

Synthesis of Summer Internship at the National Association of State Directors for Special

Education (NASDSE)

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EDUC 994

The summer internship at the National Association of State Directors for Special Education (NASDSE) provided an active and invaluable learning experience about the policy development process, how it is influenced, and the interactions between groups of people to accomplish their political agendas. The proposed learning objectives for this internship were learning the factors considered by a policy analyst in a real world setting, gain a solid understanding of the policy development process, learn about how state concerns are represented at the federal level, and understanding theoretical models of policy development within the context of real situations. This paper will provide a description of the daily internship activities, discuss how each of the learning objectives were met, discuss how the experience relates to previous knowledge and experience, and evaluate the learning experience as it relates to my goals both within the doctoral program and beyond.

Daily Activities

NASDSE is an association located in Alexandria that serves several functions. The primary function of the government relations team is to represent the interests of state directors of special education at the federal level. Representing interests is accomplished by meeting with different staffers on Capitol Hill, attending coalition meetings, and gathering other information from briefings that are related to education and special education policy. In addition to the government affairs team, NASDSE also manages several grants to include the IDEA Partnership, Project Forum, the Personnel Center, and the Charter Schools Primer. Each of these grants is designed to help disseminate information on critical issues to the special education community.

The tasks and activities of the internship varied based on the policy issues that required immediate attention. The first two learning objectives were met through the daily tasks, meetings, and discussions described below.

The first activity was a series of visits to Capitol Hill to meet with staffers. The primary focus of these meetings was to discuss NASDSE's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization principles and to meet on behalf of the Personnel Shortage Coalition. I attended these meetings with Amanda Lowe and we discussed NASDSE's talking points on the way to each meeting. Immediately after each meeting, we discussed the strategy that was used, any issues the staffer brought up, and Amanda provided feedback on my contributions. The meetings on behalf of the Personnel Shortage Coalition were conducted with other associations to include the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

The second activity was attending coalition meetings with Amanda Lowe. Over the course of the summer I had the opportunity to attend meetings of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), the National Alliance for Pupil Services Organization (NAPSO), and the Committee for Educational Funding (CEF). Prior to attending each of these meetings I reviewed background information regarding their composition and goals. I talked through the policy issues with Amanda prior to attending the meetings and then discussed the policy implications of the content of the meeting afterwards. In addition to the coalition meetings, I also attended briefings designed to disseminate information. The most noteworthy briefings were one by Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism, a speech by Representative Hoyer on the economy, and a speech by Secretary Duncan at the Press Club. After these lectures, I reported the content to either Nancy Reder or Amanda regarding the policy implications of the topic discussed.

The time I spent in the office was broken into designing a social media strategy, reading reports and summarizing them, reading different bills and discussing their impact on special

education, drafting a letter to the Senate, and preparing a policy brief on Response to Intervention (RtI). The goal for the social media was to increase the visibility of the organization, their positions, and publications created by their grants to the general public. I researched the social media strategies of other nonprofit organizations and wrote a proposal of what could be developed during the internship. They decided to start with a Facebook page. I designed the page for them, helped Nancy, Amanda, and the Executive Director, Bill East, talk through some of the issues, trained a staff member on how to update the page, and launched it. I spent time reading different reports or conducting research on different topics to provide information to Amanda and Nancy. For example, at one point there was a bill that would provide vouchers to help military personnel access appropriate services when they had been transferred. In this case, I found the specific language within IDEA that discusses continuation of services when a child transfers to another state. Demonstrating that federal law already guarantees the continuation of services provided information to the legislator that the vouchers were unnecessary since the services were already guaranteed. During different meetings and briefings, different bills would be discussed that were recently introduced. I would read these bills and discuss their implications on the special education community particularly as it impacted individual states' rights.

Analysis of Learning

My prior experience with policy development and analysis was in working with special education policy at the state level. I volunteer on a government affairs committee of an association that represents the interests of private schools for children with disabilities. Learning how states' interests were represented at the federal level was the third learning objective which was accomplished through reviewing surveys and conversations with Amanda and Nancy. The

balance between federalization and nationalization of special education is maintained based on the lobbying efforts of NASDSE to ensure that states are able to maintain control of their services and continue to manage them through a bottom-up approach of local control. NASDSE accomplishes this by sending information on legislative activity to all of the state directors to gauge their position on it. If they are not able to get consensus from their membership on a position to take on the federal policy, they will have their board discuss it. If the board is not able to generate consensus on a position, then they will remain silent on the issue.

