

Prince George's County SECAC Meeting Minutes
Sept. 27, 2022

Executive Board Members in Attendance: Troy Sampson, chairman; Janie Payne, treasurer; Jamie Anfonson-Comeau, secretary; Pamela Talley, community outreach manager.

Others in Attendance: See Attached Screen Captures

Troy Sampson opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. virtually via the Zoom online meeting platform. Mr. Sampson welcomed attendees and introduced executive board members and Prince George's County Public Schools partners.

Ms. Trinell Bowman, associate superintendent of the Department of Special Education for PGCPs, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2022-23 school year and provided an update from the school system.

Ms. Bowman noted that PGCPs is one of the 20th largest school systems in the country, and the second-largest in Maryland, after Montgomery County Public Schools. She said that PGCPs currently operates 198 schools and serves 131,657 students, as of last year's enrollment figures.

Ms. Bowman said special education now has a new parents' page of the website, with information.

Ms. Bowman said that PGCPs is continuing its Relationship Development Intervention (RDI) parent group through a partnership with Sarah Wayland's Empowering Exceptional Parents organization.

A Parent Information Session will be held on Oct. 18 regarding the RDI program. Registration for the event is online. The parent group will meet on the first and third Tuesday of each month with Dr. Wayland and Betty Adkins as facilitators.

The link to register is here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxV8pPRsyQLvqqRDc1KShU7tFr_elYDg7UqofOVdOBB9cKTA/viewform?pli=1

Ms. Bowman noted that this was the first time in three years that schools have opened for in-person instruction for all students.

Ms. Bowman introduced PGCPs's new strategic plan, Transformation 2026, and the Department of Special Education's strategic plan, which calls for tiered systems of support, a focus on autism, social-emotional and behavioral disabilities and learning disabilities, evidence-based strategies and the development of monitoring systems.

Ms. Bowman also said that they are working through compensatory education/recovery services decisions due to the pandemic. As of Sept. 1, there are 2,414 remaining, and approximately 19,000 reviewed.

She said that the department is continuing to complete backlogged re-evaluation assessments, with 363 still overdue as of Sept. 1, down from over 700 at the start of summer.

Ms. Bowman said the strategic plan aims to reduce the number of students in self-contained classrooms and increase the number of special education students enrolled in career and technical programs.

Dr. Beth Diate and Ms. Marsie Torchon spoke regarding the Family Support Center. The FSC website has a calendar of upcoming events.

Ms. Torchon also unveiled a new FSC video.

Ms. Torchon presented the results of last year's parent survey. According to the survey results, 8 out of 24 indicators have been met, with 7 more approaching met.

Ms. Torchon said the FSC provides resources to parents, including a computer lab, lending library, workshops, conflict resolution, conferences and resource fairs and referrals for community services.

Ms. Torchon said the fall miniconference will be held on Oct. 18 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. via Zoom, with Dr. Rebecca Resnik as the guest speaker.

The Parent Backpack Series for School Success four-part series begins Oct. 20 from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

The Behavioral Changes Support Group, based on Applied Behavioral Analysis, is a 10-part services starting in October.

Ms. Torchon said the FSC also has a resource guide, a quarterly newsletter and its own YouTube channel.

The 12th Annual Parent Empowerment Conference will be held March 2023; join the FSC listserv for updates.

Dr. Traci Jones, supervisor of the Office of School Health, provided a health and safety update.

Dr. Jones said all but 10 schools now have nurses, and nurses are now all full time Monday through Friday.

The school system also now has the HAZEL telehealth program at 63 schools from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. HAZEL can provide diagnoses, write prescriptions, and write notes. Nurses can also access HAZEL, which can also make mental health appointments. To participate, parents must sign consent forms. The program is being funded by the health department, Dr. Jones said.

Dr. Jones said that masks are now optional in PGCPs, and that the school system is encouraging everyone to be respectful of others' decisions to wear or not wear masks. She said that if a student is sick at school, they will put a mask on the student if they don't already have one on.

Dr. Jones said that schools will have COVID rapid tests, but no PCR tests. She said that they will only be testing symptomatic students, but that they may at some point test asymptomatic students.

Dr. Jones said that if a student tests positive, they must go home for five days, but can return on Day 6 if they are symptom-free. They must wear a mask during days 6-10, and may not participate in high-risk activities. If a child tests positive, please let the school know.

If a student cannot wear a mask, Dr. Jones said they may test on Day 6, and if they are negative, they do not need to wear a mask, but if they are positive, they may not come back until Day 10.

If they are exposed in school, they will receive a general notification letter. She said they may remain at school unless they show symptoms, and are encouraged to test on the fifth day from exposure.

Dr. Jones said the school system wants students to remain in school for the week even if they are exposed.

Dr. Jones also gave a presentation on monkeypox. She said monkeypox is spread from skin to skin contact, respiratory close contact, and physical contact with a contaminated object.

