

# MINUTES

SECAC

March 7, 2024

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## In Attendance

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Jeanne Erdley, Kara Stone, Suzanne Oshinsky, Colleen Sasdelli, Charles Dierbach, Jessica Hackmann, Megan Fitzgerald, Destiny Presbury, Angela Sittler, Jackie Corpuz, Heather Harrison, Shannon Clark, Christopher Penney, Shauna Browne, Shanika Campbell, Elizabeth Tomcho, Kelly Deluca, Kathy Pitrat, Christle Henzel, Rebecca Blake, Kyla Sener, Lu Zhang, Rachel Trovato, Kim Heeter, Brooke Muller-Thym, Sarah Walter, Steven Davis, Anne Valencia, Tracy Masur, Victory Ram, D.G., Pilar Dutton, Anjie Cook

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## Welcome & Announcements

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1. Welcome from SECAC.
2. Upcoming Meetings: April 11, 2024 - Navigating Transition Years Elementary to High School  
May 2, 2024 Navigating Transitions - High School and then Onward **\*\*LAST MEETING UNTIL SEPTEMBER\*\***
3. Upcoming Events notices from the community: Join our email list and Facebook Group.
4. Please leave comments and questions in the chat box. The chat is being monitored.

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## Colleen Sasdelli – Director of Special Education – Information Share

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Parent Engagement Questionnaire results up to this point were shared. Not as many people responded as hoped. Maryland Special Education survey is out.

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## Coaching your Student to Thrive with their ADHD Brain - Jessica Hackmann, Ed.S, NCSP, PCC

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# THE ADHD PARADOX

STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
Attention to detail - meticulous at times	Typically disorganized in daily life
Able to get a lot done in a short amount of time	Procrastinates - lives in the "now" and "not now"
Dreamer or visionary	Bored with reality
Independent - desires to be one's own boss	Struggles to work on a team and take orders
Naturally creative - ideas pop up like a popcorn machine	Trouble organizing thoughts and acting upon them
Curious - wants to understand at great depth	Easily distracted by novel thoughts/problems
Energetic zest for life	Impulsive - misses out on simple life experiences
Can remember details from years ago	Forgetful - misplaces belongings moment to moment
Great excitement at the start of a new idea or project	Enthusiasm pitters out before a task can be accomplished

- I.
- II. Environmental stressors linked to a person developing ADHD
  - a. In utero exposure to drugs
  - b. Maternal obesity
  - c. Lack of oxygen at birth
  - d. Early infections
  - e. Head injury
  - f. Exposure to toxins (lead, mercury, etc)
  - g. Traumatic experiences
  - h. Life changes/transitions (expected or not)
- III. Neuroplasticity
  - a. Early theorists believed brain development was set by age 30.
  - b. Research through brain imaging shows that the brain is capable of reorganizing and adapting by forming new neural pathways.
  - c. Neuroplasticity plays a role in injury recovery, skill acquisition and promoting well-being throughout lifespan.
- IV. Cerebellum Connections
  - a. Occupies 10% of brain but contains 75% of neurons.
  - b. Coordinates balance and movement
  - c. In 1998, it was discovered to play a critical role in developing new skills, emotional regulation and maintaining focus.
  - d. Brain scans have shown that balance-based exercises stimulate neuron production in the cerebellum (increasing management of ADHD symptoms).
- V. Functional MRI scans
  - a. Researchers were able to identify parts of the brain that are active when completing a task.
  - b. Scientists have discovered that clumps of neurons light up so to speak.
  - c. The neuron that lights up when you are engaged in a task is called "Task Positive Network" (TPN).
  - d. When your mind is distracted, the neuron in control is called "Default Mode Network" (DMN).
- VI. Task Positive Network (TPN)
  - a. Focuses on senses, short term memory and external tasks.

- b. When you are focused on a task, TPN keeps you doing it.
  - c. The bad thing about TPN is that it can keep you hyper-focused, making it difficult for you to disengage from the task.
  - d. Multitasking weakens TPN, resulting in short attention spans.
- VII. Default Mode Network (DMN)
- a. Focuses on creative/imaginative thinking and problem solving.
  - b. Unsettled and restless
  - c. Relies on past experiences and memories
  - d. Imagination supports future thinking and future plans
  - e. The ADHD brain tends to get stuck here.
- VIII. TPN vs DMN
- a. The ADHD brain is hardwired to spend more time in DMN.
  - b. DPM means more time thinking about the past, making it difficult to finish tasks and hinders creative processes.
- IX. Common Struggles
- a. Time management
  - b. Social situations
  - c. Organizational skills
  - d. Attention
- X. Techniques and Tactics
- a. Environment
    - 1. Clutter free work space
    - 2. To Do List
    - 3. Reduce distractions
    - 4. Planner/calendar
  - b. Diet
    - 1. Avoid processed food.
    - 2. Foods high in L-Tyrosine increase dopamine
  - c. Sleep
    - 1. Limit blue light exposure
    - 2. Limit overnight distractions
    - 3. Get adequate amount of sleep (based on age recommendations)
    - 4. Cool and dark room
  - d. Exercise
- XI. ADHD/Executive Function Coaching
- XII. Medication
- a. Medications used increase dopamine and norepinephrine levels to support focus, impulse control and emotional regulation
  - b. Stimulants are safe and effective
  - c. More immediate symptom relief when compared to behavioral strategies

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## Q&A

- Q. How is TPN problematic?
- A. We are not always focused on what we need to be focused on.

Q. Does insurance cover ADHD coaching?

A. No.

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### Giveaway Winners

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Elizabeth Tomcho and Shauna Browne

Minutes taken by Kara Stone, Secretary/Treasurer