

Due Process Screening Committee Meeting
November 26, 2007
ISBE – Springfield Office
(Special Education Division Conference Room)
(Teleconference)

Members in attendance:

Kathy Lyons, Chairperson
Rick Ramirez
Susy Woods
Dr. Joseph Vaal
Elizabeth Hanselman

Others in attendance:

Andy Eulass, ISBE Due Process Coordinator
Mary Schwartz, Impartial Due Process Hearing Officer
Carolyn Ann Smaron, Impartial Due Process Hearing Officer

The meeting was convened at 1:36 p.m. A review of the draft minutes of the September 12, 2007 meeting took place for which no needed changes were noted. On the motion of Mr. Ramirez, seconded by Dr. Vaal, the minutes were approved unanimously.

The Committee then heard a report from Andy Eulass on a meeting held with the current Impartial Hearing Officers at the James Thompson Center in Chicago on October 16, 2007. Mr. Eulass reported that the hearing officers met with ISBE representative, the current hearing officer professional development coordinators, the current hearing officer evaluation coordinator and representatives of the Due Process Screening Committee. The meeting's focus was the process that would be utilized for hearing officer performance evaluations for the 2007-08 school year. Ms. Lyons and Mr. Ramirez, who also attended the meeting, reported on concerns raised by the hearing officers about the evaluation process. Mr. Eulass also reported on the varied responses of the hearing officers to both the evaluation process and the evaluation tool that would be used.

The Committee then turned to a review of the evaluation template that would be used for the 2007-08 school year. It was noted that some revisions to the tool had been made subsequent to the October 16th meeting with the hearing officers, but that the tool was largely maintained. Andy Eulass informed the Committee that the tool would be used to review and score each hearing officer's performance on a minimum of three separate cases that occurred during the evaluation period. The hearing officers would be provided opportunities to respond in writing to individual performance reviews, as well as the overall summative evaluation that would be compile the data from the individual reviews during the course of the evaluation period. The process would then require the Committee to review the compiled data and to make recommendations pertaining to the hiring, remediation or termination of the hearing officer for the next contract year. Mr.

Eulass informed the Committee that the evaluations would be transmitted to the Committee by no later than April 1. Mr. Ramirez and Ms. Woods reminded the Committee of the need to ensure that their recommendations had to be made with sufficient time to ensure the State Advisory Council's ability to ratify those recommendations.

There was no old business discussed by the Committee.

In new business, Andy Eulass informed the Committee that ISBE was engaging the services of the Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) to work with the agency to provide technical support. This support would be directed primarily toward the development of new mechanisms for dispute resolution to address ongoing concerns from the community at large on the costs associated with formal procedures such as Due Process. Mr. Eulass further informed the Committee that an initial meeting with CADRE would be held in January and that Committee members would be welcome to attend.

Rick Ramirez then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which Joe Vaal seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.