



**Saint Paul Public Schools
Special Education
Advisory Council**

Tim Nelson, Melissa Weeks, Kathleen Morrison, Tara Ellis, Lisa Randall, Rhonda Morrison, Jackie Kelly, Brenda Natala, Amy Eelkema, Hai-Yen Vo, Leslie Hitchens, Anastacia Sacacos, Chamie Link

8 of 13 members, 5 guests

Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) - Minutes

Date: 10-08-19

Time: 5:30 pm- 8:00 pm

Location: Administration Building, 360 Colborne St.- Meeting rm. B, Childcare rm. H

5:30 pm Dinner and Childcare Check-In

6:00 pm Welcome & Introductions

6:05 pm SEAC Who We Are: Purpose and Structure

6:08 pm Powerpoint slideshow is available for this.

SEAC's purpose and structure is outlined in SEAC Organizational Guidelines; shared with members in SEAC binders as well as published on the SEAC webpage. Organizational Guidelines were last updated in 2016.

- Role/Purpose of SEAC
 - Increase involvement of parents with children with disabilities in district policymaking and decision-making.
 - Advise the district on policy and decisions affecting and/or related to special education.
 - Recommend priorities to be addressed by the district in their annual and long-term strategic plan.
 - Advocate from the perspective of individuals and families of children with special needs.
- Structure
 - SEAC is parent lead
 - SEAC makes efforts to meet with the SPPS School Board annually
 - SEAC submits a yearly report to the SPPS School Board
 - The Assistant Superintendent serves as the district rep for SEAC, attends the meetings and advises the council.

6:10 pm Approve September meeting minutes

6:17 pm Minutes approved. Motioned by Melissa, seconded by Tara.

6:15 pm Early Childhood Update and St. Paul 3K - Brenda Natala, Early Childhood Supervisor

Transition from half day to full day early learning classrooms is continuing.

- **SPPS Pre-K Classrooms** – 2019-2020 -- 75% are full day, 25% are half day. When we move to full day, we'll have half as many seats available for twice the instruction time.
- **Head Start Classrooms** – 2019-2020 approximately 50% are full day. They are a government run agency but you have to qualify to attend.
- **SPPS Early Childhood Family Education** - Parents and children come to weekly class together and then separate for lessons.
- **Funding Early Learning** - referendum taxes, state and early learning scholarships. SPPS has a general fund to pick up the rest.

St. Paul 3K Update: Building more opportunities locally, can't wait for federal or state government to do it for us, we have to do that for ourselves. The Design Team will issue a set of suggestions for the design of St. Paul 3K to the Steering Committee in December 2019. In 2020, the St. Paul 3K initiative effort will shift from a design phase to a financing and outreach phase.

SEAC feedback from May 6, 2019

Full Day Benefits

- Children in the same space all day
- Parents don't need to find child care for ½ day – often need to pay for full day even when student attends ½ day program. May need specialized child care.

Full Day Questions

- Not every child needs full day – some children need shortened days
 - 3-year-olds in ECSE classrooms will have ½ day classrooms
 - IEP team determines if child needs shortened days or ½ day classroom
- Ability to provide special education services and paras
- Transportation, aides to ride the bus
 - Staffing model and ratios across sites for consistency
 - Fewer bus routes for full day programs
 - Paras will continue to ride the bus based on age and/or IEP needs
- What does the day look like?
 - Full Day Schedule
 - Opportunity for more instructional time and developmentally appropriate experiences
 - Covering preparation time for teachers
 - Covering breaks for paras
 - Rest time for students
 - Students build stamina over time

SEAC feedback for St. Paul 3K - Insure students are accepted and educated including African American boys, students with special needs are welcomed and that appropriate services are provided.

Input from SEAC

In moving to full day ECSE self contained classrooms, what benefits might there be to design classrooms with Pre-K and Kindergarten age students together?

- Go for it, it may work. If it doesn't you would know the next step to take.
- The concept is wonderful, but I can't steer away from my own path and my disabled son who's not close to typical so that makes it hard. Test it out, evaluate it. Revise. Etc.
- I think it's a great idea because IEP kids don't always follow chronologically and they skill sets may cross and have other kids modeling it. I would be excited to see how that would work.
- As a student I (Tim) liked helping the other kids. It was fun to model.

The kindergarten year can be really hard and the curriculum comes really fast so this model might be helpful with development, toilet training, routines.

What challenges might you anticipate?

