

Calvert Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes: October 15, 2019

Attendees

Kathleen Porecki, Sue Rafalowksi, Kara Muffley, Alicia Chubb, Christy Harris, Jen Kuhle Parker, Judy Wickens, Sheri Tardio, Paul Reilly, Jason Miller, Deborah Maurer, Cathy Costabile, Shelley Baden

Welcome and Introductions

Alicia Chubb, SECAC Chairperson, welcomed attendees and started with introductions.

Approval of September minutes

The September meeting minutes were approved as written.

Independent Facilitated IEPs

Sheri Tardio explained that the Community Mediation Center of Calvert County is a non-profit organization established in Calvert County in 2006. They assist with mediation in a variety of areas, from neighbors who have a disagreement, to parents trying to come up with a parenting agreement, to IEP team members who need to communicate effectively to program for a student. She explained that have an Independent IEP Facilitator is especially helpful when there is disagreement among the team members, when the team is having trouble staying focused on the student or if it seems the team members are having difficulty coming to agreement. However, a facilitator can be requested to attend an IEP meeting even when there is not or has not been a conflict.

Sheri explained that the Community Mediation Center is not affiliated with the school system and the facilitators they supply are a neutral party, not parent advocates. Their IEP facilitators are provided a specific training that meets the MSDE (Maryland State Department of Education) requirements for IEP facilitators. A facilitator talks to the IEP chair and parent in advance to ensure issues important to both are on the agenda. Facilitators can ensure that parents have a voice in the meeting. There is no cost to the parents or the school system. Although either a parent or the student's school can request, both parties have to agree to have the facilitator attend the IEP meeting. A parent asked if a facilitator could assist when it feels like their suggestions or questions are being dismissed by the IEP team. Sheri explained that through their in-depth conversation with the parent, they would be aware of the concerns of the parent prior to the meeting and would include those concerns on the agenda to be sure they are addressed. She explained that the agenda is a helpful tool so all parties know when during the meeting their concerns would be addressed.

Special Education Update/Annual Report Card/Parent Survey Results/Updated

Christy Harris shared and reviewed Narrow the Gap, MSDE's visual representation of the strategic plan for moving students forward in MD schools. Christy shared the goal of the department of special education: ensure that each student in need of special education and related services receives a Free and Appropriate Public Education in the general education setting/least restrictive environment to the maximum extent

possible through promoting access, equity and progress with the goal of graduation from high school as college, career and community ready. Christy provided a list of areas of focus to achieve this goal. This list includes narrowing the gaps for students with disabilities in the areas of achievement, least restrictive environment (LRE), graduation, drop-out, suspension and significant disability as well as supporting social emotional learning, promoting inclusive opportunities, strengthening family and community partnerships and collaboration with general education and more.

A parent asked how general education teachers are educated about the disabilities of students in their classroom. Christy explained that there are a variety of professional development opportunities available to general education teachers and that teachers have a professional responsibility to know what is in a student's IEP. General education teachers are the "teacher of record" in a class where there is a special education co-teaching. IEPs designate primary and other providers and if the student has both general and education teachers, there may be some parts for which only the special educator is responsible, but the IEP should be collaboratively implemented.

A parent mentioned the differences among her children's school experiences over the years with regard to instructional strategies being used and assessments being given. Christy explained that assessments have changed over the years and that this year an online assessment, MAP, a universal screener for reading and math is being given to all students. The MAP assessment will replace some of the assessments given in prior years. This will provide teachers with student's strengths and weaknesses. The Cogat, a group administered cognitive assessment, is still administered to 2nd graders but the MD State assessments are not administered until 3rd grade.

Christy shared the Special Education Update including information from the Special Services Information System (SSIS) Data showing the number of students with disabilities reported from 2016-2018. With 10.1% of the overall student population identified as students with disabilities, Calvert County is the 4th lowest in the state. Calvert was at 68.36% for LRE, educating students with disabilities in general education at least 80% of the time. This is slightly below the state average of 70.9%.

Trauma and the Brain Conference Discussion

On Saturday October 5th, Frank Kros, Executive Vice President of TranZed, presented Trauma and the Brain. Alicia Chubb received a copy of the presentation, which was over 200 slides. She selected a few of the slides to share. Dr. Kros defined "Childhood adversity" as a broad term that refers to a wide range of circumstances or events that pose a serious threat to a child's physical or psychological well-being. Examples include child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, bullying, serious accidents or injuries, discrimination, extreme poverty, and community violence. Such experiences can have serious consequences, especially when they occur early in life, are chronic and/or severe, or accumulate over time. Trauma is one possible outcome of exposure to adversity. Alicia highlighted things that Dr. Kros mentioned such as the known prevalence of adverse experiences in the average classroom and the take home message that not all adverse events are traumatic, trauma responses depend on the child's interpretation of and reaction to an adverse event, and that adverse events are increasingly common in our students. A parent who attended the presentation also added that the book provided, *The Explosive Child*, is highly recommended and required reading by the Johns Hopkins hospital employees working with children with emotional and behavioral struggles.

Bylaw Review and Subcommittee Sign Up

Kara Muffley, SECAC Secretary, explained that this year a subcommittee will review the bylaws and suggest changes to be voted on by the SECAC. Copies of the bylaws were made available to attendees who wish to review them and/or consider participating on the Bylaws subcommittee. Kare explained the standing Subcommittees listed in the bylaws and sent a sign up sheet around for attendees to indicate if they'd like to participate on one of the subcommittees. Signs ups are indicated below.

- Budget and Scholarship Subcommittee (assist with proposal of an annual budget, review expenditures and scholarship requests)
- Communications Subcommittee (support Calvert SECAC community outreach and messaging, including SECAC web page and use of social media tools)

Kara Muffley, Judy Wickens

- Bylaws and Awards Subcommittee (maintain knowledge of Bylaws, review and propose changes; support annual CCPS SECAC Special Educator of the Year Award process)

Kathleen Porecki, Jen Kuhle Parker

SECAC Treasury Report

The budget from 2020 was provided to show an expenditure of \$1000 for the Dr. Kros, Trauma and the Brain workshop.

Upcoming Meetings and Events Announced

Tuesday, Oct 22nd 9am-2:30pm-Dr. Jim Ball: You Can't Make Me: Pro-Active Strategies for Positive Behavior Change in Children. All attendees will receive a copy of his new book [You Can't Make Me](#).

Thursday, October 25th 7pm-8:30pm Reading Festival Prince Frederick Library

Friday, November 1st CMM Open House for families of disabilities

Tuesday, November 19th 6:30pm-8pm-next Calvert SECAC meeting

The official meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.