

Notes from 09-20-11 Parent Support Group Meeting

Barb started with a quick overview of how the group got started and then had everyone introduce him or herself.

Barb talked about the positives and negatives to being in Merrimack as the parent of a special needs child. It is good that our kids get what they need to succeed. However, Merrimack is sometimes portrayed as being a magnet for “expensive” special needs kids. Our special education department is very responsible with their budget. It is also important for people to remember that special education plans are built from the child up.

There were many fiscal issues this year with funding from the state and federal ARRA dollars drying up. We did end up losing 1 million dollars in funding. Because of that we lost 6 paraprofessionals and 2 school psychologists. Contract psychologists have replaced the school psychologists on an as needed basis. Again, it is important to remember that IEPs are built from the child up.

Planning for meetings/presentations: What do we want to see happen this year? Because of fiscal restraints, Barb was thinking that we should keep things mostly in house. (ie. Last year we had a presentation that included the coordinators from each of the schools, which was taped. It was very well received. We did not tape the presentation that was given on transitions last year. That might be a possibility to present again this year and tape.

Also, Barb will post the presentations that are scheduled in neighboring towns on the website so that we can take advantage of those offerings as well. Right now there are listings in Nashua and Hollis.

Barb passed out the personnel listing for folks to look through and make suggestions. It was suggested that there be a brief description to go with each title. Barb also suggested that first names and titles be included in the attendee list on the written prior notice.

Sue Hollis announced that she had nominated Barb and the parent group for PIC partnership award.

Maureen brought up the topic of competencies and that there will be 24 credits required to graduate. There was discussion about GLEs. One parent voiced frustration over not having GLEs readily available for each grade level to share with parents. There was also discussion about lack of homework for some students.

Another parent voiced frustration regarding the difficulties encountered in trying to connect with regular education teachers to work with their special needs children. – Possible presentation topic: How to get more regular education teachers on board.

Maureen talked about Mastricola Elementary and the multi tiered system. She had invited administration and school board members to attend the APEX conference, but had no response. She would like to see a presentation on APEX/tiered system.

There was a teacher who wanted to know about presentation on emotional issues. Bard suggested we rebroadcast the taped NAMI presentation.

Barb suggested doing "A day in the life of Mastricola Elementary"

October 25 or 26 is preliminary date set for first district wide presentation.

Maureen will present PBIS at the regular meeting October 18th.

Possible topic for later in the year: Evaluations and Assessments. Maybe have Dr. Walrath present.

PBIS also suggested for a district wide event.

Talk to administration about being clearer when listing who will be attending meetings.