

**QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SPECIAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE
Minutes| October 6, 2010**

Quincy High School/President's Cafe
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

On October 6, 2010, the Special Education Sub-Committee (SESC) met with interested parents at Quincy High School. The meeting was the regularly scheduled quarterly meeting posted on the website. Present from the school committee were Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Sub-committee and Mr. David McCarthy as well as Ms. Barbara Isola. Mrs Emily Lebo was not able to attend due to a prior commitment. Mrs Mahoney chaired the meeting.

The committee members were joined by the Superintendent of QPS Dr. Richard DeCristofaro. Present from the Special Education Department: Director Judy Todd, and Team Administrators, Erin Perkins, Richard Kelly, and Donna Cunningham.

Mrs. Mahoney began the meeting with introductions of the school committee members, and we proceeded to have an informal introduction around the table of administration personal, QPAC Board Members, and parents. Those who had students within the system shared the ages and what schools they attended. After introductions were completed, a friendly reminder was announced that we cannot and should not speak of any incident mentioning a Child's name or location. If we can avoid this, it would be greatly appreciated. The goal of the SESC meetings is to create a place in which parents, administration and School Committee can come together to discuss and respectfully listen to one another with the intent to find solutions and or create dialogue on the road to the solutions.

Mrs. Mahoney then referenced the Agenda, announced that the goal was to move the meeting along the path of the agenda with intentions of providing ample time for all parties.

Meeting proceeded to follow Agenda:

1: Opening Remarks and Introductions: Stated above

2: Transportation Update: Mr McCarthy provided a high level update on the Health Safety and Security meeting which was held on Monday in the Superintendents Office. Ms. Jill Gichuhi was in attendance as well as two of QPS Bus Drivers. The meeting was a kick off for the school year reviewing all Transportation issue within the QPS as well as out of district transportation.

Mr. McCarthy turned the meeting over to Mr Michael Draicchio who handed out a package explaining the services of transportation in the QPS. The new user fee for regular ed was explained to the group. As well as the use of a new transportation badge was shown to the group for feedback. The Badge would have a child's contact information as well at the school the child will be transported to etc. No personal information would be visible on the badge. This would be strictly to help id that a child should be on a bus as well as ensure they are on the correct bus. The information would not be visible unless you pulled the badge out of its sleeve so no one would be able to read the information unless it was necessary.

Overall feedback was that we are off to a good start and the collaboration between subcommittees seems to go hand in hand with staying on top of critical transportation issues. Mr Draicchio and his team have really pulled together and we are off to a amazing start to the year.

The Emergency Information Form and Binders are a work in progress and the Transportation team is still in the process of collecting and supplying the binders to the drivers.

3: TRANSPORTATION SURVEY: Presented to the group by Jill Gichuh (Full report available as a PDF Attachment)

Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education (QPAC)

Working towards the best education for all students within the Quincy Public Schools

Vendor Transportation Survey Results

presented October 6, 2010

The Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education (QPAC) is a parent-led volunteer organization established in 1977. QPAC functions under state special education law, "advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities" [603 CMR 28.07(4)]. One way that QPAC fulfills its regulatory role is by collaborating with Quincy Public Schools administration on identifying areas of improvement within special education programs and methods for addressing them.

Transportation is one area of special education that QPAC monitors. QPAC receives anecdotal reports regarding transportation services from parents at meetings and through telephone calls and e-mail.

Although the majority of the Quincy Public Schools students receiving transportation services do so in-house, a significant portion of the feedback comes from parents of students on vendor-provided transportation. Consequently, QPAC created a survey to formally gauge the quality of transportation services for students on vendor-driven vehicles.

The survey was developed by QPAC's Transportation Committee, and reviewed by QPAC's Executive Board, as well as by Judy Todd, Director of Special Education, Mike Draicchio, Director of Security and Transportation, and Susan Gropp Administrative Assistant for Transportation. The survey was designed to measure parent's satisfaction with their child's transportation services during the 2009-2010 school year through a series of statements. Each statement addressed an aspect of transportation services and asked respondents to indicate if they agreed with the statement, neither agreed nor disagreed with it, disagreed with it, or they did not know or it does not apply. It also offered the opportunity for parents and students to leave comments.

The survey was mailed to the parents of 96 Quincy Public Schools students who received transportation from JBL, RAZ, TLC, or VHS. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included with the survey, and an online version was also made available. Parents were encouraged to complete the survey through QPAC's website, Facebook page, e-mail list, and newsletter.

