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Citizens' Advisory Committee for Special Education

www.smccacse.org and Facebook @ CACSE – St Mary's County MD

Elizabeth Snyder, Chairperson

Leslie Popielarcheck, Vice-Chair

June Nicholas, Secretary

Meeting Minutes for December 14, 2015

Meeting held at:

St. Mary's County Public Schools – Special Education Meeting Room (2nd Floor)
23160 Moakley Street, Leonardtown, MD, 20650

NOTE: This Meeting allowed for Conference Call-in; persons wishing to participate by Conference Call should contact Elizabeth Snyder at smccacse@yahoo.com.

1. Call to Order at 6:32 pm.
2. Introduction of Members and Parents/Community
 - a. All Officers were present except Leslie Popielarcheck; additional persons present this evening were:
 - i. Melissa Charbonnet, Director of Special Education
 - ii. Debbie Crosby, Coordinator of Special Education
 - iii. Chuck Slade, Park Hall Elementary School
 - iv. Laura Schultz, Leonardtown High School, Decoding Dyslexia MD
 - v. Brad Searle, Green Holly Elementary School
 - vi. Mandy Greer, Capt. Walter F. Duke Elementary School, via phone
3. Review and Approve Minutes – November meeting minutes were approved with corrections.
4. Updates from Partners for Success
 - a. A new calendar of training and workshops for Winter/Spring has been announced; dates and information will be posted on the CACSE website.
5. Committee Reports
 - a. Outreach
 - i. "Family Toolbox"
 1. Initial feedback from St. Mary's County Library is that all items are being appropriately returned and the supply of consumable items is sufficient for now. Rotation of bags among the library branches was discussed.

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2. Four new bags have been prepared, two have a math and money theme and two have a theme on handling emotions. Additional items on teaching the concept of allowance, physical play and musical items will be kitted soon.
 3. Nine schools have experimented with the sensory break boxes and have found them to be very useful. Chesapeake Public Charter School is interested in ordering additional products.
 4. Elizabeth Snyder will talk to Rocco Aiello (Coordinator of Adaptive Physical Education) about utilizing some of the items in an adapted PE program. June Nicholas will get the information on the recent kits from Elizabeth to post them on the CACSE website.
- ii. "Rise Up Award"
1. CACSE tabled planning for the 2016 award in January. A new nomination form will be created and distributed in February. The presentation is tentatively scheduled to be held at the April 27 Board of Education Meeting, with a nomination deadline of April 9.

b. Education

i. Southern Maryland Collaborative for Families of Children with Disabilities

1. Initial reports from the 2015 Fall Conference were positive and most of the logistical efforts were successful. Approximate attendance by county was as follows:

Overall	St. Mary's	Calvert	Charles	Other MD	Out of State	TOTAL
Parent	21	14	20	8	0	63
Professional	53	76	26	19	6	180
Both	9	4	8	2	1	24
Other	4	2	1	1	2	10
Student	2	0	0	0	0	2
Unknown	0	1	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	89	97	55	30	9	280

Parent No-show	1		3			
Prof No-show		9			1	
Both No-show	1		2			
Other No-show						
Switched	3	3	1			
Uncertain		1	1			
Not paid	1					
Refunded	1					

Does not include refunds made to Spring Dell Center. Uncertain attendance status is probably switches or transfers to others but have to be verified. There were about a dozen walk-ins on the day of the event who claimed to be switches or already registered; working on to verify.

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service. Maureen Montgomery, currently Deputy Superintendant, will act as the Interim Director until the position is permanently filled.

8. Old Business
 - a. Old business has been tabled until January.
9. New Business and Additional Concerns
 - a. Dyslexia Task Force
 - i. Laura Schultz presented some data on the impact of dyslexia, which affects between 9 – 17 % of the general population. A large number of individuals in the criminal justice system are affected by learning disabilities or emotional disabilities. Reading scores for all students remain flat, and dyslexia and other learning disabilities remain underdiagnosed.
 - ii. The Task Force to Study the Implementation of a Dyslexia Education Program had six meetings to examine a wide variety of issues. There are fifteen private schools in Maryland that specifically offer instruction for reading disabilities and the Task Force wants to examine what they are doing well. There is an impetus to change the national language to be specific (refer to dyslexia rather than “learning disability”) in order to apply specific remedies of instruction. Guidance on best practices is being prepared; dysgraphia and dyscalculia are also being included.
 - iii. Further information on the Task Force can be found at <http://marylandpublicschools.org/dyslexiaeducation/index.html> and <http://decodingdyslexiamd.weebly.com/news>
 - b. Support for families transferring in from other countries
 - i. Brad Searle reports on the needs of a family whose child has RETT Syndrome. The family is looking for resources. SMCPSS is working with the family to identify their educational needs and will seek to provide support in special education, English language learning, assistive technology, and other services. A Facebook page has been established to coordinate support, see <https://www.facebook.com/Reuniting-Ruby-586934111459491/>
 - ii. Ms. Charbonnet remarked about the general difficulties faced when placing children with special needs when the families are coming from another country or overseas. Often, the needs of the child are not realized until the child is actually enrolled in a U.S. school; in extreme cases, children of some immigrants or foreign nationals have never been to school at all. Some ad-hoc outreach exists, but CACSE could examine creating something more comprehensive as more immigrant or refugee families are placed in Maryland schools.
10. Updates from Affiliated Agencies and Organizations
 - a. Joint Activities
 - i. Classes for parents and advocates continue through June 2016 on “From Emotions to Advocacy,” offered by Learning Disabilities Association of St. Mary’s County (Idasmc.org), Autism Spectrum Support Group of Southern

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Maryland (autismsupport-somd.org), and Parents' Place of Maryland (ppmd.org). Full details are on the CACSE website.

- ii. June represented Autism Spectrum Support Group of Southern Maryland at a joint meeting on December 14 with Lisa Dean, COMPASS Autism Team Lead of SMCPs and of Bob Kelly, Director of St. Mary's County Emergency Services and Technology Department. There is a need to identify and register individuals with disabilities who might require additional assistance or special procedures by first responders when faced with emergency situations. Children with autism, for example, are prone to wandering and are often attracted to bodies of water; children and adults may be nonverbal or may have difficulty in communication especially while anxious or stressed, or may respond inappropriately when confronted. Several concerns were discussed, including the need to keep the program voluntary, expand the identification list to all individuals who have a need, not just those with autism. Mr. Kelly will follow up in January with a proposed registry form and further meetings. ASSG will also seek to provide parental and first responder information sessions.

11. Comments and Questions from Callers

- a. CACSE asked for questions and concerns from the representatives attending by phone conference. No additional questions or concerns were raised.

12. Adjournment

- a. Adjournment was at 8:06 pm.
- b. The next CACSE Meeting shall be held on Monday, December 14 at 6:30 pm in the Special Education Conference Room, and will include Conference Call dial-in. Contact smccacse@yahoo.com for access.
- 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.