



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

2009-2010 MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION and APPLICATION PACKAGE

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.

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 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.***



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

CONTENTS

DCASE at Work, 2007-09

Highlights of the first two years of DCASE operation.

DCASE PRIORITIES, 2009-10 School Year

DCASE Bylaws in Brief

Any nonpublic special education or charter school that supports the mission of DCASE may apply for voting membership. Membership is conferred by a majority vote of the DCASE Board of Directors. As part of the application process, additional information may be requested.

DCASE Statement of Ethical Practices

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

Dues and Payment Schedule

Dues are based on number of District of Columbia students and are payable in two installments.

Application For Voting Membership

The application, along with the signed DCASE Statement of Ethical Practices, should be completed and returned to:

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



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

DCASE at WORK, 2007-09

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

Worked to improve special education for all DC students with special needs –

Entered into a substantial multi-year contract with District of Columbia Public Schools. The **DCASE/ Blackman-Jones Assessment Project** is ending the wait for mandated assessments for hundreds of DC special education students by implementing and completing backlogged assessments, empowering member schools to do their own assessments, and helping clean up student data long known to be inaccurate. DCASE created a custom database and a monitoring system to closely track assessment progress and timelines, and established a dedicated project office in space provided by one of our member schools. Significant progress has already been achieved in the short time since inception of the project, and a solid model is now in place upon which future relationships can be built. In addition, the project has contributed to DCASE's growing visibility in the DC education and special education communities, and specifically in connection with Blackman-Jones.

Project Status, as of December 4, 2009

In CY 2009:

- 13 DCASE member schools (over 60%) were actively participating in the Assessment Project
- a total of 245 assessments were completed, including 32 in the first week of December alone
- 162 data reconciliations were completed

In addition:

- DCASE now holds a weekly meeting with DCPS staff responsible for assessments and data, increasing collaboration to clean up critical data
- the Assessment Project's Director has been given administrative status access to the Assessments Quickbase database, allowing DCASE to input timely corrected data and solving concerns about up-to-date data.

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.

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.

- more -



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

DCASE at WORK, 2007-09 (cont'd)

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.

Began planning our first regional Conference – **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Forum: Working Toward a Long Term Collaboration**, scheduled for **March 12, 2010** at The University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law. Richard Nyankori, DCPS Deputy Chancellor for Special Education, and Tamera Lewis, OSSE Assistant Superintendent for Special Education, are scheduled to participate. This conference will be the start of a series of meetings with pertinent stakeholders to discuss this “hot” topic in a more collaborative and informational manner and setting, advancing DCASE’s efforts to improve educational services and access for DC’s students with special needs.

Was selected to serve on the State Advisory Panel, the Citywide Transition Group, and the Interagency Coordinating Council. Participating in these groups is further enabling DCASE to work toward ensuring that the needs of the students we serve are being heard.

Worked with public and school officials and related organizations –

Fostered a good working relationship with both DCPS’s Office of Special Education (OSE) and **the new Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)**, resulting in ongoing open communication and a productive participatory role for DCASE. We attend monthly OSSE and DCPS meetings and have contributed input on critical topics, including: monitoring, rate setting, placement in nonpublic settings, and use of EasyIEP. Meetings with key officials have also included the Deputy Chancellor for Special Education; Victor Reinoso, Deputy Mayor for Education; and 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 and the District students they serve.

Gained recognition by DCPS and OSSE as a trustworthy and knowledgeable first contact with respect to issues, responses, and improved communication with all non-public special education schools.

Worked with and on behalf of members –

Arranged for special guests such as Dr. Richard Nyankori, Deputy Chancellor for Special Education, to

- more -



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

DCASE at WORK, 2007-09 (cont'd)

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 the District students our member schools serve.

Testified before the OSSE on the proposed changes to new regulations for nonpublic schools. The regulations outline: a new process and requirements for obtaining and renewing Certificates of Approval; future monitoring and oversight responsibilities; and the expanded role of the new state entity.

Represented the questions and concerns of members with respect to emerging issues and proposed regulations to ensure they are well informed and able to serve their District students.

Worked to build and improve the DCASE organization –

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.

To learn more, please contact DCASE.

[UPDATE December 2009]



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

The DCASE/BLACKMAN-JONES ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Soon after its inception in June 2007, DCASE (*District of Columbia Association for Special Education*) launched an effort to address directly one of the central issues in the Blackman-Jones Consent Decree—the backlog of assessments resulting in or from due process complaints. Many of the students involved in these complaints were placed in DCASE member schools without appropriate and/or updated assessment information, making it very difficult to serve these students.

