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## Citizens' Advisory Committee for Special Education

[www.smccacse.org](http://www.smccacse.org) and Facebook @ CACSE – St Mary's County MD

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Elizabeth Snyder, Chairperson  
VACANT, Secretary

VACANT, Vice-Chair  
June Nicholas, Secretary *pro tempore*

### Meeting Minutes for June 9, 2014

Meeting held at:

St. Mary's County Public Schools - Special Education Conference Room  
23160 Moakley Street, Leonardtown, MD, 20650

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1. Call to Order at 6:30 pm
2. Introduction of Members and Parents/Community
  - a. All Officers were present; additional Representatives present this evening were:
    - i. June Nicholas, Great Mills High School
    - ii. Leslie Popielarcheck, Mechanicsville Elementary School
    - iii. Laura Schultz, Decoding Dyslexia-Maryland
    - iv. Brad Searle
3. Minutes for May will be tabled until the next meeting.
4. Committee Reports
  - a. Outreach
    - i. Rise Up Award
      1. The second annual award was presented at the Board of Education meeting on May 14. Nominee applications were reviewed by Leslie Popielarcheck and Mandy Greer. Awards were presented by Elizabeth Snyder and Melissa Charbonnet, and Leslie took photographs of the recipients present. Five awards were presented. This year's awardees include:
        - a. Misty Knott, fourth grade teacher at Piney Point Elementary School.
        - b. Lisa Hixson, special education teacher at Town Creek Elementary School.
        - c. The team of Katie Fry, special education teacher; Jessica Sohn, second grade teacher; and Cassandra Lindsey, applied behavioral analysis technician; at Evergreen Elementary School.

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- d. The team of Carla Smith, first grade teacher; Tim Flynn, speech-language clinician; and Jeffrey DiRenzo, principal, at Mechanicsville Elementary School.
  - e. The team of Mona Ash, special education teacher; Laura Cook, third grade teacher; Patty Scherer, SAIL teacher; Liz Nehrbass, teacher of the visually impaired; Sara Seemayer, teacher of the visually impaired/orientation and mobility specialist; Lewis Harden, adaptive PE teacher; Michele Brokans, paraeducator; Holly Peck, physical therapist; Heather Jarrett, physical therapy assistant; Sherilyn Holzer, occupational therapist; Colleen Singleton, speech-language clinician; Anna Burke, audiologist; Katie Tippett, nurse; Cindy Fletcher, IEP coordinator; and Wauchilue Adams, principal, at Green Holly Elementary School.
2. Recipients received a lovely trophy and all nominees received a certificate of recognition.
  3. A press release will be prepared for submittal to local media, the CACSE website and CACSE Facebook page.
  4. It was discussed that CACSE should seek to get the award presentation scheduled on the BOE calendar for 2014 – 2015 as soon as possible.
- ii. Website
    1. June Nicholas and Rosalynn Adams continue to work on the website as time permits, and will hold working meetings in July at times to be determined. Volunteers are welcome to help.
    2. A new website banner will be created, incorporating a new CACSE logo and closer tie-in to previous representations.
  - iii. Promotions and advertising
    1. Designs for a new logo and promotional products will be solicited for approval this summer. Representatives are requested to suggest ideas for promotional items.
- b. Education
    - i. Southern Maryland Collaborative for Families of Children with Disabilities Spring Conference
      1. “Your Special Education Rights: Your Child’s Rights, Simplified” was held Saturday May 17 at the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center in California, MD. The presenters were Jennifer Laviano, Special Education Attorney, and Julie Swanson, Special Education Parent Advocate.
      2. Lessons learned from the conference include:
        - a. The \$25 registration fee was deemed to be a fair value.
        - b. More effort should be made to improve and increase publicity and registrations.

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- c. More scholarships should be offered.
    - d. About ten people registered after the deadline, which barely pushed registration past the 50-person mark.
    - e. Consideration of creating a conference that allows for SMCPs professional development should be coordinated through Jeff Maher, Executive Director of Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development; MSDE approval would be required.
    - f. Videotaping/podcasting the conference for online presentation would be useful; it could be determined whether this could be done using students from SMCPs' video production classes at the Tech Center.
  3. Possible speakers for the next conference could include Jed Baker (social skills training), Bill Stillman (autism awareness), Michelle Garcia-Winner (social thinking), or Rick Lavoie (learning disabilities).
  4. Registration and accounting was increasingly handled by the Autism Spectrum Support Group of Southern Maryland, as they have the least restrictions on logistics.
  5. Much of the advertising was handled by SMCPs Partners for Success, including distribution of the registration flyer through PFS email contacts.
  6. No request for sign language interpreters was made for the conference, so CACSE's involvement was limited to funding two \$25.00 scholarships for parent attendance.
5. Updates from Partners for Success (Susan Shannon, Coordinator)
  - a. Susan is soliciting for ideas for new workshops and training sessions for the new school year and planning the 2014 – 2015 schedule.
6. Updates from Affiliated Agencies and Organizations
  - a. Decoding Dyslexia - Laura Schultz said that they are planning to hold more events and increase advocacy efforts. Decoding Dyslexia is contributing to efforts to get a resolution from Congress recognizing dyslexia as a formal disability. Learning Ally is a local reading provider for books for the blind; they are offering teacher education workshops and parental support. Disability Advocacy Institute, in Hollywood, MD, provides services, as well as a new provider on Three Notch Road near Wal-Mart in Lexington Park.
  - b. United Cerebral Palsy – Brad Searle reports that their local group is also advocating on Capitol Hill. They are trying to raise awareness on helping younger kids with building neuroplasticity, with the idea of reshaping neural connections for better motor control.
7. Director's Report (Melissa Charbonnet, Director of Special Education)
  - a. SMCPs is still working on the FY 2015 budget, which begins July 1.
  - b. Most instructional vacancies will continue to be filled in-house.