The internship with NASDSE taught me how different associations and policy communities collaborated to accomplish common goals. The benefit of large coalitions is the strength in numbers meaning that the coalition goals are supported by a larger number of constituents increasing their influence over members of Congress. However, developing a common goal can be challenging. CCD is composed of a variety of associations representing the interests of both children with disabilities and educators. The different groups are not always able to agree on a specific position. An example this summer came from legislation regarding restraint and seclusion. The House of Representatives passed a bill but it stalled in the Senate. One of the conditions for passage was that restraint and seclusion had to be in the child's Individual Education Program (IEP). Having it in the IEP turned it into a planned behavioral management tool rather than an emergency crisis tool. When large groups like CCD are unable to come to a consensus on an issue, one of the associations may generate a sign-on letter where all of the associations that agree will sign in support of the position.

Another learning area was watching how Amanda Lowe interacted with the different staffers to establish and develop relationships. Relationships are a key way to get the voice of your association heard. The majority of the meetings with the staffers took 20 minutes.

Amanda started by identifying who their state director was, pointing out any work she had done with the staffer in the past, and providing documentation that outlined our discussion. She made sure the staffer knew had background knowledge of the topic and presented information in the context of the state the staffer was representing. As we talked with a staffer, she attempted to gauge their perspective on how the Representative would respond to each of the talking points. She and I both shared examples and short stories that illustrated the point we were making with each of the talking points. When we met with staffers on the personnel shortage issue, CEC provided state specific data to each staffer to provide context for how the issue impacted their constituents. The strategy I learned was to make a connection with the person and provide the information to them in a manner that is meaningful to them and their constituents.

The fourth learning objective was regarding the application of theoretical models to real life examples and will be discussed at this point. Another issue Kingdon discusses is for policy to be passed into law, the streams of interest groups, legislators, and cabinet members need to be aligned (Kingdon, 2003). This was an issue this summer with providing the funding for a jobs bill that would save the jobs of 140,000 teachers. Though Congress had a solution that found the money for these jobs, the president threatened to veto it because it took money away from the Race to the Top (RTTT) initiative. Though associations had different perspectives on taking money from RTTT, the funding never came from Congress. The result is that at the end of summer, the money is still not guaranteed and school districts will enter the school year uncertain about part of the funding for their educational staff. Towards the end of the internship, I had the opportunity to draft a letter on behalf of NASDSE supporting a Senate Amendment that would help preserve these jobs. President Obama had also come out in favor of the same Senate

Amendment but it still has not passed. Currently, the policy streams have not mixed to create a solution for this problem that is supported by Congress and the President.

Stone's polis model emphasizes community, public interest, groups and organizations as the building blocks of social action, and alliances as sources of change (Stone, 2002). The internship taught me a lot about the mechanics of how groups work together to form alliances for the public interest of their communities. Some of the coalitions I observed were better at aligning their values than others. Because CCD represents a wide range of interests, they seemed to have difficulty generating consensus on certain issues because some of their groups represented children, some represented administrators, and some represented schools. CEF on the other hand had a specific goal of helping support funding for education programs. Because their goals were narrower than CCD's, they tended to agree more and could generate a greater amount of support from the members. This presented a stronger alliance where the whole became a sum of its parts. Rather than generating one letter from CEF, the different associations would generate their own letters to assert the same position on an issue. Generating multiple letters accomplishes the same goal as a sign on letter but has a more powerful effect by the number of letters that members of Congress will receive.

From a professional perspective, it was beneficial to spend the summer working in the association environment. It helped me learn about the larger context in which my nonpublic school employer exists. Prior to the summer, I looked at all policy from the perspective of how it would impact children with disabilities in nonpublic schools. Over the course of the summer I learned about the much larger context of general education in which special education must exist which provided a much broader understanding of the educational community as a whole. However, part of that realization included the fact that special education is not taken into account

when generating general education policy. There was no definition of highly qualified special teacher when No Child Left Behind was introduced, the ESEA reauthorization blueprint barely mentions special education, and the CCSSO CCS for teacher evaluation barely mentions teaching students in special education. Though IDEA protects students in special education, the increasing number of students in the general education environment means that general education policy needs to take students with disabilities into account. Associations like NASDSE ensure that special education needs are not overlooked when general education policy is being developed.

