

Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee

(SECAC) of Prince George's County

Tuesday, October 27, 2015 6:30PM

Place: The Arc of Prince George's County, 1401 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD

Welcome and Introductions – Pamela Talley and Sarah Wayland

Meeting was called to order by Ms. Pamela Talley. All attendees were asked to sign the sign-in sheet and a round table of introductions commenced.

Update from Special Education Department – Joan Rothgeb

Ms. Rothgeb gave a brief overview of the Teaching and Learning Conference that took place on October 2, 2015. This was a professional development day sponsored by Dr. Joseph. It began with a streaming video and featured an inspiring speech by Bruce Taylor.

Also mentioned, October 26, 2015, Mr. Mike McLaughlin participated on the Disabilities Issues Advisory Board Meeting. This is an advisory panel appointed by the School Board that evaluates how well our schools are supporting students with disabilities. It was started in 2007, and is another avenue to voice concerns regarding disability issues within the school system.

Ms. Rothgeb then went on to introduce Dr. Gwendolyn Mason. Dr. Mason shared that it was a joy for her to return to Prince George's County, the place where she first began her special education career. Dr. Mason then announced that she'll be attending majority of the meetings and looks forward to seeing everyone again.

Public Comments – Sarah Wayland

1. Ms. Wayland shared that the Special Education Coalition of Prince George's County is sponsoring a Special Education Resource Fair on November 7, 2015. This will take place at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Michelville, Maryland. Ms. Melonee Clark further informed attendees that this fair will have available a variety of seminars, special education workshops, vendors, resource coordination and sign-up for parents wishing to speak with an attorney regarding their child's IEP.
2. Ms. Wayland shared vital information regarding the county council's decision to raise minimum wage for direct service providers in Prince George's County. This presents a huge increase in costs for the Arc when they are hiring people to help care for their clients. As a result, they are seeking to lobby county council and the state delegation for an increase in funding to cover this change. Next Thursday, there will be a meeting with more information here at the Arc.
3. Save the Date: November 21st, wellness fair. Attendees to this event (young adults 14 and older) will learn about preparing to enter the workforce.
4. Tamika Wright, a representative from PG Parks and Planning provided attendees with flyers in reference to programming for individuals with disabilities including a new sensory room.

SECAC Business – Pamela Talley

Ms. Talley presented a SECAC poster to attendees and informed everyone that the posters will be placed in all the schools. Ms. Talley also mentioned that she was invited to the State Advisory Committee to share what SECAC-PG has been doing to bring forth positive change in the county.

Presentations: Review of Programs & Services, Relationship Development Intervention & Family Support Center

- A. Mary Bell - Educating in the Least Restrictive Environment – All curriculum aligned with students' grade level. Briefly went over the continuum of services offered in PGCPs. The IEP drives where special education services will be delivered. This should be discussed at each IEP meeting. The goal is to educate children as much as possible in the least restrictive environment.
- B. Debbie Anzelone – Related Services – these are services that are designed to be supportive in order for the child to benefit from their special education program. This is determined by the IEP team and covers a lot of disciplines. Some of these disciplines include: transportation, audiology, counseling and mental health, school health nursing, physical therapy, vision, orientation, and mobility services can be provided directly to the student or on behalf of a student. This means that said therapist can be there to train other school personnel on how to interact/support student. Services directly delivered to a student can be individual or in a group, inside the class or outside the class. These factors are decided by the IEP team. The most important thing related services does is increase the child's access to the curriculum. How is the need determined? The IEP team.
- C. Beth Diaite – Family Support Center – Formally known as the Partners for Success Parent Center was requested to change its name by the State. Participating on district wide team to increase family engagement. New workshops and training modules specific to families of students with disabilities. Partnerships with Library regarding formation of Parent Cafes. Collaborating with schools, PGCPs departments and community agencies/organizations. Through a grant with MSDE they will be offering book study with teachers. The anticipated outcome is that they will be able to outreach to families. Ross Greene is coming back to the next Parent Engagement Conference. How do parents learn about the center? This is mostly learned at the school level through IEP team. Families can contact the Family Center via walk-ins, phone calls, and email (8908 Riggs Road Adelphi, Maryland 20783, Office: 301-431-5675 - <http://www1.pgcp.org/specialeducation/index.aspx?id=215644>). However, most contact with families is typically at the evaluation stage. A goal is to increase visibility and support for families across the continuum.
- D. Julia Watson – RDI – This is a program out of Houston that provides students in a wide range of ages, mastery levels, learning strengths and vulnerabilities, with means to master their environment. Here, parents become the change agent. They meet as a parent group 2 times a month and individually once a month. There is also an online forum. Prince George's County is the only public school system in the country providing RDI free of charge to parents. There are three trained consultants and there is currently an introductory training for new parents in process. This provides access for 10 families. To date, there have been 52 families served, and there are 13 families currently in groups. Intro to the next session is Tuesday, at 4pm to 6pm, at John Carroll School.

Question & Answer

1. What are Parent Cafes?
Parent Cafes started in Illinois and is a forum where parents can come out. There is food provided, conversation started and interaction with peer facilitators.

2. What book is currently being studied in Book Study?
Lost in School, by Ross Greene
3. Will SECAC be focusing on students transitioning to Middle School tonight from CSEP?
Ms. Talley shared that this is an upcoming topic either January or February.
4. Can parents be provided a 3 minute overview of continuum of options in PGCPS?
Ms. Rothgeb responded: boundary/neighborhood school, then increase services within school in the classroom or pullout services, groups by grade, according to what student needs instructionally; autism; deaf and hard of hearing. Middle school level, every neighborhood has the ability to have intensive services, small group setting, co-taught classes, academic resource support classes with consultative services. High School: CRI, program for students with emotional disabilities, services for twice exceptional students, and transition planning. Joan also shared that additional information can be found on PGCPS Special Education page, or parents can go to school finder and input their address. This will provide their boundary school.
5. A parent brought up questions regarding A/B schedule in high school. Shared that this causes students to have conflict with services (more time out of LRE).
Ms. Rothgeb stated they will look at the service delivery model at the high school level.

Announcement of Next Meeting - November 17, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Topic: Effectively navigating the System, Collaborative Communication and facilitated IEPs

Adjournment – meeting adjourned at 8:00p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Brooks-Wilkins