with special needs, said Lori DiGisi, Director of ASSIST. Using the Action Reflection Process, the project encourages teachers to act as researchers by documenting, analyzing, and reflecting on student work.

The 3-year-old project is a collaborative effort of Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) in Newton, MA and the Cambridge, MA Public Schools. Under the project, teams at participating schools are working to improve their science instruction, generate a greater understanding of the discipline among all students, and improve collaboration and communication among faculty members, according to DiGisi. “We find that when you bring teachers together using this process, it leads to a more in-depth conversation about the curriculum,” she said. “Those hallway conversations become more meaningful because teachers, special educators, and specialists have a shared language through the process connecting them to student work.”

“Through this deeper understanding, teachers are better able to provide services that support student learning in the science curriculum,” she said. Teachers also have the opportunity to see what’s occurring in the science curriculum across grade levels. “For the classroom teacher, it’s a chance to participate in a collaborative evaluation

of their students’ work and hear the perspective of a special educator or a science or technology specialist. For the special educator, it’s an opportunity to see the level of work produced by a range of students in the classroom and to develop an understanding of the curriculum. Both professionals contribute and gain a deeper understanding of how to support students with disabilities in the curriculum,” DiGisi said.

Karen Daniels, a speech and language pathologist from the Cambridge Public Schools, agreed. “When we put [different grade-level] teachers together during a team meeting they begin to have richer discussions and they’re able to see what the teacher has done in the previous year, what the other teacher can build on or expect [students] to know,” Daniels said. Once teachers become familiar with what works for their students, they begin to use their new strategies in other subject areas, according to DiGisi. “We often see teachers taking what they’ve learned about how to enrich science and adapt the strategies in other subject areas.”

Classroom teachers aren’t the only staff benefiting from the process, added Daniels. Media and technology specialists are part of the process, so they have a better grasp of what students need when they come into the school library or computer lab. They are also stocking more appropriate materials and resources.

Finally, the Action Reflection Process works well for students with IEPs Daniels said, “Special educators have the opportunity to see the work of

continued, page 10

In Praise of Education: Reflection on a Landmark Event

**Ingrid Draper, Associate Director,
The Collaborative**

What a special affirming and renewing experience it was to be with more than 1,600 educators in Bellevue, Washington, at the "In Praise of Education" conference, hosted by John L. Goodlad's Institute for Educational Inquiry from June 18-21, 1999.

The Institute for Educational Inquiry in Seattle, WA, conceived of this conference as early as 1996 as an opportunity to bring educators together to celebrate their work. As their conference program states, the goal was to "acknowledge that good schools exist in every part of the country and are considerable in number; that educators are doing what they do because they want to, not because they have been ordered to or threatened with closure if their test scores do not rise; that educators are hungry for the sharing of experiences and for confirmation that what they are engaged in is worthwhile." Four themes provided the connecting framework throughout the conference: the moral issues of education and schooling, simultaneous educational renewal, leadership for change, and the arts in education.

An evening with Maya Angelou and Ellis Marsalis in "Celebrating the Arts" provided a special beginning to the conference proceedings. This set a wonderful tone for the unique opportunity for dialogue and personal and educational renewal that occurred over the next several days. Educators came together to acknowledge and affirm the challenges, as well as celebrate and praise the work of a growing number of initiatives across the country engaged in grassroots educational renewal.

The "In Praise of Education Conference" provided a rich and varied array of opportunities for conference participants to make connections, to grow profession-

ally, and to learn from each other. Information booths, roundtables, book discussions, job-alike sessions, panel dialogues, and plenary sessions that focused on major conference keynote speakers were all part of the varied formats that brought participants together during the three day conference. A special highlight of the conference was the In-Depth Focus, with presentations and discussions on 21 Educational Renewal Initiatives from across the country that "share central assumptions about the nature of human society and the consequent role of schools."

"...acknowledge that good schools exist in every part of the country and are considerable in number; that educators are doing what they do because they want to, not because they have been ordered to or threatened with closure if their test scores do not rise; that educators are hungry for the sharing of experiences and for confirmation that what they are engaged in is worthwhile."

The leaders of the Collaborative and the National Institute for Urban School Improvement presented a workshop entitled "Investing in Sustainable, Successful Urban Schools."

