

TROY PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC) MEETING MINUTES – September 21, 2011

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ten people were in attendance including representatives from Hill Elementary, Morse Elementary, Barnard Elementary, Boulan Middle School, and Troy High. In addition, Kathy Jagels, Director of Troy Public Schools Special Services was also in attendance.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Cindy Desmon at 7:00 p.m.

Board

A Board composed of elected Volunteers was chosen by the ten people present and existing board members. Leslie Accardo and Heather Wood were the only volunteers for their positions and unanimously voted into their positions .

Volunteers include:

Co-Presidents- Sandy Charters (Troy High School), Cindy Desmon (Boulan Middle School)

Vice President- Kara Kneale (Hamilton Elementary School)

Secretary- Heather Wood (Barnard Elementary School)

Treasurer- Leslie Accardo (Larson Middle School)

Meeting Agenda

The meeting agenda was to have 45 minutes of time where Kathy Jagels responded to parents questions regarding concerns that they may have with how the district operates for children with special needs. Followed by 45 minutes of Parent to Parent conversation so that everyone could draw of others experience.

During the initial 45 minutes the goals of the PAC were discussed. This year's goals are

- 1) to create a larger awareness for the PAC throughout the district,
- 2) to provide a place for parents to communicate with each other and the special services department, and
- 3) to provide training and education to the parents of children who may learn differently.

Education for Parents through guest speakers that would provide information:

Topics that people are interested in include Nutrition and Sensory integration. Kathy discussed how Healing Haven had previously talked about stress in the family, the group concurred that would also be a good topic. In addition, we discussed I-pad usage and applications that would be best suited for children with special needs.

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We discussed funding for these programs and that the district may be able to pay for part of the cost along with parents paying small fees to attend.

It was also discussed as to whether there were any classes that the Oakland County Intermediate School District (ISD) was having that could be held in Troy. Or as other potential training classes that parents could attend throughout the county.

Comments, Questions, and Answers

1) **Are we hiring more classroom aides?** Many aides left in August/September. Currently, they are working on hiring new people.

2) **How many aides did we lose?** We lost more than 10% of the aides we had last year.

3) **How do you get an aide position?** Aide positions are posted on the Troy School districts website. If there is a good lead on someone, then they may pre-interview the person and get them in the substitute pool so that when a full time position comes open they are able to move the person in to the position more easily.

4) **Who is the new person that replaced Kathy Jagels?** Shawna Viet replaced Kathy in her old position. Shawna was a director of special education in Romeo School for a short period of time. She has both a special education as well as a general education teaching background.

5) **How are the special services divided with regards to best contact for parents?** Communication that can not be resolved with your child's therapist or resource room should initially be directed to the building principal for children with IEP's and 504s. At the secondary level, the student counselor's will be responsible for the IEP and 504 implementation. If the individual building staff fail to meet the child's educational needs then any concerns with regard to IEP implementation should be directed to the following person:

Shawna Viet will be handling **all secondary level (middle school and High school) with the exception of Boulan Middle School**. This exception has only been established since Kathy Jagels has intimate knowledge of several of the IEPs that are in place at this building.

Kathy Jagels will be handling **all primary grade school** and **preschool IEPs** along with intake for the preschool. In addition, as previously stated, Kathy will remain the liaison for Boulan Middle School.

504 plan children are handled differently, these children regardless of their grade level are implemented by the building principal and all concerns should be directed to the principal if the child's teachers are not able to provide you with adequate answers.

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6) How will the implementation of the new national standards of education in 2014-2015 affect children with special needs? Are they going to implement new education standard with special education before 2014? In 2014, common core standards will be implemented on a national basis for all children. Currently, the state of Michigan is still tied to the GLCE's in special education at the lower levels and the Husky Standards at the upper grade levels.

In the future, a general assessment will be created for the general student population then modified for special needs. Special needs children curriculum will follow common core standards. Speculatively, what will likely happen is that the general core standard will be developed first then subsets will be developed for children with special needs.

7) Technology based learning - Is the district utilizing more technology based learning? Currently, the district is operating a pilot program for children with special needs with regards to I-pads. A select number have been purchased with what may have been the last of the bond money and are being piloted with children with special needs. They are currently looking into various options with regards to technology based learning. Some programs out there that they are looking at include WAY. – a project based learning method where children and teachers meet in a virtual classroom through the use of computers.

8) Cindy Desmon asked about whether there would be a workshop with a board teacher? Kathy indicated that Ann Mull- Director of Curriculum instruction may be better suited to answer the question.

9) Core addition books – Kathy indicated that any texted book should be available in e-format. However due to budgetary restraints, the purchase of new books has been delayed.

Mary Lynn Kalogen is our district technology person and she is very open to helping increase technology usage for the kids.

10) What are the I-pad applications out there that work? Cindy Desmon has a list of links. Kathy Jegels will also look. Plus we will look into the apple store for any training or suggestions.

11) The debate for the board of Education is scheduled for October 24th in the Special Services Building.

12) We are still looking for additional liaisons for each building in the district.

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13) **Are there resources for hearing deficient in short term memory auditory processing who can give reading support?** Resources are not specifically known at this time for outside tutoring but people will ask around to see if someone can be found.

14) **Comment – The links on the Special Education website do not work. Is that going to be addressed this year? They have been down since last year.** Kathy will look into it.

15) **What type of transition programs are in place for students going from elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school?** Dr. Bovia from Boulan may be a good resource to talk to about the transition from one school level to another. Cindy will see if he might be willing to come in and talk to the group.

Adventure Island occurs the third week in August every year for middle school students so that they get a lay of the building during this half day camp. Try to find out if it would be possible to have another student walk a student through their first day of classes to make sure that they get to where they need to be on time.

16) **Disabilities Awareness** - Call all schools to see if they would be willing to contribute \$50.00 for disabilities awareness from the PTOs.

17) **How do they teach the rules about regular hygiene and sex education to children with special needs?** All kids are shown a film called “Just Around the Corner”

18) **What is a staffing?** A staffing is a meeting at the beginning of the school year with all teacher’s that work with your child. It is a get to know you meeting that allows the teachers to understand what limitations or special needs your child has and what accommodations have been written into the IEP or 504.

19) **How do you schedule a staffing?** The staffing should be scheduled in the beginning of the year and be based on the severity of the disability of the child in relation to the other children within that building. Children who have more severe behavioral or health issues are addressed first. The special education department does provide substitutes for these meetings. Teachers should have copies of the IEP at the beginning of the school year and be aware of the needs of the child. However, there have been several cases where this has not happened. The group tried to trouble shoot some ways to help improve on this.

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20) **Can a child be serviced for OT who does not have other services?** The child needs some other certification for OT to occur whether that be an IEP or a 504.

21) **Comment about how building staff are not even aware of the PAC.** Kathy will take and communicate better to staff about it's presence and see whether the OT/PT/Speech paths and resource room people are on her mailing list.

Open Issues –

Contact Apple Store about Application training

Start contacting potential guest speakers

Find people to cover Disabilities Awareness in March.

Determine best option for spreading the word out to schools about PAC.