

April 7, 2009 12:30 pm Sepac Board and Sped Admin mtg.

Admin: Diane Dunham, Christine Brumbach, Valerie Flynn, Dan Needham, Cathy Heller
Parents: T. Stock, S. Cisternelli, M. Callahan, K. Rogers, D Springer

Status of Inservice Trainings: Megan Zwieback was not able to compile us the list of this year and next year's in-service trainings. Cathy Heller will pick that up. T. requested including any social skills related trainings that might be held for guidance staff. C. Brumbach noted that there are 3 kinds of trainings offered: district wide, building based and director's scheduled. For Bldg. based trainings please speak to your individual principal. District wide trainings are not on the website. CH and CB state next year's trainings aren't known yet. CH is pulling together the sped training(s) for NEASC. MZ and CH have done a TA survey to gain info on what trainings to hold for next year as this area is of great need. There will be prof dev next year for all ta's in elementary and secondary level as a result. The survey will determine the teaching models. Who designs prof dev trainings? CB says there is a group and they choose things that support district initiatives...the group includes the curriculum dev coordinator Terri Dugan and Tom Campbell.

TS raised a question for a parent re: the math curriculum and how it is differentiated/supplemented for a student that needs that. CH responded that it depends on the child's needs. CB felt this was a question for the child's teacher or the liaison. The question was further clarified: are their specific district wide supplemental programs/other curriculums that teachers go to use for their struggling students? The answer is no. However, there is a math specialist at the Elementary Level.

RE: Hiring for ELC vacancies. ELC at Hillside is going to be reorganized, not sure yet if it shall be re-organized by grade/abilities/learning styles etc. Candidates are being interviewed but are not public yet. The hiring team includes: Dan Needham, Mona Maas, and Mr. Kazcak among others. Discussed also were the implications to the EASE SS group at Hillside run by Fahlbeck (and Connelly) with Fahlbeck leaving. The Admin realizes they need to recruit more teachers to run these groups.

SLP positions have been posted for a couple of weeks now. No further info.

Inclusion talk for April 13. CB is ready. Participating is Dan Gutekanst, CB, Heather Murphy (guidance), Michael Kascak (Hillside principal) and Leo Hogan (asst principal HS). The May talk is set: Forming Friendships with Lori Hodgins Brazil, Cari Feingold and Arleen Schwartz. CH and A. Skatrud are finalizing the panel for their topic in June.

Sandy has created a survey on survey monkey for next year's topic series. CH would like to suggest a topic/speaker for the HS level. CH has contacted Eileen Haggerty to do the Basic Rights talk again. The date is TBA according to Ms. Haggerty's schedule.

The update from Dan Needham on the Disability Awareness program is that Dan needs to be updated!

Dan was only given the info on this initiative 30 minutes prior to the meeting. Tee recapped the DA program that MZ and Mark McINerny were planning to bring to all the district elementary schools. CB felt this was not something Dan could accomplish in his brief interim. CB did look into how DA fits into the district goals and reported there is an action item in there on this, but there is not a current group working on it. Prior, Dan has looked into such a program being presented through the health curriculum. Dan knows the benefit of this kind of program is good, but wonders how to fit everything in to the crowded school year. S. Wilcox, principal at Eliot speaks highly of the DA program there. Tee and Maureen C. approached Emily Gaberman, new principal at Broadmeadow and she was not supportive of doing a DA program. Her experience is limited to a single grade, one-shot presentation in 4th grade in Brookline PS. De reminded that Mark M. also mentioned this program from his time in BPS and feels that the DA program that Needham uses (imported from Newton) is much better. CB is still hesitant on the best way to go about this. De likened the DA program to the CAP program that comes in once a year and does a brief interactive presentation. All moms present attest to the impression this program has made on their children.

Stimulus Money: Where is it going/gone? CB informs us that the money is grant connected and that they are waiting until April 30th to know the real dollar amount. At present no commitments have been made, however the town has a big say in how the money is used. Professional development will be very big in terms of the investment; low performing schools, and the achievement gap. Go to DESE, ARRA link for all the numbers. 1 time capital expenditures such as assistive technology will see the money. Some money may used for underfunded circuit breaker situations. ½ the money can be used for student improvement and the other ½ for other uses.

TS requested that implementing a system wide comprehensive ss curriculum be considered for the money. CB feels that we have such a curriculum. CB feels that there is a difference in expectation for the curriculum and suggested a separate meeting to figure out the disconnect on this issue. Kori agreed. CB will be getting data from the younger grades on how effective the adaptations of RC and 2nd Step are for the sped kids. CB again recommends parents talk directly to the child's teacher/liaison for answers to these questions. CB noted that some other staff who would have good input into a separate meeting on this topic would not be available during the current time we meet. This was left unresolved.

CB asked for other stimulus money usage ideas. SC would like to see a writing curriculum. Her principal told her there was no writing curriculum per se. CH and CB say there is a curriculum, but that the principal must not have understood the question.

Next meeting May 5th.