- Space, do we have enough space?
- Would there still be paras in the new model?
- How are we accessing all communities to make sure we are reaching all families? What outreach is in place? PACER might be a good resource to help reach all communities. New families to the area may not be aware of all the options.

What would some benefits be?

- I would love to see programs like this in every existing building. The culture of the building would change with the introduction of the younger population. It changes the atmosphere because the older kids are very aware of the younger kids. I used it as an incentive to the older students, to be able to spend time, help with reading, helping with transitions, etc. was a huge reward to the older kids. It positively impacts in many areas.
- It has built empathy, sense of care, etc. to have the younger students around.

How have early and late start times impacted ECSE students/families in early learning programs? - *did not discuss this*

SEAC Questions

Q. How long until it's all up and running?

A. When the voters say yes, it will be rolled out by the following fall (fall of 2021).

7:00 pm Review SEAC Mission Statement and Procedural Guidelines?

7:12 pm Mission Statement was passed around and read aloud.

It was questioned if the specific groups of students need to be mentioned in the mission statement for the Department of Special Ed. It was felt that perhaps the statement was calling attention or calling out certain groups. Some parents felt strongly about the language in the statement in the SPED mission statement and would like to see that one revised.

The SEAC mission statement How can we give SEAC more teeth around supporting parents in crisis. We are talking about policy and more high end stuff but I think SEAC should also have a component of "How can we help you, right now, with your current issues?" The hands on assistance would be meaningful, more so than the policy revision. Some parents feel like they got that level of support through SEAC, but not all do/did. If you don't speak up and let people know how you are feeling, they won't be able to provide the hands on support. A part of each meeting could be dedicated to solving individual concerns or addressing new members concerns. Connecting parents to resources, immediate action will follow. People come and people go and we could do a better job of retaining them by addressing their individual needs. Parent academy got me introduced to SEAC. I wasn't getting what I needed from parent academy but then I met Jackie Kelly. The IEP outlined the strict services but I didn't even know about SEAC. Once my student was labeled SPED, I should have been told about SEAC. I was never informed that this group existed. Maybe have a representative at each school to inform SPED families about SEAC. Are there flyers? Yes, there are, but they don't always get sent home with students. Communication is not equal across the district. It's up to the case managers to disseminate the information/alerts. They are supposed to read, print and backpack stuff to get that information home. Some teachers plates are too full and they don't do it because they are feeling overwhelmed or they prioritize differently. Even parents with students in the same school didn't get information about SEAC the same way. New parents to SPED aren't getting information about support services/entities. Why can't SEAC have ROBO calls like when there's a snow day but directed to SPED families related to SEAC resources or a text or email sent to each family of a student with an IEP. Data privacy could be a problem. Jackie Kelly does some of that already and she will speak with Marcy about possibly expanding that to include SPED families regarding SEAC. Some families don't do email, don't have Facebook, etc. Perhaps a flyer could be given out at IEP meetings. We should have 2 robo calls, one at the beginning of the school year and one midway through the school year. Why aren't the SPED supervisors doing anything about getting this information out to teachers? It's part of their job.

At exec, maybe we could check in to discuss issues regarding to how happy are you with the services you have been getting? It could hijack a meeting, but how do we carve out time for this? The Exec Board should discuss this? How do we address and keep the new people? How do we reach the people who aren't here? Exec will address these issues.

Jackie will send out mission statement and solicit more advise and maybe we could approve it at the next meeting.

7:45 pm Announcements:

Debrief Groves Academy LD/ADHD College Fair - FieldTrip, 90+ registered but only 20+ people showed up. Fair was 3 weeks earlier in the year and maybe families weren't ready? Big rain storm happened and that kept some families away. Is this something valuable and worth continuing? An SPPS teacher reported that the admissions criteria for all schools are the exact same and SPED students won't be getting in. It doesn't matter what services they provide if they aren't letting the SPED students in due to admissions criteria. One parent reported hearing about the college fair in a variety of different ways so at least that information was getting out there.

District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) is looking for members. District advisory council will be taking parent feedback back to the superintendent. They meet once a month at 360. First meeting is October 30th, Melissa Weeks volunteered to go in October. Calton and Tara also expressed interest.

SEAC members would like to alternate attendance.

Group photo - Next month. Spiff up and we'll take the photo next month. Would like to have member photos on SEAC website.

8:00 pm Adjourn

8:02 Meeting adjourned.

8:10 pm SEAC Executive

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 6th.