

SECAC meeting minutes Sept. 26, 2023

Executive Board Members in Attendance: Janie Payne, chairwoman; Jamie Anfenon-Comeau, vice chairman; Fredarika Fefee, secretary.

Others in Attendance: See attached screen capture.

SECAC Board Chairwoman Janie Payne opened the meeting virtually via the Zoom online meeting platform at approximately 6:30 p.m. Ms. Payne introduced the new 2023-24 SECAC board and Prince George's county Public Schools (PGCPS) partners in attendance.

Ms. Payne said the topics being discussed – updates from the PGCPS transportation, health services and Family Support Center, were some of the most important topics of the school year.

Ms. Payne discussed the agenda and introduced the presenters.

Ms. Payne introduced Dr. Trinell Bowman, associate superintendent, Department of Special Education for PGCPS.

Dr. Bowman welcomed new and returning families, thanked the Board of Education members and the new school superintendent, Millard House II.

Dr. Bowman discussed the school system demographics, noting that the school system serves over 131,000 students, and that special education students make up 10.4% of the student population.

Dr. Bowman discussed the PGCPS Strategic Plan, the In Person Instructional Plan and Superintendent House's 90-Day Entry Plan.

Dr. Bowman said there would be Town Hall Listening Sessions, with a virtual one scheduled for Oct. 23.

The Department of Special Education's website's parent's page lists supports and services and critical information.

Keba Baldwin, PGCPS director of transportation, discussed challenges, strategies, training and communication within the transportation department.

Mr. Baldwin said the department receives an average of 1,500 calls per day.

Alemnesh Allen, PGCPS transportation coordinator - special education, discussed the role of Point of Contacts in assisting with late arrivals, recording any discipline issues and noting late buses.

Herbert Bridges, PGCPs transportation coordinator – special education, said that despite experiencing increasing hold times, they try to be attentive to everyone’s needs. They are currently hiring for the phone bank. To apply, call 301-952-6170.

Mr. Bridges said the special education transportation coordinators liaison between parents and transportation and special education department, handle safety vests and other specialized equipment, placed students on appropriate routes and plan and implement trainings for drivers and bus attendants.

Mr. Allen said most students with IEPs do not require special transportation.

Mr. Bridges said pickup and drop-off is not door-to-door but is curb-to-curb, meaning it is the safest, most manageable spot for the bus to get to.

Mr. Allen said there should always be a parent or guardian at the stop to drop off and receive the student, unless the student can go by themselves, as determined with the school on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Bridges said inclement weather decisions are made between 5 and 6 a.m. and announced by 6:30 a.m. The school system will follow decision made by local jurisdictions for nonpublic schools, meaning that PGCPs will provide transportation for nonpublic schools that are open when PGCPs is closed.

Mr. Bridges said PGCPs will also provide transportation to nonpublic schools that are open when PGCPs is closed for break.

Dr. Traci Jones, supervisor, Office of School Health, said all but four PGCPs schools now have full-time nurses.

Dr. Jones said an arrangement with Hazel now provides telehealth physical and mental telehealth services in 63 schools. If a consent form is on file, a student can see a provider at the school. The provider can prescribe over-the-counter and prescription medications.

Dr. Jones said COVID cases increase daily. Wearing masks in schools is currently optional, but that is subject to change. Nurses typically wear masks. Schools are not doing COVID testing this year.

Dr. Jones said that if a child tests positive for COVID, they must stay home for five days from the test, but may come back on Day 6, although they must wear a mask on Days 6-10. If a student is exposed to COVID, they should wait until Day 5 to test.

Dr. Jones said everyone is encouraged to keep their child home if they are ill, or have a fever of 100.4 or greater, diarrhea, stomach ache, nausea, severe headache, cough, trouble breathing, or other signs of illness.

Yvette Young, a social worker with the Family Support Center (FSC), said the FSC assists families with children with disabilities, or who may have disabilities, with information, connect them with resources, help resolve concerns, provide workshops, review Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and provide community outreach.

Dr. Beth Haire, FSC instructional specialist, said the FSC collects data on the services and supports it provides. This year it has had contact with 298 families, attended 53 IEP meetings and served 106 schools throughout the district.

Dr. Haire said that the FSC is a federally-mandated office. She also said that the special education survey that is sent out to parents every year showed that PGCPs met only two of the 24 indicators on the survey. One of the biggest challenges is ensuring that enough families actually respond to the survey.

Dr. Haire noted that the fall mini-conference takes place Oct. 19, and the IEP Backpack Series takes place Nov. 19 and Jan. 11, 2024.

Marsie Torchon, FSC program coordinator, said the Autism Summit will take place on April 20, 2024. The phone number for the FSC is 301-431-5675.

Ms. Payne said the next SECAC meeting will be on Oct. 25 at 6:30 p.m., and the topic will be IEPs. She encouraged everyone to spread the word.

Ms. Payne thanked all of the guest speakers and attendees for attending.

Ms. Payne closed the meeting at approximately 8 p.m.

Participants (27)



Find a participant

- JA** Jamie Anfenson-Comeau (Me)
- MT** Marsie Torchon (Host)
- BH** Beth Hayre (Co-host)
- KA** Karen Andrews (Co-host)
- YY** Yvette Young (Co-host)
- HB** Herbert Bridges
- DB** Dilayla Barriga-Avila (Interpreter)
- JP** janie payne
- AA** Alemnesh Allen
- AR** Alexis Robinson
- AT** Alyce Thompson
- Andria Thomas
- AS** ANGELA SALMERON
- AB** Ayo Bello
- CT** Carolyn Tucker
- EL** edith Linares (Interpreter)

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- EB** Ellen Brooks
- FF** Fredarika Fefee
- JA** Jamie Anfenson-Comeau
- Joni Turner
- KB** Keba Baldwin
- LD** LaDonna Dingle
- NL** Najuma Louison
- Ronda Bullock
- SD** Samantha DawsonWilliams
- TJ** Traci Jones

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