Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee on Special Education
January Monthly Meeting Minutes

Tappan Media Center, 7-9pm

January 5, 2015

Present: AAPAC Exec. Team: Barb Byers, Mary Duerksen, Patricia Memmott, AAPS: Dr. Swift (Superintendent), Dr. Brown (Exec. Dir., SISS), LeAnn Dickinson-Kelly (Asst. Super), Sean Waymaster, & Tia Butler-Ketchum (ADs, SISS)

Parents

Next meeting: 2/2/2014, 7-9 pm, Tappan Middle School Media Center

Topics: Adapted Physical Education (Speaker: Deak Swearingen) and Project SEARCH (Formation of parent interest group with focus on training/internships for students with disabilities in healthcare)

Pre-meeting: 6:15-6:50pm, Dr. Brown and the ADs from SISS will be available for private conversations with parents/guardians.

I. Welcome and Sign-In

Sharing Good News: An Eberwhite parent praised that school’s 4th grade general education teachers. She was impressed with how they included Katie Kiolbasa’s special education classroom students in the 4th grade Heritage project assignment.

II. Speakers

Assistive Technology: Jeff Flynn, AAPS Assistive Technology (AT) Consultant, shared info on new initiatives and plans for AT the remainder of the school year.

New Technology in Special Education classrooms:
- 15 new laptops, mainly in use with students with visual impairments, and in wheelchairs
- Recycled laptops from the general education IT dept.
- 19 interactive whiteboards/smartboards
- 10 TAPits (interactive touchscreens for students to use in small groups)
- 12 Discrete Trial Trainers (primarily in use with ASD and CI students)
- 40 iPads (used as augmentative communicate devices)
- All students with written expression challenges should have access to a keyboard
- New voice to text software on computers with Maverick OS
- Kurzweil, and audiobook services such as Learning Ally and Bookshare, for students with reading challenges.

New Services and Supports:
- Jeff and Nancy Brown (another AT Consultant) are doing school visits to observe for AT needs at the classroom and individual student level. He emails each principal after the visits to summarize their observations and make recommendations.
- Training teachers in the classroom during the site visits
• During AAPS Professional Development day (1/26), Kindy Segovia, an AT expert in Kent County schools, will present to staff.
• After-school AT training sessions are ongoing through April for staff. Staff are not mandated to attend, but can get training on the interactive whiteboards, Kurzweil, SOLO Co-Writer word prediction tool, and Inspiration 9 (laptop-based multimedia creation tool.)
• AT Information Fair (date TBA): A chance for parents and staff to see teachers present on how they use AT in the classroom.

Parent Questions/Concerns: Discussion centered on the difficulties of the IEP process for a student to get an Assistive Technology plan, teachers (and parents) aren’t aware of the AT options available to them, ensuring teachers know how to get needed training, and concerns about why AT that is in students IEPs is not always available at the start of the school year.

LeAnn Dickinson-Kelly summarized that the improvements the district would like to see are more use of cutting edge technology, and making sure that what is available is being used. The district is currently in the midst of ordering more AT using more technology bond funding, and is working on a plan to do more training this summer.

Jeff shared that the video library they had hoped to have available on the SISS website to provide more online professional development resources has been delayed due to issues with the old website platform. They are hopeful that the new website software rolling out will remove this barrier.

Behavior Support: Vicky James (AAPS Behavior Analyst) presented information on her role in training district staff, her relationship with the WISD District Support team, and answered questions.

Professional Development Offerings:
• 70 staff trained in data collection (ABC data, duration, frequency, and skill tracking) in summer 2014
• 15 staff trained in lessening attention seeking behavior in the classroom in summer 2014
• With Maki Alexander (teacher consultant), trained 40 teachers in increasing wanted behaviors, positive behavior supports, and using intervention tracking sheets, in fall 2014
• Created PowerPoint on using TIENet’s Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan feature for social workers, in fall 2014. (Currently investigating other software options due to dissatisfaction with that system.)
• With Tia Butler-Ketchum (AD for SISS), training for teacher assistants on how to adjust curriculum for special needs students, and promoting independence with prompt hierarchy/prompt fading, on 1/26/2015.
• Session for social workers on reinforcer assessments, including pairing less preferred activities/highly preferred reinforcers, on 1/26/2015

Building Support/WISD District Support Roles:
• She has visited 3 high, 1 middle, and 6 elementary schools to support teams/students needing behavior intervention.
• Acts as coordinator for WISD District Support team (WISD Teacher Consultants with behavior support experience) to work with remaining schools
• Meets with team in person twice/month, and daily contact/updates on cases
• Organizes CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute) trainings at WISD in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention

Parent Questions/Concerns: Parents sought clarification on the status of several district classrooms where students have more challenging behaviors requiring the use of physical restraint. Vicky shared she has been working closely with those teams, data tracking, and using afterschool time to provide extra training for the staff in the classrooms. Her goal is to have
opportunities for inclusion for students who have been isolated from their peers. She usually finds that our district may sometimes be too hands-off with students, where sometimes it would be less restrictive to use quick physical contact to decrease an escape behavior.

Credentials of the TAs were also discussed, including the requirement for at least 2 years of college for most TAs. Preschool TAs are required to have early childhood education requirements since they also work in HeadStart classrooms.

Dr. Brown also answered several questions about SISS strategies for placing students and forecasting IEP student numbers/ensuring classrooms have teachers hired in time for the fall. She indicated placement is on an individual basis, coordinated by the ADs, and that predictions have typically been on target. However last minute retirements/resignations have meant some classrooms have started the year without a permanent teacher.

III. Reports from AAPAC

**AAPS Administration – AAPAC Officer Meetings Report:** The executive team met with Dr. Swift, Dr. Brown, LeAnn Dickinson-Kelly, Dawn Linden, Sean Waymaster and Tia Butler-Ketchum on 12/17/14. Topics of discussion included the fall data on suspensions for students (showing the rate dropping), efforts to replicate Skyline’s peer-to-peer mentoring class in all high schools, the need for a more active parent group to coordinate Special Olympics in AAPS, and staffing shortages.

**WISD PAC Report:** Barb invited all parents to come to the WISD PAC meetings, which are on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm at the WISD on Wagner Rd.

*Meeting business concluded around 8:30, parents stayed to discuss individual issues with officers/each other. There were no handouts from this meeting.*