Evaluation of Goals

One of the career goals I was considering in entering this internship was to work for an association after graduation. The experience gained from the internship was very positive and I am now strongly considering working for an association. One of my overall goals is to conduct research that will influence policy on a global level. Working as a policy analyst for a special education association will allow me to accomplish that goal. The policy analysts work to gather information about legislation, analyze their impact on from the perspective of the interests they represent, and then try to influence members of Congress to accept their position and implement into the policy being developed. Being able to influence federal legislation in special education provides the opportunity to influence policy at the most global level. Though federal policy is global, it trickles down to directly influence all children receiving special education services. In starting this endeavor, I wanted to help as many people as possible and working with federal policy would allow my influence to cast a wide net and accomplish that goal.

References

Kingdon, J. W. (2003). *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies, second edition*. New York: Longman.

Stone, D. (2002). *Policy paradox: the art of political decision making, revised edition*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Appendices

Appendix A: Letter from NASDSE evaluating internship performance

Appendix B: Letter written to Senate

Appendix C: Policy brief on response to intervention

Appendix D: Daily journal of activities

Appendix A: Letter from NASDSE



National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.

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August 3, 2010

Re: David Blaiklock
George Mason University

Dear Dr. Earley:

It has been our pleasure to have David here at NASDSE this summer! David has been extremely professional, self starting, engaging and inquisitive. He has conducted all his interactions with utmost professionalism and has a strong and clear understanding of special education practice and has gained valuable policy experience through his experience with NASDSE.

During his time at NASDSE David constructed and launched a NASDSE Facebook page. David completed this project with care for detail and in an incredibly timely fashion. We at NASDSE are excited about and grateful to David for this task.

David has attended a number of Hill visits – both on behalf of NASDSE and on behalf of coalitions to which NASDSE belongs. During these visits David made valuable contributions and brought relevant practitioner experience as well as had the opportunity to see policy in action. Additionally, David has attended coalitions meetings, specifically concerning funding issues, personnel shortages and related service personnel. During all of these meetings David has demonstrated an ability to quickly grasp the specific issues as well as how they relate to the broader picture of education as a whole. David has also had the opportunity to attend Hill briefings and was well able to report back on the content and nuances of the briefings. David has also read bills and has researched specific issues for NASDSE and has been very detail oriented in his reports. Finally, David has researched and supplied NASDSE with an excellent and thoughtful brief on RtI/PBIS and its potential impact on reducing the achievement -gap. David has also had the opportunity to sit in on internal NASDSE policy - making discussions regarding issues surrounding ESEA reauthorization.

David has been an exemplary professional this summer and has with a real affinity for special education policy. It is my hope that he will continue on this course – he is an asset to the special education field and we wish him all the luck!

Sincerely,

Nancy D. Reder, Esq.
Deputy Executive Director

Appendix B: Letter written to the Senate



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August 2, 2010

Dear Senator:

On behalf of The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), which represents the state directors of special education in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Agency, the federal territories and the Freely Associated States, I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of Senate Amendment 4567 that would amend H.R. 1586 to provide \$26.1 billion for FMAP and education jobs.

FMAP is the enhanced federal Medicaid matching rate that was increased to help States pay for Medicaid services for our most vulnerable citizens that will expire unless it is extended immediately. The \$16.1 B in this bill will continue to help supplement state funding of Medicaid services. Without this extension, we are gravely concerned that the quality of medical services for those relying on Medicaid will decline as doctors refuse to treat Medicaid-eligible patients. Medicaid also helps to fund needed services for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities who received services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The \$10 B in education funding will help save approximately 140,000 education jobs across the country. The failure to save these jobs will potentially reverse the efforts of education policy reform.

We urge you to support this Amendment, which is fully offset by cuts in spending elsewhere in the federal budget to support our nation's most vulnerable families and support our schools.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact NASDSE's Director of Government Relations, Nancy Reder, at nancy.reder@nasdse.org or 703-519-3800, ext.334.

