

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: 12/3/20 Minutes submitted by: Kimberly LaTourette
Members present: Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Stephanie Strazza
Member absent:
Other attendees: Patricia Cosentino, Katherine Matz, Melissa Busnel, Ed Sbordone and Rick Regan
Meeting Access: SPED (12/3 at 6 p.m.) Web: <https://zoom.us/j/96504167931>
Dial In: (929) 205-6099 Meeting ID: 965 0416 7931

Paul Gouveia read the procedures for the virtual meeting.
Stephanie Strazza called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. October 1, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of the October 1, 2020, meeting

Made by: Stephanie Strazza

Seconded by: Samantha Mannion

Recording of Vote: All in favor

III. ACTION ITEMS – none

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. High Needs Students

Katherine Matz and Melissa Busnel shared a presentation of all the informational items. Katherine reminded the subcommittee about the three big ideas to keep in mind during COVID - Public Health and Safety, Flexibility and Community - and that SPED is individualized. She reviewed why we would go hybrid - increase in infection rate within the community. We can increase physical distancing, decrease class sizes, decrease possible exposures, increase in-person learning versus being fully remote.

When we are hybrid, our high needs learners are offered as much in-person instruction as possible.

- skills deficits with functional communication, verbal and non-verbal;
- require physical assistance to learn and attend basic needs;
- usually require a 1:1 or 2:1 on IEP;
- exhibit significant behaviors;
- significant challenges accessing remote educational opportunities and
- may not be able to wear PPE.

Katherine and Melissa reached out to families today to let them know if their students meet the requirements for high needs learners. Cohorts have been reassigned so they are both 1 and 2.

B. Evaluations

Safety is the top priority. Each time we switch, we check in with Tim Simpkins and Lori Cipriani to confirm if evaluations can be conducted safely. Currently, we are instructed to conduct evaluations with minimum PPE requirements - mask, face shield or plexiglass barrier.

Some SL evaluations may not be done because a student may not be able to see the staff member's full face. Evaluators have been asked to consider the validity of the testing and if it is a good use of time or not. Teams may be asked to use other data. Families should be contacted by the case manager about their child's testing.

When the PPT meets, any testing that was not completed can still be recommended to be completed when safe and appropriate. A PPT will then meet again to discuss and review. There should be communication to families if testing is or is not complete prior to the PPT, and they should be contacting parents to review what data they do have. It should not be a surprise at the PPT meeting if testing is not complete. We are following our state and federal guidelines. There is recognition that we may have to get creative and not use all of the tools.

C. Implementation Plan

"Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan" describes how the services are being delivered. This does not replace the IEP. If there is an agreement with the family, a copy will be sent to the family. They should be developed collaboratively with the family and the team. The case manager will send plan to the family. Families who receive an implementation plan prior to any communication from the case manager or team may reach out to the case manager to discuss. The plans should not be a surprise. If families disagree, this is a working document, and can be discussed and changed at any time. Everyone should receive a new copy with changes for remote, hybrid, the in and out of school. IEPs may not be followed as written even when in person due to staff members changing positions. For example: a staff member may push in instead of pull out for services. Katherine mentioned having a grid with in-person, hybrid, and fully remote implementation plans.

D. Transition Program

M. Busnel loves seeing students from Birth to Three through graduation. The transition program is the icing on the cake and helps the student get ready for the real world. There was a meeting with Naugatuck Valley Community College in Danbury prior to Thanksgiving. We are hoping to have a program there. We would have a bus line. This program would include the following:

- Vocational Skills- jobs on campus or in the community;
- Social Skills;
- Independent Living Skills;
- Recreation;
- Navigating a college campus and taking classes when appropriate;
- Travel Training (HART bus);
- Accessing community resources and
- Community Safety.

Samantha asked about the timeline, and Melissa would love to start in the fall, but we will have to see what the budget season holds. We are asking for another SPED teacher, 2 support staff, transportation, and instructional supplies in this year's budget. There would be a savings based on the students that we have that need a transition program and the types of support they may need. It would be great to talk about the cost savings associated with this program.

E. Staffing

Speech and Language staffing at MHHS was an issue. G. Briggs (SLP) was 3 days per week, E. Bodnar was 1 day per week, A.M. Allison was 1 day per week, and S. Kersting and A. Calkins provided coverage. G. Briggs will remain on. C. Furniss works 5 days per week. High School, Middle School, and CONS staff are released back to their schools. Reading services will remain and finish to make up all their sessions. In the Middle School, in order to cover reading services, J. Paul is providing services and R. Campagniolo will be the SPED teacher. It was asked if the one person coming back from leave will be able to cover what the two teachers are doing now. It was explained that evaluations were taking a lot of time. Nicole should be coming back and have a case load and set schedule.

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Kimberly LaTourette

Seconded by: Stephanie Strazza

Recording of vote: All in favor

Meeting adjourned at: 6:50 p.m.