

Minutes of Suffolk Special Education Advisory Committee – May 20, 2020

Attendees:

Voting: Vivian Evett, Leslie Schiefer, Courtney Richardson, Tiara Logen-Biggs, Holly Boyce, Regina Hall, Saul Godinez, Anitra Simmons

Consultant: Stephanie Whitley, Julie Masters, Kelly MacPherson, David Mitnick

Guest: Sarah Bailey, Ann Dunn

Absent: Angela Bickerton, Thea Davis, Jeff Davis

I. Welcome and Introductions- Ms. Schiefer welcomed everyone and announced everyone who was present on the platform. We did not do personal introductions due to the virtual platform.

II. Public Comment – No Public Comment

III. Announcements and Correspondence

Sarah Bailey, from the Endependence Center, mentioned a Webinar for Independent Living meets online every day starting at 11 am. Topics for June are housing, sign language, cooking, introduction to IDEA and introduction to basic computer skills. Also, there is a webinar for young adults and youth from age 14-21 meets online on Tuesday and Thursday. Young Adult class – 18-24 years old, meets online every Thursday. They require pre-registration. Contact SaraBailey@Endependence.org.

IV. Old Business

- A. Follow up of school board appointment process- Ms. Schiefer announced that she emailed the School Board Chair, Ms. Byrum, on April 30 to reiterate the timeline for SEAC membership and to get an update on the board's progress on approving new members. The response from Chairperson Byrum did not answer the questions asked. Ms. Byrum stated that membership to advisory committees would be discussed at the June school board meeting. Ms. Schiefer thanked Mr. Mitnick for his assistance in trying to secure answers from Chairperson Byrum. Mr. Mitnick further stated that there will likely be a discussion at the June board meeting on how the new members will be recruited.
- B. Approval of April minutes- Approved as written.
- C. Special Education Reports
 - 1. Special Education Director's Report – Stephanie Whitley stated she has not received much feedback from parents other than from a few parents of secondary students who are using Edgenuity. Some students are having trouble getting through some of the lessons. She further stated that the district needs parents to be in touch with case managers so that they can work through these problems with students on a case by case basis. The Special Education Department is working on addressing Extended School Year which will be virtual, as will Summer School. Case managers will be contacting parents of students who qualified for ESY soon. As of right now, all of the details have not been worked out. The department is still trying to work through a lot of uncertainty, and they are taking it one day at a time.

Ms. Whitley also explained the differences between ESY and Summer School. ESY is only for students with disabilities who qualify for it. Anitra Simmons asked, if a student has an IEP, how do you know if they are being considered for ESY? Ms. Whitley replied that the ESY determination is made during the annual review of the IEP. However, there are some instances where the determination is made at a later date due to lack of data at the time of the annual review. Tiarra asked a question regarding summer school qualification specific to her child. Ms. Whitley asked Tiarra to send her an email to look at her son's IEP and case more closely and more personally. Anitra further drilled down on the lack of resources since the school closure. Ms. Whitley explained that IEPs became functionally inaccessible due to the school closure in March. She further stated that once school resumes, SPED will have to access what the impact has been on SPED students due to the school closure and not being able to receive their services during the closure. SPED is working on a plan to address those issues when school resumes. Anitra also wanted to know if there was Special Education representation on Governor Northam's School Task Force. Ms. Whitley confirmed that there was. Ms. Schiefer ask how the district was planning to handle students who were unable to return to school due to being medically fragile as it relates to COVID-19. Ms. Whitley said that she was working with Dr. Gordon on different scenarios as it relates to medically fragile students and they have no concrete plan at this time. Sarah Bailey asked, if it is determined that a student has a loss of functioning as a result of the school closure, who is responsible for documenting that loss so that the students receives compensatory services when school reopens? Ms. Whitley responded that it will be the responsibility of the case managers. The amount of loss will need to be determined by data recorded before the closure and data that will need to be collected for several weeks once school resumes. Saul wanted to know what the workforce program may look like as it relates to COVID-19. Ms. Whitley was unable to answer that question at this time due to the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19. Ann Dunn offered that DARS is offering pre-employment training.

D. Goals – revised goals were approved by the committee via an email vote.

E. Subcommittee Reports – None

V. New Business

A. Subcommittee Creation – will be done behind the scenes with the new goals.

VI. Public Comment Review – No public comment to review

VII. Open Discussion – No open discussion

VIII. Adjournment- The next meeting will be held on July 15, 2020. This will be a virtual meeting.