

R E P O R T

ad hoc TASK FORCE ON MR/DD

MICHAEL COSTANTINO, Chairperson - Lake MR/DD, NEOEA

LINDA BEHNKE - OEA Executive Committee, NEOEA

SUE BOUR - Stark MR/DD, ECEOA

SANDY DOVE - Auglaize MR/DD, WOEAA

BEN GERBER - Labor Relations Consultant

BECKY HUDDLE - Labor Relations Consultant

CHUCK LEBERKNIGHT - Labor Relations Consultant

TERRY LEE - Labor Relations Consultant

RUSS O'BRIEN - Portage MR/DD, NEOEA

BILL PEARSOL - Labor Relations Consultant

JENE WILSON - Cuyahoga MR/DD, NEOEA

MIKE BILLIRAKIS, Liaison - OEA Vice-President

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## CHARGE

That the ad hoc Task Force study all aspects of employee members' under County Boards of MR/DD concerns, including but not limited to:

1. Programming needs of MR/DD members
2. OEA staff and governance training
3. Research and information needs
4. Communications to MR/DD membership
5. MR/DD governance representation

## INTRODUCTION

The ad hoc Task Force on MR/DD has met twice for a total of four meetings since its creation. The Task Force published a Preliminary Report and Mission Statement after meeting on November 16 and 17, 1990. On February 1 and 2, 1991, the Task Force met to discuss specific issues with OEA management staff Jerry Rampelt.

It is very apparent that even though MR/DD members represent a small percentage of the OEA membership, MR/DD locals generate an inordinate amount of work for the assigned staff. Moreover, the amount of litigation and money spent on MR/DD locals greatly exceeds their relative size within the organization. In short, there is no economy of scale.

Staff and local leaders have been "boxing shadows" for years because of lack of information. It also should be stated that the Task Force recognizes that the state/county structure for MR/DD's is constantly in flux with regard to certification, funding, and related legislation. Much of the Task Force focus

was upon identifying those areas where information is lacking and the need to provide that information to staff and leadership so that OEA may more effectively and efficiently service those MR/DD locals.

Although there may be supplemental recommendations from this Task Force, the recommendations enumerated herein are intended to be in priority order. Since MR/DD board and superintendent organizations are in direct competition with the OEA on professional and political issues and provide more and better advocacy information, we believe that in order to avoid further backsliding, it is necessary that these recommendations be initiated without further delay.

The Task Force reached complete consensus on all of the recommendations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN STAFF/LEADERSHIP TRAINING

It cannot be emphasized enough that staff training is crucial. When creating the training model, we believe it is important to also include MR/DD leaders in the process. It is essential that local MR/DD presidents have the same opportunity to the plethora of information to ensure their ability to trouble-shoot problems at their work sites and work cohesively with OEA staff.

Because of the anticipation of staff movement due to reorganization and realignment, the staff training should be in place and ready to implement by August 31, 1991. The staff that will be expected to have an MR/DD local assignment commencing September 1, 1991, shall be trained as well as any internal staff with assignments related to potential MR/DD problems.

One of the important components of staff training which can be initiated immediately is an MR/DD handbook. Not only is this essential for new staff with

an MR/DD local, but it would be very beneficial for current staff to have as a reference. Presently, there is no guide for professional staff to adequately obtain information on such items as: the current MR/DD governmental structure, current certification rules for all MR/DD employees, the funding structure and sources, how Civil Service law differs from O.R.C. Title 33, or what the various interacting organizations are.

Incorporated in the training consideration must be a plan to include an MR/DD module for the Leadership Academy. Too often, the available programs have little, if any, relevance to the MR/DD participants. If the OEA wishes the academy participants to have information which can be transferred to the local level, it must make available information that is useful. It is recommended that some special form of MR/DD module be available for the 1991 academy participants.

## 2. DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH MR/DD RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

The history of the OEA's working relationships with MR/DD related organizations is, at best, very poor. The OEA must not only identify the state organizations which are "players" in the political structure, but must also determine what these organizations do and who the leaders are.

