



Haverhill, Massachusetts
Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes – SEPAC with the HPS Special Education Dept. (Meet & Greet)

Date | time: December 11, 2023 / 6:00 PM

Location: Haverhill High School, 137 Monument Street, Haverhill, MA (Library)

Meeting called by: Amanda LaClair, Chairperson

In attendance: Amanda LaClair, Chairperson, Zwadita Morrison, Secretary, Deborah Ibanez, Executive Director of Student Support Services, Forreste deGroot, Assistant Director of Special Education, Hannah Potter, Special Education Supervisor K-8, Matthew Scanlon, Special Education Supervisor K-8, Alyse Comeau, HHS Special Education Supervisor, Kristi-Lynn Kurczy, ECC Director at the Moody School, Ken McDowell, Principal, Bartlett School with nineteen (19) additional attendees (sign-in sheet available upon request).

Details: Meeting started at 6:00 pm.

Amanda LaClair, SEPAC Chairperson, introduced herself and Zwadita Morrison, SEPAC Secretary, and Deborah Ibanez, Executive Director of Student Support Services as this evening's workshop presenter to attendees for the event.

Deborah Ibanez hosted a presentation for families as well as an in-depth discussion regarding the Haverhill Public School Special Education Department Operations, Procedures, and the upcoming new IEP. Ms. Ibanez also introduced HPS Special Education Department administrative staff and education professionals.

The presentation was intended to provide families with a brief overview of the following:

- New IEP form
- Special education referrals and timelines
- Tiered supports

- Child find notice
- Pre-K and Kindergarten registration
- Bartlett School Introduction
- Access 21 Opportunities
- Inclusion support
- Vocational training
- Unified sports and
- Transition services that include employment, post-secondary education, community participation and independent living for students preparing to transition onto adulthood.

During the presentation, Ms. Ibanez and her colleagues highlighted the changes to the new IEP form (this will be reviewed in more detail in the fall at a separate meeting). Some basic differences between the current IEP form and new IEP form were shown as well as the new IEP roll out plan for HPS. The new IEP form focuses more on the student's profile with more specificity which will now be featured at the beginning of the form, while maintaining the student's attributes and individual profile as the main focus.

Administrative staff informed the attendees that the new IEP form is a new form and not a new process and that updates to the IEP has been taking place for the past 10 years, also noting that this is the first time in 20 years that the IEP has been revised by the Massachusetts Department of Education and Secondary Education (DESE). The changes were led by the State Department of Education, educators, administrators and advocates. DESE is currently still reviewing the new IEP document, and the anticipated date will be occurring in Massachusetts in the Fall of 2024, though some districts will be implementing the updated form sooner.

Ms. Ibanez and administrative staff answered questions from parents and caregivers during and after the presentation.

Ms. Maritza Martinez-Cabrera, a Bilingual Parent Engagement Liaison at Haverhill Public Schools, attended and offered families who needed it a translator for the SEPAC Basic Rights Workshop.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Next Meeting: Transition Planning 101 with Andrea Morris, Director of Family Support, The Arc of Greater Haverhill-Newburyport

Date | time: Monday, January 25, 2024, 7pm - 8pm

Location: Online/Virtual Zoom