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Citizens' Advisory Committee for Special Education

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

Elizabeth Snyder, Chairperson

VACANT, Vice-Chair

June Nicholas, Secretary

Meeting Minutes for February 13, 2017

Meeting held at:

St. Mary's County Public Schools – Special Education Conference Room
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 6:40 pm.
2. Introduction of Members and Parents/Community
 - a. All Officers were present (Nicholas in person and Snyder by phone); additional persons present this evening were:
 - i. Susie Fowler, Acting Director of Special Education
 - ii. Wallace Roberts, Supervisor of Special Education
 - iii. Laura Schultz, Leonardtown High School, Decoding Dyslexia - MD
 - iv. Keri Butler, Leonardtown Middle School
 - v. Chuck Slade, Park Hall Elementary School
 - vi. Brad Searle, Green Holly Elem. School, Reaching for the Stars, via phone
3. Review and Approve Minutes – The September and October Minutes will be corrected and approved via email after public comment.
4. Updates from Partners for Success
 - a. The Spring 2017 calendar of workshops is underway.
5. Committee Reports
 - a. 2017 Fall Conference
 - i. Charles County Partners for Success has the lead in planning the 2017 Fall Conference; a contract with Michelle Garcia Winner is being sought.
 - ii. CACSE will need a new representative for tri-county collaborative team planning for the 2017 Fall Conference.
 - iii. CACSE has received one request to date for reimbursement for the 2016 Fall Conference.

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b. Dyslexia Program

- i. Laura Schultz reported that the new Technical Assistance Bulletin for identifying specific learning disabilities and implementing educational strategies has been released for review and comment. The Bulletin addresses reading, writing and mathematics for all instructional levels. Read at: <http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Special-Education/MDTABulletinSLD.pdf>
- ii. A committee consisting of concerned educators and administrators from SMCPs, DD-MD members and parents was formed to inform parents and educators, seek feedback, and devise strategies. One meeting was held so far; the next meeting will be March 6 and will address mathematics instruction.
- iii. Ms. Fowler also gave a presentation in Annapolis at Dyslexia Advocacy Day on how to implement the Bulletin. SMCPs hopes to be selected for the new statewide pilot program, which will model methods of instruction and provide teacher training. Funding is pending.
- iv. Concerns related to higher education (training teachers and supporting post-secondary students) will be addressed.
- v. Lisa Blottenberger will give a presentation on structured literacy at the Learning Disabilities Association of America National Conference in Baltimore on February 17.

c. Communications

- i. Work on the website will continue. Mandy Greer, Leslie Popielarcheck and June Nicholas will work on a list of special education FAQ via Google Docs for team collaboration and eventual posting to the website.
- ii. CACSE will develop a flyer for PeachJar and for email mailout or school delivery that will update parents on what CACSE does, the Family Toolbox, how to get on the email distribution list, etc.
- iii. CACSE will examine whether any schools need new CACSE posters or brochures or table cards for takeaway at IEP meetings.

d. Membership

- i. A welcome letter has been distributed to IEP Chairs to aid in representative recruitment. Current representatives should reach out to their schools to determine best methods of communication. More representatives are welcome.

e. By-Laws

- i. CACSE needs volunteers to join a committee that will assist in maintaining and updating the By-Laws and ensuring that CACSE is in compliance. The committee will collaborate on authoring revisions to the current By-Laws by the end of the school year.
- ii. June Nicholas will set up the current version and pending revisions of the By-Laws in a sharable Google Doc for representative collaboration.

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- f. "Family Toolbox"
 - i. The sensory boxes continue to be popular items and circulate widely.
 - ii. One item from one of the Toolbox bags needs to be replaced. Chuck Slade is the point of contact regarding the Family Toolbox bags and liaisons with St. Mary's County Library, who holds and catalogs them.
 - iii. CACSE has purchased some books for sensory breaks and other items that will be used at the display table when CACSE is represented at area events such as school "Open House" nights or educational conferences.
 - g. "Rise Up Award"
 - i. A new nomination form for 2017 was created by Leslie Popielarcheck and was circulated for review. Ms. Fowler will verify that the Rise Up Award can be presented at the April 26, 2017 Board of Education Meeting.
 - ii. The application will be distributed to schools via PeachJar, through the CACSE website and Facebook page and through email distribution. Ms. Fowler will assist in putting out a "robocall" to spread the word; Leslie and Mandy will prepare a script.
 - iii. The deadline for nominations for this year's award is April 7.
 - iv. Mandy Greer and Leslie are on the committee; volunteers are welcome.
 - h. Advisement to the Board of Education
 - i. CACSE may speak to the Board at an upcoming Board Meeting to provide an update on recent actions.
6. Director's Report
- a. Susie Fowler submitted the following report.
 - i. Maryland Special Education Parent Involvement Survey
 1. The annual survey seeking parental suggestions for improvement of special education in their child's school has been sent out by MSDE. Parents are requested to reply by May 1, 2017.
 2. The link to the online version of the survey is:
<https://www.mdparentsurvey.com/>
 3. Last year, the response rate for St. Mary's County was 50 percent. SMCPSS is hoping that more parents respond this year.
 - ii. Extended School Year Services
 1. With the implementation of a new statewide mandate that school begin after Labor Day, school systems are determining how to adjust the schedules for ESY services and summer school recovery programs. SMCPSS may implement a six-week schedule.
 2. ESY services are typically provided Monday-Thursday from early July through mid-August.
 3. Mr. Roberts will contact IEP Chairs about the 2017 summer schedule as soon as it is determined. There are no changes in the criteria regarding who qualifies for extended services at this time.

