

DRAFT MINUTES  
23 October 2007  
SECAC-PG Meeting  
The Arc of PG County

Attendees:

- Mike McLaughlin - Chair
- Lillie Bond - Vice Chair
- Sarah Wayland - Secretary
- Meg Dillman - Treasurer
- = Gail Voigt - Asst. Secretary
- Melonee Clark
- Pamela Downing-Hosten - Director of Special Education
- Judith Kachinske - Asst. Supervisor for Grants
- Shirl Brown
- George Rathbone
- Karen Haynes
- Delores Hemmons

General Introductions

Resource Update (Melonee Clark)

Registration Materials: Navigating the Road from School to Adulthood for All Youth with Disabilities in Maryland (Transition Conference) Wed, Nov 28 - Thurs, Nov 29th, 2007  
Martin's West [www.mdtransition.org](http://www.mdtransition.org)

Transitioning Youth Series @ The Arc starts tomorrow.

Can SECAC get autism specialist, OT, and to look at Laurel Library Branch of Public Libraries Story Time, get grant... suggest program enhancement, etc.

Dec 2-8 - poster contest for elementary school, essay for middle school for Inclusive School Week. Ask around school if they got notice about the contest.

Least Restrictive Environment Committee: Talked to Dr. Deasy about bus drivers. Bus driver appreciation breakfast, provide "People First" brochures.... Flier in mailboxes announcing pizza lunch for different bus lots. Dr. Downing-Hosten mentioned training coming up for drivers and aides for nonpublic transportation, as well as another training for general ed bus drivers. As kids with disabilities migrate into general ed classroom, more on regular ed buses. Will Papa John's donate? Also discussed changing name of committee.

Mr. Rathbone asked how kids were supported on the bus - do special education students ride on the regular education bus? The answer depends on what is in the student's IEP.

SECAC wants to get nationally known speaker to come in to talk about including kids in general ed. Ms. Kachinske asked that whomever we choose contact her by e-mail to start the process of becoming a preferred vendor for PGCPs.

3 recommendations from State of Inclusion Report regarding outreach to principals at Annual Principal's retreat, or monthly meeting. The principal Mr. McLaughlin talked to thought

monthly meeting would be best forum. Dr. Downing Hosten mentioned P-Team (school counselor, nurse, parent liason, people personnel worker, psychologist.) Meets twice a month in Upper Marlboro - perhaps we could present there. Contact Spencer Greene - Chief of Student Services. Could arrange to present at one of these meetings. 2 days, broken into 8 groups - so need 8 people to make presentations.

Need to schedule time around county to go to all of them. Need visual, handouts. Discuss "Purpose, process, payoff" - People First campaign.

### Guest Speaker: George Rathbone

Mr. McLaughlin sat in on IEP meeting where Mr. Rathbone was helping advocate for children.

The Arc of Southern Maryland has a contract to provide "Behavior Support Services" to students at school and in schools. They will help families develop behavior plans, learn more about disabilities, understand development, etc., to help identify the things that impact behavior. Mr. Rathbone has been involved since 1986 in helping people with developmental disabilities get integrated into the community.

Disability doesn't reside in individual - it is an interaction between the environment and the individual. Mr. Rathbone says his challenge is to figure out how to alter the environment so person is not so disabled. If you can meet your needs and desires, you aren't disabled.

His focus has been on families of people with developmental disabilities. Families are first educators, so family intervention is an important part of his work. He gave an example of how giving attention to kid having a tantrum will reinforce tantrums instead of teaching the child how not to tantrum. He talked about how important it is to educate people about this.

Recently DDA decided to not fund children under the age of 6. But Mr. Rathbone feels that early intervention is much more effective because it is the best way to insure that the child doesn't learn bad habits. He talked about how the teenage years are so difficult, in large part because of their need for independence.

Mr. Rathbone has developed a training model for parents to help them develop a plan for supporting positive behaviors. It was a 6 session course. Unfortunately, the Arc of Southern MD didn't get funding for it, even though educators feel it is really important.

Mr. Rathbone also talked about the fact that families should foster as much independence as possible.

### More updates

Ms. Clark mentioned that there is a new campaign with State Legislators regarding DDA funding/ waiting list. She wants people who are willing to tell their story about how the money would help. No new money for services this year.

Rally next Tuesday October 30th to picket.

Website:

Calendar for your group

Links to other group events in calendar (see Howard County Autism Society)  
Link sites: MSDE, BOE, SpEd, Parent's Center, The Arc, PGCPS, PPOf MD, Family Networks, Cathy Snow's (Disability is Natural), MDLC (law center), MCIE, Procedural Safeguards  
Facilitated IEP meeting info at MSDE  
site in DC with all events in area, and info on handicapped accessibility provisions was  
Mental Retardation Dev. Disability Administration (now is Developmental Disability Services) - recreational stuff  
Wrightslaw  
Meg wants to make sure supports our central purpose of SpEd.  
Karen Haynes has 2 kids who need to put in community service hours.