Demographics

32 of the 96 surveys, or 33%, were completed by parents. 24 of the completed surveys, or 75% were returned to QPAC through the mail or in person, and 8, or 25% were completed online. 22 (70%) of the respondent's children received services from VHS, 2 (6%) from JBL, 4 (12%) from RAZ, and 4 (12%) from TLC. Of the parents responding, one had a child in district (equal to 3%), three had children in out-of-district residential programs (equal to 9%), and the remaining 28 had children in out-of-district day programs (equal to 88%). 14 respondents (44%) identified their child's primary disability as Autism, 6 (19%), identified Specific Learning Disability, 5 (16%), identified Emotional Impairment, 4 (12%) identified multiple disabilities, and 3 (9%) identified other disabilities. The age of these children ranged from 5 to 19 with an average age of 12.

Results

Positive Findings

According to survey responses, parents are generally satisfied with many aspects of their child's vendor transportation services. It was reported that:

- Students were regularly picked up and dropped off at home within ten minutes of their scheduled time
- Travel time regularly lasted less than one hour or was noted in the IEP to last longer
- There was a consistent bus driver and monitor/aide
- Individuals on the vehicle refrained from consuming foods and beverages
- Vehicles arrived clean and in good working condition •

- Vehicles came equipped with the specialized equipment and/or precautions noted in IEPs
- School bus signs were in the upright position and engaged when students entered or exited vehicles
- Parents whose children received transportation during the summer reported that it was consistent with or better than that provided during the regular school year

Recommendations

First and foremost, QPAC recommends that the survey results be shared with the vendors. They should be commended for the high level of transportation services that parents have reported. They should also be reminded of how important providing quality transportation to students is. The trip to and from school can truly make or break the student's day.

Parents did not receive a call if their child's vehicle would be more than ten minutes late

- QPAC recommends that vendors notify parents by telephone if the vehicle is running more than ten minutes late in the morning or fifteen minutes late in the afternoon.
 - *Parents did not receive the name of their child's bus driver and/or monitor prior to the start of the school year or change in personnel*
- QPAC recommends that vendors contact parents by telephone prior to the start of the school year with the name(s) of the driver and/or monitor, as well as the name and telephone number of who to call if the parent has a question or concern. Parents should also be notified by telephone, at least one week in advance whenever possible, if the driver and/or monitor will be permanently changed.
 - *Parents who contacted their provider with a question or concern were not always treated courteously, nor was their issue handled in an efficient or thorough manner.*
- QPAC recommends that vendors be reminded of the importance of positive communication with parents. If possible, a point person should be assigned whenever a parent contacts the vendor with an issue that cannot be immediately resolved. This person would be responsible for informing the parent of any resolution. QPAC also recommends that parents be reminded of when to contact the Quincy Public Schools transportation office with their issue or concern.
 - *Accommodations and/or modifications noted in IEPs were not implemented*
- Although it is unclear exactly what is not being implemented, QPAC recommends that vendors be reminded of their legal obligation to provide all accommodations and/or modifications that are noted in a student's IEP. Vendors should receive written documentation on the accommodations and/or modifications they are to provide to individual students, and this information should be shared with drivers and monitors. QPAC also recommends that Quincy Public Schools Team Administrators review the IEPs of students who are to receive transportation-related accommodations and/or modifications to ensure all are being provided.
 - *Positive behavioral strategies noted in IEPs or behavior plan were not implemented*
- QPAC recommends that drivers and monitors receive direct instruction on how to implement positive behavioral strategies with the students they transport. QPAC also recommends that drivers and monitors receive written documentation for individual students, such as a copy of the behavior plan or relevant portions of the IEP, that includes information on what types of behaviors the student may exhibit and appropriate ways of responding to them. The documentation should also include the name and telephone number of an individual who can be contacted if the driver or monitor has questions or requires further assistance.
 - *Parents indicated that drivers and monitors were not knowledgeable about their child's disability*
 - Transportation providers are required to receive in-service training prior to transporting students with disabilities [603 CMR 28.06 8(c)]. QPAC recommends that drivers and monitors receive this training on at least a yearly basis. The training should include a

general overview of the disabilities commonly present in the students they transport, ways the disabilities may manifest, and appropriate ways of interacting and communicating with children who have those disabilities. Vendors should receive written information on the individual students they serve, such as relevant portions of the IEP, and this documentation should be shared with drivers and monitors. QPAC also recommends that parents continue to be encouraged to complete the "first responder" form.

Overall feedback was that this was very helpful and the Transportation team felt as they had areas that they could address immediately. The survey will be utilized again to provide feedback to the strides of improvements in transportation.

4: ANTI-BULLYING Policy and Implications for Special Education Students: Ms. Judy Todd to report.

Quincy Public Schools Status:

- September 7th- All staff were trained on reporting guidelines.
- Student Support Team developing system-wide bullying curriculum to supplement current programs.
- October 26th- All staff will be trained on bullying trends, identification of bullying and responding to bullying, They will discuss appropriate ways to discipline the aggressor as well as social learning opportunities for the aggressor.
- January 26th- All staff will meet with Psychologist and Counselors in their buildings and share lessons and resources to help develop an anti-bullying resource guide.

