

SECAC - Prince George's County
26 June 2007
6:30 - 8:00 pm
The Arc of Prince George's County

Welcome and Introduction of Members - all persons attending the meeting introduced themselves and told a little about their children.

The following people signed in: Gail Voigt, Lillie Bond, Mike McLaughlin, Karen Gavin-Evans, Bridget Chatman, Tobi Colvin-Snyder, Sherri Wright, Vindra Saleh, Vivene Williams, Sarah Wayland, Sarah Wayland, Pamela Leach, Melonee Clark, Enid Williams, Linda Tolbert, Judy Terle, and Meg Dillman.

SECAC Elections - Gail Voigt presented the nominations:

Chair: Mike McLaughlin / Gail Voigt (declined)
Vice Chair: Lillie Bond
Treasurer: Meg Dillon
Secretary: Sarah Wayland / Lillie Bond (declined)
Assistant Secretary: Gail Voigt

After some discussion of who was eligible to vote, the above slate of candidates was voted in by the 6 members present who had attended 3 consecutive meetings in the last calendar year.

Melonee Clark mentioned that the Arc will continue to host the meetings, the 4th Tuesday of each month (except July). She said that Karen Martin (at the ARC) has the keys, and she can be reached at (301) 925-7050 x675 (this needs to be verified).

Notices: Melonee Clark talked about the upcoming Resource Fair, the TIES conference in September, and DDA funding.

(1) 3rd Annual Resource Fair for Children with Developmental Disabilities (Birth to 21 Years Old)

When: Saturday, June 30, 2007 10am-1pm

Where: The Arc of Prince George's County

Location: 1401 McCormick Drive Largo Maryland 20774

Sponsored by:

The Arc of Prince George's County

The Developmental Disabilities Administration Southern MD Regional Office

Melwood

Resource Connections of Prince Georges County, Inc.

Contact Persons for additional information:

Melonee Clark - 301-925-7050 (The Arc of Prince George's County)

Rachelle Vaughan - 301-362-5138 (Southern Maryland Regional Office)

Serena Bush - 301- 870-6722 (Melwood)

April Thompson - 240-898-9331 (Resource Connections)

Karen Redman - 240-898-9382 (Resource Connections) for Spanish interpretation

(2) The PG TIES (Training, Information, Education, Support) Conference & Workshop will be September 15th from 9am - 5 pm at Lake Arbor Elementary School.

This is a special training program that will be helpful to you if you are the parent of a child with disabilities living Prince George's County. The program is designed to help you learn all you can about the IEP process, and IDEA and how to get the most appropriate services for your child. The training is FREE and open to all parents. You can get personal help during the day, meet other parents, and take home information that will help you become a better advocate for your child. Bring your IEP, and questions about your child's educational options!

What to expect:

- * Individual time with Parents' Place staff to get your questions about your IEP answered

- * Selene Almazan, the Director of Advocacy Services for MCIE (Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education Inc.) will talk about the reauthorization of IDEA, and what it means for the parents of children with disabilities.

- * Breakout sessions after lunch on (a) facilitated IEP meetings, (b) transition, (c) functional behavior analysis and plans

(3) The Maryland State Budget for next year is tight! DDA funding is always at risk; Ms.Clark asked that we make sure to contact Governor O'Malley and our local representatives to encourage them to fund the DDA so that families who need help can actually access it.

Office of the Governor

THE HONORABLE MARTIN O'MALLEY
MARYLAND GOVERNOR
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1925
410-974-3901, 1-800-811-8336
MD Relay 1-800-735-2258

To find your local delegate and state senator, use this website:
<http://mdelect.net/electedofficials/>

Update on the Community Inclusion Panel - Mike McLaughlin gave a report.

BACKGROUND: The Board of Education has mandated that starting in August 2007, all second grade CSEP students will move from their current CSEP placements into regular co-taught classroom with a ratio of 18 students to 3 teachers. This program, called the "Making Education Accessible in Neighborhood Schools (MEANS)" Initiative has 4 goals:

- (1) To provide a service delivery model for returning CSEP students to their neighborhood elementary schools that permits maximum access to the general education curriculum.
- (2) To restructure existing CSEP programs to provide specialized instruction for students with Autism, Emotional Disturbance, and cognitive impairments.
- (3) To reduce the number of students in CSEP sites.
- (4) To decentralize special education services by placing these supports in their

neighborhood schools.

The program is designed to move PG County Schools towards the federal goal of placing all students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

You can read *all* about this in the minutes from the May 3rd, 2007 Board of Education meeting minutes, found at:

http://www.pgcps.org/~board/agendas/boardagendapack_2/boardagendapack_3/51707packet/51707packet.pdf

The discussion of the MEANS program is on Pages 7 - 22, which includes both the plan, and a list of "non-negotiable terms" that must be followed for the plan to work. Mr. McLaughlin mentioned that teacher training is the key to success, and one of these terms is that all teachers in the 19 MEANS schools must participate in the "Boundless Learning Program" at JHU by June 12th, 2007. You can read more about this program at: http://cte.jhu.edu/aboutus_program2.html.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION FORUM:

This forum was a partnership of The Arc's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Committee, the SECAC-PG, and the PGCPS Department of Special Education to get feedback from the community regarding inclusive opportunities in PGCPS.

