

Warwick Special Education Advisory Committee
Wednesday, April 8, 2015
School Committee Room 7:00 pm
Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Jessica Schad, Mary Townsend, Caitlin Regan, Kristen Saunders, Adrian Phillips, Gail Aldrich, Cindy Roberts, David Ghigliotty, Barbara Ghigliotty, Rachael Ghigliotty, Sharon Terzian, Sandra Parrillo, Michael Matteson, Bethany Zawislak, Meghan MacKay, Joseph Gendice, Jennifer Connolly, Kathy Fielder, Becca Seamans, Eugene Nadeau and Michelle Haley.

Jessica called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and introductions were made. Mary offered apologies that there were no minutes to present to the committee. The minutes for the March 11 meeting and this one will be available to the committee next month.

Old Business:

Workshop – Attorney Kevin Nerney - March 25, 2015 – This workshop/presentation regarding ‘Estate Planning’ was held in the small auditorium at Veterans High School. Kevin did a great job of presenting as much information as possible to the audience that had a variety of interests based on their child’s age and individual needs. He responded well under pressure and provided an overwhelming amount of good information...speaking about the Able Act, Special Needs Trust funds, and estate planning options. Kevin is an advocate for children, adults and families! There was discussion as to holding this presentation annually as there is always new information and new students and families that need it.

radKids Program – Ready to Go!! ☺ Scheduled to be held on Fridays beginning on May 1st from 4:30 – 5:30 in the all-purpose room at Park School. Our targeted group is grades 3 – 5 with a maximum of 12 students.

March Fundraiser for Cerebral Palsy Awareness in memory of Anna Byrne – moving forward. Dr. D has approved the flyer and yet here we are again discussing our concerns about distribution. Dr. Connolly will remind principals to please distribute WSEAC information. Some other thoughts were to send home schedules of upcoming events and meetings with quarterly progress notes...it’s an idea!

ESY Programs – There was more discussion regarding the recent focus on Social and Emotional learning and Social Skills Groups. We spoke about the possibility of having a Social Skills program along the lines of Families Plus with a different focus. There was more discussion regarding PBIS and RTI. Dr. Connolly will speak to Dr. Sara Monaco about presenting to this committee. Dr. Connolly reminded this committee that Extended School Year programs are to maintain current skill levels. ESY was never intended to provide enrichment.

New Business:

Distribution of WSEAC event flyers - This ongoing issue is yet to be resolved, however it was noted that many recent attendees are getting the information from the WPS Connect-Ed calls. This information is also posted on our website. Moved along as this topic was already discussed under Old Business.

Special Education Statewide Parent Survey – currently ongoing! Encouraging parents to participate!

SEAN Network Meeting (4/30/15) – Jessica, David, Mary and Sharon will attend.

Safety Day at Fire Station (May) – This event has been scheduled for Saturday, May 16th from 2:00 – 4:00. Jessica continues to finalize plans with Officer Steve Lombardi and Assistant Fire Marshall Michael Matteson. Details TBD and flyer will be distributed as soon as possible.

Best Buddies Friendship Walk – will be held on Sunday, May 3 at Johnston Memorial Park.

School Committee Update: Eugene Nadeau, Vice-chair was present this evening. Mr. Nadeau gave a brief history of his background. He commented on the PARCC testing and confirmed he had also been informed that it had gone well. He stated that the Long Term Facilities Planning Committee had focused on secondary schools, whereas SMMA was also looking at elementary schools as well. He spoke about the WPS budget presentation to the City Council on Monday night and confirmed that the presentation was completed prior to the bomb threat and evacuation. He commented on the search for Superintendent. He updated the committee regarding the survey held regarding the vacation weeks and the school calendar.

Director of Special Education Report: (These notes are adapted or quoted from the Director of Special Education Report.)

Dr. Connolly reported that she had visited nearly every school, except for Cedar Hill which is being rescheduled. She was pleased to report that Mike Matteson and Sandra Parrillo were approved at the last school committee meeting. She updated the board on the ongoing Job Coach trainings and Autism Project training, with participation of teaching assistants, teachers, school psychologists and guidance counselors.

“PARCC and Alternate Assessment (NCSC) have rolled out smoothly. NCSC will be done from 3/30-4/14 and PARCC will wrap up Monday, April 13, and then will begin again in the beginning of May. As the initial phase of PARCC wraps up, teachers will be encouraged to review and revise PNPs as needed in preparation for the test in May.

Special Services administrators met with SMMS this week and will continue to participate in their evaluation.”

As reported last month, Dr. Connolly, Chris Cobb and some secondary special educators attended the Transition Institute on March 12 & 13. “As a district, we are going to be looking at improving our transition assessments and articulating what assessments should be given and when.”

“...upcoming events of interest: Many of the secondary students from all three high schools will be attending a workshop this Friday “Pathways to Prosperity: Getting the Skills to Pay the Bills”.

Family Employment Awareness Training (FEAT) is a free two-day training designed for families, their young adults with special needs with significant support needs and the professionals who support them.”

State Update: Ms. Montanaro came from Thundermist and continues to do a nice job with clients and their families. Elizabeth Roberts is now leading Health and Human Services. Sharon also updated the committee on the lack of agencies accepting new clients and the “bureaucratic cuts” to Katie Beckett and Medicaid.

Membership: Barbara Ghigliotty’s application will go to the next school committee meeting.

Scheduling of Next Meeting Date: Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 7:00 pm at the Administration Building in the School Committee room

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Townsend

