

Calvert County Public Schools
Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes: April 20, 2021

Attendees:

Christina Harris, Director of Special Education; Joseph Cormier, Chairperson; Kathleen Porecki, Member-at-Large; LaShonda Scott, Member-at-Large, Camille Miller, Ashton Nelson, Sue Rafalowski; and Paul Reilly

Welcome and Introductions

Chairperson Joe Cormier called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. All attendees introduced themselves.

Approval of March Minutes

The March meeting minutes were approved as written.

Special Education Staffing Plan

Ms. Harris reviewed the staffing plan at the last meeting. The Special Education Department is proposing to keep the same level of staffing. Special education teachers will remain at 165.7. This proposed staffing plan will be presented to the Board of Education (BOE) on May 6, posted for public comment for one month, and go back to the BOE for final approval in June. During the 30-day posting, SECAC will provide input in support of the staffing plan. Public comment is reviewed and considered by the BOE and Ms. Harris before it is approved or possibly changed.

At the last BOE meeting, Dr. Curry proposed a virtual school/program. Mr. Cormier asked if the virtual school/program will have its own special education staff. Ms. Harris stated that based on numbers, teacher(s) could be shifted to cover a virtual program. A Special Education supervisor or Ms. Harris are a part of this planning process as they build the program.

Ms. Harris updated the plan with current vacancies as of yesterday. She left SLP, although right now it is 0 as contracted providers were hired. Ideally, SLP positions are staffed with CCPS employees. We have 1.5 teacher vacancies due to retirement of 1 teacher and the .5 is a vacancy that was not filled. Substitutes are covering these positions. Our Behavioral Specialist is contracted, but we are listing as a vacancy that we hope to fill as an employee. There are 9 Special Education Assistant vacancies. Usually Substitutes cover these positions, and when they cannot, services are provided by other staff. Ms. Miller inquired whether there is a BCBA on staff. Talisa Smith is contracted for the year. The position is posted, and interviews are scheduled for this week.

SECAC Staff Appreciation Awards Review

The SECAC Staff Appreciation Awards ceremony was held virtually on April 15. Mr. Cormier thanked Ms. Muffley and Ms. Nelson for their assistance, and the judges for scoring the nominations. The event was well attended and a success. Three of the four families were

present to read their nominations. With permission, Mr. Cormier will release the information to share what is working. Dr. Curry will have the SECAC Award winners in each category announced at the BOE meeting on May 6.

Someone requested we make the nominations more accessible. A scoring judge mentioned the criteria is difficult to judge when not everyone provides the same amount of information. A suggestion was made that instead of having one area to write the entire nomination, it be broken up into specific questions, based on the scoring rubric. People making nominations can then give as much detail as they want. Everyone agreed that student and nominee names will continue to be redacted.

Updates from the county on what Special Education has looked like over the last year of virtual and how to continue supports in the fall/virtual academy

Planning is in process for a virtual school/program. Based on a survey, several hundred parents replied they would like to send their students to a virtual school/program. This program will be offered to grades 3-12, with special education and related services provided. IEP teams will need to make decisions relating to if a student's individual needs can be met with virtual schooling.

An email was sent to parents about the third quarter and how virtual learning went. Everyone is encouraged to fill out the survey and provide information about what did and did not work.

A bill was passed into law that requires a Learning Continuity Plan for each child with an IEP. In the event of a school closure or emergency, this plan will serve as the backup plan. The law takes effect July 1, 2021. Plans must be developed for each child by October 1.

If you have not already done so, please go to the MSDE website and complete their survey by May 21.

Resignation and current Vacancies; Nominations

There are two committee vacancies, Vice Chairperson and Secretary. After serving many years as the SECAC Secretary, Kara Muffley is stepping down from the position. All positions are open for election next year. You can nominate yourself or someone else. Send nominations to Mr. Cormier at Joseph.somd.leaders@gmail.com or cormierj@calvertnet.k12.md.us. Members are encouraged to reach out on social media, through sports and church groups, PTAs, and school newsletters to help recruit people to join SECAC and to possibly serve on the Executive Committee. The Executive Board will meet on May 18 and tentatively schedule an election, if we receive nominations. Members are also needed to serve on the Bylaws Committee.

Treasury Report/Budget Update – Suggestions for spending this year's budget balance

The state issues the SECAC an annual budget of \$2,500 for materials, awards, meetings, scholarship opportunities for families to attend virtual or in person conferences, and guest speakers. The SECAC spent \$95.12. Remaining funds in the amount of \$2,404.88 must be spent by September 30.

In the past, we gave SECAC Award recipients a stipend for their classrooms. The group agreed to provide \$200 for the four award recipients to use in their role to support students. Funds of \$1,604.88 remain available.

Mr. Cormier asked Ms. Harris to investigate what teachers and staff need to help narrow gaps for students with IEPs or students with disabilities and present suggestions at the May 18 meeting.

Community Comments/Calendar Events

Contact Sue Rafalowski at 443-550-8375 or parentconnections@calvertnet.k12.md.us for more information the following workshops.

- Supporting Positive Behavior Series. Social Interaction: Siblings and Peers. May 20 & 21.
- James Ball, Virtual Fireside Chat on Transitioning. April 21, 6-7:30 p.m.
- What is Sensory Processing? Participants will receive a sensory box. April 26, 6:30 p.m.
- Virtual Toilet Training Workshop. If you attend, receive a potty-training kit with a book, social story, and a schedule. May 13.
- Summer Activity Resource Fair. What we are doing this summer, during pandemic, doing special, what is available. April 29, 6:30 p.m.

Contact Paul Reilly if you are interested in the following workshops:

- Summer Youth Employment – Want a Job This Summer? 12 slots are available, even if you did not attend a parent workshop. Contact Mr. Reilly to go through the paperwork. Target audience is students in their junior year, some students that are younger, or students staying in school till age 21 who have one year before they exit.
- Road Map: Links to Your Future. A collaborative effort between Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's Counties. Involves a summary of what is covered at a transition expo. Provides links to information about applying to college. Consider College target audience is students in grade 8. Includes documents and a video from UMD. Link to a One Stop Shop for transition information.

Additional community events:

- May 14 – Night at the Museum for Friends with Disabilities at the Calvert Marine Museum, in cooperation with Calvert County Parks & Recreation Therapeutic Recreation Services. Offering two museum sessions from 5 – 6 p.m. and 6 – 7 p.m., and 30-minute Tennison cruises at 5 p.m. and 5:45 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. Each person must preregister through the TRS website. Register for Tennison cruises by calling 410-535-1600, ext. 8205.

Adjournment

Mr. Cormier thanked everyone for attending. Without any further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.