

**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: 10/7/21 Minutes submitted by: Kimberly LaTourette  
Members present: Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Stephanie Strazza  
Member absent:  
Other attendees: Patricia Cosentino, Katherine Matz, Melissa Busnel, Rick Regan, Ed Sbordone  
Meeting Access: SPED (10/7/21 at 6 p.m.) Web: <https://zoom.us/j/92541701513>  
Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 925 4170 1513

Stephanie Strazza called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. August 5, 2021

**Motion:** To approve the minutes of the August 5, 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/Vocational Training**

Samantha Mannion asked how many paraprofessionals are currently working in this program. There is currently one. The BOE approved two in the budget, and she is concerned that these positions are not filled. Katherine Matz said they actually budgeted for 3 paras in addition to the teacher and said we are experiencing a staff shortage. She said that we are in better shape than other districts. The two positions are posted, they have done multiple interviews, and are trying to hire. Katherine mentioned that our paras in the district would get first dibs and the positions are still posted. Pay may be one of the factors. Melissa Busnel mentioned that there is a new job site at the library and some kids will be split up. There are lots of moving parts and students come in with different skills making this program a continuum. They have asked employers to treat our students like they are their own, having a part of all of the pieces their employees have access to. It is so important for kids to practice those skills they are learning in the classroom in these areas. Ability Beyond is coming in to help focus on pre-vocational skills and run a job club. We will provide students with experiences in different job areas, and it is our hope that if the students do well and the employer likes them, they may leave and get hired or at least have the resources to know who to contact. Hopefully, they will know what kind of job they may like and where they could be employed. The search for space is still ongoing. Melissa, Phil Ross, and the realtor will be meeting next week.

**B. Dyslexia Training for Teachers and Staff -** We have invested in training our staff in a number of literacy programs. The one we have most in is Wilson. We are running a four-part training series for our staff by a local consultant. We will continue to watch our internal staff who are certified at different levels and with different programs. Some of them are able to train other staff as well. We will be offering opportunities and information to the general education staff about dyslexia as well. Stephanie asked if we will have aligned training throughout the district and any specific training for staff below Grade 3? Melissa said they will be involving the coaches and interventionists when the consultant is in the district. The Foundations Program is K-2. All of the students receive this instruction, but there are interventions as well. Stephanie also asked about the screening process. Katherine said we use Dibbles and look at the iReady data.

**C. Student Involvement in IEP/PPT Process** - Katherine said that students usually get involved in 8th grade (spring) and throughout high school. PPS and families may decide that it is not appropriate for the student to attend the entire PPT meeting. They may attend for the last 20 minutes for the summary and to go over some information. Others may come in the beginning and share how they think things are going. The district would like to involve Middle School students more. The state decided a few years ago that students with autism at 14 should be involved with their transition services. The state has now said that it should be all students at 14. Our district was already doing this, so it is not a change in practice. Student involvement is on a case-by-case basis. Once our kids get to high school, every student has a triennial evaluation. Our high school team will go over the testing results with the students to help them understand themselves as a learner, and their strengths and weaknesses.

**V. OTHER** - Samantha mentioned the responsibility of Special Education students in the Open Choice Program if their expenses are more than the grant provided. She said that the answer that was received from Chip was different than what the statute states. Katherine said that their outplacement would not be our responsibility. Their sending district would still be their NEXUS. Samantha said that the literature says once we take them in, they are ours. Stephanie said that there are funds allocated to the Danbury District that they can use for this program, and they can only be used to pay for excess costs for the receiving district. Dr. Sanzo brought attention to "the sending district should pay the receiving district...." from the statute (subsection G.) Samantha would like "reasonable cost" to be defined. CES mirrors this, being paid the difference between the grant and what is being charged.

**Motion to adjourn:** Made by: Stephanie Strazza

**Recording of vote:** All in favor

Seconded by: Kimberly LaTourette

Meeting adjourned at: 6:42 p.m.