

SEPAC District-wide meeting

March 9, 2021

Minutes

Pathways:

Advisors are Ms. Wine, Ms. Tully, Ms. LeMieux. Lily Renga & Tricia Blazejewski, seniors, are co-mentors at Pathways.

Club run by HS students. Monthly meeting for all kids, not just special needs, grades K-5/6. All activities inclusive. Pre-covid: kickball, crafts, seasonal events. This year events are outside and spread-out. Trying to have covid-safe events and considering Zoom activities (such as a talent show, game show, or cooking class).

All mentors are recommended to go to training programs where they learn about kids with special needs and how to interact with special needs children. Right now, siblings may not be able to participate due to Covid.

1st event 3/24 spring scavenger hunt. 4-4:45. Flyer to be sent.

Update from Dr. MacKay:

MS changes:

- Writing supported in 6th and 7th in adaptive and collaborative settings. Students can choose 2 out of 3 options: electives, world language and learning strategies.

SAGE:

- School district is discontinuing contract with Sage counselors at the end of the year. District will hire counsellors on staff. Sage counselors are currently implementing the “termination process” to transition out of services with those counsellors and onto new counsellors. District’s goal is to fill positions as soon as possible.
- There is one counsellor currently working with Sage that will be leaving before the end of the school year. Handling case load: CST is working with counselor and families to see whether there is a good fit for children to work with school psychologists and other counselors.
- Goal for counseling for next year is to provide same or more robust services. District wants to work more in depth with families, and also to provide support to teachers when working with students with emotional concerns.

- Sage stemmed from Sage Therapeutic Day Schools, where they specialize in providing education and therapy. Offshoot of Day School is a counseling service embedded into a public school. The outsourcing supports formed their own company, and are no longer affiliated with the day schools. It is now called Thrive Alliance.

CALI score:

- As soon as county CALI score changes from Orange to Yellow, all students with IEPs will be invited to go back to school every day. Dr. MacKay will send out a letter asking parents if they want to change instruction from A/B to every day. Parents should notify case managers so teachers can be prepared.
- Parents are not limited in when they want to make the change. At any point after the CALI score changes, parents can decide to go to fulltime instruction.

Elementary Schools:

- Next year, the District will be implementing a K-2 autism class and a preschool autism class. In the process of hiring teachers and support staff. Each program would have 6 students.
- Some of students have already been notified, and the District is in the process of identifying other district students.
- Glen Rock would accept out of district students, if the in-district students' needs are met. Out of district students would pay tuition.
- Developing these programs to address needs of our own students.

Restart committee:

- Met to brainstorm options about getting students back in the elementary school.

Compensatory education memo sent by NJ Department of Education:

- Summer enrichment/ESY: offering same program as in the past. Any student eligible will be given opportunity to participate.
- For compensatory, CST will look at individual needs of each student. No one size fits all model. Any concerns, talk to case manager and will be discussed with team. No general program will be implemented. Look at individual needs of each child.

Parent Questions:

- In response to a question about whether there is chance to increase the amount of minutes of instruction kids receive in the resource room in elementary school, Dr. MacKay said that the District is trying to increase the time for all kids. The District is offering additional time for students with IEPs with their special ed teachers. However, they are restricted by the schedule. Doing best to accommodate parent and student needs.
- A request was made that there be an effort to reinvigorate building-based SEPAC groups for each elementary school

MS/HS report:

- [See Minutes of March 2 meeting]
- Re functionality on Genesis to capture information that teachers actually reviewed a student's IEP, Dr. Parent said that this is a feature that can be turned on, but it won't be turned on now. The District will wait until September. Does not know if the parents can find out whether a teacher read the IEP, but the administration will know.

“Angst”

- Please go to GRFederatedHSA.org to register.
- Documentary about kids living with anxiety. Viewable March 21-22. Panel discussion on March 24.
- SEPAC has offered to make a donation to increase the number of licenses so that as many parents that want to view it will be able to see it.

Elementary School Report:

- Will be meeting before the next district-wide meeting
- A question was raised about 3 year reevaluation testing and whether that will be done in person or virtually. Dr. MacKay said that after consultation with the District's attorney, if a student is remote, the District can afford them the opportunity to be tested either virtually or in person. The best way to gauge certain students and where they are, is to test them in person. This will be discussed with parents on case-by-case basis.

Q&A:

- How is the District preparing to address concerns relating to social and emotional issues for special ed kids when they return to school? The District is working with kids to reacclimate back into the building, such as inviting them to come into the building during

off hours. The District will work to best accommodate the needs of kids when they come back.

- How can we best distribute information from SEPAC?
 - District can post information on the SEPAC webpage.
 - Dr. MacKay will check to see if the Special Services Department can send out an email blast.
 - We can set up a Schoology group to make announcements and as a document repository. The “students” of that Schoology page would be parents. Each parent’s email address would have to be manually inputted. School will work with us.