

Meeting Notes

I. Introductions

Jessica Lengle, Director of Special Education, facilitated the meeting and Kristin McLaughlin, Special Education Department Chair, and Lori Mosser, Secretary to the Director of Special Education, were in attendance.

10 parents/guardians of students receiving special education services were in attendance.

II. History of Developing this Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Mrs. Lengle described the conversation she had last year with a parent which prompted a brainstorming session on how to increase communication between parents and the special education department. One idea discussed was mirroring the Parent Advisory Council that is facilitated by building principals at the West Reading Elementary Center and the Wyomissing Area Junior-Senior High School. Two groups of parents met with Mrs. Lengle last spring to discuss the idea and how it could be implemented to meet the needs of parents.

In the beginning of the 18-19 academic year, special education case managers sent out an invitation to parents of all students receiving special education services. The response was overwhelming – 107 parents returning the invitation stating they were interested in participating on this advisory council. From the 107 parents, Mrs. Lengle chose 30 parents to invite to participate – of the 30, all school buildings and disability categories were represented and they were represented proportionately to our District's special education population.

III. Develop Meeting Norms

Following a brief individual and group brainstorming session, the following norms for the SEPAC were decided upon:

1. Maintain confidentiality and respect for other team members at all times.
2. Listen to others with an open mind and ask clarifying questions when something is not understood.
3. Progress, not perfection, will remain at the forefront of discussion.
4. We will keep in mind ALL students and ALL parents.



IV. Develop Our Mission

The group of parents who attend the January SEPAC meeting will work as a team to develop the mission of the SEPAC.

V. Updates from the Special Education Department

The National Center on Appropriate Dispute Resolution (CADRE) in Special Education has a website with various resources available to parents and educators to improve the Individualized Education Plan Process and increase appropriate communication and team work in developing appropriate educational programming for students in need of special education services. Mrs. Lengle shared that through this academic year, special education teachers will be participating in some of the webinars that are part of the Working Together Series and parents are encouraged to check out this free resource.

<https://www.cadeworks.org/>

The WASD currently has 5 certified Safety-Care trainers in the District. We continue to offer Safety-Care trainings to staff annually. Safety-Care is a program that provides skills and competencies necessary to effectively prevent, minimize and manage behavioral challenges with dignity, safety, and the possibility of change. Using the newest and most effective technologies from Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS), the Safety-Care program provides our staff with strategies for not only preventing and managing behavioral challenges, but also to effectively teach replacement behaviors. Mrs. Lengle shared that we currently have approximately 60 trained staff members throughout the District.

The WASD recently had our school nurses trained as certified trainers in the Stop the Bleed program. Stop the Bleed is a national awareness campaign and call to action. It is intended to cultivate grassroots efforts that encourage bystanders to become trained, equipped and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives. Mrs. Lengle shared the District is working to train small groups of staff in each building and will look to expand the number of staff trained in future years.

All stairwells in the WASD have Evacutrac Chairs. The chairs provide a fast and safe way for District staff to transport students who utilize a wheelchair down, or up, stairs in an emergency situation. All staff who have students who utilize a wheelchair are trained annually to use the Evacutrac chairs. The chairs are checked twice a year to ensure they are working properly. Additionally, our staff practice transporting students in a non-emergency situation throughout the year.





The District's continued partnership with the Wyomissing Police Department has allowed us to add opportunities for students in some of our Special Education classrooms to see and interact with police officers during the monthly walkthroughs. The Special Education department felt this was an important opportunity for our students to safely and comfortably interact with law enforcement to increase their comfort level if they were to be given directions from a police officer in a crisis situation.

VI. Opportunities for Parent Involvement

Mrs. Lengle discussed three ideas to increase communication and involvement from parents of students requiring special education services. The three ideas presented were: a spring parent training with options for students to attend (babysitting); a coffee gathering with a mini-educational series and; pamphlets to disseminate at February Early Intervention Transition Meetings.

VII. Ticket out the Door

Mrs. Lengle asked all parents to share, in writing, one thing learned from today's meeting they would be willing to share with other community members.