Sincerely,

Bill East, Ed.D
Executive Director

Appendix C: Policy brief on response to intervention

Response to Intervention (RtI)-Description and Benefits

Until the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004, the model of determining eligibility for special education services typically required children to fail before receiving the services they needed to be successful in school. For certain disabilities, students were identified as eligible for services through the discrepancy model which represented a gap between a child's potential and the rate of their actual achievement. This categorical approach to providing services did not account for the range of abilities that may exist for students identified with these disabilities. Response to Intervention (RtI) was introduced into the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004. RtI is a data driven tool for educators to target instructional interventions to children's areas of specific need when it becomes apparent. This proactive approach provides a continuum of support for the child prior to receiving special education services. RtI facilitates collaboration between special and general education personnel to help struggling children, provide data to inform the eligibility process, and to constantly monitor the progress of struggling learners to identify when an intervention may not be effective.

Background

Federal legislation began supporting special education services in 1975 with PL 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. The intent was to assure that children with disabilities were provided a free and appropriate education, to protect the rights of children with disabilities, to help school districts provide an education to children with disabilities, and to assess children to assure they were receiving an effective education. Amendments to the law include providing due process to help protect the rights of children with disabilities, providing early intervention services.

The 1990 amendments changed the name of the law to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and supported services for children with disabilities to transition to postsecondary training and the workforce. Special education law became increasingly concerned with educating children in the least restrictive environment (LRE). For some special education students the LRE is the general education classroom where they receive the support of a special education teacher. The inclusionary movement of shifting children with disabilities into the general education setting broke down the categorical differentiation between students in special and general education. This created a continuum of services within the general education classroom that were provided through the collaboration of general and special education teachers. The reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 included provisions for early intervention services. Under IDEA 2004, local school districts were allowed to use up to 15% of IDEA Part B funds to implement early intervention services to students who had not been identified as needing special education services.

Currently, the most widespread model for identifying children as requiring special education services is the discrepancy model. The discrepancy model measures the child's potential through either their IQ or adaptive abilities to their overall performance in school. If

there is a discrepancy between their aptitude and their achievement, then the child is identified with certain disabilities, most commonly specific learning disability. The disadvantage to the discrepancy model is that it can take years before the discrepancy between ability and achievement is wide enough for the child to be identified as having a disability. For the child, this means years of struggling to keep up until they ultimately fail. It is when they fail that services are provided but by the time they receive services they are already several grades behind in their abilities (by definition of the discrepancy model) and they are frustrated with school. Applying services through this model creates a situation where special education becomes where students go when they fail rather than being the supportive and helpful environment it was designed to be by IDEA.

RtI-What is it?

RtI is a data driven model to identify general education students in participating schools who may be struggling either behaviorally or academically. The implementation of this model for modifying behavior is referred to as Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). Students receive varying degrees of intervention based on their response to each one. There is no one-size-fits-all model of RtI/PBIS rather they are based on several principles that schools can be adapted to settings. The system involves communication and collaboration between teachers, administrators, and parents.

The basic models of RtI/PBIS have three tiers with the first tier being for students in general education who are benefitting from high quality, evidence based classroom instruction. Data is collected on these students and is analyzed after no more than nine weeks. Students who are struggling at this level move to the second tier.

In RtI students in the second tier receive targeted instruction:

- In response to their instructional needs.
- In small groups.
- From an education professional trained specifically to work with students in the area they are struggling.

In PBIS students in the second tier:

- Receive targeted behavior interventions.
- Have simple small group behavior plans.

Data is collected on the students in this tier and analyzed at least every 9 weeks. Depending on the amount of progress, students can either move to tier one or remain in this tier to continue receiving interventions. Students who continue to struggle at this tier will move to the third tier of intervention.

