
Special Education Advisory Council
September 6, 2007
Minutes of Meeting

Members Present: Mary Broderick, Brianna Inkster, Rose Jacobs, Heather Nichols, Cindy Owen, Rebecca Schlough, Patty Waletzko, Randy Arnold, Elisabeth Lodge Rogers

Guest: Carrie Nash

Dr. Rogers began the meeting with a welcome and introductions. Members were asked to verify their contact information and give consent to have it posted on the Special Education Advisory Council website.

The agenda was reviewed and two items were added.

District 742 Levy

Dr. Rogers provided a handout of commonly asked questions regarding the upcoming District 742 operations levy. She explained that there were two questions being asked on the levy. The first question will request a renewal of the 2004 operating levy to help support the current teacher to student ratio, maintain student transportation services, and extra curricular activities, including arts. There was a discussion about the value of extra-curricular activities in keeping the youth engaged and connected to school, therefore being an incentive to students in achieving academically and developing socially to becoming contributing adults. The Local Education Activity Fund (LEAF) foundation was discussed as very effective in providing additional funds for special initiatives, but didn't cover all the costs such as, facilities use, which comes out of the general fund. The second levy question will support the District's technology needs for upgrades to aid in meeting new state mandated requirements for electronic testing. Dr. Rogers also noted the need for current technology in order to provide students with web-based instruction.

Dr. Rogers thanked the members of the committee who supported the legislative actions of this past year and said that our District was one that benefited from the outcome. Also discussed was the commitment the District has made to early intervention, which will keep as many students as possible from being identified as needing special education services. The AmeriCorp Reading program will be in all eight elementary schools and there is a focus on preschool literacy programs.

Special Education Leadership Team Organizational Chart

The Special Education Leadership Team Organizational Chart was distributed. Dr. Rogers explained that the responsibility areas of the special education supervisors had be modified to create more balance for the supervisors in numbers of staff supervised, but most importantly to create a "north/south" scenario for smoother transitions for families of students attending South Jr. High and Tech High School and North Jr. High and Apollo High School. Sara Nelson and Jill Murphy will have interim supervisory positions.

Elementary Counselors Grant

The District was awarded a 3-year grant to provide 5.6 FTE counselor positions in the elementary schools. The grant designated that a school needed to have a minimum of a .6 counselor. The goal will be to work toward progress in early intervention with a focus on social/emotional well-being for students, including attendance and school refusal issues. Dr. Rogers is the administrator of the program and Principal, Diane Moeller is assisting in coordination.

Update on Welcome Center

The Welcome Center opened in mid-July as a central location for families to enroll students in District 742. Currently, 155 families received registration services from the Welcome Center. The center provides immediate service in assessing English as a Second Language (ESL) needs. It is a goal to also have a public health designation on site for immunization and the possibility of child and teen check-ups was discussed. The process for receiving special education services has also been established at the Welcome Center.

Meal Plans for Post High School Programs

Dr. Rogers explained the procedure that has been used to provide lunches at the InnStep program and particularly at the Community Options Two (CO2) program, which is located on the St. Cloud State University campus. After discussing a number of possible solutions to paying for the increase in the cost of lunches for students, it was concluded it would be best to inform parents of the increase and ask for their assistance.

InnStep Program Transition

Randy Arnold explained that after 12 years of having the InnStep program located at the Kelly Inn, in St. Cloud, that the management has requested that another site be found. A committee has been formed to pursue finding another location and developing a plan to make the transition as smooth as possible. A letter was sent to parents of student for this school year as well as the 2006-2007 school year explaining the impending move. Randy will send the letter to the SEAC members. Efforts will be made to move by mid-year, however, the management at Kelly Inn has reassured the District that they will be as accommodating as possible in making the transition smooth. It was suggested that the Kelly Inn Program be a host site for a Chamber Connection meeting.

Paraprofessional Reviewing IEP's and Planning for School Year

A committee member asked what the policy was for paraprofessionals having the opportunity to review IEPs for students prior to school starting. Dr. Rogers explained that she encourages the paraprofessionals be informed by their supervising teachers of student's goals and needs, including reading an IEP if it helps facilitate the process. She said that with budget reductions of the past several years that there was a reduction in paraprofessional time, but time has always been built in to allow for training and some preparation. She reiterated that the teachers have never been refused if they requested time to plan with paraprofessionals. They do need to ask their special education supervisor or her if they need extra time. Dr. Rogers explained that due to last minute decisions of many paraprofessionals to not return in the Fall, we were hiring for open positions right up to the start of school, which means that there may have been some delay in getting paraprofessionals current with student needs.

Dr. Rogers thanked the group for attending and the meeting was closed.

Next Meeting: November 1, 2007

Submitted by: Sharie Narlock

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