
Special Education Advisory Council
May 1, 2009
Minutes of Meeting

Members Present: Rebecca Schlough, Brianna Inkster, Heather Nichols, Patty Waletzco

Guests: Jill Murphy, Brenda Blackmore

Facilitated by: Elisabeth Lodge Rogers

Dr. Elisabeth Rogers began the meeting with a review of the agenda and a request if there were additional items to be discussed, which were:

- ◆ Integrated Service Delivery Model
- ◆ Oak Hill School Boundary Reconfiguration

H1N1 Novel Flu Update

Dr. Rogers informed the committee that the District has been taking direction from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) since the probable case at Rocori Middle School was brought forward. They will also work closely with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to assure that actions will be taken to keep students and communities as safe as possible. A message will be updated on the District website as information becomes available. All the agencies have strongly recommended using universal precautions of:

- ◆ Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water.
- ◆ Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- ◆ Limit your contact with others who may be ill.
- ◆ Stay home from school or work if you are ill.

Communication systems have been set up between regional superintendents. If there is a probable or confirmed case in the boundaries of our District, Superintendent Jordahl will receive a call, he will then call Dr. Rogers. They and the District lead nurse will meet and follow direction from the MDH.

Dr. Rogers noted that the H1N1 virus could become more or less virulent. It could wane and then show up several months later. The District will be watchful and proactive. There was a question about how families would be notified if schools are closed. The same communications systems used for inclement weather will be utilized: TV, radio, and the District website. Follow-up will also be provided via letters from the superintendent in student backpacks. Parents may use their discretion at having their children stay home and absences will be excused. As of April 28th, MDH is requiring daily reporting of absences due to illness. Staff has been instructed to call parents to find out the nature of a student's absence if unknown. Minnesota will have its own material and testing resources so samples don't have to be tested at CDC.

Budget Adjustment Update

Dr. Rogers led a discussion about the District budget planning. They have used the Teamworks process for decision making. She explained that they won't be able to finalize the budget until the two legislative bills are settled. Governor Pawlenty is proposing zero and zero increased in foundation aide, which ultimately means a reduction because of inflationary cost increases. The District is currently assuming there won't be salary increases; however, all staff belong to bargaining units. The District is to implement 1.6 million dollars in reductions for the 2009-2010 school year and at least 2.3 – 2.6 million reductions for the subsequent year. The State also plans to change the

percentage of funds issued during the school year from 90% to 70%, which means the District will have to borrow more money, also meaning more interest. Dr. Rogers stated that we won't know for some time and it makes planning difficult.

There was a brief discussion about the school boards decision not to approve the bond to pay for post retirement benefits for a select number of previous employees who qualify for this benefit. (OPEB). August 1st was the legislative deadline to submit the application to the State.

Dr. Rogers also explained the impact to the District of the Federal stimulus IDEA funds. It is 2.6 million dollars over the next two years. 15% of the funds can be used for early intervention, as well as staff development, which Dr. Rogers indicated she wanted the paraprofessionals to be offered inservice opportunities along with licensed staff. The proposal for 2009-2010 is to purchase 2 full days of staff development at \$300,000 each and one day for the next school year, with the focus being response to instruction. \$50,000 is also proposed for upgrading assistive technology. A question was asked when we can expect the Federal stimulus funds to be dispersed. Dr. Rogers they were to be distributed by April 1st, but that hasn't happened and we don't have all the parameters yet.

DCD Program Review

Jill Murphy and Brenda Blackmore, special education supervisors, presented a powerpoint to update the group on the action plan for the Secondary DCD program. The DCD teachers met and developed eight goals and a timeline for completion. Members of the advisory council will be asked for feedback or participation in the parent training piece. The powerpoint will be emailed to the council.

Integrated Service Delivery Model

A parent asked for an explanation of the "push-in" classroom. Dr. Rogers discussed that this is integrating students, not "pushing in". The purpose is to bring teacher together for co-teaching and to have flexible grouping. This will provide all students access to general education curriculum, with special education services being in addition to the general education experience. An example of a benefit is this should mean that students would get more reading instruction instead of less. This is a change for our teachers, but we are finding it's working well in many buildings. Several principals have become advocates of the integrated model. System of delivery and instruction may differ from building to building.

There was a brief discussion about the new student information system, Skyward, which will be implemented July, 2009. It will have a parent portal. A parent noted that it would be beneficial to have daily assignments posted on-line for parent and student access.

Oak Hill School Boundary Reconfiguration

A parent asked where the District is in the reconfiguration of Oak Hill. Dr. Rogers said the project is still in process. There was a community input meeting the end of April. The group suggested that the District make a decision and that it will be impossible to please everyone when it comes to boundary decisions, but with a population of 1,0026 students, it does need to be done. Dr. Rogers noted they will be using the Teamworks process to make decisions.

Dr. Rogers thanked the attendees and the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted By: Sharie Narlock

These minutes are not official until reviewed and approved by the Special Education Advisory Council.