

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: 4/4/24 Minutes submitted by: Susan Huwer
Members present: Sue Huwer, Kimberly LaTourette, Samantha Mannion, Ed Sbordone
Members absent:
Other attendees: Ken Craw, Maria Kennedy
Place of meeting: New Fairfield Community Room, 33 Route 37, New Fairfield, CT.

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 1, 2024

Motion: To approve the minutes of February 1, 2024, as presented

Made by: Kim LaTourette

Seconded by: Samantha Mannion

Recording of vote: All in favor

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Paraprofessionals - The district has looked at the number of paraprofessionals and their assignments and compared them to the number of IEPs provided to make sure we are using our paraprofessionals efficiently and every child is getting what he/she needs. We are shifting from staffing kids to staffing classrooms with paraprofessionals. We look to keep the same paraprofessionals with the same children. We have six vacancies for paraprofessionals and are contracting out to provide coverage at this time. When fully staffed, the district will have the equivalent of 80 FTE paraprofessionals.

B. Coverage for Elementary Special Education Teacher - We had a recent resignation of a special education teacher, but teachers are taking up additional duties to help. The district is keeping track and will make sure any service hours not met are documented, communicated to families, and made up.

C. Unified Sports - The Unified Sports Track and Field program is to start on Monday, April 9th with six practices planned. Two information sessions were held for parents to give an overview of the program for the rest of the year and beyond. Middle School and High School will be combined in one program. There are coaches, paras, student volunteers. There are 13 students and 10 peers participating thus far. We received \$4000 to help the program with uniforms and transportation to track events.

D. STRIDES - The Strides program is growing as planned. Currently, we have four students this year and will have eight students from our district next year and more the following year. We are working to partner with the Newtown school system in the 24-25 school year which will bring in more students and consequently we will be moving to new space (a mock apartment) that will have more room (from 1,000 to 3,000 square feet), multiple bathrooms, private meeting space, and space for kids to decompress. We have another district reaching out to place their students as well, but we are not ready yet for this. Presently, we are working out the details/contract with Newtown via Maria Kennedy. An advantage of partnering with Newtown is that Newtown can provide transportation for all students to the worksite, otherwise a \$37,800 cost. The cost of the new location will be \$1875 monthly, an increase of \$875 monthly from the present rent/location. We are applying for a one-time grant from the State to help fund this new space.

E. 24-25 Special Education Scheduling - The Committee looked at Special Ed for next year re offering a less restrictive environment for the kids for whom it would be appropriate, bringing staff into the classroom rather than sending students out. Also, we have the SEED program that addresses social and emotional needs of students in grades 3-5. We want to add a social and emotional program at the K-2 level as we are seeing behavior that needs to be addressed.

F. Transition Planning - Special Ed scheduling for the 24-25 year has been underway for students transitioning to new schools. As students transition from school to school, Special Ed staff will be reviewing IEPs that travel with the students to make sure paperwork is up to date with hours appropriately noted, and staff will be meeting with families to make sure they are comfortable with the oncoming transition, including asking families and students if they want to visit the new school beforehand.

IV. ACTION ITEMS - none

V. OTHER

Motion to adjourn: Made by: Ed Sbordone

Recording of vote: All in favor

Seconded by: Samantha Mannion

Meeting adjourned at: 6:45 p.m.