

SNAC



Special Needs Advisory Council

Nantucket, Massachusetts

Laura Steele, Suzanne Fronzuto – Co-Chairs

SNAC Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2020

(Note: The meeting was held by video conference via ZOOM App)

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:00 PM with 14 people in attendance. An opening welcome by co-chair Laura Steele was followed by participant introductions.

Director Update:

- Deb Gately, Director of Special Services provided the following updates:
 - Cohort A In-Person Learning: The return to in-person learning for Cohort A is going well, and students are happy to be back in school. It was acknowledged by all to be big shift after seven months of remote learning. Not all Cohort A students returned based on personal decisions and are continuing remote learning. Student observations for possible regression are made per teacher request. Special focus is being made on social-emotional wellness and working with families.
 - Professional Development: November PD sessions for teachers and staff will include training in the DESE Universal Screening Process.
 - Director Schedule: Deb shared her weekly schedule at the various schools: Monday – Admin/SPED Office; Tuesday – NHS; Wednesday – NIS; Thursday – NES; Friday – CPS.
 - Compensatory Services: Deb sent home to parents, special educators and liaisons the *COVID-19 Compensatory Services Fact Sheet*. This guidance for families must be discussed at the IEP meeting of each student. If IEP meetings have already occurred, liaisons must reach out again to families. Students are being prioritized starting with those having complex and significant needs, and review will take place with the State on how to meet those needs. The services will be geared toward the individual needs of students, and as a legal entitlement, families will receive an official agreement. Deb reviewed and discussed portions of the document via screen sharing. Meeting participants followed up with questions and comments for Deb centered around determining level of need, if all parents will go through the process, if regression may have occurred even if service was accessed during the remote learning period and if the compensatory services can or will need to be accessed outside of school hours. Deb advised that the State qualifies the criteria and that all students with an IEP will be addressed, highest needs students first. Deb also expressed confidence that the school will work with families to coordinate.

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Director Update (continued):

- Special Services Webpage: Deb had talked earlier this year about the Department of Special Services webpage on the NPS website. It continues to be worked on and will be an accessible resource once complete.
- Telepractice: Deb reported that telepractice (the use of technology to deliver speech-language treatment) has had some logistical challenges with the return of in-person learning. Deb is asking the school to hire staff to support students who continue in remote with these services as it did not go as well as hoped. Deb shared that some parents did not know their students were receiving speech services via telepractice rather than in person. Deb was unaware of this and had also thought consents had been done, which was incorrect. Deb recommended that any issues with the telepractice delivery should be discussed with the service providers first and then with her in the Special Services office.

Parents had a Q&A session with the speech & language service providers from the four schools: Fred Durand - NES, Abby Pugh - NES & NIS, Tedy Veleva - NES & CPS and Cathy Bruno - CPS & NHS.

Q: How is the decision made about who receives services in person versus telepractice?

A: Youngest and highest needs students are priorities for in person services due to challenges with attention span.

Q: How is telepractice going? What can be accomplished in this delivery model as opposed to in person?

A: CPS and NHS students who are good with technology are progressing smoothly. NES and NIS students are also doing well. Noise cancelling headphones have made a big difference.

Q: How does articulation work with speech when students are wearing masks?

A: Articulation is more challenging with masks, but it does not totally prevent progress. There are masks that are clear that can be used, however, they do fog up. Self-monitoring techniques can also be used by students to gauge their articulation.

Other questions about service delivery centered around OT: If those services were being provided in person, and if students in Cohort D would be able to access OT services. Deb confirmed that OT services are being provided in person in the school setting only, with no home visits at this time. Remote students can come into the school for evaluations if coordinated with the service provider.

Deb advised that telepractice consents in English and Spanish would be going out immediately to families electronically.

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The minutes from the September 23, 2020 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

The next SNAC meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2020 at 6:00PM. The meeting will again take place via Zoom app.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM. All non-parents signed off so the Uncommon Parents support group meeting could begin.

Respectfully submitted,



Lora Kebbati, Secretary of SNAC

Approved through a vote of SNAC members on _____

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