

SEPAC October 19, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Somya Bhatnagar, Janice Corrado, Kristin Fox, Kirsten Light, Megan Lipset, Nick Markarian, Robin McKeon, Lisa McNey, Jean O'Connell, Stephanie Orr, Lindsay Pannucci, Monica Petraglia, Bridget Schiraldo, Sean Siet, Guddia Singh, Allyson Read, Lauren Small, Lisa Stanzione-Vitale, Jen White, Karen Zubulake

SEPAC & PEC Reorganization

(Presented by Janice Corrado, Somya Bhatnagar, Lindsay Pannucci, Jean O'Connell)

- To more effectively identify individual school vs. district-wide issues, SEPAC leadership recognized the benefits of reorganizing the structure of SEPAC into two distinct groups
 - Building-based concerns regarding special education will be addressed by PEC school representatives, who will work with other grade level representatives through principal meetings at each school. They will identify school-specific issues which will be shared with both PEC and SEPAC leadership. Each school will have one or two PEC representatives
 - A smaller group of SEPAC representatives, representing all district special education students, will work on broad topics across the district and will meet with district administrators and staff in October, January, and April. These SEPAC representatives will analyze the data gathered from PEC school representatives in order to identify trends for district administration to consider

Communication/Collaboration

(Task Force members Megan Lipset, Monica Petraglia)

- Back-to-School Night at elementary schools will include a dedicated 30-minute session prior to general education presentations so that parents of students in self-contained Bridges and LLD classes, and possibly Resource Room classes, have the opportunity to meet with both special education and general education teachers. This will be effective starting September 2023
- District is considering SEPAC's recommendations on how to collect Special Education parent data/feedback brought forth in principal meetings at each school
- PEC website being shared across various platforms
 - Mr Markarian's SOS 10.21.22
 - Linked on ALL Special Services Friday Folders
 - Newly updated district website includes link to PEC website on all school pages
 - Listed under *Special Services Parent Resources* on the district BernardsBOE website
- Weekly PEC Newsletter
 - Includes ESS district presentations and workshops
 - Shares upcoming Lunch & Learns and events hosted by Special Services supervisors

Parent Education

(Task Force members Lindsay Pannucci, Bridget Schiraldo)

- PMT has previously provided Crisis Management seminar for PEC parents but are no longer providing training for parents whatsoever
 - Researching new provider to teach this type of de-escalation training technique
 - Contacting SPAN for new possible resources
 - Will follow up with Director of Special Services
- In the interim, all parents should reach out to their case managers to discuss difficult/unmanageable behavior at home
 - Case managers will provide individual feedback and instruction for parents
 - If a home visit is needed, one will be arranged
 - Reminder that case managers and supervisors are there to help parents at all times with their child's struggling behavior
- PEC Parent Survey distributed via Weekly Newsletter, PEC Website, PEC Facebook Group
 - Seeking perspective from parents new to the special education program in order to provide social engagements, educational workshops and mentoring opportunities
 - Exploring new avenues to increase awareness and parent participation in PEC events, activities, programs and workshops

Community Outreach

(Task Force member Karen Zubulake; recruitment of second member underway)

- Karen is working with New Jersey Support Services Coordinator for Somerset County on an in-person ID/DDD workshop for parents with students in the Transition program. This will be an evening presentation, to be scheduled for January 2023.
 - Adult day care options
 - Financial services overview
- Karen to work with the Transition Coordinator and Director of Special Services on creating an anonymous Post-Transition database. This will include the names of program providers, support coordinators, and the number of students from Ridge who have selected each program
- Karen and Lindsay Pannucci are designing a sign for display by businesses who employ our Vocational and Transition students. Three designs will be created and voted upon by students, with the winning design presented to businesses in the latter half of 2023
- Lindsay is reaching out to local therapy providers to offer programs for PEC children

Curriculum and Inclusion

(Task Force members Lisa McNey, Lauren Small)

- Sensitivity Training
 - Current model is not sustainable over time due to financial and staffing concerns
 - Identify how to infuse sensitivity training into existing school curriculum
 - Consider different implementation at elementary grades vs 6-12 grade level
- Kristin Fox, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, acknowledged disability education is part of the NJ State Health and Phys Ed curriculum. The district will continue to

identify opportunities for integrating disability awareness into the current curriculum as content areas are written

- SEPAC recognizes the complexity involved in considering curriculum changes and will work through Director of Special Services as we research possible options for educating students regarding disabilities
- With regard to wheelchair accessibility, parents should notify case managers in advance of potential extracurricular participation so that accommodations can be provided for student
 - Visitors to any school who require wheelchair accessibility should contact school staff in advance of visit