

**SECAC - PG General Membership Meeting  
19 August 2008**

**Attending:**

Mike McLaughlin

Melonee Clark

Gail Voigt

Lillie Bond

Pamela R. Downing Hosten (Director Special Education)

Vivene Williams

Tjameika Purnell Davenport

Mary Bell - Coordinating Supervisor in Dept of Special Education

Sarah Wayland

Megan King - Gazette Reporter

**Review of Minutes from 22 July 2008**

Corrections by Melonee regarding the presentation on special education services provided by the county.

Mary Bell corrected the description of the zones to say that there are 6 geographically defined zones, plus three zones covering the entire county, including a High School consortium zone, an opportunity zone (for specialized schools, e.g., French Immersion, charter schools, etc.), and an autonomy zone (for schools that are already high performing.)

The minutes were approved pending these corrections.

**General Meeting**

*Resolution to Require People First Language in the PGCPS*

Mr. McLaughlin started the meeting by passing around a resolution he was drafting to require the PGCPS system to use People First Language. He felt a need to do this in part as a response to the movie, *Tropic Thunder*, which does not use People First Language, and portrays people with disabilities in a demeaning fashion. Mr. McLaughlin wants to put the resolution in for a first reading at first meeting of the PG County's Board of Education in late September.

Dr. Downing-Hosten asked where, what, when and who would pay for the clause requiring professional development on the topic. Mr. McLaughlin agreed that it this was important and said that he would amend his resolution.

*Maryland Online IEP Training*

This training is scheduled for Tuesday October 14th from 6:30 - 8:00 pm at The Arc. The session will be for parents, teachers, etc. to encourage projecting the online IEP during meetings and to train attendees on how to use it. Ms. Bell said she would put it on the

PGCPS Special Education website to advertise it. We discussed having someone from MSDE come down to present their perspective. One parent mentioned that transferring from another district is much easier with this standardized form.

Dr. Downing-Hosten said that she would ask Dr. LaRhonda Owens, a coordinating supervisor from the Special Education office of Compliance to describe the "discussion" boxes on the form, which are expandable and serve the purpose of documenting parent input.

Dr. Downing-Hosten said that Ceci Aikens - Data Management Technology Assistant for Dept. of Special Education will also present.

#### *Discussion of Parents' Role on the IEP Team*

Ms. Bell said that Beth Diaite (said "Jay-a-tay") of the Parents' Center can educate parents about the IEP process.

Lillie Bond asked how to get a draft copy of the IEP prior to an IEP meeting. Dr. Downing-Hosten said that parents must be notified of an IEP meeting 10 days before it occurs, and parents can request copy of the IEP any time in that 10-day period. After the meeting, parents should receive a draft copy of the IEP for approval, and once they approve, should get the final approved copy 10 days later.

#### *Discussion of Televising Presentations to Educate Parents about Special Education*

Mike McLaughlin discussed his goal of educating parents about Special Education and getting them more involved by using PGCPS TV. The thought is that we could record some of the educational presentations given at The Arc and other places and broadcast the videos at scheduled times. In addition to PGCPS - Special Education TV, Mr. McLaughlin mentioned that he had asked someone at MSDE if they could create MSDE TV, and he also said that Glen Graymann, a Family Resource Specialist in Special Education at MSDE is also planning to update the training on CD they distribute.

Ms. Bell mentioned that the PGCPS TV station is in the process of moving, though they are still broadcasting.

#### *Discussion of Special Education Staffing*

Dr. Downing-Hosten gave a report on a meeting she'd had earlier in the day with Itinerant and Special Education Specialists who have gone to the schools to see how the reduced staffing is being addressed. The HR Office at PGCPS requires "highly qualified" individuals to fill all positions, and as a way to address the current budget shortfall, those positions which are filled by people who haven't been certified or passed the praxis were cut from the budget. This meant that 231 positions were cut from the current staffing for the Department of Special Education.

How will these duties be covered? The Coordinating Supervisor of Instruction has a list of international teachers currently teaching in regular education classrooms who have special education experience. It may be that if a teacher has experience they could be placed in Special Education positions, not in regular ed position.

One of the people at the meeting mentioned that some students with disabilities who are currently placed in CSEP programs scored in the proficient and advanced range on last year's MSAs. Dr. Downing-Hosten talked a little about what would it take to return them to the neighborhood schools, and mentioned that the IEP process should include a discussion of staffing at the current school (e.g., CSEP) and staffing at the neighborhood school to see if a student's needs can be met there. Dr. Downing-Hosten is trying to figure out best way to provide most effective support to students with IEPs.

