

SECAC Meeting, July 23 2013

The following people were in attendance for the July 23, 2013 SECAC meeting at the Arc of Prince George's County. They are: Mary Bell, Sarah Wayland, Pamela Talley, Scott Geist, Terry Hampton, Roberta Medley, Nathalie Legerwood, Tracey Content, Kay Kane, Lori Carter –Evans, Tresa Robinson, Enid Smith, Meg Dillman and Norma Rodriquez.

The meeting was opened by welcome and introductions of attendees. An update was provided by the Department of Special Education in regards to the Common Core Standards. Mary Bell described some of the changes, including (a) "close reading," which require students to have a better understanding of the text so that they can answer questions, (b) writing in content areas, and (c) math, where the instruction will be project-based, using manipulatives, and going into topics in depth, rather than jumping from topic to topic quickly. Math instruction will also emphasize that there is more than one way to solve a problem.

Ms. Lori Carter-Evans, the new Director of Transportation was invited to the meeting. During the meeting she provided an introduction of herself. During the introduction she revealed that she is a native of Pittsburgh, with educational background in engineering and multiple years of work experience in the public transit and school bus transit system.

Following her introduction, Ms. Carter-Evans shared some of her goals and visions for the Department of Transportation. Her first goal is to establish a partnership between parents, teachers and bus drivers. This can be accomplished through the establishment of a transportation advisory committee. The committee, which would be comprised of at least 15 people, including parents, would promote group interaction and better communication. She also presented the idea of developing and implementing robo calls. This would provide parents with status updates on the buses.

Ms. Carter-Evans' second goal is to change the culture of transportation. She would like to provide more training throughout the year. This includes training for all bus personnel. The training will provide bus personnel with training and knowledge of the kids they service. Finally Ms. Carter-Evans wants to be able to address all of parents concerns and have open line of communication. If parents have any specific type of challenges or issues they would like to communicate, they should follow the following chain of command:

1. First, contact the Foreman at the bus lot.
2. Second, contact the Supervisor.
3. Third, contact the Assistant Director – however, this position is unfilled.
4. Last, the Director of Transportation, Lori Carter-Evans.

Ms. Carter-Evans reported that there would be training for bus drivers on August 7, 2013 at High Point High School. She asked that a parent speak at the event. Ms. Pamela Talley, Chair of SECAC, and Amani Kharma, the SECAC treasurer, volunteered to be speakers at the event. Ms.

Carter-Evans noted that there is currently a shortage of bus drivers. The department had a job fair in June, and thirty-three offers were made; seventy-five drivers were trained by the end of the summer. The department is currently trying to build a pool of desired substitutes to prevent a shortage of drivers.

Enid Smith was elected as Secretary.

Tracey Content provided update on the Learning Disability (LD) survey. She reported that they received forty-five responses thus far. They have done everything they can do to advertise the survey through Bowie Blade, SECAC and PG Tag list serve. One parent suggested translating the survey to Spanish to attract more people to complete it. The survey has been opened for couple of months and will close at the end of September.

Planning for the next school year – below are preview of possible topics:

*September 24th, 2013 - Effectively Addressing Concerns*

*October 22nd, 2013 - Learning Disabilities and Twice Exceptional Children - Special Guest Speaker - Rose Blucher*

*November 26th, 2013 - Transportation*

*December - NO MEETING*

*January 28th, 2014 - Overview of Special Education Programs and Services*

*February 25th, 2014 - Common Core & Special Education*

*March 25th, 2014 - Nonpublic and CRI placements*

*April 22nd, 2014 - Advocating for Children with Developmental Disabilities - Special Guest Speaker - Mary Funk*

*May 27th, 2014 - Extraordinary Service Awards Ceremony*

*June 24th, 2014 - Home & Hospital*

SECAC will plan for a Board of Education Presentation. SECAC will highlight its vision and mission to the Board of Education members, as well as areas of concern. This usually takes place at least once a year; Peggy Higgins (board member) has recommended that the presentation be early in the year; October would be ideal.

Information sharing – SECAC will put out a suggestion box for parents to note topics that they will be interested to talk about.