

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

A meeting of the Special Education Subcommittee was held on Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at 6:00 pm at Quincy High School. Present were Mr. Paul Bregoli, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mr. David McCarthy, and Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Ms. Judy Todd, Mrs. Catherine Carey, Mrs. Donna Cunningham, Mrs. Mary Fredrickson, Mr. Richard Kelly, Ms. Madeline Roy, QPAC Board members Ms. Linda Perry and Ms. Cassandra Beck, interested parents, and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mrs. Mahoney.

With the permission of the subcommittee, Mrs. Mahoney took the agenda out of order and moved to the second item, the **Substitute Teacher Information Form**. Ms. Todd noted that in the new Aspen X2 Student Information System, there is a Special Education module still to be integrated. She suggested a pilot utilizing the reports in that module to provide this information. This module could be demonstrated at an upcoming Special Education Subcommittee or QPAC meeting. Ms. Todd will follow up on this item. Ms. Todd also mentioned that Dr. Denning, who is working on the Young Athletes Initiative at the Della Chiesa Early Childhood Center would like to present updated data on early project results at the January Special Education Subcommittee meeting.

The next item on the agenda was the **Special Education Mediation Policy**; Ms. Todd clarified that mediation is not applicable in all situations. Mediation is not used for placement decisions, both sides must agree at a team meeting to resolve placement. Mediation is never refused for situations that can be resolved through this process.

The next item on the agenda was a proposed **Community Service Collaboration** with UMass/Boston. Carol Dumas is working with UMass on proposal to facilitate a project where students with disabilities would create a PSA on inclusion and students would earn Community Service hours. QPAC was an early proponent of the Community Service Pilot and want to be sure that students who wish to participate in Community Service do so whenever possible.

Ms. Todd, in conjunction with her staff, Mrs. Cunningham, Mr. Kelly, and Mrs. Carey, then presented the **Special Education Program Improvement Plan**. Ms. Todd began the presentation by noting that the Special Education department's mission is focused on "empowering students to become active members of society based on their individual strengths and abilities." Ms. Todd announced that Mrs. Carey has joined the SPED Department,

bringing a long experience including her most recent position as Special Education Department Chair at North Quincy High Schools. The Special Education team works with DSAC in a Collaboration Institute for Special and General Education Leaders; middle school Math continues to be the area of focus.

For last year's goals, there were varying levels of completion: (1) During the 2012-13 school year, the elementary Resource Room teachers will progress monitor monthly, using this data to determine the appropriateness of instruction. This goal was amended to three times a year and the results demonstrate growth, although most students with disabilities are still not meeting benchmark. (2) The transition team will implement the Transition Resource Guide by November 2012. (Middle School to High School and High School to Adulthood) All action steps were completed; monitoring of IEPs has been ongoing and team administrators report transition plans are being completed for all required students. (3) The Special Education Administration will provide a review of all discipline and ethnicity at the Middle School level and share the findings with the Administration at each school by June. This goal was not completed due to software implementation issues that impacted data collection. With the new Aspen X2 Student Information System, there are capabilities that can be utilized to continue working on this goal in the future.

Mr. McCarthy arrived at 6:30pm.

For MCAS student growth, Grades 5, 6, 7, and 10 ELA fell into the typical growth range; for Math, Grades 4, 5, 8, and 10 made typical or moderate growth. In comparison with state averages, there are still performance gaps, especially for middle school math. The gap is very narrow between Quincy and state performance for Grade 10. The MCAS data includes all QPS SPED students, including those who are in out of district placements.

For the Language, Reading, and Writing Anchors, the results have been consistent across the grades for the last several years. With the new Common Core curriculum focus on writing, there is the potential for scores to increase. The Math Analysis clearly outlines by grade the areas for focus and improvement. Recently purchased Math textbooks require short answers and open responses, giving students the opportunity to grow in these areas of expression.

Mr. Kelly reviewed the Special Education department organization: Team Administrators Mrs. Connolly at the Della Chiesa Early Childhood Center, and Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. Carey, who work with the Elementary and Middle Schools. Mr. Kelly and Ms. Pattavina are Out of District liaisons, each managing 70+ cases, including Transportation. At the high schools, the Special Education department heads are the team administrators.

For 2013-2014, the Special Education department goals are: (1) During the 2013-14 school year, all students with Math goals in their IEPs in Grades 7 and 8 will increase their MCAS percent correct in the domain of Number System by 1%. (2) In 2012-13, the average gain in word reading for Grade 3 Resource Room students was 14.9 words. At the conclusion of the 2014 school year, students in Grade 3 will have increased word reading on an average of 17 words. (3) The Special Education Administration will develop a presentation for general educators regarding their responsibilities under IDEA and Massachusetts Special Education Regulations which will be placed on the website by May 2014.

In addition, the other Special Education teams have goals and professional development. The *Occupational/Physical/Vision Therapy* team will increase their use of visual tracking strategies in treatment to better address students' needs ensuring an increase of one standard deviation of 2/8 subtests on the DTVP/Miller or FUN evaluation tools. The *Speech and Language* staff goal is for students to decrease the number of prompts needed to execute multi-step directions related to therapy activities by March. The *Elementary and Middle School Resource Teachers Team* will demonstrate compliance with Special Education regulations as they pertain to developing IEPs, assessing students, and understanding the components of the team meeting with 100% accuracy by May. The *Middle School Resource Teachers Team* will also create a curriculum map alignment for the wrap around/reteach period by May 2014. This will be evident through the development of an alignment guide which identifies interventions and assessments that align all core Math components. The *Language Development Team* will work with students to increase their DRA levels by 3 levels by the end of the school year through specific interventions and progress monitoring of DRA benchmarks books at each report card period in November, March, and June. The *GOALS team* will create an analysis of attendance for GOALS students that will demonstrate a 5% decrease in absences and tardies by May 2014. The *Pre-Kindergarten CARES team* will develop social thinking activities that are aligned with the Pre-Kindergarten Common Core, creating a minimum of five activities to be shared with the team by May. The *Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Learning Center* teachers will utilize data collection/best practice strategies/assistive technology and team collaboration meetings to manage behavior, monitor progress, and share communication systems to increase social skills opportunities within the classroom environment, reducing the need for behavioral intervention by 10% by May 2014.

QPAC's goals are also incorporated into the Program Improvement Plan: (1) Increase participation in QPAC by May 2014; (2) Share resources with parents, teachers, and others by May 2014; and (3) Provide opportunities for self-advocacy and leadership for students by May 2014. Ms. Todd concluded the presentation by noting the lengthy Appendix, containing information on staffing, budget, student population, program description, and the procedural manual.

Mr. Bregoli made a motion to approve the Special Education Program Improvement Plan. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mr. McCarthy made a motion to adjourn the Special Education Subcommittee Meeting at 7:15 pm. Mr. Bregoli seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.