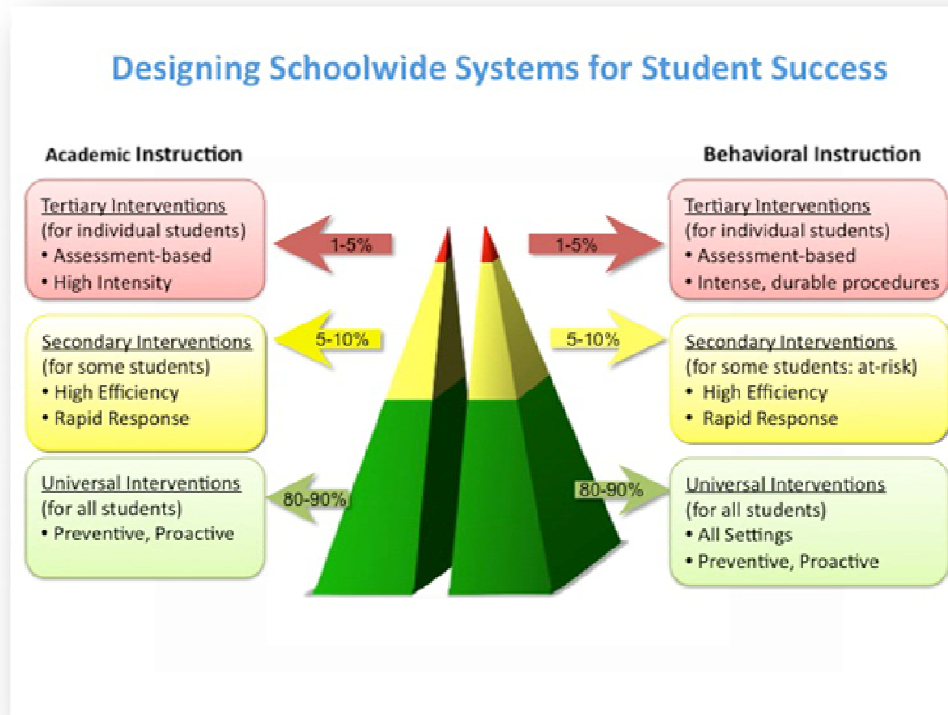
In RtI students in the third tier:

- Receive individualized instruction targeted at their deficit areas.

- May be referred to the special education eligibility process.

In PBIS students in the third tier:

- Receive individualized targeted instruction that specifically addresses their behavioral challenges



It is important to note that this is a basic outline of how RtI/PBIS could be used and each school can design the system based on their needs. The data can be analyzed more frequently to more rapidly determine if a child is not responding to an intervention and if they should be moved to a higher tier of service. It is also important to note that the parents can request the special education eligibility process to begin at any point during RtI/PBIS. Depending on how the school implements the program, special education personnel take an increasingly active role in helping students as they move to higher tiers.

RtI Benefits

RtI/PBIS provide a continuum of services for children who are struggling within the general education classroom. The current discrepancy model requires the students to fail before they receive services. The RtI model provides increasingly intensive interventions to try to support the child before school becomes so challenging and frustrating that they give up on it. Children who receive the RtI interventions understand them as part of the education process resulting in them feeling less stigmatized when they do start receiving special education services. PBIS provides targeted behavioral interventions to help the child be available for learning within the classroom environment.

RtI/PBIS is a scientific approach of using data to make decisions about interventions and eligibility. The discrepancy model is based on a more subjective interpretation of information based on the beliefs of the people convened in the interest of the child. RtI/PBIS provides hard data to demonstrate that the child is struggling that can inform eligibility determinations and Individual Education Program (IEP) teams as they make decisions regarding the student. When the student does go through the educational testing process, the data collected from RtI/PBIS will help triangulate the results so that parents and educators can make the best decisions to help the child.

RtI/PBIS have the potential to alleviate the achievement gap and reduce the disproportionate representation of minority and low-income students in special education. By providing interventions early, struggling students will fall behind at a slower rate than their peers who are being identified through the discrepancy model. When they are found eligible for services, the students who have participated in RtI may be closer to grade level than students who did not. Therefore, participation in RtI has the potential to increase the achievement rate of struggling students which may help close the gap between them and their peers. PBIS will help who struggle with behavior issues be more available to learn resulting in their ability to learn at an increased pace.

Because they are receiving interventions at a younger age, students who participate in RtI/PBIS may either not require special education services or will only need them for a limited time. In some cases, the tiered interventions may suffice for helping the child catch up with the rest of the class. In other cases, the tiered interventions may help provide the requisite skills that only need to be reinforced through the special education services. This will allow the child to spend more time in the general education environment as special education supplements the services they need to achieve at the same rate as their peers. Reducing the amount of services will also reduce the amount of money spent on providing services for the child.

PBIS provides a tool for schools to identify students who are “at risk” behaviorally early in their educational career. The targeted interventions can be provided early and can address such behaviors as bullying, aggression, and noncompliance. Working with a model that allows schools to focus on these areas early will create safer schools for all children in the future.

