

SECAC-PG Monthly Meeting - Minutes of July 24, 2008

The Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) was called to order by the Chair, Mike McLaughlin at 6:408 PM, July 24, 2008 at the ARC of Prince George's County.

Persons attending: Mike McLaughlin, Mary Bell (PGCPS), Gail Voigt, Vivian Williams, Bridget Chapman, Asha-Leteef Williams, Andreas Toney, Meg Dillman. Welcomes and Introductions were given around the meeting table.

The June SECAC-PG meeting minutes were available at the meeting and they were seconded and approved.

Mary Bell spoke about a number of topics. Mary Bell will be the point of contact for communications between groups such the Parent Center, and distribution of the SECAC brochure. Mary Bell also said that a survey of Special Education services was going through MSDE from the county to the PPWs to the parent liaisons to the parents. Mary Bell has a Power Point demonstration concerning the survey.

Changes are coming to the Special Education website. When the 10 month employees begin the school year, then the changes will become more apparent. On Sept 19, 2008 a forum will be held that will describe special education services. More about that will be forthcoming.

This year there will not an interdepartmental day for new teachers as Antoinette Keilaker indicated that new teachers are overwhelmed.

There is a new procedure, the PT Team or Parent Teacher Team. It is a large procedure that the Board of Education must approve. It includes the response-to-intervention procedures, Parent Liaison position description as well as the process or description of how the Parent Team will function to better serve the student.

Finally, Mary Bell tells us that the 5 regions have been re-designated as 6 zones due to population changes and growth.

Mike McLaughlin felt that it was a good idea to get the SECAC message out to the unserved via a video-tape presentation.

Andrea Toney Thomas, former SECAC chair brought up an interesting question to the group. When certificate students turn 21, when is the last year of service? MDSE regulations indicate that the last year of service is in the year that the student turns 21. The first day of school varies from county to county and therefore, service in terms of 1 year of service differs from county to county. Because schools may not know when the beginning of the next school year will begin, schools sometimes cannot easily plan for a student's next year or study or for transition out of school. Andrea has researched this and found no definitive case law. Andrea wants to write a white paper and get a godswell of

SECACs, ARCs and state representatives to discuss this issue. Andrea doesn't want to see litigation over the issue. She just wants consistency.

Mike McLaughlin attended a barnstorming session about the pilot facilitated IEP meetings project. How to get the message across to more people? One way one county doing this is through alerting parents to the concept of facilitated IEP meetings through the Procedural Safeguards pamphlet. Procedural Safeguards pamphlets generally discuss the Special Education process and mention Mediation and Due Process. However, since each county writes their own Procedural Safeguards, each county can list additional resources in the pamphlet. Anne Arundel County is doing just that. Mary Bell will look over PGCPS Procedural Safeguards to see if additional resources can be listed in the pamphlet.

The SECAC will be sponsoring a MD Online IEP Forum. It would be great if someone from MSDE will come and speak to the forum. There are numerous ways in which the Online IEP is being promoted. Principals are being trained on the IEP.

Mike McLaughlin attended a LRE roundtable today. One of the discussions was the qualifiers in IDEA such as the word 'appropriate'. The LRE Roundtable would like to be able to write such adjectives and adverbs out of the law. Other concepts discussed at the meeting were UDP, Universal Design Language which uses assistive technology and video instruction to teach a more larger spectrum of learners.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:20 PM.

Sincerely,

Gail Voigt
Assistant Secretary