

AAMR Action Plan Proposal

This electronic form is to be submitted to Maria Alfaro: Maria@aamr.org

Name of Proposal: Education Division: Educating Lifelong Learners
Date of Submission: June 28, 2005
Proposed Start Date: September 1, 2005
<p>Brief Description of Proposed Actions/Activities:</p> <p>Special education services for persons with disabilities have undergone a shift in recent years. The field has recognized that our educational expectations for persons with developmental or intellectual disabilities have often been set too low. Related to this, schools have made a major shift to a standards-based educational system that mandates that all students have access to the information and experiences our society views as important for its citizens, that is, the general curriculum. Students with disabilities are increasingly being included in general education classrooms where teachers are providing them with individualized modifications and accommodations so that they can access the same information as their typically developing peers. They are also being included in high-stakes assessments used by districts to evaluate the effectiveness of their educational programs. Educators are also realizing the importance of involving their students with disabilities and the students's families in planning appropriate educational programs. Finally, we have recognized that individuals with disabilities are lifelong learners. They are capable of acquiring new skills and knowledge across the lifespan and may actually be better able to learn some skills in adulthood.</p> <p>The complexity of the issues listed above requires that we re-think both the delivery of educational services and supports across the lifespan and the way in which we prepare educators to provide these services and supports. Our Action Plan is designed to help AAMR members begin to think in new ways about the role of education in the lives of persons with disabilities. It includes providing some on-line resources for AAMR members and others in the field and creating a working committee to develop a framework.</p>
<p>What is the intended outcome?</p> <p>Specifically, the Education Division is proposing an action plan that will allow AAMR members to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn about new and effective implementation of significant ideas related to educational practices that recognize and support lifelong learning by persons with disabilities. This will include developing an online resource (on the Education Division webpage) of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief descriptions of local initiatives that demonstrate implementation of significant new ideas related to provision of educational services and supports (e.g., an effective community literacy program for adults with moderate or severe disabilities) that will be posted to the Ed Division webpage as an informational resource. • Brief vignettes about individuals with disabilities who are exemplars of lifelong learners. These could be

individuals of any age who are effectively utilizing educational programs to meet their goals in a variety of areas.

2. Join other interested members on a working committee that will focus on creating a framework for educators, other professionals, and individuals with disabilities and their families to use to design effective, individualized, lifelong educational experiences, including specific supports and services. This framework will include ways to evaluate and plan for a meaningful balance between content knowledge and practical (functional) skills that some individuals may require and issues to consider when designing individualized accommodations and modifications. It is not intended to take the place of the formal Individualized Education Planning process used in public schools, but rather to be used as a planning tool by families and teams for individuals at any age. Interested members will examine the research and practice literature and local exemplary programs to identify and then use information gleaned from this process to develop a framework for planning and consideration by educators and individuals and their families.

3. Access an on-line experts listing so that persons interested in specific topics or areas related to education can contact someone for information or additional resources. This would include listing researchers or research teams examining some of the critical educational issues in the field. This would be added to our webpage as a resource available to AAMR members and others.

These actions steps will meet the expressed needs of AAMR members (as assessed by the results of our on-line survey this past May) by (a) creating a way to network with other members interested in education issues, (b) disseminating information on new and effective educational practices, and (c) providing a broad base of resources related to educational concerns. These steps will also provide a concrete outcome (e.g., the framework) that will have a positive impact of persons with developmental or intellectual disabilities.

Does this Action Plan need funding? If so, how do you propose to fund it?

We are asking for funding: reimbursement for actual mailing costs as we do the work outlined in the plan. This money could come from the fees paid by members who join the Education Division.

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How will this Proposal impact persons with developmental or intellectual disabilities and/or AAMR?

This proposal will impact persons with developmental or intellectual disabilities by focusing the field's attention on the changing nature of educational supports and services for this group and creating a framework for practitioners and individuals with disabilities and their families to use when designing individualized, lifelong educational experiences.

Board Action: Approved

Date: July 18, 2005

Comments by Board: Approved with a request for more specifics on the budget.