

Billerica Parent Advisory Council for Special Education
Meeting with Special Education Director
Minutes

February 27, 2008 at 3:30

Location: Special Education Conference Room

Present: Dr. Steven German Special Education Director, Susan Hopkins (BPAC Chair), Joanne Barry (BPAC Vice Chair); Priscilla Aufiero (BPAC Secretary), Michele DeParasis (BPAC Treasurer), Gina Maniscalco (Public Relations)

- Guest Speaker

Sue Hopkins announced that flyers have been prepared and distributed for the March Guest Speaker, Dr. Stephen Shore. She will ask Dr. Serio to approve the flyer in order to post it around the public school offices and for distribution to students. Gina Maniscalco will email the flyer to Dr. German and he will then forward it electronically to the MEC Program Director and all local Special Education Directors.

Dr. German has been in contact with Matt MacAvoy, a Special Education Attorney. He has tentatively scheduled Mr. MacAvoy to be a Guest Speaker on May 19th. Dr. German will contact Mr. MacAvoy to confirm this date and provide Gina with a brief summary of his background to be included in the flyer.

Michele DeParasis announced that Dunkin Donuts has agreed to donate refreshments for the Guest Speaker Series. In addition, Gina Maniscalco has a commitment from Market Basket to donate refreshments for the March 27th Series. Michele is also checking in with other vendors to see if they will be able to provide something.

- Program Descriptions

Dr. German distributed an outdated version of the Special Education Program Descriptions. This is something that should be worked on once the Alan Blume evaluation of the existing programs has been finalized. In the meantime, Dr. German distributed a copy of the Blume evaluation to Sue Hopkins for her review.

- Proposed Budget Cuts

Sixteen positions were proposed to be cut at the School Committee meeting. Of the sixteen positions, eight are paraprofessionals. In addition, remedial reading may no longer be offered at the Locke, and Physical Education may be eliminated at the High School. A short discussion took place regarding "educating" the public about Special Education and how short sighted decisions may affect the student population in Billerica.

Gina asked to have the Special Education Director report to the Town Meeting and explain to the public/members what Special Education is and how it works for the students. Dr. German thought it was a great idea and offered to go to the Meeting if deemed appropriate by the Superintendent and Town Meeting Members.

- Other

Dr. German reported that there is money available in the Special Education budget to renew the BPAC MassPac Membership.

Dr. German announced that Michael Ponte will be his successor. He will start July 1st. Dr. German will leave in August and plans to transition Mr. Ponte into the position over the summer

Sue reported that she sent a copy of an email message from Brad Maguire with "Teach Town" software to Dr. German for his review. She is working with him to get this software program in the school system permanently.

Michele mentioned to Dr. German that there is a new SpecEd Chairperson at the elementary school level but, to her knowledge, staff/parents have not been informed of her presence. Dr. German will make certain that a notice is sent out to the appropriate people to announce her arrival.

Meeting Adjourned.