Dr. Jones said preventative measures include frequent hand washing, avoiding contact with rashes, discourage sharing objects, cleaning schools more than once a day. If sick, isolate.

For athletics, Dr. Jones said equipment will be wiped down and it is recommended that coaches conduct daily verbal screenings.

If there is a suspected case on monkeypox, mask and isolate, Dr. Jones said. Refer them to their health care provider for testing.

If monkeypox is positive, Dr. Jones said, the patient must isolate for two to four weeks, until the scabs have fallen off and new tissue has formed. They must also be cleared to return to school by their provider.

Dr. Jones said that the school system is working on a plan to provide education while the student is isolated. All classrooms will be cleaned thoroughly.

Herbert Bridges and Alemnesh Allen, transportation coordinators for special education, provided an update on the Transportation Department.

Mr. Bridges said that the school system transports close to 100,000 students every day.

Ms. Allen said that the school system has approximately 1,200 school buses in operation.

Ms. Allen said that the special education transportation coordinators work with the Department of Special Education, parents and transportation. They attend IEP meetings representing the Transportation Department. They also work to assist with the placement of students on appropriate routes.

Mr. Bridges said the school system has approximately 180-200 bus driver positions open. Ms. Allen added that there are an additional 15-20 bus attendant positions open.

Mr. Bridges said that the school system is holding bus driver fairs every two weeks, in the form of both virtual and drive-thru fairs. He said the school system is also encouraging parents to carpool whenever possible. Middle and high school students may also utilize The Bus, Prince George's County public transportation, for free using their student IDs.

Mr. Bridges said students may utilize infoFinder to track school buses.

Ms. Allen said most students with disabilities do not require special transportation; they can take regular transportation with their non-disabled peers. Students granted special transfer requests are not entitled to transportation services.

Mr. Bridges said that if schools are closed because of weather, the Transportation Department will not provide transport to nonpublic schools that are still open.

Ms. Allen said student trip details can be found on the infoFinder site or the StopFinder app.

Mr. Bridges said masks are now optional on buses. Masks and social distancing are still recommended while waiting for buses. When exiting the bus the bus, students should remain seated and not congregate in the bus aisles. Windows may be open to facilitate air circulation.

Mr. Bridges said bullying incidents on buses should be reported and all reports will be investigated.

Ms. Allen said complaints about drivers or aides should start at the school level. Parents may also contact the Transportation Department and submit a ticket through the Transportation Resolution System site.

Mr. Sampson said the slides shown during the meeting will be available within a couple of days on the SECAC website.

An attendee asked what is RDI? Who qualifies?

Ms. Bowman said RDI, which stands for Relationship Development Intervention, is a therapy that specifically targets individuals with autism, but really looks at developing guiding relationships.

Another attendee said her daughter with autism is in first grade, and said that there does not appear to be support for autism at the school her daughter attends. She said she would like to see coordinators create opportunities for families to meet and interact, and that they need to have better platforms for autism support at school.

Ms. Bowman said the communication team has worked through a variety of strategies to reach out to all parents. She said the point is well taken, and they continue to make sure information is getting out to all families.

Another attendee said Dyslexia Awareness and Down Syndrome Awareness are both coming up in October, and asked if information is being provided to schools.

Ms. Bowman said that they will push out information on both to schools.

Mr. Sampson thanked the speakers and said the next meeting will be held virtually via Zoom on Oct. 25 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. The topic will be "Let's Talk About IEPs".

Mr. Sampson told everyone to be safe, wear masks and social distance, because COVID is still out there.

Mr. Sampson closed the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Find a participant

- JA** Jamie Anfenon-Comeau (Me)  
-  Marsie Torchon (Host)   
- FK** felecia king  
- b** beth DIAITE (Co-host)  
- YY** Yvette Young (Co-host)  
- HB** Herbert Bridges 
-  Alemnesh Allen  
- AJ** Alyssia James  
-  Andria Thomas  
- BC** Brandi Cannon  
-  Camille Johnson  
- CR** CHERYL ROTHWELL  
-  Erika Stevenson  
-  Irin Wills-Allen  
- JP** janie payne  
-  LaDonna Dingle  
- LS** lakwona simmons  
- LD** Linda Deavers  
- MC** Meeka Caldwell 
- MD** Meg Dillman  
-  melonee clark  
- NL** Nicole London  

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- NL** Nicole London 
-  Nicole West  
- PT** Pamela Talley  
- RM** Rahneshia Mitchell  
-  Rheadrea Walker  
- RW** Rheadrea Walker  
- RM** Rob Malone  
-  Ronda Bullock  
-  Sarah Byrne  
- SN** Shee Newman  
- SI** Sheila Izebere  
-  Sue Griebner  
-  Sylvia Taylor  
- TA** Tamara Arrington  
- TJ** Traci Jones  
- TB** Trinell Bowman  
-  Troy Sampson  