

Calvert County Public Schools
Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes: February 8, 2022

Attendees:

- Joseph Cormier- Chairperson
- Michelle Shifflett – Vice Chairperson
- Lashonda Scott- Member at Large
- Christina Harris -Director of Special Education
- Pamela Cousins – Board of Education Member, President
- Dawn Balinski - Board of Education Member
- Antoine White – Board of Education Member
- Shelley Baden - Parent
- Samantha Mathieson – Parent
- Kara Muffley – Parent / CCPS Data Management Specialist
- Susan Dudley – CCPS Physical Therapist
- Susan Johnson – CCPS Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
- Jennifer Lomascolo- CCPS Compliance Specialist
- Laura Rivers – CCPS Adaptive PE Teacher
- Janet Stephanson – CCPS Supervisor of Special Education

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Cormier opened the Meeting at 6:30PM. Due to ongoing health precautions, SECAC is meeting virtually. We will continue to monitor the parameters regarding the pandemic and as situations allow considerations for in person and /or hybrid meetings will be considered.

Director Update – Christy Harris, Director of Special Education

Parent Survey – Jennifer Lomascolo reviewed the results of the MSDE Parent Involvement Survey which is conducted annually every year between February and May. The 2022 survey is not yet available, but once it is all parents of students who receive special education services will have the opportunity to complete either on-line or by mail.

- Results from 2021 Survey were reviewed:
 - Response Rate: 15% of parents of preschool students completed the survey; 11% of parents of school-aged students (both were a slight increase from 2020 but below state average response rate).
 - 89% of parents of pre-school aged students who responded to the survey report schools facilitated Parent Involvement; 82% of parents of school-aged students who responded to the survey report schools facilitated parent involvement. (Results for both groups are above the state average. Preschool results were consistent with the 2020 school year, but the school-aged results show an improvement from 2020).

Parent Consent – Janet Stephanson reviewed parental consent requirements. As of April 2017, Maryland law added a requirement for IEP teams to obtain specific written consent from parents on an annual basis for the following actions:

- Student participation in Alternate Standards and Alternate Assessments.
- The use of Restraint and Seclusion.
- The following Technical Assistance Bulletins (TAB) created by MSDE provide detailed information about these requirements:

- TAB 17-02 – Parental Consent Under Maryland Law
- TAB 19-07 – Improving Outcomes for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Eligibility, Instruction, and Assessment:
- TAB 19-02 – Student Behavior Interventions: Physical Restraint and Seclusion.
- All TABs can be found by following this link: [Technical Assistance Bulletins \(marylandpublicschools.org\)](https://www.marylandpublicschools.org)
- Dr. Harris reviewed additional CCPS policy regarding restraint and seclusion.
 - CCPS policy as of July 2021 states that seclusion can only be used if it is indicated on a student’s IEP and if the parent has provided written consent.
 - Currently, only 12 IEPs indicate the need for restraint and seclusion (9 students currently attending a Calvert County Public School)

Extended School Year – Janet Stephanson shared the following updates for 2022 ESY:

- For eligible students, classroom based ESY will be held at Calvert Elementary School this year and will run from July 5th through August 4th (M-Th from 8:30-11)- 5 weeks.
- Individual ESY services may occur throughout a date range in the summer and may be provided in a variety of settings to include summer school.

COVID – Current Trends – Dr. Harris shared information provided by the Department of Student Services as shared by Dr. Polsky from the Calvert County Health Department.

- In CCPS, overall case counts have decreased by 34.4%; although the rate does remain very high – 346/100,000 residents – this does not count the unknown number of cases (at home tests).
- Household exposures remain the most cited source of virus transmission.
- Calvert’s percent positivity was 12.6% as of 2/4/22 – down from 26.9% on 1/11/22.
- We are slightly below comparison counties of St. Mary’s Cecil, and Wicomico (similar population size and relatively rural).
- Information is provided by Dr. Polsky from the CCHD.
- Vaccination Rates: ages 5-11– 36%; ages 12-18 – 75%; ages 18+ - 67%.
- The CCPS Website has a section that provides quick links to all COVID -19 information: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Calvert County Public School District \(calvertnet.k12.md.us\)](https://www.calvertnet.k12.md.us). Included are direct links to: Guidance from the CDC, guidance from the State of Maryland, and Guidance from the MSDE, the Maryland Department of Health Resources, and Family Resources and Calvert County Community Resources.