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) agreed to contract with DCASE to reduce these backlogged assessments, empower member schools to do their own assessments, and help clean up student data long known to be inaccurate. DCASE built a database and created a monitoring system to closely track assessment progress and timelines. It is an enormous project, and we are proud to be making significant progress in a very collegial way with DCPS.

Getting Assessments Done

Under the project, **our member schools have the autonomy** to assess students who have been identified by the IEP team as needing one or more assessments. If schools have internal capacity, they perform these assessments themselves. If not, they can tap into the DCASE Qualified Provider Network (QPN) for **highly qualified providers** to do the assessments for them. DCASE works to ensure all assessments are then reimbursed by DCPS through the Assessment Project.

Important Benefits

The Assessment Project offers real cost savings. Any provider participating in the Project—school-based or QPN—has agreed to abide by the DCPS Chancellor rate schedule. These rates are fair market rates that “cap” any assessment service to an appropriate maximum, making it more cost-effective for any school to provide much-needed assessments in an economical, but thorough, manner.

Addressing Students’ Needs

Ultimately, the Assessment Project enables DCASE and our members to offer a better option to **meet our students’ needs: timely, well-done assessments** that contribute to students’ overall well being and success in the school environment.

For More Information...

or to ask questions about the DCASE/Blackman-Jones Assessment Project or our Qualified Provider Network (QPN), please contact:

Laura Loessner, LICSW
Project Director

- **240-687-1335**
- **lloessner@dcase.org**
- **Fax: 866-688-2641**



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

DCASE PRIORITIES 2009-2010 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.



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

DCASE BYLAWS IN BRIEF

Membership

- Both nonpublic and public charter schools eligible for voting membership
- Members must sign Statement of Ethical Practices
- Board of Directors will approve applications for membership
- Annual dues are based on number of DC students and are paid in two installments. \$45 per student; minimum: \$250; maximum: \$3500
- Affiliate (non-voting) members may be approved by Board. For further information about Affiliate Membership, please email info@dcase.com.

Meetings of Members

- Schedule to be set at end of one school year for next year school year
- Minimum of three membership meetings
- Members elect 12 member Board of Directors

Board of Directors

- Two groups of size: representatives from member organizations and at-large directors
- At-large directors to come from broader special community
- Purpose of at-large directors' participation is to bring outside views and provide validation of association goals

Officers

- President, Vice President Secretary and Treasurer
- Officers elected by Board from among members of the Board
- Standing Committee chairs are part of Executive Committee

Committees

- Standing Committees are Finance, Nominations, Best Practices and Technical Assistance, Membership
- Committees may have other representatives who are not on the Board, and even individuals not affiliated with members if the President chooses
- President establishes Special Committees as needed



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

DCASE STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRACTICES

Section 1: Member Responsibilities to Students and their Families

Members shall follow accepted patterns of professional conduct in relations with the students that they serve and shall comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and implementing regulations. Specific commitments to students and families shall include but not be limited to the following:

- 1.** Members may not guarantee results or make false claims;
- 2.** Members will take every reasonable precaution to protect the physical and mental well-being of the students served and to use all feasible resources to help promote students' improvement and growth;
- 3.** Members shall maintain the school or program's premises and equipment in safe and clean condition;
- 4.** Members shall have policies and procedures that guarantee confidentiality of all students and their families;
- 5.** Members shall not exploit students by accepting them for special education or related services from which they cannot reasonably be expected to benefit or by continuing special education or related services unnecessarily;
- 6.** Members shall deliver special education and related services in accordance with each student's IEP;
- 7.** Members shall honor their financial commitments to all parties involved with the school or program;
- 8.** Members shall strive to improve their staffs' skill in the education of students and make available to the students, to those closely associated with them, and to colleagues, the benefits of the staff's professional expertise;
- 9.** Members shall not require any fees by a parent as a prerequisite for the acceptance of the student for placement in the school or program;
- 10.** Members shall guard against conflicts of interests and shall neither accept nor give gifts, fees, or other forms of gratuity for referrals;
- 11.** Members shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation or any other basis prohibited by law;
- 12.** Members shall uphold and maintain in all possible ways the highest professional standards.



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

DCASE STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRACTICES (cont'd)

Section 2: Member Responsibilities to Funding Agencies

In order to facilitate relationships that foster the growth of students, members shall work toward cooperative and collaborative relationships with all funding agencies. This shall include but not be limited to the following:

- 1.** Members shall provide information requested in an application for a Certificate of Approval or renewal of a Certificate of Approval;
- 2.** Members shall not provide false, misleading, or incomplete information to a funding agency;
- 3.** Members shall maintain accurate course descriptions, transcripts, and attendance records;
- 4.** Members shall encourage participation in alternative dispute resolution forums to resolve billing issues with funding agencies;
- 5.** Members shall notify the funding agency whenever any credible information is received regarding a student that would change the obligations of the funding agency (such as a change in status as a ward or a change of residency to a location outside the District); parents and guardians shall be notified at the beginning of each school year that such information will be forwarded to the funding agency;
- 6.** Members shall send copies of documents from any IEP meeting to the funding agency when the agency has not been in attendance;
- 7.** Members shall make students available to representatives of funding agencies for assessments and evaluations, at appropriate times;
- 8.** Members shall respond to requests by funding agencies for information necessary to receive reimbursement from federal sources.