Information about the 21 initiatives mentioned above, as well as videotapes of the major "In Praise of Education" conference sessions may be obtained from:

**The Institute for Educational Inquiry
124 East Edgar Street
Seattle, Washington 98102
Phone: (206) 325-3010**



Ingrid Draper

“To the person who has only a hammer, everything looks like a nail.”

Continued from page 7

How Far We've Come

have done a better job at removing the physical and social barriers to building inclusive communities, than we have at removing the artificial barriers of special knowledge and disciplinary isolation.

Many years ago, the social psychologist Seymour Sarason coined the phrase “professional preciousness” to characterize this problem. In a culture of constantly increasing specialization, professional preciousness is the tendency to define problems so as to require our own profession for their solution. As educational researchers, we need to go beyond the discipline of special education to assimilate and transmit the knowledge emerging from our fellow researchers outside of education. As teachers and administrators, we need to look at the

exciting reforms that are occurring in the human services, human resource management, rehabilitation science, and architectural design. Parochial perspectives are not unique to education, of course. We have important knowledge to share as well, and should not be bashful about broadcasting our discoveries. Nor is our narrow vision a particularly new phenomenon either. It is just a twentieth century version of an ancient human tendency: “To the person who has only a hammer, everything looks like a nail.” When we talk, as educators, about expanding our toolkit, we need to make sure we look to see what the cultural carpenters outside the classroom are using to build our increasingly inclusive communities.

Continued from page 8

Building Teacher Practice . . .

students with disabilities along with the work of their peers. “The teachers are always thinking about how they can integrate the IEP and the curriculum goals. It’s an ongoing assessment.” Daniels added that the information gathered through the process is particularly helpful during IEP re-evaluations. “It provides a richer context. It’s information is based on classroom work.”

How the Process Works

Like researchers, action reflection team members analyze the data of student work to develop an understanding of what students know, and then collaborate to develop strategies to help the students. A classroom teacher chooses the work of three students: a typical learner, a student with an IEP, and a student the teacher considers at-risk – either because the student is struggling or needs to be challenged, said DiGisi. Because the focus is on how students communicate their thinking over time, the work chosen reflects three different points during the science unit. The group meets and documents its findings using a two-page Action Reflection Tool, she said.

Team members work through the *Action Reflection Process* over a 40-minute period, during which they describe what they see objectively in the students’ work, interpret what it means about what students understand about the major concepts of a unit, and decide what instructional strategies and technology tools will help improve the students’ ability to learn. “Before we start, we set the guidelines about the conversation,” said DiGisi. “Although controversy is welcome, the goal of the group is to reach consensus. It is critical that everyone feels safe to voice his or her opinion and that everyone’s opinion is heard,” she said. She concludes, “This no-fault collaboration is based on the work of James Comer. We are not here to blame the child, parents, the teacher, the curriculum, or the environment. We want to move the child forward.”

Resources

Want to learn more about the *Action Reflection Process*? You can reach Lori DiGisi (ldigisi@edc.org) by calling Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) at (617) 969-7100 or visit the ASSIST Web site at <http://www.edc.org/FSC/ASSIST>.

Continued from page 6

Annual Appropriations Battle

The Primary Education Initiative.

The State Improvement Program provides funds to states to improve educational results for students with disabilities. The State Improvement Plan must involve LEAs, Parent groups, and universities with 75% of the money going to teacher development. We have huge needs for staff in special education, and our general education teachers need much more training in disability. Right now, less than half the states get this money and without an appropriations increase, most states will go without this support. The President has requested a \$10 million increase in this program.

The Primary Education Initiative would help local school districts address one of the most vexing problems we have in special education—reaching kids with learning disabilities and those with emotional disturbance with powerful interventions earlier, without incurring inappropriate referrals to special education. The research is clear, the sooner these children receive the help they need, the better. Some have asked me why this program is needed given that local school districts clearly have an interest in intervening early with these kids. My response to this is twofold. First, special education budgets are exceedingly tight and

there are rarely resources to fund innovative practices. Secondly, though we have research documenting the desirability of early intervention, we do not have a sufficient number of models that have effectively implemented the research in school districts. School districts are worried that early intervention models must be carefully implemented to avoid inappropriate referrals to special education. Most school administrators want to see models that have been proven to work. If the federal government does not seed the development of these models, they are unlikely to occur.

