

BOARD OF EDUCATION, NEW FAIRFIELD, CT
Special Education Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting

Name of Subcommittee: Special Education Ad Hoc Meeting type: Regular
Date of Meeting: 12/2/21 Minutes submitted by: Kimberly LaTourette
Members present: Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone, Stephanie Strazza
Member absent:
Other attendees: Patricia Cosentino, Katherine Matz, Melissa Busnel, Angela Mahoney
Meeting Access: SPED (12/2/21 at 6 p.m.) Web: <https://zoom.us/j/94558501669> Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 945 5850 1669

Stephanie Strazza called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Motion: To nominate Stephanie Strazza as chair

Made by: Samantha Mannion

Recording of Vote: All in favor

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 7, 2021

Motion: To approve the minutes of the October 7, 2021, meeting

Made by: Kimberly LaTourette

Seconded by: Samantha Mannion

Recording of Vote: All in favor

III. ACTION ITEMS - none

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Transition Program/Staffing - Katherine Matz introduced Angela Mahoney, STRIDES Program teacher, who is going to be presenting tonight. Katherine spoke about the value of having an in-district program and that it may not be what happens each and every year. Angela has been a special educator since 2001. She spoke about the goals of the program, calling it a robust transition program that focuses on independence. They provide specialized, individualized instruction using the CT Core transition skills. The biggest driving force is differentiation and really figuring out what each individual needs. One unique way that we are doing this is the community-based education and applying the learned skills in different environments (Whole Foods, Petco, Danbury Public Library, etc.). They are also trying to build soft skills - time management, budget/money management, self-advocacy. They build and try to maintain a vocational foundation using the career readiness module focus (job readiness, clerical, food service, ...). They have also visited locations that do woodworking, music and fashion, culinary, wellness and fitness. They have been accessing the bus service and increasing their community and safety awareness while making relationships as well. Angela encourages hobbies and the students will be participating in a craft fair this weekend. She then offered some time to answer any questions from members and parents.

A parent voiced some concerns that she is having about the program. She stated that she did not believe all of the parts of the presentation are actually occurring. Stephanie Strazza and Samantha Mannion stated that this would be the forum for parents to bring their concerns and voice their thoughts. Samantha mentioned that students appear to be moving as a unit to the different areas/locations and asked how individual needs are being met. Angela said that the program has herself and two other paras, so they are able to split up into smaller groups.

Samantha asked about the space - whether we are staying or going somewhere else. Melissa Busnel has been looking and had Phil Ross come out to look at a space that is within the budget and zone. Dr. Sanzo also visited. The entire team will meet again with the landlord to walk through the property and make sure it has everything we need for life skills and for several years moving on as well.

Ed asked about enrollment and staffing for next year. There are currently 5 students and Katherine will be asking for one teacher and 3 paras again for next year.

Kim encouraged members of the community and parents to attend these meetings - that is why we have this committee. She also encouraged parents with specific questions to reach out to the teacher and administrators as well.

B. IEP Fidelity in the General Classroom - Katherine Matz spoke about how the teachers have access to students' IEPs. All teachers have access on PowerSchool, and they can pull it up any time. It is their professional responsibility to read them, clarify understanding, and ask case manager questions if needed. Different buildings have different ways to meet and discuss the student's needs - it could be individual or have a team approach. If staff are ever concerned if IEPs are being followed, they can reach out to an administrator. Parents can reach out to the teachers specifically and ask them questions regarding their child's IEP. The next step would be to talk to the case manager or school administrator. Samantha Mannion asked if there is an electronic way to check if teachers have actually read a student's IEP. Stephanie mentioned signing off on PowerSchool possibly being an option. Kim suggested signing off on a form.

V. OTHER

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Stephanie Strazza

Recording of vote: All in favor

Seconded by: Kimberly LaTourette

Meeting adjourned at: 6:50 p.m.