

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

PRESENTATION ON THE CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ON SPECIAL EDUCATION

January 13, 2014

Background Information:

The Special Education Citizen Advisory Committee (SECAC) works in conjunction with the requirements of the Individual Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in supporting an advisory council for parents of students with disabilities (SWD) and with the Board of Education as one of their Advisory Committees. Each year, the Superintendent of Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) recommends to the Board of Education an area of study to be pursued by each of the Citizen Advisory Committees.

The areas of study for the 2012-2013 School Year for SECAC include exploring the continuum of programs for students with disabilities in HCPS and provide suggestions for enhancements, as appropriate.

The committee also continues to focus on enhancing communication, which has been the area of study for the past few years. These two initiatives align with the Mission Statement of SECAC:

- *To enhance partnerships of students, families, community leaders, organizations, educators and administrators through discussions that focus on the enrichment of services and opportunities for students with disabilities and their families.*

Discussion:

To reach a greater audience of parents of children with disabilities, a new format for monthly meetings has been adopted. One month a presentation is given on a specific topic and the next month, during a SECAC business meeting, a representative from HCPS is available to provide feedback and answer questions on the previous month's topic and how it is aligned and/or implemented in HCPS. The business meetings also provide an opportunity to dialogue regarding programming and the continuum of services for students with disabilities and gather input as to the needs of the students. Last year topics addressed were: Seclusion, Exclusion and Restraint; Assistive Technology; Social Skills; and Transitioning. During the first two SECAC meetings for the 2013-14 school year, the topic was bullying. By enhancing the topics available, the committee has been able to reach a greater audience of parents and community members.

Although there are many opportunities for meeting the needs of SWD in HCPS, there is a continued need for enhancements to programming for:

- Students transitioning from Infants and Toddlers and preschool programs into kindergarten placements;
- Classroom Support Programs; and
- Students on the autism spectrum and the need for additional program options.

Recommendations:

The SECAC recommends the following:

1. Expand program options for SWD to support the sensory and behavioral needs of students.
2. Continue to partner with the Department of Special Education in finalizing the SECAC website and updating the new SECAC brochure.

The committee appreciates the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Board of education and the Department of Special Education for supporting students with disabilities and their families and invites you to attend a meeting this year. Topics considered for the remaining of this year will include:

- Department of Health & Hygiene Supports and Services
- Brain-based/Neuropsychology/Attention
- Community Agency Resources
- PARCC and Common Core