

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Thursday, May 16, 2013

A meeting of the Special Education Subcommittee was held on Thursday, May 16, 2013 at 7:00 pm at Quincy High School. Present were Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mr. David McCarthy, and Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Mr. Richard Kelly, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Judy Todd; Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education (QPAC) Board members Ms. Jill Gichuhi, Ms. Mia Hurl, Ms. Linda Perry, Ms. Cassandra Tucker; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mrs. Mahoney. The first item on the agenda was a review of the Program Improvement Plan goals by Special Education Director Judy Todd. The department goals included elementary resource room teachers progress monitoring students three times over the course of the year; the SPED team convened and reviewed results and produced recommendations in the fall and winter. The second goal was to implement the Transition Resource guide: high school and middle school staffs were trained and IEPs were monitored for adherence; this is an ongoing goal. The last goal was to monitor discipline issues through SWIS; however there were issues with software installation and training. This goal will be continued next year.

The CARES team focused on technology integration and completed multiple opportunities for professional development. The Occupational Therapy team focused on creating a resource inventory and central storage and successfully completed this goal. The Speech and Language team developed evaluation tools for use with ELL students. For the GOALS team, their overall goal was working with at-risk students and accurately assessing and supporting these students, while providing one-to-one support to address the stresses that impact their academic success. The team meets weekly to adapt instruction and other supports for individual students, refer for outside services, and communicate with parents. The Middle School team focused on the Keys to Literacy Comprehension course and developing and utilizing formative assessments to drive instruction in the classroom. The Language Development team developed their own mathematics needs assessment which will be implemented next fall.

Ms. Gichuhi reported on the QPAC goals contained in the Program Improvement Plan. The new website has been successfully launched and the Parent Guide has been updated, along with a number of resource sheets. The group published one newsletter and hosted a very successful Resource Fair. QPAC also collaborated on IEP implementation and Transition Guide revision. Ms. Gichuhi asked about assistive technology. Ms. Todd said a staff member just completed a graduate program in technology and will be focusing on this in the next school year.

The next item on the agenda was proposed Special Education Subcommittee Meeting dates for 2013-2014. Dr. DeCristofaro asked the Special Education Subcommittee to consider changing the time so that the meetings would be more in line with other Subcommittees and a 6:00 pm start time was agreed to. The proposed meeting dates are October 16, 2013; January 15, 2014; March 26, 2014; and May 14, 2014.

The next item on the agenda was a QPAC update by Ms. Gichuhi. She introduced the new Executive Board: she will remain as President, Ms. Linda Perry is Vice President, Ms. Mia Hurld is Treasurer, Ms. Karen Cobb is Outreach Coordinator, and Ms. Cassandra Tucker is Public Relations. The Board is still seeking a Secretary.

QPAC recently completed an online survey of teachers and parents. Parents of 37 students completed the survey. QPAC will follow up with back-to-basics awareness training on issues. 20 staff members responded, most from general education. Some teachers suggested more time for planning with special education and intervention teachers. Ms. Perry suggested that SPED work to make sure teachers are aware of the options and supports they have system wide. Dr. DeCristofaro said that the QPAC website is a valuable resource for parents and QPAC presence at open houses and community events is very helpful.

QPAC is holding a Planning Meeting for 2013-2014 goals, on May 28 at 6:00 pm. Agenda items include the calendar for next year, including meetings and presentations and the Resource Fair. Big picture goals include increasing visibility, including visiting PTOs over the course of the next school year and providing resources for parents and staff. Ms. Perry asked about the Substitute Forms; those will be used beginning in September 2013.

Ms. Gichuhi asked for suggestions to add to QPAC goals. Dr. DeCristofaro suggested that QPAC presence at citywide curriculum events would be a good way to increase visibility. Mr. McCarthy suggested that the survey should be narrowed; a shorter survey might generate more parent response. QPAC recently met with the QEA stewards about helping general education teachers understand the resources they can provide. Ms. Heald suggested that general education teachers would attend QPAC workshops if they could get PDPs and Ms. Todd agreed to look into that. Mrs. Mahoney said that parent are often overwhelmed by a SPED diagnosis and if a parent is struggling, they may be feeling isolated with their child's specific issues. Meetings that are more socially focused may draw more parent participation.

Mr. Bregoli made a motion to adjourn the Special Education Subcommittee meeting at 7:55 pm. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.