

22 January 2008 - SECAC General Meeting

Mike McLaughlin
Lillie Bond
Judith Kachinske
Sarah Wayland

Website

We discussed the rather drab appearance of the website and how to improve it. We agreed that it would be nice to put some pictures of people on the website, and make the colors coordinate with those of the PGCPs website. Mike McLaughlin said he would ask for pictures from people on the listserve.

We also discussed adding an advertisement for the Autism Awareness video to website.

PGCPs Special Education Budget

Judith Kachinske said that the MEANS initiative funding is being held at its current levels, which means that expansion to more grades, and more schools will be difficult. The group discussed this and determined that we should ask Dr. Downing-Hosten what we can, as parents, do to support SpEd in getting MEANS re-funded so that the children who are currently in the program can, at the very least, continue to access the program.

Ms. Kachinske also said that 10% of Special Education students are in non-public placements, which costs roughly \$44,000 per child. She brought this up because she said that when the School Board looks at the budget for the MEANS initiative it looks really expensive. However, the reality over the long term is that it is cheaper to support these children in neighborhood schools than it is to send them to non-public placements. The MEANS initiative is a solution that will be cost effective over the long-term.

Ms. Kachinske also said that the shift to consolidate schools such that children stay in the same program from Kindergarten through 8th grade was not going to be funded.

The budget shortfall is between \$16.9 and \$22 million. This will have an impact on hiring and professional development, and it means that school supplies are currently in short supply.

Other news items include:

- PGCPs is officially hiring SpEd teachers.
- Mid-level administrative positions not being filled if current employees leave.

Extraordinary Service Awards preparation

SECAC will cover the cost of printing certificates which they will get from "Successories". In addition, PGCPs may not be able to cover the purchase of food for the ceremony because of the aforementioned budget cuts, though Ms. Kachinske said she would look into whether PGCPs could cover them for this ceremony, since they promised them

Last year we got a fruit tray, cake, chips, ham/chicken/tuna sandwiches, pasta and potato salad for roughly \$600. (\$10 a person.) Mike will see if he can find a caterer to donate food for the event.

The group then brainstormed about who could donate food. We discussed some of the businesses who are known to be very civic minded, including Henry's (in Oxon Hill & Mitchellville), the IHOP in Forestville, Levis, Popeyes, Three Brothers, and the family that owns Burger Kings in area (one on Annapolis Road).

Schedule for Ceremony:

- Tuesday - May 20th, 2008 - Ceremony
- Application deadline - March 31st, 2008

We will get the awards engraved as quickly as possible. There will be 6 awards, and it takes 8 weeks to get money expenditures approved. We will also need to check with the engraver to find out how long it will take. The Plaque Shack in Oxon Hill is a preferred vendor with PGCPs, so they can do the engraving.

We also need a committee to organize the event and evaluate the applications.

Outreach Efforts:

- Kathie Snow is now an approved vendor - so we can arrange a date for her to come speak.
- Put Partners for Success video on Channel 38 on the cable to get information out about this part of PGCPs Special Education Services.
- Andrea Toney Tomas might be a possible speaker for next year - she works to keep older kids with Learning Disabilities reading.