

Merrimack Special Education Support Group
December 21, 2010

The meeting began with attendee introductions. Discussion ensued regarding getting more staff and teams within the school district to understand the pragmatic language and social skill needs of children within the autism spectrum. References were made to the social competency program at James Masticola Upper Elementary School, [Camp Connect](#), [SuperFlex](#).

Barbara presented the Merrimack results of the [2009/2010 NH Parent Involvement Statewide Survey](#). Barbara asked that the group to review the results for discussion at January's meeting.

Opinions were solicited on how best to thank parents for responding to past parent involvement surveys. The consensus was to have the special education department send a short note out to all parents just prior to this year's survey thanking them for their participation in the past. The note would reference a couple of the survey areas that the district has shown an increase in parent satisfaction as well as a few areas that the district is working on.

A follow up on the early release issues regarding some of the special education students was discussed. Unofficial changes were made to the small bus schedules so that students were being released only at 2:10pm versus 2:15pm. Concern was that this was an unofficial policy and would not become permanent.

One attendee expressed concern with students not being evaluated and or identified as needing services at an early age, i.e. preschool. The concern revolved around what was perceived as a lack of consistent standards and resources at evaluating and identifying students earlier rather than later.

A discussion arose about out of district placements and the need to have a consistent and timely response's to family concerns and questions. Comments also arose regarding analyzing out of district placements costs. Could potential savings be had if district personnel were trained to attend to some of the specialized needs of these student's?