

Calvert County Public Schools
Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes: September 14, 2021

Attendees:

- Joseph Cormier- Chairperson Joseph.somd.leaders@gmail.com.
- Lashonda Scott- Member-at-large
- Christina Harris -Director of special Education
- Shari Tardio- Executive Director, Community Mediation Center of Calvert County
- Nicole Maldonado- Parent
- Ashton Neslon – Parent
- Michelle Shifflett – Parent
- Sue Rafalowski- Partners for Success

Welcome and Introductions

Calvert SECAC opened the 14th Sept 2021 Meeting at 6:30PM. Due to ongoing health precautions, SECAC will continue to meet virtually. We are working on a solution to setting up a 'hybrid meeting' where parents can gather and social distance, as well as participate by Microsoft TEAMS. Updates to follow. SECAC will be unable to offer childcare during in person meetings for the foreseeable future.

Logo

SECAC will be working with CTA Students on a new logo. If you have any input on that process, please email them in by the October 31st.

Bylaws

Bylaws were reviewed, and changes offered. The proposed bylaws will be posted on the CCPS SECAC website for public review and comment. Intent is to vote on them after 30 days of review, possibly at the Nov 9th meeting.

Elections

All executive board positions, Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and two at large members are open for nominations. For more information, or to nominate yourself or another, please email SECAC at SECAC@calvertnet.k12.md.us

SECAC Staff Appreciation Committee

Calvert High School scheduled for April 20, 2022 for awards. Joe shared he is looking forward to doing it in person but may have to have it virtually. Discussion about changing the way the nomination form was structured; looking for more of an organized way to get more consistent nominations. If interested in helping with that committee please email SECAC at SECAC@calvertnet.k12.md.us

Directors Update

Christy Harris provided an update and responded to questions from attendees captured in summary below.

We are happy that we are able to have students back in school buildings. Students are actively engaged in learning. We have had some situations with students on required

quarantine due to either exposure or positive COVID test result. Specially designed instruction for students with IEPs will still occur during required quarantine (RQ) but through alternate service delivery modes. Our goal is to keep students learning and making progress in the general curriculum and on their IEP goals. For students in grades 3-12 they have technology (1:1 devices issued) and if on RQ are provided a link by the classroom teacher to access instruction, the pre-k to 2nd students do not have 1:1 devices and are provided packets to continue learning at home. CCPS had hundreds of devices that did not get turned in last year or were broken and there are chip shortages and high demand everywhere for electronics are creating some difficulty; Prek- grade 2 students typically require more support for at home learning as well and for students with IEPs a special educator will reach out to the parent to review the content in the packet. There may be a way to provide loaner devices for students on RQ, but it would not be appropriate given the structures and hands-on, differentiated nature of primary grade classrooms for a pre- grade 2 student to be provided a link for the full school day, but there are certain things where technology could be used. The new regulation for IEPs to have an emergency plan in an event of an extended school closure (more than 10 days), such as a class, school or system shut down; will be embedded into IEPs as meetings occur starting October 1st. CCPS requires staff and students to wear masks in school. Christy will be reissuing to school administrators/IEP chairpersons guidance/tips for students with disabilities and wearing masks as there are some students who are not able to tolerate the mask due to health, sensory, disability related reason and require an accommodation and some students with disabilities, especially very young students need instruction to support mask wearing. State board just put in place that all schools in MD will require masks as this was previously up to each school system. Special educators are doing a great job of keeping up with the changes and challenges presented as a result of the pandemic. In order to better support Special Education teachers and service providers on writing compliant, well written IEPs CCPS has purchased Goalbook Toolkit which is a resource that helps to ensure IEP goals are aligned to the standards, are measurable and provides various strategies for providing specially designed instruction. Professional learning on this resource is being planned for October. Special education has an ongoing focus on developing well written IEPs since this drives the specially designed instruction for the student. There is going to be a lot of testing in the fall to include state assessments which are typically in spring. MAP testing which serves as a universal screener and a diagnostic assessment will be administered for elementary students in the fall. A determination of compensatory/recovery services was made for each student with an IEP at the end of the school year and many students received these services during the summer. Some students have been identified for tutoring to occur this fall. At the end of Sept. the Special Ed. Dept. will compile data for the students that received the services over the summer to see who completed services, declined etc. and this data will be reported to MSDE. At any point, an IEP team can meet and make a compensatory decision. Quite a few studies conducted on the impacts of the pandemic, but one thing they found despite the gaps, the greatest gaps occurred during the full shutdown which started in March 2020; once teachers were able to provide the instruction, in most cases made the same amount of progress in a regular year; unfortunately, some students did not recoup those gaps. Making sure we are writing strong, IEPs and provided targeted instruction is a priority for our students.

Treasury Report

We get 2500 dollars every year in the form of a federal passthrough grant. Due to the nature of the pandemic we have 1800 dollars left to be spent within the next 14 days; Parents Place of Maryland is sponsoring a Wrights law conference on understanding the special education process and we can use funds for that event (Oct. 12 & 13th) if parents

would like a scholarship to attend. We discussed ideas of purchasing The Classroom Management Book to purchase for the classrooms to spend the money or supporting positive behavior on buses for special education bus routes.

Community Mediation Information

Ms. Tardio Executive Director, Community Mediation Center of Calvert County: Wanted to let people know about the services that they have at the mediation center which can be helpful to parents/students/teachers; independent IEP meeting facilitation which is helpful if there is a lot of new information or team members are having difficulty communicating or getting off focus or a disagreement which would be a good time to have a mediator who is completely neutral in the process. They do an intake with the parents and IEP chair to find out what everyone's concerns are and help make the agenda so everyone's concerns get addressed. They can help resolve disagreements and support the processing of information. The service is free to use, just call the center to talk about the case. A new service they can help schools and parents with is attendance mediation which brings together all parties to discuss attendance issues or chronic tardiness for the purpose of intervening before it gets to be too late and figure out what the root cause of the issue is and come up with a solution. It can be used at any point where attendance is concerned.

Upcoming Calendar Reminders

30 Sept for training on back to school anxiety (Sue).

12 Oct- SECAC general Membership meeting

20 Oct 6:30 to 8:30 pm Special Education Rights for Parents workshop.

Adjournment and Final Points

We discussed ways to increase SECAC presence/attendance through updating flyer, direct mail, email, social media etc. Mr. Cormier thanked everyone for attending. Without any further business, the meeting was adjourned.