

SECAC Meeting: January 28, 2014

The following people attended the January 28, 2014 meeting:

Mary Bell, Irin Wills-Allen, Sarah Wayland, Jeniece Weddington, Robert Kurz, Pamela Talley, Carolyn Tucker, Vanessa Lopez, Kathleen Healy, Rachel Booker, Afenia Hubbard, Joan Rothgeb, Candy Davis, Scott Geist, Judy Rein, Brandie Valentine, Tonya Scott-Jones, Theresa Thompson, Donzell Robinson, Stacey Travers, Tresa Robinson, Enid Smith, Peggy Higgins, Meg Dillman, Muriel Thomas and Tracy Content.

The meeting was opened by welcome and introductions of attendees.

Joan Rothgeb, Director of Special Education for Prince Georges County Public Schools (PGCPS), provided an update on special education. She described a meeting that Marcella Franczkowski, Lillian Lowery and Carolyn Dukes at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) hosted for all school districts in the state of Maryland in which they emphasized their desire for more coordination between Special Education and General education. They discussed the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (the standards previously known as "Common Core"), and reviewed compliance numbers for each district. Ms. Rothgeb also told us that Dr. Monique Davis has been named the new Deputy Superintendent for PGCPS,

Dr. Donzell Robinson, an Independent IEP Facilitator from Key Bridge Foundation (Conflict Resolution Center), gave a brief synopsis of the facilitated IEP process. He noted that the main goal is to help make sure that everyone has a chance to speak and be heard at the IEP meeting. He encourages parents to use this free service. Parents can call 301-625-0707 - which is the Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County - however your information will be forwarded to Prince Georges County. He can be reached also at drobinson@keybridge.org, donzell.robinson@hotmail.com (or @yahoo.com; @gmail.com) to arrange facilitated IEP meetings.

Mary Bell presented on special education programs and services offered in Prince Georges County Public Schools. She discussed the law and least restrictive environment. She then described the differences between the Comprehensive

Special Education Program (CSEP) and Community Reference Instruction (CRI) program.

In the CRI program students receive a certificate of attendance rather than a diploma; their curriculum is focused on learning life skills so that they will be ready for the world of work and independent living when they reach the age of 21. These students require extensive modifications to their curriculum. They cannot handle general education because they need extremely specialized support. These students have intellectual disability, autism, significant cognitive disabilities and other disabilities. Class size is 10 students with 2 adults (teacher and paraprofessional) with Dedicated Aides as needed for elementary aged students and 13 students with 2 adults (teacher and paraprofessional for middle and high school aged students. Students in this program may need the Alt MSA and they'll get a certificate of attendance instead of a high school diploma after completion.

CSEPs are located in comprehensive elementary school sites that have self contained classrooms in which intensive all-day special education services are available to students with various disabilities. Students in this program have access to the general curriculum and also inclusive opportunities are available. There are 10-12 students in each class with 2 adults (teacher and paraprofessional). Dedicated Aide is requested as needed basis. There is also one CSEP Coordinator, one Psychologist and one Crisis Intervention Resource Teacher at each school. Student in this program do not take the Alt MSA. They participate in all district and statewide assessments and pursue a Maryland State High School Diploma.

A parent wanted to know what happens after the student in CSEP gets to middle school. Carol Reed noted that an IEP decision would be made to determine appropriate placement. Some students go to an intensive self-contained class in middle school and high school. In Elementary School, they are grouped academically not by disability. They spend at least 40% of their time in the general education curriculum. Joan Rothgeb mentioned that the CSEP is a non-categorical program. It is geared to students' academic needs and related service needs.

Another parent noted that her son is in CRI and she is not satisfied with the program. She asked if the program is focused on reading. It was noted that some of the portfolio are aligned with reading standards.

Diane Bonnani discussed the special public day school. The Infants and Toddlers program is from birth to age 2. Services are delivered through parent partnership in natural setting. The child is seen at home. Early Childhood starts from age 3 to 5. At age 3, the child receive inclusion services with his or her typically developing peers . At the age of 4 (Pre-K, also head start & co taught class), the child gets full opportunities with the community.

Scott Geist discussed the Regional program which is from kindergarten to 21 years. It is a separate day school for students with significant cognitive delay, orthopedics. All services are housed at the school. He noted that there is a Capital Improvement plan in place where student have inclusion opportunities. The future goal is to have students have the opportunity with the general education population.

Home and Hospital was also discussed. This service is under student services not special education. Students are limited to 6 hours a week.

Sarah Wayland asked why just 6 hours since other district has up to 10 hours. Carol Reed said that 6 hours is the minimum. However, if determined by the IEP that more hours is needed - then it can be flexible.

Joan introduced Peggy Higgins who is a member of Prince George's County School Board. In addition, Joan talked about the training they had for paraeducators. They had the opportunity to trained 900 paraeducators. The training went well and it has been the third training thus far.

Another parent asked about parent training and was noted that a parent can ask for parent training and it can be built into the child's IEP.

Another parent wanted to know if a parent requests an IEP meeting when should the meeting be held. It was noted that the school should have the meeting within 30 days.

Sarah Wayland asked about Gifted with Special Learning Needs (GSLN). Mary Bell gave a brief description of GSLN. She said that these are students that are gifted, but also have learning disabilities, ADHD, or autism. There is a curriculum that can be delivered through the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program, but services can also be included as part of a student's IEP.

Joan Rothgeb encouraged parents to be familiar with the Partners for Success Parent Center. They have a lending library and help parents with questions. Also they have a Spanish Interpreter for Spanish speakers. Parents can contact Beth Diate at 301-431-5675 or email beth.diate@pgcps.org to learn more.

On March 8th, the Partners for Success Parent Center, the Parents' Place of Maryland, the One World Center for Autism, and Pathfinders are co-hosting a parent workshop called "COLLABORATIONS: PUTTING TOGETHER THE PIECES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS" at John Carroll Elementary from 8:30am to 3:30pm. Kirk Martin from Celebrate Calm! will be the keynote speaker.

Information sharing - A suggestion box has been placed in the back for parents to note topics that they will be interested to talk about.