Implications for Students with Disabilities

" The IEP indicates that the child has a disability that affects social skills development or that the child is vulnerable to bullying, harassment or teasing because of that child's disability, the IEP shall address the skills and proficiencies needed to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment or teasing."

- Incorporate pragmatic language goals in the IEP with benchmarks specific to responding to bullying.
- May recommend a "group" that is available to all students dealing with bullying issues and indicate this on additional information page.
- Incorporate a goal around communication in the IEP and develop a benchmark that addresses appropriate ways to respond to behaviors (this would be more individualized to how the student responds currently).

The new law protects all students this presentation was for the interest of the Special Education Population.

5: QPAC GOALS:

2010 - 2011 Goals Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education (QPAC) (PLEASE VIEW ATTACHMENT FOR FULL DESCRIPTION)

A. Increase participation in QPAC

Action

1. JILL G Newsletter August 2010: ACTION: Design and distribute a newsletter: COMPLETED: The first issue was drafted and distributed to parents at the start of the school year: NEXT STEPS ▪ Draft and distribute issues in December/January and April/May.

2. Kathy B. Parents Empowered September 2010: ACTION: Reorganize the Parents' Empowered group: COMPLETED: The flyer was revised, updated, and distributed to parents. An article was included in the newsletter. NEXT STEPS ▪ Continue to promote the group.

3. Carol D. Outreach November 2010 ACTION: Identify constituent groups and meet with their representatives to promote QPAC and determine unmet needs: COMPLETED: Constituent groups and initial steps for targeting them were identified. A survey was drafted for use at presentations to elicit feedback and identify future topics. A letters outlining QPAC's purpose and activities was drafted and distributed to school principals. A QPAC liaison to Early Intervention was appointed and meeting and event information was shared. Members participated in the Ward 4 Family Night to promote QPAC. NEXT STEPS ▪ Attend school PTO meetings to promote QPAC's purpose and activities..▪ Meet with QEA representatives to discuss QPAC's purpose and identify future collaboration efforts.▪ Connect with representatives of Head Start to share information about QPAC's purpose and activities.▪ Distribute information additional information Early Intervention and participate in their events.▪ Identify and participate in additional community outreach opportunities

4. Mia H. Fund Raising January 2011 ACTION: Explore fund raising options and opportunities: COMPLETED: Initial guidance regarding bank accounts and use of funds was obtained from Mr. Mullaney NEXT STEPS ▪ Identify and apply for grants and other potential funding opportunities.

5. Jill G. PERC March 2010 ACTION: Establish the Parent Education and Resource Center (PERC): COMPLETED: Identified a physical location for the PERC. NEXT STEPS ▪ Create wish list of furniture, supplies, and materials.▪ Identify activities.

B. Advise the district on special education policies, procedures, and programs.

1. Tony T Transportation October 2010: ACTION: Collaborate with QPS on a transportation survey and updated first responder card: COMPLETED A transportation survey for parents of students on vendor-driven vehicles during the 2009-2010 school year was drafted and distributed to parents. The first responder card was revised and distributed to parents with the transportation booklet. FUTURE ACTIVITIES: ▪ Encourage parents to complete the "first responder" form

2. Linda P Dispute Resolution December 2010: ACTION: Research and report on dispute resolution options and procedures: FUTURE ACTIVITIES: ▪ Revise and edit several dispute resolution resources to reflect state and local information.▪ Update the Dispute Resolution and Complaint Resources sheet ▪ Develop a dispute resolution checklist for Teams. ▪ Draft a list of Transition-related recommendations for the district. ▪ Compile a Transition Resource Guide. ▪ Plan a Transition workshop series or one-day conference.

3. Laura K Transition to Adulthood February 2011: ACTION: Identify transition-related resources and best-practices and report on the results: FUTURE ACTIVITIES: ▪ Draft a list of Transition-related recommendations for the district. ▪ Compile a Transition Resource Guide. ▪ Plan a Transition workshop series or one-day conference.

4. Maureen L Disabilities Booklet April 2011 ACTION: Collaborate with QPS on the disability characteristics booklet. *Booklet* COMPLETED Individual pages were created in Google Docs for each disability that was identified for inclusion. Individuals were invited to contribute via the newsletter, website, e-mail list, and page. FUTURE ACTIVITIES: ▪ Periodically remind parents and others of their opportunity to contribute. ▪ Edit and revise information as necessary
5. Linda P *Needs Assessment* May 2011 ACTION: Conduct a parent needs assessment and report on the results. FUTURE ACTIVITIES: ▪ Draft questions using the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring parent involvement survey as a guide.

6: Items in Special Committee: After some discussion it was decided that we can remove Emergency Information Form. But Need to regroup on all others in Special Committee

7: Parent Questions: None

Meeting Adjournment 8:40pm