Finally, this budget does not increase the Parent Training Program. The National Longitudinal Transitional Study demonstrated that the children who have knowledgeable, engaged parents are more apt to have better results. IDEA is complicated and parents need to understand both the processes involved, as well as the impact of their child's disability on their education. We need to support greater availability of parent training and seek better partnerships between parents and educators.

From my perspective, the overall budget amounts are generally disappointing. As special educators, we recognize the importance of supporting an overall healthy appropriation for education, not

merely a better special education appropriation. The education of children with disabilities is the responsibility of the total education system, especially as more and more children are educated in mainstream classrooms. Title 1, though increased this year, still is not reaching a majority of eligible students. Many of these students get inappropriately referred to special education. Further, the only way we will have more architecturally accessible schools is by investing in the infrastructure through school construction. Simply put, the federal budget must do a far better job at supporting a comprehensive program of school reform. This is particularly true for those of us who work in cities. Some communities can support the best schools money can buy if the federal government falls short; wealthy communities can make up the difference. This is not so for cities. Though we all know that money isn't the sole answer, it is necessary to repair crumbling, inaccessible buildings and upgrade the skills of our teachers. The only route our children have to a brighter future is through education. The U.S. is an affluent country enjoying unprecedented prosperity. Yet poor kids do not have sufficient access to high quality education. There is no better time to advocate for a significant increase in federal investment with a balanced program to improve student achievement. At the same time, we have every right to expect that the federal government serve as a better fiscal partner in supporting IDEA.

Continued from page 1

Hehir Joins Collaborative as New Senior Policy Analyst

Prior to his appointment to the OSEP leadership post, virtually all of Tom's professional life as an educational administrator had been in urban school districts. Tom served as the Associate Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services in the Chicago Public Schools (1990-1993) and Director of Special Education in the Boston Public Schools (1983-1987).

Throughout his career, Tom has demonstrated a continuing commitment to improving educational opportunities for children and youth with disabilities in urban school districts and holds the utmost respect for the achievements and challenges of urban educators and school administrators.

Tom has been very accessible to and supportive of the Collaborative since its inception five years ago. As you can imagine, we are delighted to have Tom on board. Please join us in welcoming him to his new role with EDC and the Collaborative.



Urban Perspectives is a publication of the *Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative*.

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Fall Meeting a Success — Spring Meeting Planned

More than 150 urban special education and general education leaders from more than 50 member districts attended the Collaborative's Fall meeting in San Diego, CA, from November 4-6, 1999. The theme of the meeting was "Effective Programs and Services for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities." Major presentations included Tom Hehir, former Director of the Office of Special Education Programs, who framed the topic in light of IDEA '97; David Osher, Director of the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, helping to bridge the research to practice gap in this critical arena; and Karl Dennis, Executive Director of Chicago's Kaleidoscope, who spoke dynamically about wrap-around and community-based services for the "hardest to serve children and families." Members and associates who were not able to join us in San Diego were sent copies of materials that were handed out during the meeting.

Spring 2000 Meeting

Plans for our Spring meeting are already underway. The meeting will be held in Atlanta, GA, from May 18-20, 2000. The meeting topic is "Contemporary Models of Effective Professional Development for Urban Schools." We will seek to learn such things as (1) what school districts are doing to "grow their own" teaching force given the shortages of special education teachers, (2) how are member districts retraining general and special education teachers so that

students with disabilities can meet standards, (3) what new roles unions, teacher training institutions, and communities have assumed to help with professional development, and (4) what should a comprehensive system of professional development look like in urban school districts.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Atlanta this Spring.

Welcome New Member Districts

The Collaborative currently links 73 school districts from 22 U.S. states plus the District of Columbia. Nine new member districts joined the Collaborative this Fall/Winter. Please join us in welcoming:

- Chicopee Public Schools, Chicopee, MA
- City School District of Albany, Albany, NY
- Dayton Board of Education, Dayton, OH
- Flossmoor School District 161, Chicago Heights, IL
- Fresno Unified School District, Fresno, CA
- Lansing School District, Lansing, MI
- NYC Community School District 22, New York, NY
- Pittsburgh Public Schools, Pittsburgh, PA
- School District of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA

For contact information pertaining to each member district, please point your Web browser to: <http://www.edc.org/collaborative/members/dist.html>

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