



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP

INFORMATION and APPLICATION PACKAGE

2008-2009

The **District of Columbia Association for Special Education** (DCASE) is comprised of nonpublic special education and charter schools that serve students with disabilities from the District of Columbia. As a non-profit alliance, DCASE members are committed to providing **technical assistance, on-site training, and advocacy** to expand and improve services in a variety of public school and community settings.

Under DCASE Bylaws, the Board of Directors may extend Affiliate Membership to individuals or organizations engaged in activities supporting the education of youth, if those activities do not conflict with the mission of DCASE. Affiliate Members are not eligible to vote.

Affiliate Membership may be offered, but is not limited, to:

- Human service organizations, such as social service agencies, or health and mental health clinics that engage in practices consistent with the mission of DCASE;
- Professional firms or individual practitioners, such as physicians, psychologists, educational diagnosticians, advocates, attorneys, or accountants, that engage in activities consistent with the mission of DCASE; and
- Businesses and vendors that support the education of youth and engage in activities consistent with the mission of DCASE.



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About DCASE

DCASE members are dedicated to improving the educational opportunities for all District of Columbia students with disabilities, wherever their needs are best served. Improving special education in every school—DCPS, nonpublic and charter—will improve the effectiveness and success of all schools, benefiting all students. DCASE members are inspired by the motto...***a rising tide lifts all boats.***

The DCASE mission is—

- To serve as a conduit for information to DCASE members;
- To advocate for students served by members in policy discussions with the District of Columbia Public Schools, the State Superintendent, the State Board of Education, the Mayor and federal agencies, and Congress;
- To provide technical assistance and professional development to members and their employees;
- To promote collaboration and cooperation among members;
- To engage in partnerships with parents and organizations concerned with the needs of students and families;
- To promote efforts to provide services to students with disabilities who are unserved and underserved;
- To support measures to provide adequate public funding for special education and related services in both public and nonpublic programs.

DCASE Priorities for 2008-2009 School Year

DCASE will use membership dues, develop consulting relationships, and solicit other funding that will allow members to share their expertise and experience with District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), charter schools, and public agencies.

DCASE Statement of Ethical Practices for Affiliate Members

Acceptance of and adherence to the DCASE Statement of Ethical Practices is required of all voting and affiliate members. Failure to adhere to any portion of the DCASE Statement of Ethical Practices may be sufficient reason for termination of membership.



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DCASE PRIORITIES 2008-2009 School Year

- **Advocate for policies that improve special education services in public and nonpublic schools.**

DCASE will monitor policies that affect children with special needs and advocate for changes in regulations administered by DCPS and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

- **Assist in the transition of students from nonpublic to public schools and postsecondary options.**

DCASE will develop transition plans to ensure the successful return of students to neighborhood schools or the pursuit of opportunities such as college, job training or job placement.

- **Decrease the number of students receiving nonpublic services far from their District neighborhood.**

DCASE will work with OSSE and DCPS administrators to co-locate nonpublic special education programs within public school buildings.

- **Strengthen staff development for DCPS and charter school employees.**

DCASE will share expertise, best practices, instructional strategies, and innovative curricula with all categories of school staff.

- **Support the timely delivery of critical services to children and youth with special needs.**

DCASE will establish and maintain a Resource Bank of crucial programs and services that it can provide to DCPS and OSSE, including assessments, dropout prevention, vocational education, and wrap-around services.

To learn more, please contact DCASE.

711-A Edgewood Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20017 | 202-615-3070 | info@dcase.org | www.dcase.org



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DCASE at WORK, 2007-08

In our first year of operation, the **District of Columbia Association for Special Education:**

Established statements on Ethical Practices to which DCASE members are committed, Equitable Principles for Special Education Rate-Setting, and Principles of Co-location; all these can be seen on the DCASE website. These documents have been shared with administrators in OSSE (Office of the State Superintendent for Education) and DCPS. The purpose is to clearly define the roles and responsibilities for future partnership possibilities and to avoid the pitfalls that have plagued such partnerships in the past.

Worked closely on the new Special Education Data System being implemented by OSSE. Our goal is to ensure that all members would be able to use the system with the minimal amount of disruption to every day operations and maximum support during implementation.

Met with key officials in DCPS and in the Office of the Chancellor, and established a regular meeting with OSSE staff and the Deputy Chancellor for Special Education. We've met with Victor Reinoso, Deputy Mayor for Education, as well as others involved in Mayor Fenty's educational reform efforts. In these meetings we have been able to advance for discussion the timely issues that affect our members. These issues have included: policy and procedures, monitoring, rate setting and placement, to name but a few.

Arranged for special guests such as Dr. Richard Nyankori, Special Assistant to Chancellor Michelle Rhee, to attend DCASE membership meetings and foster dialogue between DCASE member schools and key public leaders and education officials. These meetings have resulted in our members having the most current information on the changes within DCPS and the progress of the transition to OSSE of key responsibilities concerning our member schools. Our special guest for our next meeting will be Dr. Phyllis Harris, DCPS Deputy Chancellor for Special Education.

Organized and hosted a series of Focus Groups with DCASE member schools, OSSE, and DCPS to explore topics related to revising policy, such as the delivery of related services, IEP development, and transition. These sessions were open to any other interested parties to join in. The discussions focused on best practices and increased understanding of the way in which our member schools serve students and their families.

