East Greenwich Special Education Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2024

Meeting Time: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Location: Archie Cole Middle School Library, 100 Cedar Avenue, EG

1. Success Stories
    a. Freshman at EGHS and participates in Unified sports. For the last year, the Director and Athletic Director worked to remove barriers and she was a cheerleader for the school district.
    b. Unified courses are started at EGHS (math, science, social studies,a nd English) and peer mentors take those classes as electives. We have had some other school districts interested in it and lots of kudos.
    c. SEAC Chairs do a lot of work and great work. We appreciate them.

2. Old Business
    a. SEAC curriculum issue per policy 7210 (December 2022) There will be an up to date revision next meeting (from Parent Workshop last year)
    b. Parents recommended formalizing (e.g., required template/process) (December 2022) This is an agenda time for today.
    c. EGSD Special Education Audit Recommendations and Continued Updates (November 2023) This will also be spoken about today.

3. Action Items (require a vote & quorum)
    a. SEAC Chair Recruitment If anyone is interested, please reach out to chairs, Molly and Matt.
    b. Ask your legislators to address RI's lack of Special Education Funding in the state funding formula
        i. Question - Illustrate the point. Do the math. If we were proposing, what would that net difference be? It would be better by a point of reference. Use the 47 other states as an example. Add something tangible. Gauge the impact.
        ii. Question - Would this address all the needs? Would it help all these things? It would be helpful to all.
        iii. What would be addressed with this? Skilled interventionists for Tier 2 & 3 and mental health professionals. Give a "so what"? Pull at the heart strings. Can't close the gaps. We are funded for gap maintenance. Crisis because we are underfunded and here are the impacts it has on our kids and our community. Specifically reference the audit.

iv. Even though we are well off, the formula is bad. I'd rather have numbers.
v. Do we have any date each year of students with IEPs from year to year.
vi. Poverty metric- sometimes these families aren't able to advocate; the families of students with IEPs will be vocal, well represented

4. New Business
    a. District Special Education Audit - Staff Adequacy Portion
        i. Do we have a sense for our staff…are they (when providing services to a child on an IEP) providing minimum or maximum workload?
        ii. Exhibit 4 What does resource mean? More included students, milder needs, less services often (not always). What does intensive resource mean? More complex learners with more intensive needs, can be more separate (again, not always). What about when it says speech? Does that mean they receive speech only? This is speech services only.
        iii. What are the different roles between the School Psychologist and Social Worker? Social Workers do social history with families. Social workers also work a lot with general education and need in general, not special needs (per se) specifically. Some are listed in an IEP, but that is newer. The caseload worker number listed here is the number in IEPs for services. We aren't doing a great job of tagging them and attaching them to IEPs. School psychologists do testing, often involved in social emotional goals, direct counseling of kids, and risk assessments, etc.
        iv. Where do the paras get training with understanding behavioral health needs? Often struggle to fund and fund/find time.
        v. Write your recommendation on a post it. They will be collected and gathered.
    b. Director share document/tool inspired by the Parent Workshop - We want to promote consistency and belonging in the IEP process. From initial referral to qualification to annual IEP to reevaluation to transition adulthood. This year working on standardizing IEPs a few days in advance as a standard. Now also working on accompanying resources to support each staff. Tonight Mr. Marcaccio will share some of them. Like to have all of them be reviewed and given feedback from SEAC.
        i. Need to differentiate between EI to preschool vs initial referral vs parent or preschool initial referral or screening
        ii. Agenda sent out prior to this meeting with each step clearly defining the parent/family role (what they can do to prepare).
        iii. Skip the detailed team roles page.
        iv. Others really liked all the detail.

v. An agenda of the initial meeting with clearly state what parent role is and explicitly ask staff to pause and ask if the parent would like to offer feedback, ask questions, etc.
vi. Is there a video with a re-enactment of an initial referral meeting? This would also be great for when the child starts coming to the meeting at 14.
vii. Will it come as an email before every meeting? Yes.
viii. Learning the roles of OT, PT, etc. would be helpful. Also, they can pursue things outside of school, too. There is an expectation about services that may not be the case.

Mr. Marcaccio is looking for a subgroup/an ad hoc workgroup to give feedback on parent resources. Email nmarcaccio@egsd.net if you want to participate or you want to provide feedback.

School Committee Updates (if applicable) (5 min)

ix. Joint Town Council and School Committee Budget Meeting on February 5th at 6pm
x. School District Budget Meetings Student Services (district budget) on March 5th at 6pm at Cole Library
xi. Are you willing to be a part of EGHS' transition work and a study? Please contact Margaux Officer, OT Doctoral Student. Her email is mofficer@egsd.net. This project will be presented on April 17th, so focus groups and interviews in February and early March.
xii. EG is starting a Young Athletes Special Olympics for ages 2-7. Contact Mollycbyrnes@gmail.com to learn more.

Minutes submitted by Nicole Bucka, School Committee Member