

Minutes of Suffolk Special Education Advisory Committee – November 20, 2019

Attendees:

Voting: Leslie Schiefer, Vivian Evett, Holly Boyce, Angela Miller, Tiarra Logen-Biggs, Anitra Simmons, Regina Hall, Saul Godinez via virtual meeting

Consultant: Julie Masters, Stephanie Whitley

Guest: Ann Dunn, Paige Kluck, Sarah Bailey, LaCrecia Riddick, Salli Purnell, Danielle Pack, Sheena Levesque

Absent: Courtney Richardson, Jeff Davis, Thea Davis

I. Welcome and Introductions - Ms. Evett welcomed everyone and people introduced themselves.

II. Announcements and Correspondence

- A. Ms. Evett mentioned at the November School Board meeting, the SEAC committee was mentioned and that the policies governing membership had changed. Members of the meeting were provided a copy of the By-laws. Ms. Evett broke down the by-laws of the SEAC committee. The school board would like to appoint one person from each voting borough. Ms. Evett doesn't feel comfortable changing the committee and worries changing members might favor the school board in lieu of the committee. Ms. Evett wants to know why the school board wants to change the membership policies. SEAC has plans to contact the school board and its representatives. Ms. Schiefer wants to know why someone who has no child / grandchild involved with special needs would want to be on the committee. The policy states that each School Board member will come up with a candidate and the candidate will serve on the SEAC committee. Ms. Evett mentioned that in March the committee forms a Nomination Sub Committee. During our meeting in July, the full committee approves the nomination members. To Mrs. Evett's knowledge, the committee has not turned any member away who wanted to join the committee. Ms. Schiefer feels that an application process for SEAC would be counterproductive. Ms. Dunn mentioned that the committee needs more than 7 members because when the committee is divided into the subcommittees, 7 people aren't enough.
- B. Day for people with Disabilities at the Virginia Zoo will be May 2nd from 10-1pm.
- C. Ms. Evett mentioned that there was not very much traffic at the Disability Awareness fair. Ms. Masters mentioned that the turnout was more this year than before. Ms. Evett wants next year for the committee to be more centered instead of in the back of the gym.
- D. Chat and Chew by the Autism Society will be November 21st at the Panera in Harbor View; Teen dance is the 14th of December in Hampton; Next move is a program for people with disabilities; SKIP school counseling intervention program for families with special needs coming into Suffolk Public Schools; TDT is offered as an Outside company of Western Tidewater for children with more emotional and behavioral needs.

III. Public Comment – None.

IV. Guest Speaker – None

V. Old Business

A. Approval of September minutes - Minutes were approved as written.

B. Special Education Reports

1. Special Education Director's Report

- Ms. Whitley reported on the Disability Awareness Fair that was held on November 15, 2019: The Autism Society and SEAC were attendance. Tables were set up with different items and different activities. System technology specialist were in attendance. Suffolk public school teachers were in attendance. Student support services were in attendance. Parent Resource Center was in attendance. It was mentioned that Chesapeake SEAC conducted a walk for their Disability Awareness month. SEAC would like to get together and submit ideas for the fair for 2020.
- School performance reviews have started. It is district wide a each of the schools. Principals come in and share their plan and talks about their goals. The special education program does their own audit. They look at student data, compliance and ways to provided feedback to case managers.
- SPS has hired a new educational diagnostic Technician. Also hired a new Behavior Specialist for special education.
- Diane Resnick is retiring December 6th.

2. Parent Resource Report-

- Parent Recourse center received 5 visits and 23 phone calls. PRC Open House scheduled for November 20, 2019, the same night as November SEAC, was being held at Booker T. Washington Elementary School.
- Form families forward is having a fun and fellowship open house from Friday December 6 from 6-8pm.
- Autism Society free respite night directory.
- PEATC news e-blast: Where should I begin? Transition to employment forms. CJ Butler is doing training for Autism Society at ODU on January 25th at the Tri-cities campus.

3. Transition Report will be presented at the January SEAC Meeting.

VI. New Business

Subcommittee reports- None reports will be sent out again in January

VII. Public Comment Review – None.

VIII. Open Discussion – What is the plan / process in place for an IEP or a 504 plan to be communicated with school personnel such as nurses etc.? Along with the IEP there is an affidavit that is supposed to be signed by anyone that is a service provider to that student. Only people who need access to IEP can log into the IEP system. There is no consistency between the Elementary school, and middle school IEP process. Ms. Whitley is working on consistency across the district.

Regarding transition, Ms. Masters invites incoming students to the school during the summer, parents are encouraged to bring a camera to take pictures of different locations. Parents and students meet the staff in the building.

Has Suffolk done a Gap Assessment? Where is the formal assessment to identify the gaps?

Ms. Schiefer emailed reading statistics that were obtained via a school board member's Facebook page to SEAC members. She posted the percentage of the students that are on a lower reading level. Ms. Schiefer highlighted the students with disabilities stated that 82% of students with disabilities could not read on grade level.

Benchmark testing how are the benchmark testing so low if a child is on honor roll. Ms. Evett says data committee comes once a year and they break down the information. The data specialist attends the January meeting.

Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters has broken ground on the mental health building. Ms. Simmons will let us know when we can start donating to help continue to fund the new building. There was discussion regarding Middle school and Elementary school transition accommodations. A member was informed that children cannot have backpacks for special accommodations.

IX. Adjournment - The next meeting will be January 15, 2020.