

Quincy School Committee, Special Education Subcommittee
March 16, 2011

On March 16, 2011, the Special Education subcommittee met at Quincy High School with QPAC Board Members interested parents. Present from the School Committee were: Emily Lebo, Chairperson, Anne Mahoney, Barbara Isola, and Mayor Koch. Also present were Dr. DeCristofaro, Mr. Kevin Mulvey, Ms Judy Todd, Ms. Erin Perkins, Ms Donna Cunningham and Mr. Richard Kelley. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with introductions of all present. Agenda items were addressed.

Open Meeting Law (OML) review: Mr. Mulvey shared essential points of the OML and explained why it pertained to QPC meetings as a regulatory public body that acts as advocate for Special Education to the School Committee. The purpose of the OML was defined as a need to insure transparency. Essential points include: need for agenda, location and time to be published 48 hours before meeting, and items not on the agenda should not be discussed but can add a section on parental concerns, This posting of the meeting can be on the school system website (with agenda). Minutes must be posted and kept forever, and are subject to requests for public records. Even if the minutes have not been approved with a vote, a draft of the minutes would have to be given if requested, can be given as a draft. Questions about the content of emails from parents about particular children and if they are subject to public records rules, Mr. Mulvey stated that if it is communication between only two people and not discussed with multiple people they are not subject to public records rules.

Individual Transition Plans. Ms. Todd and her team introduced Brigance as a tool kit they are using with students who need more transitional developmental supports in the areas of Independent Living skills, community participation skills, post-secondary agency supports, and academic development. This instrument would not be appropriate for students preparing for college and competitive employment. However it has multiple informal assessments where students, teachers, and parents identify benchmarks that can be worked on to move students toward independence. These assessments are criterion referenced and students are measured as to their progress in the benchmarks. Benchmarks are included to the IEP goals. The booklet follows the student from age 13 to exit form HS. Assessments can be done in natural settings through observations or conversations with students and parents. These are done on an ongoing basis and at re-evaluations. There were questions about how much PD was required for this, training was online and done in five modules. This is part of the Transition Planning Form and from these assessments a report can be written. However, it is to be noted that no student would take all of these and they would be individualized according to student needs.

Substitute Teacher Information Sheet, a draft form was developed that speaks to accommodations and it was shared with the group and it was decided that QPAC would like more time to share this with their membership and determine what substitutes need to provide safe and appropriate lessons. This item will stay in subcommittee.

First Responder and Contact Cards were merged into one. This will hopefully get more responses. These cards will be on all buses both in and out of district. Ms. Todd will build a glossary of terms to be included in the book to assist bus drivers and monitors in using the cards. Cards will be sent out in August. Questions about how information about specific needs (i.e. deafness, etc.) are communicated with monitors. Supports have been given for special circumstances like these and will continue to be reviewed and supported for students with communication difficulties.

Implementation of IEP's There were some questions about how this is done at the High School level, especially in regular education classes. Ms. Todd checked with the Department Heads at both high schools and reported that the liaisons are giving all teachers a summary of the accommodations and IEP 's for all students in their classes and that the liaisons are checking back to insure implementation. At the Middle School level, the chair of the team is doing this also. It was decided that this item can come out of subcommittee.

Progress reports, Ms. Todd checked on this and the process of distributing progress reports with report cards as described was being done at NQHS but Quincy High was using another method. Both high schools are now doing progress reports at the same time as the report cards. They are being sent home with the students at the same time frame as report cards. Some discussion about the Middle School process and it is the same although Progress Reports may not all be getting to the home by way of the students. There was a brief discussion about possibly mailing these but the cost is an issue. Parents need to be reminded to look for these and check with their students at grading intervals.

Dismissal Time at NQHS Students, who are bused to NQHS, come to and leave from school ten minutes early due to bus issues at dismissal time. Teachers had rotating responsibility for the dismissal bus and a teacher who had students in his/her class was dismissing early on the day they covered the dismissal. That has been rectified and only students on the bus are being dismissed. All students are getting the required amount of educational time. No academic classes are being shortened. Students who take the early dismissal can still stay and participate in after school events can get later transportation/.

Parental Concerns

Parents would like a presentation on the **policy on CORIs**, Mr. Mulvey will coordinate this.

Transportation, In a regular education classroom with special education students, could a student be dismissed early and not receive academic time. There is a question that this may be happening to a student at one of the middle schools. Ms Todd reports that this really needs to come directly to her so she can review it as it should not be happening as a matter of course.

QPS email There was a lot of discussion about teachers recommending to parents that they not use the QPS email to contact them about their but instead communicate to parents via Gmail for better security. People had heard that the school email had been hacked. This is a concern and not something that probably should be done because of student confidentiality issues. Gmail is not secure. There was discussion about the ongoing problems with QPS email and issues with it not working consistently. Both the Mayor and the Superintendent said they would look into this.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 11, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.