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

DCASE STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRACTICES (cont'd)

Section 3: Member Responsibilities to DCASE

1. Members shall support the philosophy, organization and function of DCASE and its policies;
2. 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;
3. Members shall maintain helpful and cooperative relationships with other member organizations;
4. Members shall respond to requests for information from DCASE in a timely manner;
5. Members shall honor all financial commitments;
6. Members shall advocate for the education of the public regarding issues, best practices, and trends in special education;
7. Members shall share expertise and materials and welcome professional visitations;
8. Members shall agree to abide by the **PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING REPORTS AND COMPLAINTS**, attached as **Appendix A**.

Members shall strive to uphold these ethical practices, assist colleagues in upholding these ethics, be available to DCASE to work with other member schools or programs in meeting these practices, and provide the best possible environment for students. Any act that is in violation of the spirit and purposes of this statement of ethical practices shall be considered to be unethical.

I certify that the below named school or program adheres to this statement of ethical practices and accepts this code as the basis for membership in DCASE.

Name of School or Program: _____

CEO/Director: _____

Date: _____



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

DCASE STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRACTICES (cont'd)

In consideration of the commitments above, DCASE, its officers, employees and agents make the following commitments to Members:

- 1.** To serve as a vigorous and effective voice for the community of nonpublic and special education charter schools;
- 2.** To provide members with timely and relevant information and services;
- 3.** To make every effort to minimize response time to a member's request for information or advice;
- 4.** To maintain financial stability, use resources efficiently, and eliminate duplication;
- 5.** To maximize non-dues revenue through collaborative efforts with funding agencies, foundations, and universities;
- 6.** To develop and maintain secure systems to ensure the confidentiality of all information received from members and to restrict the disclosure of any information which would identify a member or representative unless permission is obtained from the member or member representative prior to disclosure;
- 7.** To be mindful of potential or perceived conflicts of interest;
- 8.** To actively seek members' views and take action based on feedback;
- 9.** To hire staff and consultants who have integrity, creativity, initiative, respect, and judgment;
- 10.** To provide staff and consultants with training regarding the mission of DCASE and the members' programs.

DCASE President: _____

Date: _____

Approved by DCASE Board – August 2007



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

DCASE STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRACTICES APPENDIX A

PROCEDURES for RESOLVING REPORTS and COMPLAINTS

- All members will sign the Statement of Ethical Practices as a basis for membership and 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.



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

MEMBERSHIP DUES and PAYMENT SCHEDULE

2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR

TABLE OF DUES

NUMBER of D.C. STUDENTS	ANNUAL DUES
1 – 6	\$250
7 – 74	\$45 per student
75 or more	\$3500

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Payment

Based on October enrollment count, please remit payment of dues according to the schedule above no later than November 13, 2009.

Invoices are mailed to members in October, addressed to the primary voting representative designated in the DCASE membership application. Please provide alternate instructions if applicable.



DCASE

District of Columbia
Association for Special Education

A rising tide lifts all boats

APPLICATION for VOTING MEMBERSHIP

PROGRAM INFORMATION	
Name of School/Program:	
Name of CEO/Director:	
Street Address:	City, State, Zip:
Phone:	Website:
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
Setting: <input type="checkbox"/> Day <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Nonpublic	
Total enrollment:	D.C. enrollment: Ages served:
Disabilities served:	
PLEASE ATTACH	
<input type="checkbox"/> Description of program for DCASE Directory (Max: 250 words, exclusive of contract information). <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of current DC Certificate of Approval or similar document from another jurisdiction. <input type="checkbox"/> If program has more than one campus, please list other campuses with contact and demographic information for each. <input type="checkbox"/> List of other professional organizations with which your program is affiliated (optional).	
Please list two (2) current DCASE members in good standing to support your application.	
1:	
2:	
VOTING REPRESENTATIVES	
PRIMARY	ALTERNATE
Name:	Name:
Title:	Title:
Phone:	Phone:
E-mail:	E-mail:
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.	
Signature of CEO/Director:	Date:
Return completed application to: Georgia Vergos, DCASE Membership Chair, 711-A Edgewood Street NE, Washington, DC 20017	
Please contact info@dcase.org with questions or comments.	