I. Welcome and Sign-In

Sharing Good News: A Thurston parent praised her child’s 1st grade teacher, Ms. Yip’s “Yip Bucks” behavior system. Reps from Huron, Pioneer, Tappan, Angell, and Open thanked their administrators for giving them time at capsule nights and/or distributing brochures to educate parents about AAPAC. Pioneer CI room teacher John Conley was recognized for his focus on preparing his students for their life after high school. Finally, a new Carpenter parent reported how efficient her child’s new IEP team had been at getting evaluations and services in place.

II. Speakers

Student Support and Intervention Services (SISS) Welcome: Dr. Elaine Brown, SISS Executive Director, greeted parents and shared several informative handouts. A parent requested these be posted online as well as distributed to the IEP/504 email list:

- **SISS Administration Responsibilities chart**: A useful guide for parents to use when they have questions about their child’s services. It lists which buildings and/or therapists, are assigned to which staff. These team members can assist with issues that parents have been unable to resolve by working within their IEP teams and/or 504 Plan administrators. A new staff member, Concetta Lewis, has joined the team as a Supervisor, and Cheryl Brown will be a Supervisor/Transition Coordinator. Deak Swearingen is teaching adaptive PE at fewer schools, but is consulting with PE staff in those cases. Also, 504 Plans have been moved out of SISS. They are now supervised by Assistant Superintendent Lee Ann Dickinson-Kelley and her Section 504 Plan staff, Terra Webster and Derrick Padgett. [https://a2pac.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/revised-siss-responsibilities-chart.pdf](https://a2pac.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/revised-siss-responsibilities-chart.pdf)

- **Handout on Accommodations and Modifications**: Link TBA. Covered some examples of IEP/504 accommodations and modifications.
• **Flowchart for Contacting Staff & Administrators:** Link TBA. A visual guide to the responsibility chain from teacher – Superintendent. Families were advised to always bring concerns first to the staff who support their student on a daily basis, and to provide 2-3 days for those staff to troubleshoot/resolve before bringing it to the building administrator. Waiting for the monthly parent meetings was discouraged – they want our issues to be resolved in a timely manner.

**AAPS Superintendent of Schools Welcome:** Dr. Jeanice Swift presented a review of last year's program enhancements, and info on district-wide and special education priorities for 2015-16.

- Slides are available at: Link TBA
- Opening Day Video at: [http://a2schools.org/Page/8797](http://a2schools.org/Page/8797)

**Additional Notes from Dr. Swift’s Presentation:**

- **Pathways to Success:** The combination of A2Tech and Clemente has created a great opportunity for IEP and other students to take advantage of a smaller learning environment. Students are able to enroll concurrently at WCC for college credits, and this year have new internship opportunities through a ZingTrain partnership.

- **Early Childhood Expansion:** A Young 5’s room was added to Preschool in addition to the expansion of Young 5’sand Tuition Preschools to more elementary schools.

- **Special Education Enrollment:** Has been around 10% of total enrollment since Fall 2012. They expect to see our total IEP population at ~1700 for 2015-16.

- **IDEA Anniversary:** Dr. Swift noted that with the 40 year anniversary of IDEA this November, special education has changed so much thanks to the efforts of many parent advocates. We use our students’ strengths and gifts to build on their individualized learning.

- **SISS Goals – Ongoing Practice:**
  - To ensure frequent, accurate, and consistent communication
  - To improve responsiveness and proactive problem-solving using the flow chart
  - Implement internal processes to ensure high-performing team & student outcomes
    - Continued development of leadership capacity in every building
    - Continue support of agile problem-solving occurs closest to the student need
    - Resolving questions, issues & problem-solving through the principal, supervisor, assistant directors

- **SISS Goals – Continuing Projects This Year:**
  - To continue Disability Awareness Workshops
    - A plan in place to continue this excellent program
  - To systemize Peer Mentoring Programs in all AAPS schools
    - Ongoing support of principals/school teams to build capacity and develop quality programming across all AAPS schools
  - To enhance Assistive Technology supports
    - Continue to ensure that assistive technology is provided, as detailed in IEPs with full intention to enhance assistive supports
    - Increasing after-school Professional Development opportunities
  - To systemize Personalized Curriculum to meet student needs and enhance student achievement.
How Mindfulness Helps Parents of Children with Disabilities: Dr. Mary Spence and Dr. Rita Benn, of the Michigan Collaborative for Mindfulness in Education (MC4ME) guided parents through a “Mindful Moment”, the history of MC4ME, the research-based evidence for mindfulness (including a study done with AAPS families), and the trainings they offer. Slides at: https://a2pac.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/aapac_oct5-15.pdf

- **Self-Compassion & Resilience:** MC4ME workshop with Kristin Neff on this topic, Oct 23 & 24. Parents are welcome to register, info is at: http://www.mc4me.org/events.html

- **Handout:** “What is Mindful Parenting?; Some Mindfulness Moment Practices for Parents; Self-Compassion Break; Soften-Soothe-Allow”; “The Three Minute Breathing Space.” At: https://a2pac.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/aapac-mindfulness-oct2015.pdf

- **Mindfulness Curricula for Parents/Schools:** SMART-in-Education, Mindful Schools, MindUP and more info at: http://www.mc4me.org/mindfulness-curricula.html

- **Mindfulness Book Recs:** Mindful Child, Mindful Discipline, Whole Brain Child

III. Reports from AAPAC

AAPAC Executive Report: Dr. Swift, Dr. Brown, and their staff met with AAPAC on 9/23:

- **Transportation:** The main topics related to problems with bus routes, and upcoming trainings. October 16th will be more of a best practice, real life snafus and how to problem solve them focus. On November 3rd, the Autism Alliance of Michigan safety trainer will be training all bus drivers, monitors and TAs on special needs safety. Parents who have concerns about long bus rides (over 1 hour is too long) should be in contact with their SISS AD/Supervisor staff to help troubleshoot this concern. A preschool parent shared her concern about a bus driver who didn’t check her ID the first week of school.

- **504 Plans:** Work is ongoing to review all district 504 Plans, and bring them into the TIEnet system for ease of access to staff/updating.

- **Special Olympics:** Bryant Elementary gym has been reserved for practices every Wed, 5:30-6:30. Poly hockey (floor hockey) practices have started, they will do basketball next. A parent in the audience offered to work with PAC to improve communication to AAPS parents about offerings. Jenna Bacolor at Rec&Ed has been helping schedule locations/dates for scrimmages.

**WISD PAC Report:** WISD is a countywide PAC that has speakers on special education topics. All AAPS parents are welcome. They meet 3rd Tuesdays, at 6:30 in the WISD Teaching & Learning Center on Wagner Rd. Their Sept topic was Standardized Testing Updates. 10/20 = WISD Updates; 11/17 = Assistive Technology; 1/19 = Skills for Effective Parent Advocacy; 3/15 = Music Therapy & Therapeutic Riding; 4/19 = Early Childhood & Success by Six Updates. Barb is serving on a taskforce which is evaluating the WISD Young Adult program (used by AAPS IEP students through age 26 who don’t receive high school diplomas.)

*(Meeting was adjourned ~8:55.)*