

Greenwich Special Education Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2025
Zoom meeting, 7:00 pm

- A. Attendance
 - a. SEAC Members: Andi Cosby, Alex Saltis, Kiera Lewis, Jenni Reynolds, Lisa Berluti, Abby Anders, Don McGuire, Beth Forger, Mariana Moreno, Veronica Chivaroli, Julia Reisch, Dawn Zimmerman, Jenn Donat, Alexis Cossifos
 - b. Ex Officio Members: Dr. Stacey Heiligenthaler
 - c. 16 Community Members
- B. Welcome and Opening Remarks from Chairperson
 - a. Committees have done really great work and encourage people to continue to join them. Our spotlight today is a continuation of assistive technology with Meagan White.
- C. Public Comment: None
- D. Lottery for Vacant Parent Voting Member Position
 - a. Lottery for moving up a current alternate to voting. Used a random wheel generator and Veronica Chivaroli was chosen to be a voting member.
 - b. Lottery for new parent alternate member. Used random wheel generator and Nacho Nigam was chosen to be a parent alternate member.
- E. Approval of 11/12/24 Meeting Minutes
 - a. Motioned by: Alex Saltis
 - b. Seconded: Veronica Chivaroli
 - c. All in favor, none opposed.
- F. Updates from Dr. Heiligenthaler
 - a. Finishing up identifying dates for bridging processes (prek - K, 5th - 6th, 8th-9th). Should be sending out info end of January/beginning of February. Will have general information sessions for each of those level changes, and will share details in school newsletters and Together We Can.
 - b. Feb 20 is the BOE meeting where PCG will be presenting their review.
 - c. Question on how students can participate in reading lab: Reading specialist is Jocelyn Bruchman. She provides training to staff, consultation to teachers on specific students, and sometimes provides specific instruction for a short period of time (eg when a student requires a specific training that maybe other staff doesn't have). She works in conjunction with Special Ed teachers. It is not necessarily a qualification, it's more making sure the team has the support, knowledge and training to support

student need. If you feel your team needs more support, you can reach out to your school principal or coordinator.

- d. Question regarding pulling out during core classes. District goal is to close the gap for special ed students. Get core instruction from gen ed and special ed teacher is additional service. Staff does schedules at the beginning of the year to make sure everyone is scheduled appropriately.
 - e. Inclusion specialist question: She works with all grade levels. What she does with each level is different depending on each school's needs. Supports co-teachers, global school UDL practice, parent workshops, para training.
 - f. Staffing around missed service: If you have a specific question of not being notified of a teacher being out, please reach out to a principal, coordinator or Dr. H. Our goal is to provide services to students that are on their IEPs. Is easier to discuss specifically case by case. Any long term absence should be shared by your building administrator. This does not include things like illness, but things like official leaves of absence should be shared including how they are covering/making up sessions. Sometimes there are people covering across positions - administrators covering teachers, etc to make sure students are covered.
- G. SEAC Spotlight: Meagan White, M.Ed., LSLS Cert. AVEd, Assistive Technology Specialist, Part 2
- a. meagan_white@greenwich.k12.ct.us - can reach out to her with any questions
 - b. Review of previous discussion, see November meeting minutes.
 - c. Tools serve all students, not just those with disabilities. Makes even playing ground for everyone
 - d. Text to speech: Texts are read aloud. Bookshare, Libby app, Many websites have embedded text to speech tool: Discovery Ed, Newselea, Wash Post
 - e. Snap and read: All students have access. Available to all students. Chrome extension (looks like a puzzle piece). Can download from chrome webstore.
 - i. Intro video: [SnapandRead](#)
 - ii. Key features
 - 1. Subtle toolbar
 - 2. Remove distractions
 - 3. Read aloud - highlights words. If on ixl, webpages, any text on any website.

4. Screen shot reader - pdf, copy of something - can click on second icon, create a text box, and it will read it once scanned.
 5. Simplify vocabulary. Discreet - italicizes the words that are more complex and you can hover over it to reword it or get a definition or pictorial representation.
 6. Realtime translation on any website.
 7. Line by line highlighting for visual support (cover overlay)
 8. Organizing an outline
 - a. Fills in reference and will link directly to the original article.
 - b. Creates reference list
 - c. A number of customizable outline templates for a variety of different projects to allow you to graphic organize with hyperlinks
- f. Speech to text: voice recording/dictating. Co-writer
- i. Intro video: [CoWriter Universal](#)
 - ii. Extension on chromebook (looks like a thought bubble)
 - iii. Anticipates what you're going to type. It encourages students to use grammar.
 - iv. Reread: allows you to listen back and helps to edit and revise pieces. Student can decide if it sounds ok.
 - v. Speech to text feature: can dictate more complex topics. Need to say punctuation.
 - vi. Topic dictionary. Allows prediction of words related to a specific topic/text. Eg. Specific books (Catcher in the Rye), or specific topics (cells, American Revolution).

B. Committee Updates

- a. Andi Cosby gave brief overview on how our committees are structured this year. Looking at all past recommendations that we've given to the BOE in past SEAC reports. We've created committees that are looking at all of these recommendations with the goal that our presentation to the BOE at end of year will identify what has been taken care of, and to prioritize the rest of the recommendations.
 - i. Kiera Lewis. Inclusion/Behavior committee has had 3 meetings so far. Next meeting is Feb 4. Have covered staffing, inclusion and behaviors. Next month will look at consistency. Going well so far, lots of feedback.

- ii. Alex Saltis. Eligibility/Implementation committee has had 2 meetings and next is Feb 3. Welcome to all to attend. Working on combing through.
- iii. Enrichment. Looking into spring and next fall now.

C. Adjournment

Next Meeting is March 18th at 6:30pm