

10/24/07 SEAC Meeting Minutes

In attendance:

Parents: Penny Hill, Andrea Braun, Brenda Bugbee, Laura Frigstad, Tierney Francis, Matt and Eileen Lundgren, Jane Meany, Sara McFee, Tricia Olson, Amy Onken, and Leslie Siegel

Staff: Michelle Dunaski, special education coordinator; Kim Lannier, district/special education secretary; Dan Spriggs, HS special education teacher

- Michelle presented several updates regarding increased state funding for special education, district-level changes in staffing and changes regarding the IEP process (excusing a staff member from an IEP meeting and the state looking into omitting short-term objectives for IEP goals to follow the federal guideline-a handout was provided)
- Surveys were mailed to all parents of children receiving special education services prior to the Oct. 24th meeting. Zero surveys were received as of Oct. 31st. Several parents discussed the survey questions during the meeting and one parent sent in feedback after the meeting.
- Topic ideas for future meetings and areas where speakers are desired-
 - Autism
 - Anxiety issues in children with various diagnoses
 - General behavior strategies to assist with children at home (getting homework done, dealing with behaviors/non-compliance/attention, transitions, etc)-**Special education director Josh Robinson will be speaking on this topic at the next SEAC meeting on Dec 5th, 2007**
 - Dealing with transition from elementary to middle to high school
 - Dealing with bullying
- Several parents asked that staff follow up on getting PACER puppets to come in as part of a disability awareness program. Michelle offered to look into this, discuss with Kari Page-elementary school principal, and report back at the next meeting-**Michelle Dunaski and Becky Olson will be working in collaboration to get an assembly together after the first of the year at Wilshire Park.**
- Parents discussed their reluctance in the past to attend SEAC meetings due to not understanding what the committee represented, misunderstanding who was “eligible” to attend, etc. Michelle will look into the legal requirements of the committee and follow up at the next meeting. Michelle discussed that her intent is to make it a parent-friendly environment where parents can learn from each other, listen to speakers present on topics of interest and receive relevant special education related updates. The brochure will also be updated, as several parents commented that the wording used indicated attendees had to be “appointed” to the committee. The new brochure will be available on the district website and in print by the next meeting.

- Parents asked what the requirements are for attending school board meetings and “having a voice” with other administrators/school board. Michelle followed up with superintendent Dr. Rod Thompson-**If parents have a proposal they should email/call Michelle Dunaski. She will follow up with Dr. Thompson, he will evaluate the proposal and determine if it’s something that can be handled without the board or if it should be addressed by the board. Michelle can present the issue at the board meeting and parents can sign up for the “from the audience” segment of the meeting.**
- Parents were encouraged to share resources by emailing Michelle or Kim and/or bringing resources with to future meetings. Resources will be included in meeting minutes and/or on the district website.
- Michelle will work with Barb McIntyre, webmaster for the district, on updating the special education website. Several parents made suggestions for updates and all will be considered. Michelle will have an update at the next meeting.
- The parent of a middle school child shared feeling “insulted” that there was no mention of or materials related to special education services addressed at the middle school orientation. Parents also expressed concern with the service delivery model at the secondary level and the issue of being “required” to transfer out of the district after elementary school.
- A parent asked how the district addresses special education students who are also gifted/talented. Michelle responded that they are entitled to gifted/talented services like any other student if they meet the criteria. Michelle will bring a copy of the criteria to the next meeting.
- A parent shared the following resources: “Lighthouse for the Blind” website where you can submit a book and they put it on tape for free; Orton Gillingham approach for student’s with learning disabilities
- A parent of a child diagnosed with “DiGorge Syndrome” shared the characteristics of this syndrome and how his child is affected by it.
- Parents discussed having separate diagnosis specific support groups that meet outside of the SEAC meetings.