Based on the input from the participants, the partnership is generating a "State of Inclusion" report for PGCPS Superintendent John E. Deasy that will highlight the positives and the challenges that parents see with current efforts to provide LREs in PGCPS. The report will include the testimony given by the participants, and will make recommendations.

Mr. McLaughlin emphasized that, although the source of the report was called the "Community Inclusion Forum", the language of the report will emphasize "access", as it isn't just about inclusion - it's about giving *all* children access to the same opportunities.

Some other announcements from Mr. McLaughlin included information on "Making an Action Plan", ideas for the NCLB reauthorization, and a "Disability Advisory Board" for the Board of Education.

(1) In Howard County, some parents take advantage of a program that encourages those who interact with their child (friends, family, staff) to meet on a less formal (and not legally binding) basis to "make an action plan" for the child's educational goals.

There are typically 2 meetings. The first, MAP-1, is a forum in which the team members talk about their hopes and dreams for the child. In the second meeting, MAP-2, the team comes up with a list of actions and responsibilities that will be discussed/implemented in the IEP. Mr. McLaughlin was impressed by the meeting he observed - he said the team was relaxed and constructive. He thought we should push for these kinds of meetings to happen in PGCPS.

(2) The Elementary and Secondary Education Act NCLB (No Child Left Behind) is currently undergoing reauthorization, and we should actively lobby for changes that make the law less punitive when it comes to accountability (testing). Mr. McLaughlin said that Nancy Grasmick, Ph.D., State Superintendent of Schools, and our own Superintendent, Dr. Deasy, both support testing for "growth over time" versus the

current testing to standards, and suggested the following talking points (a) testing should follow a student's educational growth over time; standards are useful for goals, but they should not be the sole criteria for testing. (b) Also, for growth-over-time testing to become the model, the law will have to be modified to eliminate the end date, the 2013-2014 school year when the law currently states that all students will test "proficient". By removing the pressure of testing to standards for schools to make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress), schools can stop teaching to the test and instead focus on the individual student's ability to learn the curriculum allowing states to assess the progress (growth) of individual students throughout their education. Dr. Grasmick and Dr. Deasy both noted that changes like these will move our educational system towards providing an Individualized Learning Plan for each and every student, to be tracked and evaluated as appropriate for that child. However, even as late as last year, not all county school districts in Maryland had the ability to provide the individual student identifiers necessary for such individualized assessments. Now they do. Glitches will need to be overcome, of course. But now it is possible to track children's long-term academic progress, even if they move outside of the county, but stay within the state of Maryland. Other states (Colorado, Florida, and...) are also lobbying for the growth model.

(3) The Board of Education is creating a Disability Advisory Board (DAB) whose members are nominated and approved by the board and the Superintendent. The members would advise the School Board on multiple, disability-related issues, but primarily focus on PGCPs compliance with the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), such as access to and within buildings (many of our schools still have physical barriers) for students as well as PGCPs employees. Mr. McLaughlin was nominated as the SECAC representative to the DAB, and will work to coordinate the efforts of the SECAC with those of the DAB.

(4) The PGCPs.org website is being revamped. It is already easier to navigate.

Last, but not least, Karen Gavin-Evans from Danya International, spoke about her program to educate classmates of children with autism spectrum disorders. Autism Classroom Connections (ACC) is a series of four multimedia interventions designed to educate typically developing students about Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in elementary and middle school classrooms. Each video-based intervention is designed specifically to educate elementary or middle school populations about autism or Asperger Syndrome and high functioning autism. Teachers, parents, or any other advocate of a child with ASD can easily implement the ACC intervention in the classroom. All intervention packages include one video (approximately 15 minutes) and a facilitator's guide with instructions on how to conduct the presentation, along with related classroom activities and discussions.

The specific goals of the ACC interventions are to:

- * Increase typically developing children's understanding of autism
- * Promote social inclusion of children with autism in general education settings
- * Foster empathy and positive attitudes toward children with autism
- * Increase positive social interactions of children with autism with peers

Dr. Gavin-Evans' company, Danya International, has applied to the PGCPs Board of Education to allow their materials to be shown in classrooms in the PGC public schools. Dr. Gavin-Evans would like to come back and show the video to see what we think - if we like it, we should let Dr. Downing-Hosten, and our elected School Board Officials

know.

In the meantime, if you have Windows Media Player, you can watch samples from the video at: <http://www.danya.com/autismvision.asp>.

Judy Terle from MCIE (Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education) mentioned that in Howard Co. she always has a goal in her child's IEP that the children and teachers in her child's classroom must participate in "Disability Awareness" training by the end of September, and again in the middle of the year, if possible.

The next SECAC meeting will be August 28th, 6:30 - 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Wayland
PG-SECAC Secretary