Questions:

- A question was asked about masking procedures and consistency between schools and programs because a parent was directed that her student had to participate in an extended quarantine because he was in a special education program. Dr. Harris explained that the different quarantine times is not specific to a student’s placement but the ability to wear a mask. She explained that if a student is unable to mask consistently, they would be required to quarantine for a full 10 days. It was also explained that if a certain percentage of students are required to quarantine, then the entire class may have to be closed. Refer to the January 6 update.
- A question was asked regarding the need for a note regarding a student’s inability to wear a mask. It was explained that this is determined through conversations the nurse will have with staff who are with the student and the parents. Some students may have a documentation on their IEPs regarding an inability to consistently wear a mask.

**If there are topics for consideration in future meetings, please email to SECAC email address or to Mr. Cormier directly.

Treasury Report

- At this time, SECAC has not spent any funds and we are willing to take suggestions on how the funds should be spent. Some suggestions could be:
 - This can include scholarships
 - A presentation by the Parents Place of Maryland. Mr. Cormier explained that he has been talking with them and has requested more information. (At the next SECAC meeting, possible ideas can be presented).
- **CCPS Budget** – Dr. Harris shared information regarding the CCPS proposed budget for the 2022-2023 school year.
 - Special Education is not asking for more, although it may appear this way as Kirwin funds are being blended into the local budget for Special Education.
 - We will be able to sustain all of our positions, with a proposed need for a new Occupational Therapist position – but that will come from federal funds.
 - Mr. Cormier explained that SECAC provides public comment to the staffing plan after it is officially presented. He shared a concern that more staff are not being added to the budget as it seems like staff are all working very hard and drowning right now. He recommended that members follow the Blueprint for the Kirwin Commission Plan and attend Board of Education meetings to advocate for full funding.
 - Dr. Harris explained that a proposed staffing plan will be provided to SECAC prior to the presentation for the Board of Education and opportunity for input from SECAC will be obtained.
 - Mr. Cormier shared PG County's Blueprint for Kirwin: [Blueprint for PGCPSS: Funding for Programs, Initiatives and Facilities](#)

Transportation Update

– Mr. Cormier shared the following information:

It has been a difficult year for transportation. They do their very best to get kids to school. The Director and Supervisor of Transportation are regularly driving buses. Central office staff sub and staff in schools are subbing as bus attendants when they have to. We definitely appreciate the hard work of our bus drivers and attendants. The information here was obtained by conversations with staff in the CCPS Department of Transportation:

- Assistants are employed by CCPS and drivers are employed by independent contractors.
- The operation of special route buses over regular route buses are the priority.
- If the bus doesn't run for a student with transportation as a related service on their IEP, the county will reimburse parents for mileage (A form is mailed to parents).
- What is CCPS doing to hire and retain staff:
 - The bus assistant rate was increased from \$10.60/ hour to \$14.00 / hour.
 - The hourly rate of pay to bus contractors was increased approximately \$5.00 / hour and four steps for longevity was changed to 6 steps for longevity.

SECAC Awards

- Nominations for the 2021-2022 Annual SECAC Staff Appreciation Awards are now available! The information and nomination forms have been shared with multiple school venues, CCPS Parent Connections. This is the opportunity for parents to celebrate the dedication of their child's team. The nomination deadline is March 11th and the awards will be held in April.

Special Olympics Inclusive Track and Field Event

Kara Muffley provided information about this year's event. The format will be different this year as it will be an inclusive event with students with disabilities partnering with their peers without disabilities.

- Dates: This year there will be two dates: young Athletes and elementary will be Wednesday April 27; middle, high school, and LFI will be Thursday, April 28th.
- Location: Calvert High School
- Times: 10-12:45
- Rain date: April 29th (if one event is cancelled; if there is rain on both dates, unfortunately the event will be cancelled).

Adjournment and Final Points

- Members of the Board of Education shared the following information:
 - Ms. Cousins voiced her agreement with Mr. Cormier's recommendations for advocacy with the Blueprint for the Kirwin Plan. She shared that the Board of Education will be providing more information in future Board Meetings.
 - Mr. White shared his support with the efforts discussed.
 - Ms. Balinski shared that the BOE will be proposing a CCPS policy change to be in effect August 2022 to totally prohibit seclusion. She also shared her hope that CCPS can reach the COVID "off-ramp" statistics to allow for a loosening of the mask mandate. She shared that the members of the BOE appreciate hearing from SECAC on the Special Education Staffing Budget.
- A question was asked about CCPS' efforts to use the Ross Greene CPS model in schools. Dr. Greene's model is called the Collaborative and Proactive Solutions model to effectively support students in a collaborative and proactive way. Dr. Harris explained that several schools had begun the training process in this model directly before schools were closed in March 2020. Schools are beginning to pick this back up. She also shared that the staffing for behavior support has increased and CCPS now employs four behavior specialists with one behavior tech assigned to each as well as a BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst). The numbers of restraint and seclusion in CCPS has significantly decreased.
- The next meeting will be held on March 8th from 6:30-8:00.