

Missouri Education News
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The State of Autism in Missouri

The Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism was appointed by President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons in 2007 and chaired by Senator Scott T. Rupp to address the growing concerns about Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in our state. The goal of the Blue Ribbon Panel was to ensure that people with ASD are included in their communities and receive appropriate, timely, and necessary services throughout the lifespan and to make recommendations to further those goals.

The Blue Ribbon Panel conducted hearings in Jefferson City, Cape Girardeau, Springfield, St. Louis, and Kansas City to listen to testimony from experts and members of the public. Parents, individuals with ASD, healthcare providers, educators, social service professionals, state and regulatory agencies, and others all contributed their time and expertise to the Blue Ribbon Panel through testimony at the hearings and by submitting written testimony. Their knowledge and assistance was essential in assessing current gaps and systemic impediments in services and identifying priorities for future actions to improve the system of care for individuals with ASD.

Autism Spectrum Disorders

Autism is a complex neurobiological brain disorder that presents varying degrees of impairment in communication skills, social interactions, and restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior, among other behavioral and physiological symptoms. Although symptoms can sometimes be recognizable at 18 months or even earlier, many individuals are not diagnosed with autism until a much later age.

Early identification can lead to early treatment, which has proven most effective. Appropriate diagnosis, intervention, and treatment supported by autism-specific research, teaching, and training are critical to maximize the potential for Missouri individuals with ASD.

Autism is one of a spectrum of related disorders that carry names such as Asperger's Syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorder - NOS, Rett's Syndrome, and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder. The current conventional custom is to label this array of disorders as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). In addition to the ASD behavioral diagnosis, physicians have found more than 30 genetic disorders that can be associated with ASDs. Currently, 15% of children diagnosed behaviorally with an ASD can also be diagnosed with a specific genetic disorder. Common genetic disorders that are commonly associated with autism include Fragile X Syndrome and Tuberous Sclerosis.

Many people who testified view the data as indicating an epidemic of ASD. While there is debate about how much of the increase results from increased recognition versus increased prevalence, there is no disagreement that there are significantly larger numbers of people who need services to treat and cope with ASD. While Missouri lacks an adequate database for information about people with ASD in this state, no indicators suggest that the rates of incidence are statistically different from national data. Such estimates indicate that 1 in every 150 children across all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds is diagnosed with ASD. ASD is more prevalent in males where approximately 1 in 90 is diagnosed.

Missouri Senate's final report (<http://www.senate.mo.gov/autism/>) of the **Blue Ribbon Panel on Autism:**

<http://www.senate.mo.gov/autism/autism2007.pdf>

“Distinction in Performance”

Nearly 300 Missouri school districts (<http://dese.mo.gov/news/2007/distinction.htm#Distinction12>) have earned the state's prestigious “Distinction in Performance” award for academic progress and

achievement during the last school year (2006-07), state education officials announced today.

A total of 294 school districts qualified for the annual recognition, which is determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Of this year's recipients, 247 are K-12 districts; 47 are K-8 districts. Last year, 235 districts qualified for the award.

The Distinction in Performance award is based on the 14 academic performance standards that are now used in the accreditation of all public school districts. K-8 school districts are covered by a portion of these standards. The standards are based on scores from the state-mandated MAP tests, graduation rate, attendance, ACT scores, and other indicators.

To qualify for the award this year, K-8 districts had to meet 6 of 7 performance standards, including all of those based on the results of MAP tests. K-12 districts had to meet 13 out of 14 standards, including all of the MAP-based measures.

Under the state's accreditation process, known as the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP), each school district is evaluated at least once every five years. The Distinction in Performance award is based on the same criteria used in the accreditation process, but it provides an annual confirmation and recognition of a district's consistent performance.

How to Manage Behaviors and Improve Test Scores through Brain Science - MNEA Good Teaching Conference

Saturday, March 8, 2008

Adams Point Conference Center

Just off I-70 in Blue Springs, MO

In the world of high stakes testing and increased negative behaviors, teachers and administrators struggle to find strategies that are effective with all underperforming students. This session is designed to train teachers and administrators how to implement school-wide brain-based strategies to improve behavioral and academic outcomes of their students.

- Learn a discipline model that works even with the chronic offender.
- Practice new techniques so you can use them Monday morning.
- Understand the science behind brain-based strategies.
- Learn an instructional method proven to improve standardized-test scores.

- Network with teachers from other school districts.

About the Presenter

Horatio Sanchez did his graduate work at Duke University. His diverse education and background has helped him to merge research, science and practice. His book, *A Mentor's Guide to Promoting Resiliency*, provides a revolutionary framework for understanding childhood development, disorders and treatment.

Sanchez uses his training as an educator and clinician to educate and treat children with severe emotional disorders. His approach is not only based on sound scientific research, but has been the foundations of his award-winning mental health and education programs.

Register on-line:

<http://www.register123.com/event/profile/form/index.cfm?PKformID=0x4847488a51>