

## May 6, 2009, Webinar

Unfortunately, we had terrible technology problems this morning and had to end the webinar. Apparently, a switch was recently replaced with a temporary one and that switch controls the internet access on our floor. We think this may be the problem but are not sure.

Below is the information I was attempting to share with you during the first 15 minutes of the webinar. The questions received will be answered in the Q&A posted on our website – a SELS message will be sent when those are ready to view.

Thanks for at least trying to tune in! We will resume the webinars next school year in October. Surely, that is enough time to figure out the problem?!

1. Deaf/HOH: We have been addressing the needs of kids who are Deaf/HOH in this past school year in the following ways:

- We put a state-wide contract into place in the fall of 2008 with Missouri State University to provide free consultation to school districts serving children who are Deaf and who use the oral method or have cochlear implants.
- Missouri School for the Deaf hired an audiologist in the fall of 2008 whose expertise includes children with cochlear implants and offers free consultation to school districts serving children who are Deaf on either serving them through American Sign Language or through the oral method.
- Offered “start up” grant monies for school districts to form special education cooperatives, so that they can pool their resources to better serve kids and we have specifically promoted the use of this option to create a Deaf Education Program in a cooperative or to share Deaf Educators.
- As a follow up to the Deaf Summit held in Missouri in April 2007, jointly sponsored by MSD and Central Institute for the Deaf (CID), we held a two-day Workshop/Summit in October. We brought in national facilitators and trainers and it was a very worthwhile meeting. Two subcommittees were formed as a result of the recommendations, and I am anticipating further recommendations from those subcommittees in the next month.
- We are working with the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and HOH to address the concerns about quality educational interpreters.
- We have agreed to fund scholarships for Deaf Educators to enroll in the master’s program at Missouri State University.
- We are contracting with MSU to develop, implement, and maintain, an on-line Community of Practice for Deaf Educators in Missouri. This on-line community of practice will include access to webinars and to “ask the expert” periods. This will be available for the 2009-10 school year.
- We are contracting with MSU to provide on-line coursework in the area of Deafness and Reading. Several sequential courses will be offered free of charge. These will be available during the 2009-10 school year.
- We are contracting with a certified Visual Phonics instructor to offer intense two-day regional workshops. We anticipate the first workshop being offered this summer.

- We have agreed to fund scholarships for educational interpreters to attend an intense four-week summer training program.
  - We are finalizing draft “fact sheets” to disseminate to the field regarding the education of children with cochlear implants, created by collaboration of the three oral schools and higher education folks.
  - Missouri Assistive Technology is working on a technical assistance document focusing on assistive technology for kids who are Deaf/HOH.
2. Psychologist Interns: Keep in mind that your stimulus monies can be used to pay for school psychologist interns who are working with children who are disabled. School psychologists are a great resource for school districts. They have a unique set of skills to assist districts with eligibility determinations, consultation, professional development, and parent contacts.
  3. Legislation and Budget: Right now, most of the legislation we are watching and concerned with is tied up in SB291. This bill is a large omnibus bill and as of yesterday it was sent back to committee in an attempt to strip \$100 million of its \$180 million cost. Our special education IDEA bill (regarding due process hearings and resolution sessions) has been moving along nicely but still we cannot say for sure it will pass. This was the bill we tried for three years to get passed and would bring our statute into alignment with IDEA. The allergy bill has passed and has an emergency clause; when the governor signs, it will go into effect immediately. It requires schools to have policies in place to address student allergies (HB922). We will keep you posted on legislation that passes through a SELS message. Regarding the budget, most of the department positions that were eliminated remain eliminated; additionally, the critical funds funding (aka Professional Development monies) has been cut to \$7 million (recall last year it was cut from \$20 million to \$15 million.....now it is down to \$7 million) with line item appropriations that fund each RPDC equally and create two NEW RPDCs.
  4. State-Wide Electronic IEP System: We are moving forward with the next step. We will be contracting with an individual to prepare a rough draft Request for Proposal; that RFP will contain the items that the State-Wide Electronic IEP stakeholder committee recommended. Once that draft is ready, we will have stakeholders provide review and input before then working with the state’s Office of Administration to prepare an RFP to hit the streets. The process is a long one, and I will keep you posted.

Thanks for your patience and as always thank you for all your hard work on behalf of our kids.