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7. CACSE Budget Report

- a. Discussions on the budget will be tabled until the March meeting, including an update on final expenditures for the FY 2016 budget and potential expenditures for the FY 2017 budget.
- b. Current earmarks for the FY 2017 budget include:
 - i. A minimum of \$250.00 in Scholarships for the Fall Conference (six scholarship requests have been made to date)
 - ii. \$500.00 for the Rise Up Award Teacher Toolbox
- c. The balance remaining for FY 2017 is \$1,750.00 as of October 10, 2016.

8. Old Business

- a. By-Laws
 - i. A committee will be formed to consider revisions to the By-Laws, including the suggested rules and procedures for public comment.
- b. Support Group Meetings
 - i. The Support Group Meeting has had low attendance and coverage by Officers has been difficult this year. CACSE will consider alternate coverage or other ideas to help parents seeking advice.
- c. Additional Topics requiring CACSE follow-up and resolution include:
 - i. Family Communications/SMCPS website link testing
 - ii. Sensitivity training for educators
 - iii. Transportation issues related to wheelchair and assistive equipment use
 - iv. Feedback from the MSDE Parent Surveys for Special Education
- d. Vice-Chair
 - i. A decision was made that the position of Vice-Chair shall remain vacant for the remainder of the school year.

9. New Business

- a. Elections for the 2017-2018 School Year
 - i. A call for nominations to the CACSE Executive Board will be made this spring, for election in May, or if the By-Laws are revised, in June.

10. Public Comment

- a. Parents, educators and the public are welcome to make public comment at this time, and shall:
 - i. Sign in at the beginning of the meeting
 - ii. Limit comments to three minutes per speaker
 - iii. Refrain from commenting on individual staff or situations but rather address concerns in general
- b. CACSE will take in all public comment on advisement and will discuss concerns raised at future CACSE meetings.

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- c. For the February 13 Meeting there were no individuals offering public comment.

11. Reports from Agencies and Organizations

- a. Autism Spectrum Support Group of Southern Maryland
 - i. June Nicholas reported that ASSG hosted Training on “Understanding Autism and other Intellectual and Developmental Disorders” for law enforcement and first responders and a “BE SAFE Interactive Movie Screening” for teens and adults with disabilities. Both events were at the College of Southern Maryland, La Plata Campus on February 9. About 35 officers and first responders attended, including from Charles, Calvert, St. Mary’s and Prince George’s Counties, as well as US Park Police.
 - ii. Both events will also be held on at St. Mary’s College on June 8, 2017. More sessions may be offered through the ARC of Southern Maryland. See details or register at <http://autismsupport-somd.org>
- b. See the Ability
 - i. Elizabeth Snyder reported that an education conference on behavior analysis and strategies for home and school was held at St. Mary’s College of Maryland on January 14.
- c. Reaching for the Stars
 - i. Brad Searle reports that RFTS is finalizing language on seeking funding in an upcoming appropriations bill that will address issues related to cerebral palsy.
 - ii. Cerebral Palsy Television is now available online; Brad posted information on the CACSE Facebook page. See more at <http://reachingforthestars.org/2017/02/cerebral-palsy-television-is-now-available-on-apple-tv-4th-generation/>
 - iii. March 25 will be the National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Day; supporters are encouraged to wear green in support. A tee shirt fundraiser can be found at <http://www.tfund.com/GG4CP-2017>

12. Questions and Concerns

- a. Brad Searle asked Ms. Fowler to address several questions, including:
 - i. A status on Green Holly therapeutic pool repairs: There are therapy pools at Green Holly and also at Benjamin Banneker Elementary School. The GHES pool is currently out of commission but there is a desire to reopen and repair it. The Great Mills Pool operated by St. Mary’s COuty Recreation and Parks cannot be utilized by SMCPS because of transportation issues and loss of instructional time during the day.
 - ii. Accessibility options for taking State Assessments with assistive technology: Brad asked if it was possible for children with limited communication or mobility issues to take the state assessments using an iPad or other assistive technology rather than using a human scribe. Ms. Fowler replied that there are some alternative forms of technology that can be used but they are limited due to the design of the PARCC tests. There was speculation that the software for the tests may not be modified to be accessed by alternate forms of delivery.

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- iii. What process is required for parents to request assistive technology: Ms. Fowler said that if parents wish to request assistive technology for their children, the usual procedure is to contact the IEP Chair at their school. The requests are conveyed via note or memo through the Supervisors of Special Education. There is not a request form for parents per se, but a form exists for schools to describe technical needs such as internet connectivity or printing capability.
- iv. Whether parents are notified when an occupational or physical therapist is reassigned or if there is a gap in services: Parents are not routinely notified about changes in school personnel as a therapist may cover several schools and substitutions are sometimes necessary. However, parents are supposed to be notified if there is a time lag in services or if the services are not being provided at all as this would present a violation of the requirements specified in a child's IEP.

13. Adjournment

- a. Adjournment was at 7:48 pm.
- b. The next CACSE Meeting shall be held on Monday, March 13, 2017 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 just prior to the regular November Meeting.