

Hoosac Valley SEPAC Meeting Notes

DATE: 3/11/24

Meeting started at 5:04

6 participants (Special Ed Director and 5 parents)

Introductions

Talk about dates and times that will work best for everyone and place. Some people like to have it at the night, because of transition to this school

New IEP : Starting 09/2024

*What will that look like?

** The new IEP uses the Child's strengths and how we can use their strengths rather than the IEP meeting being negative and focusing on what the child can't do. Layout is more parent friendly, easier to understand.

*Training staff on it now, would like to get parent volunteers for training using mock IEPs.

*Trial run on Friday for mock meetings. Grant for big training.

*Possibly start in 05/2024 for mock trials/meetings, learning sessions

The new IEP uses the Child's strengths and how we can use their strengths rather than the IEP meeting being negative. More parent friendly. DATA DRIVEN, All claims MUST be supported with data.

DESE put out a technical guide. Monica will forward it to everyone. Make it available on the school website. Will post this on social media for parents to access and be aware of as well.

Event on Facebook was very helpful. Parents have been voicing that they aren't available but want topics/concerns brought up for them. They are reaching out to other parents involved to have those topics brought up in meetings. This is helping create trust between parents of special needs children that we are there for each other.

A need: Event where parents can meet all support staff so that parents know who everyone is and who to contact.

Next meeting should include some support staff so that we can all discuss together. It was voiced that it is nice to have a face to a name, helps to create better relationships between staff and parents.

Issues with 1:1 and lack of support during IEP meetings and not being able to attend. It creates too many people in the middle, giving an opportunity for important information to be forgotten at meetings that 1:1 would be able to provide or answer more easily.

Highschool level and not being able to get all of the teachers to attend IEP meetings, issue with only getting a couple teachers to attend rather than all of the team. There is more staff to have to find coverage for at once. How can we fix this to get more staff in meetings all at once so everyone on the team can contribute?

A lot of data needs to be collected for a child to receive a 1:1, and that hasn't been happening. Budget is an issue?

Data collection is an issue in this district, it seems that staff are struggling with how to collect or what data to collect.

Create opportunities to educate students on children with disabilities. Normalize that everyone is different.

Normalize disabilities that are also not visible.

Getting someone to come to meetings and train parents on how to advocate.

Next meeting will involve a parent advocate and staff members, we need to come together as a team.

Student/peer advocate. A teacher or even a friend/peer that can be a safe person so that kids can start feeling confident to advocate for themselves at their own IEP meetings.

Parents voicing fears of transition from elementary to middle school. How can we help make this transition smoother for parents of special needs children so that they feel supported and don't feel as helpless. Get more communication between third and fourth grade teachers.

Karen Mowry for the parent advocate to attend next meeting along with principle, and other support staff. Would like to have support staff attend future meetings, so that we have voices and ideas coming from both parents and staff.

At the middle/high school for next meeting. We will bring in one of the ED Advocates (family advocate) that our Sped Director works with

Possibly week after April vacation? Offer Zoom as an option again. Start at 5:30

SEPAC Facebook and email to be set up.

Change the next notice to mention that this is run by parents.

Adding minutes to the special education services school website. Also add DESE links to website and Facebook page once created.

Meeting end 6:12pm

1/25/24

4 parents/ 1 admin Sped Director

New IEP- meetings more positive

More collaboration with families in regard to what families can do to support at home OT,PT, Academics, Speech, Exercises etc

Going from EI to School is much different

What has been helpful:

Full Day Prek

Transportation for Prek

Communication has gotten better

Being more proactive- progress reports monthly re bx, what's working, not, rather than letting it spiral

What still needs to be done:

Jargon- will the new iep help with this

Doesn't seem to be many activities beyond athletics- robotics, exercise club, etc

Elementary school is limited with activities more than hs

Elementary does many events later in the day with a lot of stimulation/chaos - it's hard for Autistic children to take part in these

It would be great to have a "tinker with electronics" program or robotics after school

Structured projects and crafts, 3s printing etc

How do parents know possibilities of accommodations that should be available

What if there are other things that are available that we may not

Not all general ed teachers attend the meetings....only one came, how can we get more teachers at the table

Volunteer to meet with the special ed and gen ed teams - to discuss new iep and parent involvement

Next meeting: 3/11 5:00 High School

Have someone else take this meeting on so it's not a director

11/28/23

Attendance:

5 parents/1 admin Sped Director

Special Education Revamp- DESE

- New IEP- first revamp in 20 years
- Jung Article Review
- Strengths Based vs ignoring the struggles-needs continue
- High Expectations
- Questions
- Specialists (Art, Music, Tech etc) knowing our students well- HOW?
- More parent input- will help
- Sign and agree to something that they actually can not
Ex eyes on me, still hands, = with good student
- Engagement=focus
- Events- PTG-
- Communication - who to communicate to and feeling comfortable about
communicating - how can we be safe doing this
- Connect with other parents
- Finding a time that - need a ride etc- make a connection etc kids can't come here bc
no babysitter could help with my child
- Who is in charge of what- in the iep meeting
- Iep process - meet everyone involved or who to talk to when you have a problem
- Who is the right person to bring things to- i always use the principal
- Handout with if it's a bx problem go to this person, hierarchy who do you call when
this happens or that happen
- Things will be changing with the new iep - this is what it will look like
Secondary

10/10/23

Introduction to SEPAC

- What is SEPAC
Special Education Parent Advisory Council
- Discussion of Grading, Modifications vs Accommodations
- The New IEP