

## Stakeholder Input

At the October 2016 meeting the Education and Employment Committee indicated a desire to develop a quantifiable and measurable definition of what is meant by stakeholder input to better address Activity 4.3.2<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, the Committee expressed a desire to define “Authentic, meaningful stakeholder input.” A proposed definition and specific practices to facilitate stakeholder input are below.

Authentic and meaningful stakeholder input is well-informed individuals, most impacted by policies and practices, having ample opportunities to be included in informational meetings throughout the entire process of proposed changes, and for the concerns be adequately addressed and recommendations be reasonably considered into final policy or practice decisions.

PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS = Individuals most impacted by policies and practices

Individuals most impacted by any policy or practice decision should be the primary stakeholders for input. Deference should follow the opinion and perspective of the individuals who will experience the most direct impact of decisions under consideration.

Agency practices to facilitate stakeholder input:

- 1) Include representatives of parents of children with disabilities in informational presentations regarding policy and practice developments. For example:
  - a. Include parents of students with disabilities in quarterly Special Education Administrator meetings;
  - b. Provide training sessions to stakeholders in collaborative sessions; and,
  - c. Develop workgroups or Ad Hoc Committees to review specific issues requiring more in-depth study and analysis.
- 2) Ensure opportunities for stakeholder input are early enough in the process to enable recommendations be considered into the final product.
- 3) Provide information that is:
  - a. Accurate and valid;
  - b. Complete – with summaries of national, statewide and LEA level data or policy perspectives;
  - c. Consistently use terms and labels;
  - d. Timely, to allow stakeholders adequate time to process the information prior to making decisions regarding policy or practices changes; and,
  - e. Publicly available for any interested stakeholder to access and offer perspectives.
- 4) Request stakeholder input that is:
  - a. Specific to the actual proposed change to policy or practice being considered; not merely input on process for making the change or how to implement the change;
  - b. Timely and allows recommendations to alter the proposed changes prior to final adoption; and,
  - c. Presented simultaneously to multiple stakeholder groups for discussion of differences in perspectives be heard, understood and, where possible, for compromises to be reached.

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<sup>1</sup> Activity 4.3.2 Advocate for increased meaningful opportunities for stakeholder input; improved practices to facilitate stakeholder input and consideration of stakeholder recommendations.

Practices for stakeholders to be well-Informed representatives:

- 1) Participate in learning opportunities related to policies and practices driving the service delivery system.
- 2) Gather and research information to ensure adequate understanding of the issues, best practices, outcomes, different models and/or perspectives, and potential impact of various options.
  - a. Request information necessary to understand the issues.
- 3) Evaluate request for input into policy and practices and whether adequate information was provided to allow a position on the issue to be formulated.
  - a. Request more time to understand an issue if information provided was not timely, accurate or complete.
- 4) Understand recommendations to change proposed policies or practices are allowable
- 5) Identify resources to assist in researching and analyzing information, understanding historical perspectives and appreciating the interplay across various regulations and policies.
- 6) Take a position on issues.
  - a. When necessary, be comfortable with disagreeing with Agency or other stakeholders and able to express difference in a respectful, clear and assertive manner.