

**Calvert County Public Schools  
Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee  
Meeting**

**October 20, 2020 6:30- 8:00 p.m. / via TEAMS**

**Attendees:** Christina Harris, Director of Special Education; Joseph Cormier, Chairperson; Kathleen Porecki, Member-at-Large; Christine Finamore; Sue Rafalowski; Paul Reilly; Antoine White, Calvert County Board of Education candidate; and Judy Wickens

**Welcome and Introductions**

Chairperson Joe Cormier called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Attendees present at the start introduced themselves.

**What is SECAC?**

The Calvert County Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee (SECAC) meets monthly to collaborate with and provide input to the Special Education Department/Director. Membership includes parents, community members, and Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) staff.

**Executive Board Vacancies-Vice Chairperson & Member-at-Large**

There are two committee vacancies, Vice chairperson and member-at-large. An election will be held at the next SECAC meeting on Nov. 17, 2020. Contact Mr. Cormier if you are interested or if you would like to serve on the Bylaws Committee or Staff Awards Committee.

**Director's Update – Christy Harris, Director of Special Education**

The Special Education Department is using a Distance Learning Plan (DLP) to serve as the amended IEP and supplement to the IEP as we continue to phase in the reopening of schools. Once schools are fully reopened, the DLP will not be needed as the current IEP will be in place. IEP meetings are currently held virtually and as always a parent or school can request a meeting at any time. CCPS continues to conduct assessments virtually and in person. As of September 21, some students with IEPs who were eligible for in person instruction have been in school for partial days. In person instruction will be increased as our phases for reopening continue.

CCPS Board of Education approved a plan for students in pre-K through Grade 2 to return to school beginning November 9th in a hybrid model (A week/B week model alternating in person and virtual instruction) four days per week. Families had the choice of the hybrid model or 100% virtual. For students with disabilities, if the team determines that the child should attend on both A and B week, and if their DLP/amended IEP indicates this, they will attend both weeks.

In the proposed reopening plan for CCPS, the next group eligible to return in the hybrid model are Grades 3 – 5 in early December. This will be discussed at the Board of Education meeting on Thursday. Students with IEPs can attend both A & B weeks if necessary. Another consideration for early December when grades 3-5 return will be for students who are working on the alternate standards framework to receive in person for full days rather than partial days.

At this point, middle school students are scheduled for in person instruction in January and high school will follow at the beginning of February.

Ms. Harris is an advocate for students who need in person instruction to attend school on site and views safety as a top priority. The Health Department advises the Student Services Department on safety protocols put in place to make sure school is as safe as possible for students and staff. Many safety protocols are in place in our schools.

The Hybrid Return to School Recovery Plan is posted on the CCPS website. Feel free to contact the Special Education Department with any questions about students with disabilities and reopening plans.

MSDE has many available resources. Maryland Learning Links has resources for navigating the COVID-19 pandemic which would be helpful to families of students with disabilities.

MSDE has guidance for school systems across the state. They provided us with a technical assistance bulletin on supporting students wearing masks, which was shared with staff and administrators. This bulletin will be attached to the Minutes for your review.

### **Topics for Focus This Year**

The SECAC Executive Board met and selected the following topics for focus during the 2020/2021 school year:

- Virtual learning tips – mini sessions throughout the year, embedded into meetings
- Community resource sharing – invite resource partners to provide a short overview of supports they offer to families and/or students
  - Calvert County Mediation Center – to share information about facilitated IEP meetings and services
  - SOMD Bridge
  - Parents Place of Maryland
  - The Connection
  - The Autism Project
- Staff Appreciation Awards (April)
- Special Education Staffing Plan – current staffing, what we anticipate for enrollment, and recommendations for staffing for Special Education (March)
- Tips for parent participation in IEP meetings
- Events organized by Parent Connections

In addition, Sue Rafalowski organizes events for Parent Connections/Partners for Success. Parent connections offers a variety of resources and supports. Paul Reilly hosts secondary transition events in partnership with Parent Connections.

Mr. Cormier suggested a breakout session for parents to participate in professional development that is offered to teachers, relating to Special Education virtual learning.

Ms. Wickens provided feedback on a blended learning (virtual) program, Lexia Core5, which offers differentiated literacy instruction. This program is being implemented at the elementary level in CCPS. Because of the adaptive nature of the program, learning difficulties can be detected and it is helpful to children with dyslexia. The program is adaptive to all levels, wherever the student is in their learning progression. She would like this program continue being offered even when regular school resumes.

Ms. Porecki attended a county training session, Being Productive During COVID, and thinks a similar topic would be helpful to provide working parents with tips on how to effectively telework while assisting their kids with virtual learning, manage time, schedule peak work and downtime, stay healthy, etc.

### **Treasury Report/Budget Update**

The state issues the SECAC an annual budget of \$2,500. Funds are issued in July, available for one school year, and must be spent by September 30 of the following year. Ms. Harris reviewed the 2019/2020 school year budget. Funds covered materials, awards, presenter fees, books distributed at presentations, and childcare during meetings. We spent \$26 over budget, which was taken from the 2020/2021 budget.

The 2020/2021 budget allows for materials, awards, meetings, scholarship opportunities for families to attend virtual or local conferences, and guest speakers. Childcare funds may shift to another line item if we do not meet in person.

### **Community Comments/Calendar Events**

- **October 22 – Board of Education Meeting** – Work session is at 7 p.m. You can watch live from the CCPS website. Provide public comment to Kara Maxey at [Maxeyk@calvertnet.k12.md.us](mailto:Maxeyk@calvertnet.k12.md.us).
- **October 30 – Special Needs Night** at the Calvert Marine Museum, in cooperation with Calvert County Parks & Recreation Therapeutic Recreation Services. Offering two museum sessions, 5 – 5:45 p.m. and 6 – 6:45 p.m., and two Tension cruises at 5:15 p.m. and 6:15 p.m. Each person must preregister through the TRS website. Register for Tension cruises by calling 410-535-1600, ext. 8204 or 8205.
- **November 12 at 7 p.m.** – Parents Place of Maryland presents **Special Education: What Parents Need to Know**. Register with PPMD. Complete a survey and they will send the registration. Held on Teams.
- **Special Olympics** – See website for programs of interest: <https://www.somdcalvert.org/>
- **Infants & Toddlers** – Family Support Preschool Partners is hosting a parent engagement that focuses on children from birth – 5 years. Email Sue Rafalowski if you are interested.
- **January 2021 and March 2021 – Secondary Transition Parent Workshops** – Covers topics to prepare for life after high school. Meet adult service agencies (pre-recorded videos and information links). DORS' Summer Youth Employment (SYE) program (live webinar with Q&A).
- **February 19, 2021 (date may change) – Try College for a Day** – Aimed at juniors and seniors with IEPs and 504s. Live/interactive webinar. Partnering with College of Southern Maryland.

- Late April 2021 – **Consider College** – Aimed at Grade 8. Pre-recorded presentations to broaden horizons to consider college, from area college staff/agencies.
- May 3, 2021 (estimated release date) – **Tri County Transition Expo** – For students and families to obtain lots of varied information related to transition, DDA, DORS, financial planning, etc. Will consist of pre-recorded presentations.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Cormier thanked everyone for attending. Contact him with comments or questions at [Joseph.somd.leaders@gmail.com](mailto:Joseph.somd.leaders@gmail.com). Without any further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

**The next SECAC Meeting is November 17, 2020**