

SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Region 14 Special Education Committee was held on Monday, December 6, 2010 in the Region 14 Central Office Conference Room, 5 Minortown Road, Woodbury, CT.

The following members were present: Linda Bulvanowski, Stephen Sordi, Gary Suslavich and Committee Chair Pamela Zmek.

The following members of the Region 14 Administration and Board of Education were present: Dr. Robert Cronin, Kimberly Culkin, Deborah Corsico, Mary Lou Torre, Melinda McKenna, Alice Jones.

Also in attendance were several members of SEPTA and the public.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 by Pamela Zmek. The following matters were discussed:

- Update from SEPTA: SEPTA is planning several activities with the PTO in an effort to foster a culture of acceptance and friendship among all student groups. SEPTA will be sponsoring a January event on internet safety. In February a parent group will go to each PTO meeting to introduce SEPTA to PTO members and explain its goal of celebrating differences among all students. The PTO has indicated it will help SEPTA with financial aid for upcoming programs.
- Special Education Program Review Panel – Dr. Cronin and Kimberly Culkin discussed a framework for a proposed Program Review Panel. Dr. Cronin presented a draft worksheet to be considered for use by a possible future panel. Discussion centered on the fact that this is not an oversight panel for consent of services, but rather one which would take data from many sources and make it available in one place; it is also proposed as a means of communication between the administration and Board with regard to unexpected special education expenditures. The Special Education Committee will discuss the possibility of this type of oversight panel at future meetings.
- Departmental Opportunities Review - Mrs. Zmek stated that she had spoken with Nate Levenson of District and Community Partners with regard to what services the agency could provide to Region 14. Mr. Levenson had also spoken with Dr. Cronin and Mr. Sordi and would be contacting Mrs. Culkin in the near future. Discussion centered around the types of data D&CP would gather and what types of suggestions and strategies would be provided in their Opportunities Review. Mrs. Culkin and Mrs. Zmek shared that they had each spoken to administrators in other districts who had recently contracted with D&CP, all of whom were very complimentary with regard to the agency. Sample reports were reviewed - copies are available at Central Office.

- High Needs Program - The issue of whether a high needs program shall in the future be housed in one facility or remain at each elementary school was discussed. Mr. Howard indicated that he felt strongly that the District should provide special needs programs in both Bethlehem Primary and Mitchell Intermediate School. Representatives from SEPTA voiced their concern that they want the best possible resources for students in the program and they feel they will be included in any community. They felt that the District should consider the issue of responsibility vs. reality. Mrs. Culkin stated that she is looking ahead to staffing needs and professional development for staff. She stressed the need for excellence at both buildings. Mrs. Zmek stated that the decision as to whether to house the special needs program will be made by the administration and will be based on legal requirements and best practices.
- The next meeting of the Special Education Committee will take place on Monday, December 20, 2010 at 6:30, and will include a workshop presented by Mrs. Culkin.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela Zmek

Special Education Committee Chair
Region 14 Board of Education