Along with the several major organizations which impact MR/DD, OEA should then communicate that information to staff and MR/DD leaders so that some impact can be made at the local level. This information can be included in the new handbook and updated when necessary.

There should also be an effort made to get all staff and local leaders on those respective mailing lists of the publications of those related organizations.

### 3. EXPAND MR/DD RELATED PUBLICATIONS

In addition to greater attention to MR/DD issues in Ohio Schools, there must be a special publication or quarterly bulletin which would deal with only MR/DD related issues. Although these should be geared toward our 2,000 OEA members, the publications could be sent to all of the MR/DD statewide employees.

Here, OEA has an opportunity to do something slick and polished that can compete professionally with the various other journals MR/DD employees receive. This would greatly enhance our ability to sell OEA to those 10,000 non-organized employees statewide.

### 4. INCREASE ORGANIZING EFFORTS

With only 2,000 members of the 12,000 MR/DD employees statewide, this organization has not fully tapped the membership potential county programs afford to it. For the most part, the county MR/DD programs that are not represented by OEA (62) are not organized by an competing union association. Since this provides us with an opportunity for membership growth, without the expense of a representational take-over campaign, the time is ripe for our association to escalate its organizational efforts.

There is also every reason to believe that each county program will continue to grow. The state institutions represented by the State Council of Professional Educators (S.C.O.P.E.) are being emptied and closed. The individuals are being "deinstitutionalized" and moved into the county MR/DD programs.

In addition, a recent piece of legislation has just expanded the definition of Developmental Disabilities. More "disabled" people will be eligible for our programs, necessitating more jobs. There is a continuing effort by Case Management departments to seek out and find those unknown eligible individuals presently residing in each county.

All of the aforementioned will offset any mainstreaming from county programs to the public schools. All in all, county boards of MR/DD are growing, and OEA should be on the threshold of that growth.

#### 5. ESTABLISH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MR/DD

There currently has been little, if any, professional workshops or seminars sponsored by OEA that have application to the general MR/DD employee. By offering opportunity for professional growth to those employed in the MR/DD field, it not only enhances the "professional" aspect of this association, but also provides for us an effective organizing tool.

The OEA has an opportunity to demonstrate that it is on the forefront of the MR/DD profession in this state and that education is important for everyone.

#### 6. ESTABLISH CLEAR STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

Because the State of Ohio constantly changes its structure regarding the MR/DD programs, it is essential that clear staff assignments be made. Within the last month, a new Ohio Department of MR/DD director has been named and new certification standards have had their final proposal hearings.

The Task Force recommends that not only must monitoring of these issues occur, but that monitoring of legislative issues also occur. Many legislative bills are not what they appear to be with respect to MR/DD, or the real proposal is attached to an innocuous bill. Only by sufficient staff training and updated information can any staff effectively monitor these issues, not to mention the various licensure boards and accreditation agencies.

## 7. RESEARCH STRUCTURAL CHANGE

The Task Force recommends that the appropriate OEA personnel do an investigation to determine the desirability and feasibility of creating a system whereby each county MR/DD board is its own independent governmental entity. This would include freedom from the county commissioners, auditor, and probate judge. It suggests that board members be elected (they are now appointed) and that there be a uniform accounting system (there is not one in place).

Since this item has broad political as well as legal questions, the Task Force feels that more in depth research needs to occur.

## 8. CONTINUITY OF THE MR/DD TASK FORCE

It is our consensus that the Task Force continue to exist in its present form for one more year. Due to the recent changes in the Department of MR/DD, certification, and the law, it is anticipated that it may be necessary to make further recommendations to OEA.

Moreover, because of the immediate priority of these recommendations, topics such as MR/DD governance representation, policy, or national state structure comparisons have not been discussed. Therefore, in order to accommodate those very important areas, it is recommended that the MR/DD Task Force continue and meet as required for the implementation or modification of this report at the call of the chair. Supplemental reports would then follow.

[The expectation is one more meeting in 1991 with no more than three in the 1991-92 school year.]

MC/lg