Finally, RtI/PBIS are not rigid systems that prescribe exactly how they are supposed to be implemented. The models are flexible so that schools can adapt it to meet their specific needs. Even schools within the same district may apply it differently based on what will work best for them. Using this model allows schools to adapt it to their practice rather than having to adapt the school to the intervention.

Conclusion

When PL 94-142 was initially introduced in 1975, identification for special education services was based on a categorical model of students in general education and students in special education. The inclusionary movement of the 90s allowed more students to participate

in the general education environment as the least restrictive environment for receiving an appropriate education. Despite the participation in the general education environment, there is still a categorical differentiation between those students who receive special education services and those who participate in the general education environment. According to the discrepancy model, students need to fail in the general education environment before they are able to receive special education services.

RtI/PBIS provide the much needed bridge between general and special education. The increasingly intensive interventions provide a continuum of services for students in the general education classroom who may require special education services. When the student is identified as having a disability, the introduction of special education services simply becomes another level of intervention as opposed to something that suddenly occurs. By making it another level of intervention, the student may need less time to adapt and can benefit from the special education services immediately.

Appendix D: Journal of daily activities

Journal

Day 1-July 6

Amanda and I met early in the day, one of the tasks assigned was to read the NASDSE position on their principles for reauthorization of ESEA and be familiar with the position of other associations (CEC, NEA, etc.). We met with staffers of 2 representatives on the Hill (Biggert, IL, Platts, PA). The logic for meeting with the staffers of these two representatives was that they were moderate Republicans and would be good allies in promoting NASDSE principles within the party.

At each meeting, Amanda made a connection with the staffer by recognizing their state director and trying to discuss previous interactions with that staffer. She handed them a packet of information that included the NASDSE position paper. She talked them through the position paper and asked for any questions. The staffer for Biggert was very receptive and open about what he thought Biggert would agree with and what may be a little more difficult to sell.

Day 2-July 7

Spent the morning helping Joanne work on her computer and talking about the CoP project she is working on with the IDEA partnership project. I spent part of the afternoon reading some of the materials associated with that project and plan to discuss it with her further in the future.

Researched NEA, CEC, and other related association activity on facebook and linkedin. The overall question for designing the facebook page is to determine what the purpose of the page will be. It could be a great way to disseminate information about the different grant projects. A Ning community may be beneficial as well for the state directors to talk amongst themselves in a secured community. I also read the President's blueprint for ESEA reauthorization which did not speak to children with disabilities. Also read about CCD in preparation for a meeting on Friday.

Met with Amanda and Neche over lunch and talked about the different surveys NASDSE does to find answer questions for the state directors. In terms of policy issues, if the state directors agree then NASDSE will make a statement, if there is dissension then NASDSE will look to their board to determine a stance, and if the board is not able to come to resolution then NASDSE will remain silent on the issue. Relationships have been a key part of working with other associations (like CEC) on different issues. Bill East is very responsive to the state directors when they ask him about different things. Some of the state directors are politically appointed and as a result, they can't lobby. NASDSE provides orientation to newly appointed state directors to help them ease into the position and inform them about the political climate at the federal level. In addition to the government relations component, NASDSE also manages several grants that supplement the maintenance of the organization

Day 3-July 9

Spent the morning looking at Project Forum, the IDEA partnership, and the Personnel Project. Also prepared some more for the CCD meeting by looking up DOJ/OCR letter. Amanda provided the DoD

voucher information for me and I read it on the train. Attended the CCD meeting and spoke with Amanda afterwards (while texting during) about the players in the room and how opposing positions are resolved. Essentially, people sign on to the positions they agree with. The purpose of a consortium like CCD is to bring together groups with common interests to align the perspective when attending hill visits and other important meetings. The strength in numbers approach allows for a louder voice and a greater influence on political decision makers. However, as today indicated, not everyone was as informed as they thought they were and everyone approached problems from their particular lens as opposed to looking out for what was good for the whole.

Also looked up the specific bill that the voucher program was in. The program was buried in a military spending bill and I asked Amanda about how frequently education spending gets buried in other bills. She explained that it was a little challenging to speak out against the voucher program because of the combined sensitivities of helping both military personnel and children with disabilities. Read HR 4247 to become educated on the proposed legislation for restraint and seclusion.

Day 4-July 12

Attended the RTI action network presentation on RTI this morning that was put on by NCLD. Good presentation in terms of content and trying to get others to push for federal policy that supports RTI. Essentially replaces the deficit model.

