

## SpEAC Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 22, 2011

Meeting called to order 9:37am

Attendees: Jonnene Dunne, Michele McVacey, Linda Alexandroff, Cynthia Moskalow, Sue Ambrose, Tracy Shields, Scott Duman, Nicola Hampton, Susan Madara, Kathy Carlyle, Diane Doherty, Kelly Eagles, Amy Pedersen, Deb Tsarouhas, Julie Sattinger, Mia Patterson, Dave Tate, Regina Hartshorne, Kim Twomey

**Chair Report:** Maura introduced the new meeting structure. First 45 minutes of meeting will be devoted to administration and BOE reports, followed by questions and answers. Then district officials will be dismissed and there will be open general discussion amongst the group.

**Dave Tate, Director of Special Education:** Mr. Tate presented an overview of CST staff and their placements, and the programs that are currently running within the schools. Note that Gerry Durisin is the new supervisor for the PS-6 grades.

Regarding the new Anti-Bullying Law (aka HIB policy) – the entire staff and administration are currently being trained in the procedures of the new law, including paraprofessionals. The question was raised about how situations involving children with communication difficulties or other special needs are handled, and if there are special provisions in place for such students. Mr. Tate will report to us on that at our next meeting. Overall this new policy will change the way things are done in the district regarding the investigation of bullying incidents.

**Cynthia Moskalow, Supervisor of Special Education 7-12:** Ms. Moskalow spoke briefly about the vocational/life skills program at the high school. This year the kids will be opening a full size school store. Nine students are out in the workforce with 10 employers and three more employers will be signing on to the program next month. She would like the opportunity to present to SpEAC within the next few months in more detail about the programs running at the HS level.

**Transportation Difficulties and Discussion:** It was brought up that yet again this year there have been multiple problems with transportation scheduling and execution. As a group we discussed our frustration that year after year this is an issue, particularly for our children with special needs who may be non-verbal or otherwise communication impaired, who may suffer increased anxiety and stress from changes in routine, etc. Maura requested that everyone with a bus issue should email their story to her so that SpEAC can compile the information and present it to Mr. Tate, Mrs. Sugars, and Mr. Bach. Mrs. Alexandroff will also discuss this issue within her board committee. PLEASE SUBMIT ALL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES TO MAURA BY THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29.

**Linda Alexandroff, Board of Education Representative:** Mrs. Alexandroff was pleased to announce the successful resolution of the contract dispute with the MEA. In January, a joint committee will be formed to review the salary guide structure. Also, the superintendant search committee will shortly be choosing a search firm to assist the district in their hunt for Mr. Bach's successor. The board is committed to including all community stakeholders in the search, and will be soliciting input from parents, parent groups, community members, and staff.

Finally, Mrs. Alexandroff spoke about the changes to the school lunch menus made by Nutriserve, that include more whole grains, more variety of fruits and veggies, low fat foods, and no fried foods. This is in preparation for new regulations that will go into effect in 2013.

### **General Discussion:**

Maura discussed the need for a co-chair who would be able to continue as chair next year. As a group if we want to continue to do the work we do it is necessary to establish a continuum of leadership.

Discussion continued regarding the transportation issues.

Meeting adjourned at 11ish.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julie Sattinger

Communications/Website Chair