

Meeting Minutes

Subject: SEACOM (Special Education Advisory Council of Marblehead)
Kick-off Meeting

Notes By: Christopher Baylow / Jennifer Schaeffner

Meeting Date: November 14, 2006

Attendees: See list below

Copy: SEACOM file

DISCUSSION

1.1 Introductions of SEACOM Co-Chairs

The following items were presented by SEACOM Co-Chairs Christopher Baylow and Jennifer Schaeffner.

1.2 Purpose of SEACOM – A resource and advisor to parents and educators of children with disabilities in the Marblehead Public Schools grades pre-k through 12. The Mass DOE requires each school district establish a parents advisory council, like SEACOM.

SEACOM's specific goals are as follows:

1. Promote a network of parents of children with special needs, and provide a forum to share information.
2. Promote better understanding between parents / guardians and school officials.
3. Advise the Director of Special Education Services and the School Committee on operations and development of special education programs, parent & teacher training needs, and help to develop policy.
4. Promote communication between SEACOM members, local, State and National organizations, councils and groups.
5. Provide informational forums to parents, educators, students and professionals.
6. Promote communication and awareness within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion.

1.3 Introduction of MPS special education services chair persons by Bob Bellucci, Director Special Education Services, MPS:

1. Nancy Charest – Pre-k (not in attendance).
2. Maureen Smith – K-4.
3. Janine Glabicky - 5-8.
4. Kathleen Harris – 9-12.

DISCUSSION

- 1.4 Report on upcoming workshops scheduled for the winter and spring of 2007. Workshops are scheduled the second Monday evening of each month.

December 2006: No meeting due to holidays/vacations

January 8, 2007: Kotin Crabtree & Strong attorney Dan Heffernan - Changes to special education Federal Law IDEA 2004, final regulations enacted August 2006 and how to use information to assist in the planning, decision-making and monitoring of your child's IEP

February 12, 2007: Joann Pino/Mass. Advocates for Children - MCAS Accommodations

March 12, 2007: Bob Bellucci and Chairs from Special Services Dept - Extended Year and Summer Services.

April 2007: No meeting due to vacation

May 14, 2007: Federation of Children with Special Needs - Parents Rights Workshop providing an introduction to rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts Special Education Law and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and to help parents learn how to be effective partners with the school, to decide the child's eligibility for special education, develop an IEP and monitor educational progress.

- 1.5 Possible SEACOM initiatives for 2007:

1. Website development and launch.

2. Resource Center at Abbot Library.

3. Parent Survey 2006-07 via the website.

4. Attendance at School Committee meeting 1/4/07 and ongoing representation at School Committee meetings. Amy Drinker will be the liaison to SEACOM initially. Parents please attend.

5. SEACOM representatives on the PTO at each of the 8 schools, and representation at the monthly PTO president's council meetings.

6. Review and monitor DOE evaluation of MPS Special Education Dept. Sept. 2005

7. Reaching out to Early Intervention in local catchment area to provide parents with resources to facilitate a smooth transition into MPS.

8. SEACOM to become member of MASSPAC – Massachusetts Association of Special Education Advisory Councils.

9. Parent networking

10. Review / revise SEACOM by-laws.

DISCUSSION

1.6 Possible workshops for fall 2007:

1. September meeting Bob Bellucci to update on progress of evaluation, what's new for 2007, 2008 school year, report on budget.
2. Round table discussion - behavioral therapies for autism spectrum disorders.
3. Executive functioning (Sarah Ward, SLP) – workshop provides parents with strategies they can use at home to help children get organized, from homework to chores. Ms Ward is a speech language pathologist and past president of the Massachusetts Brain Injury Association. She has worked for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), for the Mars program, teaching robots executive function skills.
4. "An IEP for my child" (FCSN) - takes parents step-by-step through the development of the IEP including how to articulate a Vision, using evaluations to write annual measurable goals and how to measure their child's progress
5. "Transition Ages 14-22"(FCSN) - addresses the issues related to designing the right curriculum and supports throughout high school so that the student will be on the right track for becoming self-sufficient and living independently after graduation
6. Bullying prevention in concert with bullying prevention taskforce starting in Marblehead.
7. Other topics from results of parent survey.

1.7 Parents are encouraged to get involved in SEACOM. Specific areas of need include website developer / manager, Secretary, Treasurer, SEACOM representatives to the School Committee / PTO / Early Intervention. Contact Chris Baylow (cbaylow@comcast.net) and Jennifer Schaeffner (jenschaeffner@aol.com).

These notes shall become part of the SEACOM record. Please contact the author within seven days of the distribution date of any additions or corrections.

List of Attendees: Christopher Baylow, Jennifer Schaeffner, Robert Bellucci, Maureen Smith, Janine Glabicky, Kathleen Harris, 35 Marblehead parents of children with special needs.