



**Billerica Parent Advisory Council for Special Education
Minutes for Meeting with SPED Directors
January 10, 2007 @ 3:00 PM**

Location: Special Education Department

Present: Special Education Directors: Dr. German and Tom Walsh; PAC Officers: Michele DeParasis, Donna Gadbois, Gina Maniscalco; Parent: Doreen Johansen

- Dr. German reported that the advertisement for the Speech and Language Pathologist position that Kerry Irons vacated has been placed in the Boston Globe. Interviews are now being conducted. They are looking at some recent graduates. In the meantime, compensatory time will be offered to students.
- Dr. German reviewed with the PAC Members, his staff members who are on leave and who will be covering for them in their absence:

Dr. Shapiro. Elaine D'Angoro, Assistant at Hajjar is helping out.

Judy Spanos-Davis, Ditson Team Chair, is recovering from surgery.

Melissa Padera Int. Special Education is on maternity leave, having twins.

Marian Conlin-O'Hearn, Ditson Psychologist is on maternity leave. Ann Costanza, retired psychologist is helping out.

- Teachers are conducting interviews for the Team Chair at the High School. The BPAC will inform the Special Education department if a parent should report any concerns of IEP reviews not being performed.

Dr. German and Tom Walsh will be conducting the initial screening of replacement staff and then forwarding the individuals on to the schools.

- Dr. German reported that he will schedule a meeting with the Middle School Principals. A possible date, January 20, 2007. PAC members will be invited to attend.



- It was pointed out that the School Psychologist doesn't have experience with adopted children. Tom Walsh stated that there are Social Workers available who have experience.
- Dr. German has been trying to reach Jim McGonagle from Shawsheen Tech to schedule a meeting at the vocation school but they have been missing each others telephone calls. He will try again.
- Dr. German and Tom Walsh talked about possibilities for placement options for the Special Education children after Middle school. Technical School might not be the right place for them. Doreen Johansen asked for the Shawsheen Tech placement results. A discussion took place regarding the tests conducted at the Tech to determine where the students should be placed when they do get there. There was a great deal of concern to learn the academic levels of the students from Billerica Public schools are testing low. The goal of the placement test is to measure reading and math academics.
- Dr. German will ask Jim McGonagle, Special Ed. Director at the Tech to explain the test and what results tell us. A subgroup should be organized to meet with Jim.
- Dr. German reported that Dr. Serio felt that the meeting with the Principals was a good meeting and liked the idea of working with the Principals and Dr. German.
- Donna Gadbois talked about the difference between a "504 plan" and an IEP. She stated that we need to include Tom Woodbury at the PAC and Special Education Director Meetings.
- Dr German was very pleased to announce that three Richard LaVoie tapes are on order for the teachers and administrators to use.
- When the new Technology Director comes on board, we should get everyone behind him as a PAC. He starts at the end of the month. It was mentioned that we should invite him to a PAC meeting.
- Dr. German and Tom Walsh want an outside evaluation conducted to review the entire special education programs currently in place and to see what improvements need to be done. He wants to define the programs.

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The Chair of Special Education at Simmons College, Alan Blume, will take a look at all programs from start to finish. PAC, Teachers, Principals, Administrators, Connection Programs. He is to speak to our PAC Group.

Dr. German wants Advisory Council members and parents to be part of the committee to review the special education programs. He asked for the PAC to recruit possible members.

The committee will review, make recommendations for strategies, and maintain consistency throughout the schools. He wants to start with the Connections program. Dr. German felt that last year's evaluation was completely inadequate.

- A discussion began on how the IEPs are written and how they affect the schools financially in terms of reimbursement by the State. Each service gets funding based on the designation of IEP services delivery page. Tom Walsh stated that we do not get reimbursement until an individual child's expenditure surpasses \$30,000 annually, and then only incrementally which pays a portion of the expense. The State will pay for a specialized aide in classroom.
- Gina announced that the January 30th meeting will be posted on BATV.
- Dr. German reported that he is unable to attend the January 18th BPAC meeting. If this is a problem, please let him know.
- Doreen suggested contacting Representative Bill Green to ask him to get more involved in school committee and special education programs.

Meeting Adjourned.