



Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Minutes

January 13, 2016 Meeting
Hyannis West Elementary School

Attendance Head Count: 13 including officers, parents, and district personnel; 4 children in Child Care.

Guest: Susan Powers, Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled (CORD)

SEPAC Business Meeting

Vice-President Kathy Bent called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m., welcomed everyone, and expressed appreciation to Principal Kathi Amato for hosting the meeting. Introductions were made.

Kathy noted purpose of the meeting is to gather input for improving special education to submit to the district administration. She mentioned that the next meeting with Jane Jezard, Director of Special Education, Bill Butler, Interim Superintendent, and Margeaux Weber, Chair of the School Committee is next week. Parents were asked for suggestions for meeting topics.

ByLaws Vote

A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed ByLaws for Barnstable SEPAC. The ByLaws were approved unanimously by those eligible to vote. The approved ByLaws will be posted to the SEPAC website and copies will be available at the next meeting.

Parents were encouraged to check the website often for updates and event announcements.

Comments/Suggestions from Parents Included:

- A parent expressed a concern about the annual IEP review meeting and asked whether principals have the authority to decide services needed for a student. Dr. Jezard responded that it depended on the school. Since there is no elementary special education coordinator the school psychologists have been trained for this role, however principals have sometimes been participating as Team members. Parents should check the signing page of the IEP to see who signs for the District and that would be the person responsible for allocating resources and is typically the facilitator at meetings
- Another concern expressed by a parent was about the Assistant Director of Special Education attending IEP meetings. The parent preferred that Dr. Jezard attend the meeting if there is a reason for an administrator to be there.
- A parent suggested that parents start a binder to keep organized and mentioned that the paperwork necessary to keep can become overwhelming otherwise. Dr. Jezard remarked that *Family Ties* is an organization that has provided workshops that help parents learn how to organize. This might be a good workshop for SEPAC to schedule next year.
- A parent asked if Jane had received the Report concerning services for students with Down syndrome that was conducted in September. Dr. Jezard replied that she had received the report and was consulting with an outside organization for guidance in implementing changes. The raw report is not being made available to parents.
- A parent asked how to pursue a diagnosis for a child that is in need of additional/different services because what is occurring is not working. Testing was done by the school, but not a neuro psych evaluation. Dr. Jezard responded that the parent/guardian needs to send a letter to her office identifying the test results you disagree with and she will send you a form and additional information to request an independent evaluation. She mentioned that

the school does not provide neuro psych evaluations because they do not impact the educational setting. The child's physician could order that type of evaluation which should be covered by health insurance.

- A parent asked how the school handles attention issues. Dr. Jezard responded that the School Psychologist should be contacted to help with social/emotional/attention issues and the information needed in the IEP may be recorded in the **Other Health Impairment** area.
- A short discussion occurred regarding what health insurance covers/does not cover and how it varies from carrier to carrier.
- A parent asked if and how an IEP is continued if a student was "home-schooled" as placement. How are the services in the IEP provided (OT/PT/SPL)? Dr. Jezard offered to look into it.
- **Comment forms are available at each meeting and on the SEPAC website for those parents who cannot make meetings or who prefer to submit comments anonymously.**

Susan Powers, a Transition to Adulthood Program (TAP) advocate at CORD, provided a brief description of the services available to students 18 through 22 including social programs and transition information. Students interested in finding out more about these services should call CORD directly at (508) 775-8300. A link to CORD will be posted to the SEPAC website.

REMINDERS → Child care is available at every meeting. Again this year SEPAC has a rotating schedule (both days of the week and building sites—remember to check the schedule carefully or the SEPAC website--www.barnstablesepac.com).

Ask the Advocate

Christine M. Riley and Tina Qvarnstrom of *Cape Cod Advocate* provided an overview of the IEP process and additional tips for preparing an effective IEP and/or 504. A lengthy Question & Answer session was held with parents. A link to Cape Cod Advocate is under the Resources tab on the SEPAC website.

Announcements

The next meeting is Monday, February 1 at BWB Elementary School (2463 Main Street [Route 6A] in West Barnstable. The SEPAC meeting begins at 5:45. The presentation, ***Exceptional Lives***, begins at 6:30.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Bent