

**Minutes
MS/HS SEPAC
May 5, 2021**

New SEPAC Website:

<https://grfederatedhsa.org/sepac>

Transition Meetings for incoming 6th and 9th grade parents

We will have to wait for Dr. MacKay to schedule. The transition meetings involve case managers and administrators who field questions for incoming parents. Typically scheduled before the end of the school year for incoming 6th and 9th grade parents. Previously, the school has held a follow-up meeting approximately 6 weeks after the start of the school year (in October) for parents to come in with questions.

Transition from MS to HS:

Case Managers: The transition will happen internally at the Special Services department. The HS team speaks with the MS team. Special attention is brought to cases in which there is an anticipation of difficulty in transition.

Students will have the same case manager throughout high school.

Ms. Lauren Auerbach will be the incoming 6th grade case manager. She will be speaking with the outgoing case manager(s) of the current 5th graders and reviewing their IEPs.

According to high school case manager, there is less transition for high school kids, because they are more independent. If there are specific questions, parents/guardians should reach out to case managers over the summer with questions or concerns. Note that case managers work only 10 months/year. However, if there are questions, please call the main number for Special Services and someone will be available to field questions.

A parent suggested that that case managers be proactive to work on transition between MS and HS. This year is different than in the past given the pandemic and different learning environments, circumstances and issues that may exist. We ask that HS Case Managers initiate with students and families to assist with transition.

High school orientation. One day orientation program for incoming 9th graders with some of the teachers and administrators present. There will be freshman class meetings periodically. Orientation will be scheduled during the last week in

August and will last about 2-3 hours. High school guidance counsellors have already spoken to 8th graders about scheduling.

Mentoring: The HS and MS will be running a mentoring program for incoming 9th and 6th graders. Incoming 6th graders will have mentoring program to help them adjust to being in the building and the new circumstances.

Testing Accommodations for ACT/SAT

ACT has recently changed its procedures regarding accommodations. Students now need to sign up for the test first, then ask for accommodations. ACT is now more like SAT, which always had strict criteria for "Limited time testing." If there's something in IEP, they are not necessarily going to approve accommodations. Just because it's in the IEP, or just because tutor says you need it, accommodations have been denied. People have been denied accommodations for items that were not included in IEP. Any accommodations that are needed for the students must be in the IEPs.

Getting accommodations for multi-day testing for ACT is very difficult now. Extended breaks, or more frequent breaks has been allowed. But multi-day is more difficult to get.

IEPs need to be very specific. For example, IEPs should mention if the student is doing double testing, or testing for only 2 hours per day, or only 1 test per day. These accommodations should be implemented as soon as possible in the IEP as appropriate.

You will also have to demonstrate use. The student has to be using the accommodations, not only that the accommodations are provided in the IEPs. Will need statements from teachers to say that the student is regularly and currently using the accommodations in the IEPs.

Really important to pay attention to the IEP accommodations.

In addition, re-evaluation should be done within 3 years of applying for the accommodations. ACT may take the position that there is not the current need if there is not a recent reevaluation. The issue is the "severity of the disability." Recommendation is that if your child has not been evaluated in 3 years, get it done.

A HS case manager said that no one has ever been denied because testing is outdated.

This may also be needed for college accommodations.

Relationship between Guidance Department and Special Services Department

Dr. Parent said that these two Departments talk to one another, but there is delineation between who has authority over different issues. For example, Guidance will never work on IEPs because they do not have training for the mechanics of IEPs.

Various departments do get involved in the Intervention and Referral Services (guidance, CST, nurse, building administration)

Role of Special Ed Supervisor in MS/HS

An LDTC from Byrd has been appointed to the position. She will be assisting and guiding the pedagogy of special education. Special ed teachers have not had a specialist who can work with them on how they deliver instruction. She is to provide a disciplined approach on what quality instruction looks like.

Learning strategies curriculum needs attention. She will be working to develop learning strategies course. She can give better supports for students who receive in class support. There is a particular need for specialty and electives where there is no special education presence. Discussed the need to assist gen ed teachers in ensuring how best to adhere to IEP modifications.

Strategies to address social challenges for returning students

Robin (the organization that ran the SEL day in March 2021) will provide year-round services during the 2021-2022 school year. A coach will be available for programming for Grades 6-12. There will be a heavy investment in middle school so that they can deal with issues for coming into high school. Need to make kids more comfortable for speaking about mental health. Need to learn about coping skills.

There is also motivation to increase transition services for outgoing seniors.