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- i. 25 general education paras were moved to special education positions.
    - ii. Schools are still submitting plans on what they need.
  - c. There will be a Downs Syndrome conference in October and held at the College of Southern Maryland's La Plata campus. Registration will begin in July. CACSE may be able to offer some scholarships for attendees.
  - d. Alternative-MSA scores are in for the 2013 – 2014 school year, and they are “phenomenal,” especially in science. Scores will be posted when all are official.
- 8. Old Business
  - a. CACSE Budget
    - i. The budget for the 2014 – 2015 school year becomes official on July 1. Remaining money for the 2013 – 2014 school year needs to be spent by then. Money for CACSE expenditures in the new school year will become available in late August.
    - ii. There was discussion about how much was spent on the conference and scholarships, and whether there was money that could be rolled over to the 2014 – 2015 school year. Additional discussion included paying for printing costs for new brochures, signs, magnets and the like.
  - b. Family Toolbox
    - i. CACSE grant money will be used to purchase items. Several items have been submitted for spending approval and purchase information.
    - ii. Smaller items are being purchased so far that would be easily storable. Appropriate storage containers should also be acquired.
    - iii. An officially designated storage location should be chosen, preferably at Partners for Success.
    - iv. Elizabeth Snyder has begun a list of items to purchase. Comments are requested by June 13 so orders can be finalized before July 1.
  - c. CACSE Executive Board Elections
    - i. Elizabeth Snyder called for nominations for election to the following positions for the 2014 – 2015 school year. The following nominees were presented to the Committee for a vote:
      - 1. Elizabeth Snyder for Chair
      - 2. Leslie Popielarcheck for Vice-Chair
      - 3. June Nicholas for Secretary
    - ii. The vote for election was held, and all three nominees were approved for office per CACSE By-Laws Article IV Section 1. The new roster of Executive Officers should be presented to the Board of Education in September.
- 9. New Business and Additional Concerns
  - a. State SECACs – Elizabeth reported that there was a phone conference in Columbia, MD recently; another will be held in September in anticipation of

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Congressional reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

- b. Summer meetings - The new CACSE Executive Board will seat in July; however, Melissa Charbonnet and Deb Pierce will be on annual leave at the time of the July CACSE meeting, so the Board of Education building will not be available. Discussion ensued as to whether to hold the meeting at an alternative location. It was determined that the July CACSE meeting, and the accompanying Support Group meeting, would be cancelled. The August meeting will be held as scheduled.
  - c. No additional concerns were raised this evening.
10. Adjournment
- a. Adjournment was at 8:00 pm.
  - b. The next CACSE Meeting shall be held on Monday, August 11, 2014 at 6:30 pm at the same location.
  - c. The next CACSE Support Group Meeting shall be held at 5:45 pm at the same day and location, just prior to the regular Meeting.

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### Rise Up Award – Press Announcement

*NOTE: This announcement has been posted on the CACSE website (<http://www.smccacse.org/>) and a link has been posted on the open page of CACSE – St. Mary’s County on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/CACSE-St-Marys-County-MD/557936827610084?sk=timeline>).*

*This is being respectfully submitted to the Enterprise newspaper, TheBayNet and Southern Maryland Online editorial pages for letters of community recognition. Press announcement was prepared on July 12, 2014, by June Nicholas, juniper2291@yahoo.com.*

On May 14, the St. Mary’s County Citizens’ Advisory Committee for Special Education presented the 2014 “Rise Up” Award at the Board of Education meeting for St. Mary’s County Public Schools. On hand to present the award was Elizabeth Snyder, Chair of CACSE. Assisting in the presentation was Melissa Charbonnet, SMCPs Director of Special Education.

Five awards were presented this year, each of which recognizes individuals and groups in the school system and in the greater community who have gone above and beyond the normal call of duty to support our students with disabilities in their educational endeavors.

This year’s awardees include:

- Misty Knott, fourth grade teacher at Piney Point Elementary School.
- Lisa Hixson, special education teacher at Town Creek Elementary School.
- The team of Katie Fry, special education teacher; Jessica Sohn, second grade teacher; and Cassandra Lindsey, applied behavioral analysis technician; at Evergreen Elementary School.
- The team of Carla Smith, first grade teacher; Tim Flynn, speech-language clinician; and Jeffrey DiRenzo, principal, at Mechanicsville Elementary School.
- The team of Mona Ash, special education teacher; Laura Cook, third grade teacher; Patty Scherer, SAIL teacher; Liz Nehrbass, teacher of the visually impaired; Sara Seemayer, teacher of the visually impaired/orientation and mobility specialist; Lewis Harden, adaptive PE teacher; Michele Brokans, paraeducator; Holly Peck, physical therapist; Heather Jarrett, physical therapy assistant; Sherilyn Holzer, occupational therapist; Colleen Singleton, speech-language clinician; Anna Burke, audiologist; Katie Tippett, nurse; Cindy Fletcher, IEP coordinator; and Wauchilue Adams, principal, at Green Holly Elementary School.

This is the second year that this award has been given. Recipients of the award received a lovely trophy, and all nominees received a certificate of recognition.

CACSE is taking this opportunity to recognize the dedicated individuals who work with our students and to thank them for the amazing jobs they do every day, including teachers, paraeducators, and therapists. Many thanks to this year’s recipients and nominees, the parents who shared the wonderful stories of their work, and the Director and Staff of the SMCPs Department of Special Education for their assistance.

*(pictures to be posted follow on back of this page)*



2014 Recipients of the Rise Up Award



Green Holly Elementary School Recipients



Town Creek Elementary School Recipients



Piney Point Elementary School Recipients



Mechanicsville Elementary School Recipients