

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, October 17, 2012

A meeting of the Special Education Subcommittee was held on Wednesday, October 17, 2012 at 7:00 pm at Quincy High School. Present were Mr. Paul Bregoli, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mr. David McCarthy, and Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Ms. Judy Todd, Mrs. Donna Cunningham, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Mr. Richard Kelly, QPAC Board member Ms. Linda Perry, interested parents, and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mrs. Mahoney.

The first item on the agenda was a **Review of Meeting Dates and Goals for 2012-2013**. The goal of the Special Education Subcommittee is to facilitate communication about the implementation of the Special Education Program Improvement Plan by further developing the website to include updated information; monitoring and reporting on progress report distribution; and updating the Special Education Program Booklet. The Special Education Subcommittee will meet on January 16, 2013; March 27, 2013; and May 15, 2013.

Ms. Todd, in conjunction with her staff, Mrs. Cunningham, Mr. Kelly, and Mrs. Perkins, then presented the **Special Education Program Improvement Plan**. Ms. Todd reviewed the Special Education Department Mission Statement and Message, both revised for this year. DSAC initiatives the department is participating in include Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (PBIS) and Collaborative Institute for Special Education and General Education Administrators. In cooperation with the Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education (QPAC), the Transition Manual has been updated and is included as part of the Program Improvement Plan.

For last year's goals, there were varying levels of completion: (1) the Middle School Language Class monitoring through SRI data and observation was completed but test scores were not always reflective of the progress observed. The teachers are seeking a new measurement tool for going forward. (2) Lexia software was used as a reinforcement and progress monitoring tool to supplement Orton Gillingham instruction. This was a very successful program with students and teachers; it flags areas for reinforcement for teacher instruction and has a homework component. (3) Training for Special Education regulations focused on Transition issues and assessments and age of majority. Training is ongoing and planning begins in the year the student turns 16.

Ms. Todd reviewed MCAS growth results, noting that the average growth rate is in the 40-60% range. For 2012 ELA, Grade 5, 7, 8, and 10 SPED students were within that range; for 2012 Math, Grades 7 and 10 were within the range. Ms. Todd noted that for Math, the middle

school grades continue to be a challenge. Ms. Todd then reviewed the comparisons of Quincy to the rest of the state; by Grade 10, both Math and ELA are almost equal to the state levels. For Science and Technology, Grades 5 and 10 Science are very close to state levels. Mr. Bregoli inquired about comparisons to other cities and towns results; Mrs. Fredrickson spoke of the DART Tool which provides that data. Mr. McCarthy asked about a plan for improving Math results and Ms. Todd agreed that this would be discussed at a subsequent meeting. Mrs. Mahoney clarified that we see a dip in Grade 8 Math scores in regular education as well. She noted that the MCAS tests are going to be changing to match the Common Core and the results and comparatives impacted going forward.

Mr. Kelly reviewed the Special Education department organization: Team Administrators Mrs. Connolly at the Della Chiesa Early Childhood Center, and Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. Perkins, who work with the Elementary and Middle Schools. Mr. Kelly and Ms. Pattavina are Out of District liaisons, each managing 70+ cases, including Transportation. At the high schools, the Special Education department heads are the team administrators. The Circuit Breaker audit by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is October 31, 2012. Mrs. Mahoney inquired about the audit, Ms. Todd clarified that this is a random process of selection by DESE. Ms. Perry asked about DESE's Comprehensive Program Review; 2013 is the next scheduled full review (6-year cycle) and incorporates Title I, ELL, and civil rights.

For 2012-2013, the Special Education department goals are: (1) During the 2012-13 school year, the elementary Resource Room teachers will progress monitor monthly, using this data to determine the appropriateness of instruction. (2) The transition team will implement the Transition Resource Guide by November 2012. (Middle School to High School and High School to Adulthood) (3) The Special Education Administration will provide a review of all discipline and ethnicity at the Middle School level and share the findings with the Administration at each school by June.

In addition, the other Special Education teams have goals and professional development. The *Occupational Therapy* team will (1) organize all fine motor equipment and supplies to create a resource inventory and (2) increase professional awareness of Occupational Therapy by observing other programs and participating in in-services. The *Speech and Language* staff will review appropriate practice in the assessment of ELL students. The speech staff will review and discuss *Assessment of Bilingual Learners: Language Difference or Language Disorder?* This information will be utilized to develop a protocol for Speech Pathologists to determine the presence of a disability. The *Elementary Resource Team* will progress monitor using DIBELs and Lexia. The *Middle School Teachers Team* will attend and participate in the course "Keys to Literacy: Comprehension" and develop formative assessments that can be used to progress monitor reading/content comprehension. The *Language Development Team* will assess students in Math to appropriately group students and to provide ongoing monitoring

throughout the 2012-13 school year. The *GOALS team* will communicate the needs of the students and effectively address all education and social concerns. The *CARES team* will promote greater access, use and integration of technology to improve learning and communication. The *Physical Therapy* team will create an organization to ensure all testing is completed within the mandated timeline as well as ensuring that all reports are complete and in the hands of the chairpersons a minimum of 48 hours in advance and that goals are completed on EasyIEP one day prior to a reevaluation or initial meeting.

QPAC's goals are also incorporated into the PIP and are focused on four areas: Resource Sharing, Home-School Communication, Transition to Adulthood, and Needs Evaluation each with multiple goals and action steps.

Mr. Bregoli asked whether Orton Gillingham at the middle school would be used in the resource room as well as the Language Development classes and it was confirmed. Mrs. Mahoney asked about MCAS results and how poor results may concern a parent of a child who is showing progress in school and on other types of evaluations. Ms. Todd clarified that per DESE, MCAS results are not part of the IEP process. Ms. Todd reminded everyone that a student who has been decertified and then begins to struggle again (even several years later) can begin the process again.

Ms. Perry relayed a few corrections for the PIP, including updating the QPAC goals. Ms. Todd will make the final corrections before next week's School Committee meeting and when the PIP is approved, it will be posted on the website. A parent noted that the website does not have information on the Language Development program beyond the elementary level; Mrs. Perkins will look into this.

Mr. McCarthy thanked Ms. Todd and her team; Orton Gillingham instruction and Transition plans have been created to address needs that were expressed several years ago; the Special Education team has made impressive progress.

Mr. Bregoli made a motion to approve the Special Education Program Improvement Plan. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Ms. Todd presented the final **Initial Evaluation Brochure** for approval; on behalf of QPAC, Ms. Perry said the brochure was accepted. Mr. McCarthy made a motion to approve the Initial Evaluation Brochure. Mr. Bregoli seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

Mrs. Mahoney deferred the next item on the agenda **Review of Items from 2011-2012** to the next meeting's agenda.

Save the date On October 29, 2012 *Who Cares About Kelsey?* will be screened at 6:00 pm at Quincy High School. This documentary is about the implementation of a Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) at a high school that previously had a very high dropout rate.

Mr. Bregoli made a motion to adjourn the Special Education Subcommittee Meeting at 8:15 pm. Mr. McCarthy seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.