

VIII. Appendix D: Steering Committee Composition

Members of the Part B Steering Committee are identified in the following pages. In addition, a brief summary of each participant's position, background, affiliation with special education, etc., is provided.

Brian Billstein is the DeWitt-Lavaca Special Education Cooperative director of special education and the principal of DeWitt-Lavaca Special Education Cooperative Multi-District Classrooms. He has participated in the Texas School Improvement Initiative and the Advisory Committee for Juvenile Probation Department. Brian serves as Board Member for the Mid-Coast Family Services, Board President for the Child Study Clinic, Treasurer for the Tender Loving Care, Chairperson for the Community Resource Coordination Groups of Texas, and Regional Coordinator for the Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education (TCASE). He has membership affiliations with Phi Delta Kappa, Texas Association of School Boards (Associate Member), Council for Exceptional Children, American Association on Mental Retardation, American Council on Rural Special Education, and Texas Association for Alternative Education.

Cindy Boynton is a mother of a special needs child. She holds a masters degree in Special Education and taught in the Alamo Heights Independent School District (ISD) in the preschool program for children with disabilities (PPCD) for 1½ years. She is currently on the Texas Special Education Continuous Advisory Committee (CAC), the state advisory panel, and the site base committee for Alamo Heights ISD, representing the Special Education population.

Denise Brady is general counsel for the Texas Interagency Council on Early Childhood Intervention (ECI). From 1990-2000, she served as governmental affairs specialist on education issues for the ARC of Texas (formerly Association for Retarded Citizens/Texas). Denise is a registered lobbyist in Texas 1999-2000. She has provided training on special education issues and rights to thousands of parents and professionals over the years. Denise is a co-author of the parents' rights manual, "What a Good IDEA!", that was distributed statewide.

Mary S. Brown is the director of special education for the Texas Youth Commission. She has experience in programs serving special education and mainstream students in pre-school through secondary programs. Currently, she serves on committees at the state and national level addressing education.

Karen Cantrell is president of the TCASE and the executive director of special education for Northeast Independent School District (ISD). She has served as a stakeholder on proposed rules and has been past-president of the Council for Exceptional Children (San Antonio chapter) and Texas Educational Diagnostician's Association (Alamo Area Chapter). Karen also serves on the boards of the South Texas Children's Habilitation Center, Freedom Center, and United Way Allocations Panel.

Eve Cugini is the director of Family to Family Network, a grassroots parent organization, located in Houston. Family to Family Network is working to create communities where all

children belong, with a primary emphasis on education. Eve is a graduate of the Partners in Policymaking Program, a leadership development program sponsored by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities for parents of children with disabilities and self-advocates. Eve has served on a number of TEA stakeholder groups and is an active participant in her sons' school and district organizations. She is the mother of two sons, Nicky and Alex. Nicky's diagnosis of cerebral palsy put the Cugini family on a path of discovery. He is currently a successfully included 4th grader in the Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.

Dan Dickman and his wife, Susannah, live in El Paso with their three sons (two of whom have disabilities). Dan currently serves as the interim director for the Center for Students with Disabilities at El Paso Community College. He has worked with students with disabilities at the post secondary level for over 20 years.

Julian Encina is the director of Career and Technology for San Elizario ISD. He has fifteen years experience in education as a counselor prior to becoming director. Julian continues to work very closely with the district's special education department, especially with transition planning.

Phyllis Gandy is the director of School Improvement Support Services at the Region XI Education Service Center (ESC) in Fort Worth. Prior to working at the ESC, she was a director of special education and a special education counselor. Phyllis has been working with students with disabilities for over twenty years.

Willie Harris has worked for the State Parent Training and Information Center Project since 1997. Currently, her position covers the Region IV ESC and surrounding areas. She is a native Houstonian, and, lives in the Fort Bend County area, which is a suburb of Houston. Willie and Sammy, her husband, have two beautiful children: Ashley 18 and Bryan 16.

Sylvia R. Hatton is the executive director of Region I ESC located in south Texas. She is a former special education teacher and program supervisor. She has also trained special education teachers while an assistant professor at the university level. Her specialty was working with low incidence disabilities. She lives in McAllen with her husband and her 10-year-old granddaughter. Her daughter teaches in a special education resource class at the middle school level.