Opened discussions with DCPS and other child-serving agencies to identify ways to establish co-located special education programs and other types of collaborations with members in DC. Discussions continue at regularly scheduled meetings with OSSE and DCPS administrators.

Testified before the DC Council on the proposed legislation to amend the *Placement of Students with Disabilities in Nonpublic Schools Amendment Act of 2006*. While DCASE supports the prohibition against aversive interventions as outlined in the legislation, we commented on the need to broaden the scope of the legislation to include all entities that serve students with special needs, not just the nonpublic, as well as advocated that any oversight involving control and sanction must include due process for the entity controlled.

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DCASE STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRACTICES for Affiliate Members

Affiliate Member Responsibilities

Affiliate members shall follow accepted patterns of conduct for any profession in which they are engaged. In addition to commitments required by professional codes, specific commitments to students, families, funding agencies and other DCASE members shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1.** Affiliate members may not guarantee results or make false claims;
- 2.** Affiliate members will take every reasonable precaution to protect the physical and mental well being of any students served or represented by the Affiliate member and to use all feasible resources to help promote students' improvement and growth;
- 3.** Affiliate members shall have policies and procedures that guarantee confidentiality of all students and their families;
- 4.** Affiliate members shall not exploit students by accepting them for services from which they cannot reasonably be expected to benefit or by continuing services unnecessarily;
- 5.** Where applicable, affiliate members shall deliver special education and related services in accordance with each student's IEP;
- 6.** Affiliate members shall guard against conflicts of interests and shall neither accept nor give gifts, fees or other forms of gratuity for referrals;
- 7.** Affiliate members shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation or any other basis prohibited by law;
- 8.** Affiliate members shall not provide false, misleading, or incomplete information to a funding agency;
- 9.** Affiliate members shall respond to requests by funding agencies for information necessary to receive reimbursement from federal sources, where applicable;
- 10.** Affiliate members shall support the philosophy, organization and function of DCASE and its policies;

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**DCASE STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRACTICES
for Affiliate Members (cont'd.)**

- 11.** Affiliate members shall not share with non-members confidential information or classified materials from the DCASE office or Executive Committee, or from an individual acting within his/her capacity as a member of DCASE, without prior written approval from DCASE;
- 12.** Affiliate members shall maintain helpful and cooperative relationships with other member organizations;
- 13.** Affiliate members shall respond to requests for information from DCASE in a timely manner;
- 14.** Affiliate members shall share expertise and materials and welcome professional visitations;
- 15.** Affiliate members shall agree to abide by the **PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING REPORTS AND COMPLAINTS**, attached as **Appendix A**.

Affiliate members shall strive to uphold these ethical practices, be available to DCASE to work with other members in meeting these practices, and provide the best possible environment for students. Any act that is in violation of the spirit and purposes of these ethical practices shall be considered to be unethical.

I certify that the applicant adheres to this statement of ethical practices and accepts this code as the basis for Affiliate membership in DCASE.

Name of Applicant: _____

Name of Contact: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____



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APPENDIX A

DCASE STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRACTICES

PROCEDURES for RESOLVING REPORTS and COMPLAINTS

- All members will sign a DCASE Statement of Ethical Practices as a basis for voting or affiliate membership and shall sign annually for continuation of membership.
- If a member believes that another member has violated part of the Statement, he/she will write to the President of the Board and state the problem and the member involved. The President will consider complaints by members only.
- All formal complaints and subsequent inquiries will be confidential.
- The President will appoint a member of the Executive Committee to investigate the complaint, talk with each member involved and issue a recommendation or report to the Executive Committee.
- The Executive Committee may consider the following options: a dismissal of the complaint, or referral to the full Board of Directors for further action. The full Board of Directors may consider the following options: a dismissal of the complaint, mediation between the parties involved, a temporary dismissal of the member for a specific period of time (member may petition to return), or termination of the membership.
- Any member of the Executive Committee or Board of Directors shall recuse himself or herself if he or she works for, consults with, or is the parent or guardian of a student who attends, receives services from, or is represented by, the parties involved.
- The Board of Directors will issue a formal decision to the membership only if the outcome of the complaint is suspension or termination.



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AFFILIATE

APPLICATION for MEMBERSHIP

Thank you for your interest in becoming an Affiliate Member of the **District of Columbia Association for Special Education**. Please return your completed application with all required attachments, including the signed *Statement of Ethical Practices for Affiliate Members*, to:

Georgia Vergos, DCASE Membership Chair, 711-A Edgewood Street NE, Washington, DC 20017

Affiliate Membership dues are \$500 for the 2008-09 school year. You will receive a dues invoice following review and approval of your application.

APPLICANT INFORMATION		
We are (I am) a/an:		
Name of Applicant:		
Contact Name:		
Street Address:		
City:	State & Zip:	Phone:
Email:	Website:	
PLEASE ATTACH		
<input type="checkbox"/> Signed copy of DCASE STATEMENT of ETHICAL PRACTICES FOR AFFILIATE MEMBERS <input type="checkbox"/> References from two (2) DCASE voting members <input type="checkbox"/> Information on current licensing, if required for your profession <input type="checkbox"/> List of memberships in other professional organizations, if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Description of recent activities that reflect a commitment to the DCASE mission <input type="checkbox"/> Description of program/service for DCASE directory (Max: 250 words, exclusive of contact information)		
SIGNATURE		
I hereby certify that all information provided herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and authorize the verification of all information provided.		
Name of Applicant:		
Name of Contact:		
Signature:	Date:	