East Greenwich Special Education Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2024
Meeting Time: 6:30 - 8:00 pm
Location: Archie Cole Middle School Library & Via Zoom
100 Cedar Ave. East Greenwich, RI

Minutes

Introductions, updates.

-Meeting dates have been updated with additional meeting date added.-

Mini surveys: a series of smaller surveys.

SEAC has been granted the right to poll within the district through liaison with student services.

Committee has decided to circulate mini surveys to get information about what is needed in the present as well as to be able to have ongoing data collection.

Smaller surveys can address smaller topics such as social-emotional or specific surveys.

First mini survey will be timed to anticipate preparation for budget season within the district. Mr. Marcaccio will roll out survey with feedback from this body and then can use that information to advocate for budget specifics.

Survey data can also inform future trainings and meeting topics. Additional student services office hours as well as training opportunities will be added.

Budget: Mr. Marcaccio requests input from the SEAC about where to focus budget allotment.

Ad-hoc committees planned – to put together documentation, formulate ideas, generate surveys. The ad-hoc survey committee is being initiated by chairs.

Ad-hoc committee to advocate for changes to the way that budgets are distributed. Legislation currently uses “poverty” as a proxy for population of children with special education service needs. Also looking for representation at the state functions. Potential partnership with other agencies including RIPEN.

Ad-hoc committee to create a digital presence for parents with children with IEPs. Possibility of having a google classroom to house digital information and trainings. Suggestion to also add list serv or group.me or other informal connection.

School Improvement team: SEAC is granted the right to seat a parent at each SIT team. SEAC chair Matt suggests that SIT team members can report to SEAC and also have ongoing coordination as representatives turn over (as parent SIT team membership is attached to student enrollment at a given school).

Director updates:

Assistant director of Student Services-

Staffing updates

Mr. Marcaccio identifies the need for a "thought partner" and collaborator with the goal of Mr. Marcaccio being able to do more big picture projects. Currently working on hiring assistant director. Have recently hired several excellent paraprofessionals. Currently hiring for a "high needs" teacher to replace an educator who is pursuing administrative work.

IEP Protocol Updates

48 hour IEP roll out in progress. Mr. Marcaccio currently training staff in IEP best practices. Staff using guidance to drive more effective IEP meetings. Goal writing and progress reporting- district moving away from anecdotal reporting toward formalized reporting.

Co-teaching pilot updates (slide deck)

Frenchtown, Eldredge, Cole, EGHS all have co-teaching implemented. Co-teaching studies indicate positive outcomes for students.

Co-teaching model is different than "push-in" services where an educator comes into the classroom for periods of time or pull-out services with specialists. Benefits to students include educational and social and also increased opportunities for adjustment within classroom. Co-teaching offers the possibility of increased job satisfaction for special educators. This model helps special educators to stay in position and not bid into gen ed positions. The model increases the number of special educators in building but would decrease paraprofessional presence. Possible roll-outs for co-teaching models are: Parallel, station, alternate, one teach/one assist, one teach/one observe, team teaching. Station teaching is shown to be the most effective method of co-teaching. The district has focused on this strategy. Other strategies can be used to help educators to evaluate or update for IEPs. The goal will be to move beyond pilot program to implementing established co-teaching classrooms for the next school year with the possibility of creating co-teaching coach roles from within the teaching community with specifically designed co-taught classrooms in every school. (Some students will still need "pull-out" opportunities to mitigate distractions or other challenges.)

Parent suggestion- to begin to partner/create sibling schools and bring parents and other community members to witness co-teaching.

Parent suggestion that “smart boards” are useful in creating leadership opportunities for all students. Also can fulfill movement needs.

Survey data will help to advocate for increased budget allocation, parent advocacy as well. Role of reflective consultation and supervision in special educator support, micro-learning, support – these are related to budget because of time. Seeking grant funding also a possibility for training. The administration offers an estimation that this would cost one million dollars.

Next meeting scheduled to accommodate December-January break.