

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD  
COUNTY INFORMATIONAL REPORT  
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ON SPECIAL EDUCATION  
OCTOBER 24, 2016**

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 Citizen 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 Citizen Advisory Committee.

The area of study for the 2015-16 school year for SECAC include exploring the continuum of programming for students with disabilities in HCPS.

The committee also continues to focus on enhancing communication, which has been an area of study for the past few years. This initiative aligns 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:

Over the past school year, the SECAC notes the following accomplishments, recommendations, and proposed charge for the 2016-17 school year.

***Accomplishments***

To reach and inform a greater audience of parents of children with disabilities, speakers are sought to present information about topics of current interest at monthly meetings. Leaders and experts in the field of Special Education meet with the parents. Additionally, business meetings provide an opportunity to dialogue regarding programming and the continuum of services for SWD and gather input as to the needs of the students. Last year, topics addressed were: Applied Behavioral Analysis, Chesapeake Therapeutic Riding, Effects of Social Media on Brain Development, Sensory Diets, What is in the IEP?, and the PARCC Assessment. By offering a variety of topics, SECAC has been able to reach a greater audience of parents and community members.

***Recommendations***

Although there are many opportunities for meeting the needs of SWD within HCPS, SECAC

supports and recommends the continued need to enhance programming for:

- Participation and achievement in the general education curriculum by all students.
- The development of a Social Skills component across learning settings to address the behavioral challenges of students.
- The expanding population of students with the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- Reduction of student to teacher ratio to ensure needs of all students are addressed in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

***Proposed Charge for 2016-17 School Year***

SECAC requests to continue to pursue the following areas of study during the 2016-17 school year:

1. Explore the continuum of programming for students with disabilities in HCPS.
2. Focus on enhancing communication, which has been an area of study for the past few years. This initiative aligns with the Mission Statement of SECAC:

The Committee would like to thank the Harford County Board of Education for allowing the Committee the opportunity to present our views. These views are from professionals, parents, and students in many of our public schools throughout Harford County. We would like to thank Superintendent Mrs. Barbara Canavan, Dr. Susan Austin, and all of the current SECAC members. We look forward to serving the Board of Education and the citizens of Harford County by providing the citizens' perspective and advice related Special Education in Harford County Public Schools. The Department of Special Education invites the public to attend a meeting this coming school year to support students with disabilities and their families.