There was a discussion about Zone Executive Directors (ZEDs) as opposed to the Regional Superintendants. We learned that there are also Zone Itinerant Liasons who coordinate related services personnel (SLPs, OTs, PTs, Audiologists).

A parent at the meeting asked about the training required to be a CRI teacher. (Her child has moved to a CRI program and she feels like he's regressed.) We learned that CRI specialists train CRI teachers, and the autism coordinator and autism specialists coordinate with the CRI specialists as needed. If a parent has an issue with their child, they can ask for collaboration with any of these staff members if needed.

Someone then asked for clarification regarding CRI Floaters. These are itinerant CRI specialists who provide additional support and instruction for 2-3 weeks at a time working with teachers to coach and mentor them.

We discussed the fact that the Human Resources department can tell you if a teacher is highly qualified - you just need to call an HR Specialist for Special Education to find out about a particular Special Education position. You can also ask the school tell you who in the building is highly qualified. We learned that as a last resort, you can appeal to the chief of HR, Christine Knighton, if you get the run-around about this question. We learned that the proper procedure is to talk to the school principal first, then the Zone Executive Direction, then HR, and finally the Chief of HR.

Gail Voigt asked what happened to 181 positions that were "cut"? We learned that some positions have been "revised", some are being filled, and some will be covered in a different fashion.

We then asked whether HR can have a representative from Special Education to keep something like this from happening again. This used to be true, but is no longer the case after the most recent re-organization.

What can a parent do if position at their school's special education services are not being covered.

- (1) Ask principal.
- (2) Ask ZED.
- (3) Ask HR Chief.

The SECAC discussed whether we should try to get an HR person to come to a SECAC meeting so we can express our concerns.

We also discussed how to better work with School Board members. We agreed that it was important for the SECAC to build a relationship with the Board of Education. Mr. McLaughlin mentioned that Bridget Chapman has volunteered to help with regular notification for outreach purposes.

#### *Other News of Note*

(1) PGCPs is encouraging parents to bring child to school first day, and also to encourage more parents to come to the classroom the last 100 days of school. The goal is to get parents to participate more with educating children.

(2) Mike discussed the importance of outreach using the PGCPs cable channel. He mentioned that PGCPs can use a "Polycom" to record a class to allow others to observe the classroom remotely. This system is currently used in foreign language classrooms to get less commonly taught languages instruction into more classrooms. Maybe we can use this technology to record some workshops?

Mr. McLaughlin mentioned that the PGCPs videographer - Robin Breedin - offered to come to record workshops, but no one showed up. Dr. Downing-Hosten mentioned that a commitment like that would be overtime for these workers, so they may not be able to do it. We discussed getting a videography company to record for free - and donate tape for the show, though we would need legal oversight to make sure we are doing it properly.

(3) We discussed how to get the word about the SECAC out at Back to School Night. Mr. McLaughlin mentioned that someone is updating the SECAC brochure to have it available at Back to School Night, and suggested talking to your school principal to get a moment to discuss the SECAC at Back to School Night. He said that Anne Arundel county sends a SECAC brochure out with each progress report, and he wants this in PGCPs.

(4) We discussed Bettie Bolden's work on the new Special Education website for PGCPs. Rumor has it that she presented her work officially, though there was no indication of when the site would roll out for parents to see.

(5) Someone mentioned that the contact numbers on the Facilitated IEP Meeting brochures are wrong. Mary Bell said she would get someone at PGCPs to correct the misinformation.

(6) Saturday November 8th from 9:30 - 1:00 Judy Ryan of the Least Restrictive Environment Committee will discuss the "Access to Education 2008" follow on to the State of Inclusion workshop. They will discuss the best way to provide the least restrictive environment, including discussions of universal design, assistive technology, and legal requirements. The meeting will likely be at Lake Arbor ES, though we still need to get permission from principal.

(7) September 9th at 6:30 pm at The Arc , the PGCCPS Special Education department will host a "Listening Post" panel where people can talk to school officials about Special Education in the county. In particular, they will describe the programs and services available, as well as where they are located. There will be booklets/pamphlets with info about each program. And all this information is currently available at the Parent Center.

Next meeting September 23rd 6:30 pm, and Beth Diate (of the Parent Center) will be there.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah C. Wayland  
Secretary - SECAC PG  
2008-2009