Returned to office and read more on the IDEA partnership, looked up background info on Bobby Scott for meeting tomorrow, set schedule for week and looked up info on DOE and Alliance for Excellence in Education. Reviewed posting on Education Sector Online discussion as well.

Day 5-July 13

Went to the Hill with Amanda and met with staff from Bobby Scott's office. She seemed very informed about special education law and policy and was receptive to NASDSEs perspective. She referred Amanda to a few committee staffers and took a lot of notes on the recommendations.

Talked with Amanda about how policy position papers are developed and found they are drafted by Bill and Nancy and then passed by the board then distributed to membership. Also talked about potential contention between folks not agreeing to sign on movements and she said it happened from time to time. Researched some IDEA language and did some other reading. Established a twitter account to track certain hill proceedings and have gotten good info from that. Read HR 1569 from Bobby Scott regarding graduation rates.

Day 6-July 14

Attended National Alliance for Pupil Services Organization with Amanda. A staffer from Representative Holt attended the meeting and presented information on data systems that could be used to align instruction with areas where students are struggling. This was based on a model that was effective in Union City, New Jersey. The group also discussed a bill regarding prohibiting corporal punishment and how to develop evidence based practice that could be implemented into the schools. Talked with

Nancy, Amanda, and Bill, about NASDSE's position on the restraint/seclusion legislation if it is going to be a required part of the IEP. Also talked about the proposed corporal punishment legislation discussed at NAPSO. The discussion about restraint/seclusion discussed that NASDSE should hold the same position on the Senate side that they did on the House which was that restraint/seclusion should not be in an IEP. The issue with restraint/seclusion being in an IEP means that it becomes a special education only issue.

Participated in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services webinar to discuss their roadmap. However, due to technical difficulties, the webinar was cut short. Did some reading about SAMSHA and continued working on developing the facebook page.

Day 7-July 15

Attended a panel presentation by Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism in the Russell Senate Building. The goal of the panel was to present the issues that adults with Autism experience as they transition to adulthood. Representative Doyle and Senator Menendez co-hosted the discussion and presented legislation they would be introducing to help people with Autism. One of the policy issues that AFAA puts forth is they are requesting that IDEA include the ability for students to work on social skills and career readiness skills to help them transition into adulthood. This struck me as odd since IDEA already allows for those sorts of goals to be in an IEP. The other odd thing about the presentation was that it took them about 2 hours before they were really getting into the issues adults with Autism face. Before that they had different panels of adults with Autism that described how successful they were being in the community. By the time they got to that point of the presentation, half of the room had left and the message did not reach as wide an audience.

Returned to the office and participated in a conference call (with Amanda) with the Bazelon law group that discussed the implementation of PBIS. The conversation moved very fast and the call did not last very long. Spent the rest of the afternoon working on the facebook page and reading information about the Bazelon Law Group.

Day 8-July 19

Read two reports from the Center for Education Policy on the achievement gap and school performance models to provide an oral summary for Nancy and Amanda. Also read the Council of Chief State School Officers ESEA reauthorization principles. Met with Nancy and Amanda to show the beta of the facebook page. After the meeting conducted research on two assessment grants that the SBAC and PARCC consortiums had applied for.

Day 9-July 20

Spoke with Amanda Lowe about idea for helping develop evidence based practice for NAPSo. The idea being that school districts and university HSRBs work together to streamline the IRB process to give researchers easier access to schools. The idea was received favorably by other members of NAPSO. Reviewed research on the Promise Neighborhoods initiative. Also read through the draft CCSSO CCS

evaluation standards for teachers. Talked through the policy implications for special education as they are currently written. Read HR 5756 which was just introduced by Representative Doyle to see what the bill contained and if any of it pertained to NASDSEs policy agenda.

Day 10-July 22

Reviewed information on the National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services to include their ESEA reauthorization principles. These were reviewed in preparation for Hill visits in the afternoon. Presented the beta facebook page to Bill East, Nancy, and Amanda, talked through some of the management issues with them and discussed the benefits of social media. Fixed the concerns they raised with the page.

Met with Representative Loeb's staffer in regards to the NCPSSER ESEA reauthorization principles. We were joined in this meeting by members from CEC and CCSSO. CEC had provided personnel shortage data that was specific to Iowa. At this point, it was more of an exploratory perspective and the staffer seemed open to the principles. Debriefed the strategy of the meeting with Kim from CEC and Amanda.