Marjie Haynes is the division director for Instruction at Windham School District, which provides adult correctional education for offenders who are incarcerated in Texas Department of Criminal Justice facilities. She has administrative responsibility for the development and implementation of the district's academic programs, vocational programs, and the counseling and testing components. Marjie has been employed by the district for eleven years, serving in her current position for the past five years. Prior to assuming her current duties, she served as an assessment specialist and the coordinator of special populations for the district. In addition to her correctional education experience, she has numerous years of experience in public school districts as a special education teacher and educational diagnostician. Preceding her employment by Windham School District, Marjie served as an educational specialist for a regional education service center.

Eddie Henderson is the Special Education Division Head at West Texas A&M University.

Connie Hughes lives with her family in Idalou, Texas. She is the mother of two children—Cody, 18, a senior in high school, and Jessica, 14, an eighth grader with cerebral palsy. She has taught special education children ages 0-3 years with early childhood education for the past 9 ½ years and serves on the state ECI Board of Directors.

Kathy Kennedy is the grants coordinator and special populations coordinator for the Texas State Technical College in Sweetwater. One of Kathy's duties involves working with counselors and representatives of state agencies to provide services to students with disabilities who are enrolled at the college.

Susan Maxwell has worked with the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities since 1995. She has served as a public policy specialist since 1999. She is a parent of two children, both of whom have received special education services to maximize their academic potential.

Janice Meyer is the co-director of Partners Resource Network.

Ann Overall works with the University Charter School and serves on the CAC.

Juanita Rodriquez is very involved in her community activities working with parents of children with difficult disabilities. She has previously served on many stakeholder groups. Her activities include informing parents of the rights and responsibilities throughout school districts. Juanita lives with her family in Brownsville. She is the mother of four children, including Joe, a 10-year-old with Downs Syndrome.

Linda Dulce Mora, Ed.D. is the principal of Chula Vista Academy of Fine Arts in Corpus Christi, Texas. In addition to being a principal, Linda has been a special education teacher and consultant. She has participated in writing the ExCet for SPH and has participated for many years in community groups/advocates geared to assisting individuals with disabilities.

Stephen Ryan is a special education teacher for Somerset ISD. Recently, he completed a master's degree in Educational Administration. During Stephen's ten-year tenure as a teacher, he twice received the district's Teacher-Of-The-Year award. He serves on the CAC.

Penny Seay has been involved with disability-related issues, including special education, for over 20 years. She was a special education teacher and administrator before earning a Ph.D. in special education from the University of Texas at Austin. Penny has been with the Texas University Affiliated Program since it was funded in 1989, and the director since 1992, and has participated on many TEA stakeholder groups. She lives in Austin, Texas, with her husband, Allen, and their three daughters: Emily (15), Eleanor (13), and Laurel (10).

Nanette Tidwell is a third grade teacher at Pleasant Grove Elementary School in Texarkana, Texas. In the past 21 years, Nanette has been a speech therapist, chapter teacher and a special education teacher. She received the TCASE Region 8 Teacher of the Year in 1998-1999 for her work with special education students in the classroom. She is the mother of two children, a freshman in college and a sophomore in high school.

Betty Walker is a full time mother of four children. Two of her children have special needs. Elliott has severe cerebral palsy and receives multiple services from his school district. Ashley has dysgraphia and attends a private school that has allowed her to have the modifications she needs to be successful at or above her grade level. Betty has served as a Trustee to Hockaday, a private girls' school, president of the Highland Park Special Education Parent's Group (PASE), and a member of TATP. Currently, she serves on the CAC.

Cheryl Washington is a superintendent of two public charter schools serving students with diverse learning styles and needs. Cheryl has served as a teacher (practitioner and administrator of students with special needs for 18 years, for the most part in alternative settings). She is a parent of a student with special needs and has developed many programs of acceleration for at-risk students. Cheryl has served on the CAC, a state-wide focus group with Region IV ESC, and several other local community and state-wide initiative groups to improve special education services in the State.

Norma J. Young is the manager of Administration and Compliance in the Special Education Department of Houston ISD. She has 34 years in education; 28 years devoted to providing quality educational experiences for students with disabilities and their families.

Agency Members

The following Texas Education Agency staff members served as sources of information and provided clarification to the Steering Committee:

Dan Arrigona
Pamela Baker
Marcia Breedlove
David Carrales
Kathy Clayton
Mary Cole
Sha Cowan
Tom Cowan

Carolyn Dietrich
John Fessenden
Karen Hattaway
Emi Johnson
Valerie Koy
Gene Lenz
Sandy Lowe
Laura Lucinda

Forrest Novy
Susan Rose
Cindy Savage
Nancy Smith
Debora Wright
Laura Taylor
Tong Zhang