

## AEA 11 Board of Directors

6500 Corporate Drive

Johnston, Iowa

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

### **BOARD TRAINING SESSION (2:00 – 4:30 p.m.)**

Board training sessions are informal meetings held each month prior to the Board's work session and regular meeting during which time members can learn about agency services from administrative staff members. These sessions provide board members an opportunity to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of the various leaders throughout the Agency and to ask specific questions related to their unique work within the Agency.

Session Presenters: Grace Bargstadt, Director of Special Education; Jim Clark, Assistant Director of Compliance Monitoring; and Ron Lorenz, Assistant Director of Special Education.

#### Development of AEAs

- The AEAs were created to provide efficient and economical services to children with special needs from birth to age 21. The AEAs provide services that many districts cannot afford as they don't have the capacity to do so.
- AEA special education support services are funded by property taxes and state aid. AEAs are required to identify children who need special education services (Child Find), so they receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

#### Special Education Services

- Two-thirds of Heartland's staff are assigned roles and responsibilities in special education.
- AEAs coordinate programs in special education for districts.
- All children are to receive a free and appropriate public education.
- Generally, there tends to be coordination between many services.
- Most students who receive special education services graduate at grade 12, however some students receive services until age 21. When a child graduates, special education services end. Transition services must begin no later than when a student is 14 years of age.
- All children, including those with special needs, are held to the standards set by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Alternate assessment tools are used to assess the development of severely handicapped children. This is allowed for up to 1 percent of the student population. AEA staff members support district administrators in implementing appropriate student discipline measures for student who have disabilities, including but not limited to students with unique behavior needs. The rules and regulations surrounding this issue are complex.
- Heartland provides districts with school social workers, occupational therapists, school psychologists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, itinerant hearing and vision teachers, audiologists, parent educator coordinators, special education consultants, assistive technology specialists, challenging behavior and autism consultants, an adapted physical education consultant, early childhood consultants, program assistants and professional learning and leadership consultants.
- The exit rate for a child meeting all Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) goals and no longer in need of special education services is very small. The tendency is once a child is identified as needing special education, he or she will need these services for the duration of his or her education.
- The Agency is planning for a parent advisory regional structure that will facilitate ongoing conversations between parents and AEA/district staff to discuss issues important to parents with students with autism as well as other topics.

- Weighted enrollment is the system used in the state to generate excess funds for students who need special education services as described in an IEP. The weighted enrollment process was never designed to address all of the excess costs in special education; it was designed to offset some costs. Several districts are spending more on special education services than they are receiving.
- There is talk about if the weighted enrollment matrix is an efficient and effective document. This is part of a statewide system and it has stabilized across the state in the three years that it has been in place. However, some districts statewide have experienced an increase in funding, others a decrease.
- Heartland's average weighting is now more consistent with others districts throughout the state.
- AEAs and districts question weighted enrollment and whether or not it's providing enough funding.
- There is a correlation between the sufficiency and completeness of how the IEP is documented on a statewide Web IEP system and the weighted enrollment factor that is subsequently assigned.
- Ron Lorenz will place a copy of the weighted matrix on Basecamp for board members to review.

#### General Supervision

- All states have an obligation to meet the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In Iowa, AEAs have the oversight responsibility for the provision of all special education services This is a regulatory and compliance function of the special education director in the Agency.
- AEAs have to balance the delivery of service with accountability and state and federal requirements.
- The Department of Education (DE) extends its authority to the Agency to assist with this oversight.
- The AEAs are the only type of intermediate system in the country that has delivery and oversight authority.
- AEAs have a systematic statewide procedure for monitoring procedure compliance through a Web-based system sponsored by the DE.
- Districts are accredited every five years and their IEPs are sampled prior to these visits. They can then become part of the districts school improvement plan.
- Heartland works with districts and legal counsel on due process or pre-appeal cases. The goal is to resolve these cases at the lowest level possible.
- The Agency is accountable for procedures and results, specifically how children are progressing in their education. The Agency does very well on timeline requirements. There are many talented people at Heartland who know how to get real time data.
- Data is collected on Child Find, however specific results won't be known until next year.
- If questions are received or observations made on non-compliant procedures, the Agency investigates those claims.

#### Recap

- Heartland identifies and assesses children entitled to special education services and helps districts in providing those services. The Agency works with districts to providing students with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

### BOARD WORK SESSION

Board President Ms. Ann Wilson called the work session of the Heartland AEA Board of Directors to order at 4:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Ms. Jane Bell, Ms. Margaret Borgen, Dr. Earl Bridgewater, Mr. Cal Halliburton, Dr. Steve Rose, Ms. Marcy Sparks, Mr. Nels Turnquist and Ms. Ann Wilson. *Absent:* Mr. Bruce Christensen.

Administrative Staff Present: Ms. Laura Gillon, Ms. Sheila King and Ms. Jenny Ugolini.

#### *Discussion Items*

##### *Board Goals*

Jane Bell will continue working on and finalizing the board goals. She has received input from all board members and the top three priorities will focus on hiring a new chief administrator, data gathering and partnership directors. She will send materials to members prior to the December meeting.

*Affirmative Action Plan*

Nola Bond, Director of Human Resources, was present to review the 2009-11 Affirmative Action Plan. The Affirmative Action Plan is a statutory requirement that must be completed every two years. It looks at the Agency's employee base compared to those of the general and student populations of the regions it covers. The intention is to get staff diversity to match the diversity of the regions the Agency services. Ms. Bond reviewed the plan and made note of certain data.

- The Agency has a low minority projection compared to the state: 3.1 percent compared to 9.3 percent statewide.
- The Agency has a low male population; 13.3 percent males compared to 86.7 females.
- The Agency does recruit, however is in competition with other AEAs and school districts.
- The Agency's reputation has been helpful in drawing future employees, especially school psychologists.

Board members commented on the plan, that it was well presented and easily understandable, but raised concerns that the goal to increase the minority population of staff members was so low at 1 percent. Ms. Bond said this was done purposely, to make the goal more achievable, and if reached over five years, would be a 5 percent increase.

*Board Photograph*

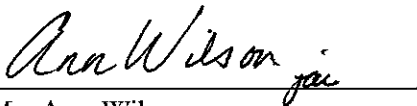
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*Board Comments:*

- Ms. Ann Wilson commented on the October 27 Board legislative open house held at Heartland. She was very impressed by the staff and what they had prepared. Although only three legislators attended, this was typical for similar meetings held across the state. The average legislator attendance at each meeting was as low as two and high as seven. The PowerPoint presentation from that meeting will be placed on Basecamp.

The work session adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Reports and documents are on file in the Board Secretary's office, 515/270-9030 ext. 14441, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.



Ms. Ann Wilson  
Board President



Ms. Jenny Ugolini  
Board Secretary

*Heartland Area Education Agency is dedicated to enriching people's lives. We are partners for learning who provide cutting-edge services for children and youth, families, schools and communities. Heartland AEA is a pro-active and caring organization fueled by a passion for excellence in all we do. We are committed, every day, to helping people grow, develop and learn. Heartland Area Education Agency 11 does not discriminate based on gender, gender identity, race, national/ethnic origin, creed, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.*