Bridgit Chapman - PR Communication Committee - will meet with Mr. McLaughlin this week.

Ms. Dillman wants to form a Leadership Committee for recruiting people for the "next generation" of SECAC members. MM knows of a student who could come to meetings and is interested in disability issues. Wants ways to get more people involved in advocacy.

Ms. Voigt said that she can work on a membership committee, and has ideas, but is not sure she can drive it. She has list of members.

### Co-teaching

At this point, Dr. Downing-Hosten talked about co-teaching. Dr. Jesse Britt Mason established many of the Special Education programs in PGCPS. Fifteen years ago, she created co-taught classrooms at the Middle School and High School levels. Co-teaching involves both general & special educators in the same classroom. The model was called "3/4/7 Classes", because 3 or 4 students had challenges, and 7 had disabilities, a setup that requires differentiated instruction. Dr. Mason wanted to know why these students were grouped together without kids who were superior/average in abilities. In 1992, she decided that there should be no more 3-4-7 classrooms, and she took over training "Jesse's Girls" with the goal of putting 3-4-7s in regular classrooms with Special Educators.

The current status of co-teaching is that PGCPS does have some Special Education teachers who are provisional. Unfortunately, individual principals started pulling them out of the classroom to cover staffing needs. This meant that the Department of Special Education had to find a way to insure that a co-teacher was in the co-taught classroom at all times. This is particularly challenging because the principal evaluates the teachers - not Special Education department.

Now the Supervisor of Education has schedule of all Special Education teachers in every school building, and can do spot checks that involve checking for teachers, kids in the classroom - those with disabilities, challenges, or without issues. MEANS requires monitoring tool to insure ability to do this at secondary level. This monitoring has been going on at the secondary level for 4 years, but PGCPS still needs to train staff at the Middle School level.

Ms. Voigt asked what professional development is available for co-teachers. The answer is that they access both Special Education & Regular Ed training.

Audrey Davis is in process of revising all training. Dr. Downing Hosten took her to Chapel

Forge & Elizabeth Reed where she interviewed some of the paraprofessionals, and then observed in the classroom. There are currently training meetings held twice a week to discuss issues.

#### Director's Update:

Budget preparations underway for 2008-2009 (FY '09), and is supposed to be submitted today. As soon as it is submitted to the CEO, Dr. Downing Hosten will submit a copy to the Chair of the SECAC. Special Education usually gets what it needs, though sometimes they get it phased in over a 2 year period.

The Special Education budget supports Special Education programs. Dr. Downing Hosten found out at the 11th hour that General Education Teachers for the MEANS initiative should come out of Special Education budget, so they had to add it to the budget with a new code, so they can track the cost separately (it was under the regular education budget until this year.)

The budget includes money for the expansion of the Autism program, programs for the Emotionally Disturbed, and the MD Online IEP. PGCPS has asked the Chelsea School and High Roads School to develop Type II programs that will be housed within the neighborhood schools.

The budget has separate line items for the Autism, MEANS, and Emotionally Disturbed programs. Also the Early Childhood Center budget transition is complete. Full day Pre-K is fully funded now. PGCPS needs a staff psychiatrist, and a pediatrician on staff. There is also a new role for speech language pathologists because a lot of kids with developmental disabilities have language disorders.

The Department of Special Education Services is also budgeting for a supervisor for instruction, related services, compliance, & Early Childhood, housed in Curriculum Support. Also the budget requests a few more supervisors, as well as an R&D program to evaluate whether new programs are working. This R&D function will be covered under Special Projects which will take over pilot programs & evaluations.

Dr. Downing-Hosten also discussed the fact that 47 pages of the 52 page training manual for Regular Education teachers is devoted to Special Education.

Special Education is now under Division of Student Services. Chief is Dr. Betty Despenza Green. Dr. Downing-Hosten reports directly to her. She also reports to Carol Ann Bagland of the Attorney General's Office. Dr. Downing-Hosten has to make sure PGCPS is in compliance with the law insuring top-notch services while keeping us out of "IEP jail".

SECAC will review the staffing proposals and the budget. The Department of Special Education will also present their process at the MSDE Leadership Council.

PGCPS provides Special Education services to students at 204 public schools, 45 private & religious, and 40 nonpublic schools.

Mr. McLaughlin mentioned that he wanted information on Facilitated IEP Meetings added to the brochure on Parental Rights and Procedural Safeguards under steps to resolving a dispute. Dr. Downing Hosten mentioned that MSDE cannot do it now because "Facilitated IEP Meetings" are not available to all schools in the county. She also mentioned that the MSDE

Facilitated IEP brochure is better than county version. It has the best Q&A. The PGCPS brochure does have contact information. Dr. Downing-Hosten can add a stapled page with info on Facilitated IEP if the PGCPS attorney approves it. She also mentioned that she would look into whether PGCPS can put something in the PGCPS Facilitated IEP Meeting brochure referring to the procedural safeguards.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Wayland  
Secretary, PG-SECAC