Day 11-July 23

Attended the Council for Education Funding meeting where the main topic of discussion was about the education jobs bill. Originally, the funding to save 140,000 education jobs was going to come from the Race to the Top initiative but President Obama threatened to veto the bill if that was where the money came from. The House passed a bill that had the offsets for the \$10 billion required to save the jobs. However, it was voted down in the Senate. The Senate said they would propose their own bill with different offsets. A staffer from Representative Honda spoke and talked about the possibility of there being an ESEA markup by mid-August.

After the CEF meeting, I attended a speech by House Majority Leader Hoyer about the state of the economy. The speech was very partisan in regards to blaming republican policy for the current state of the economy. Representative Hoyer spoke about the importance of returning to a manufacturing based economy. He also talked about tax reform and incentives in terms of how they will create jobs.

Came back to the NASDSE office and reported what Hoyer had said to Nancy and Amanda. Had conversation with Nancy about how challenging it has been to get anything to move in the Senate due to partisan politics.

Day 12-July 26

Met with the staffer for Representative Woolsey with Kim from CEC to talk about the NCPSSER ESEA reauthorization principles. The staffer was very receptive to what Kim was telling her about and the input I provided. After meeting with the staffer, I had coffee with Kim to debrief from the meeting and to talk about CEC's perspective on different policies. Many of their positions are similar to NASDSE.

Returned to NASDSE to talk with Amanda about how the visit went and let her know what issues the staffer brought up.

Day 13-July 27

Began working on writing a policy brief about the benefits of RtI. Attended a speech by Arnie Duncan at the Press Club. Duncan took an interesting political approach where he referred to the law as NCLB when referring to the bad components and ESEA when talking about the good ones. Duncan spoke about the goal of being the most college educated country in the world over the next 10 years and making sure that all high school graduates are college ready. I spoke with Amanda when returning to NASDSE about how this contrasted to Hoyer's speech about returning to a manufacturing economy as I assumed a college education may not be necessary within the manufacturing sector I wondered if this would create a workforce that would be underemployed and frustrated by a lack of jobs. There also did not seem to be much consideration for special education in Duncan's address.

Also taught a member of the NASDSE staff to manage the facebook page and provided HTML code for facebook badge that could be placed on the webpage.

Day 14-July 28

Launched the facebook page and will continue to monitor it to try to build the audience. Met with Nancy to talk through different policy issues and experiences from the summer to get her perspective. She explained to me how the staffers build the legislation based on the visits from the different associations.

Amanda and I met with the staffer for Representative Holt to talk about HR 5024 and how the proposed data systems would align with special education. Amanda did very well about getting him interested in collaborating with NASDSE to ensure that the data that special education already captured was aligned with the proposed data collection system proposed by HR 5024.

Continued working on policy brief.

Day 15-July 30

Attended the CEF meeting on my own. The ed jobs bill was still a big topic of discussion and the proposed solution was in SA 4567. SA 4567 would amend HR 1586 by stripping all of the language and providing \$26.1 billion for federal Medicaid matching and the education jobs through different funding offsets. The meeting also discussed the new Senate appropriations in terms of programs that would receive more or less money.

Had coffee with Lindsay Jones from CEC after the CEF meeting as we had an afternoon meeting with the Education and Labor Committee staffer that afternoon. Lindsay and I talked some more about CEC's perspective on different issues and she shared with me how she came into policy. I talked with her about my experience in the classroom and she was interested in hearing about it though she recognized I was dealing with an extreme population. Kim from CEC joined the conversation towards the end.

We met with a staffer from the Education and Labor committee to talk about the personnel shortages coalition. The conversation shifted into discussion about ESEA reauthorization where the model was shifting from highly qualified to highly effective. Highly effective would be determined by cross district rubrics of best practice and would be used to target specific areas of need for professional development. The staffer also shared that the committee would be ordering a GAO report on charter school discriminatory practices against students with disabilities.

Returned to the office to share the information from the day with Nancy.

Day 16-August 2

Wrote letter to Senate for NASDSE urging them to support SA 4567. Finished first draft of policy brief on Rtl.

Day 17-August 3

Revised Rtl policy brief based on feedback and spoke with program directors about their different projects.