

Harford County SECAC Meeting Minutes

April 3, 2025

6:30pm - 8:30pm via Zoom

Participants: 27

Jeanne Erdley - SECAC Chair & Parent
Frank Kros - speaker
Autumn Greene
Bernard Hennigan - HCPS
Brooke Muller-Thym
Carey Reise - HCPS
Carie Sadowski - HCPS & Parent
Chabre Hall - HCPS
Christine Lai - Parent
Claudette Lezama
Colleen Sasdelli - HCPS
Ellianne Lanza - MCF
Howard Quinn
Kathryn Jenkins
Kim Birnbaum - PPMD
Kim Heeter - HCPS
Lo-An Fine - Parent
Marley Nickle
Megan Fitzgerald - HCPS & Parent
Penelope Shevenell - Parent
Sarah Walter - ATS
Shanika Campbell
Shannon Harrison
Stacey McCord
Suzanne Oshinsky - SECAC Co-Chair & Parent
Lindsey Gilmour
Diana Gervasi (DG)

Welcome and Information Share

1. SECAC opened the meeting and welcomed all.
2. SECAC announced the upcoming election for Board positions on Thursday, May 1, 2025. Nominations can be sent to harfordcountysecac@gmail.com.

3. SECAC announced the upcoming meeting on Thursday, May 1, 2025. The meeting will hold the Board elections for all three positions. There will be two presentations: All About ESY and The Basics of Supporting Your Student Outside of the School Setting.

Director of Special Education – Colleen Sasdelli

1. The Special Education Director asked Parents to fill out the Parent Survey.
2. The Special Education Director discussed the budget and will be monitoring any changes to the budget.

Presentation

Rethinking ADHD - What Works, What Doesn't and Why

ADHD diagnoses are on the rise, but ADHD myths persist—learn what ADHD really is and how to support this unique brain.

Frank Kros, MSW, JD

Kros Learning Group

CEO and Founder

<https://kroslearninggroup.com>

Tonight's Agenda:

- I. Major Message
- II. 2 Big Ideas

I. Major Message

- a. The major takeaway he said was to nurture and fiercely protect your child's emotional health, and everything else is secondary.
- b. Formal schooling is the most difficult environment for someone with ADHD and once done with formal schooling many will blossom.
- c. The negative messages and shame that ADHD students receive is the biggest danger to their emotional health.

II. 2 BIG Ideas

1. ADHD is a Biological Condition.

- a. The frontal lobe is responsible for executive functions and impacts one's ability to self-direct, as well as working memory. Instead of being future oriented, one is more focused on the minute to minute.
- b. ADHD does not affect one's knowledge, but rather one's self-direction so reteaching the knowledge or skill over and over is not going to be successful.
- c. The ability to Self-Direct is different than knowledge or intelligence.

- d. Kids with ADHD can Succeed but Need Understanding and Supports.
- e. ADHD is a biological condition, not a behavioral one and differences in the ADHD brain are found in the frontal lobes.
- f. An ADHD student is about 3-5 years behind in terms of executive functioning than a neurotypical student.
- g. Are you an Ally or an Adversary for your child/student?
- h. Teaching healthy stress management strategies is one of the most important things you can do. Having ADHD is very stressful.
 - i. Vigorous exercise
 - ii. Balanced diet
 - iii. Adequate sleep
 - iv. Positive, supportive relationships
 - v. Mindfulness based stress reduction
- i. ADHD people are more at risk of engaging in unhealthy behaviors because of high stress.
- j. Use Stress Relief Tools.
 - 1a. A.N.T. Therapy (automatic negative thought) since our brain focuses on threats: A.N.T. therapy is self-talk, so for example, what are you thinking or what is your inner voice telling you? Name it or objectify the thought "Eeyore". Transform, or think of a favorite place. Finally say "I'm Done." or "What's my next step?" to move on.
ANT Therapy 4 steps. 1. Be Aware of the negative thoughts. 2. Name it 3. Transform the negative thought to a positive. 4. Move on
 - 2b. If/Then is another technique. For example, a child that had trouble waiting or dealing with impulse control. Remind them that "If I know the answer to the question, then I will count my cards" and have a physical set of cards with 1, 2, 3 and a final card with a picture of raising one's hands. These physical and visual cue cards help with impulse control.

Bottom Line: ADHD is a biological condition with highly predictable behaviors and opportunities for skill development. Prepare your toolbox to successfully meet your child's needs.

2. Kids with ADHD Can Succeed

- a. But Your mindset matters.
- b. After formal education, many successful people like Bill Gates, Einstein, Michael Phelps, who have ADHD. They struggle in highly structured environments.
- c. Change one's mindset: they not distracted, they are dreamers. Not Fidgety, but energetic. Not Impatient but go getters or risk takers.
- d. ADHD is context dependent.

- e. Begin with strengths, ie. brain surfs. Make a list of the child's strengths and other things you love about your child. Change your mindset.
- f. Dopamine is a reward chemical that is underproduced in or not metabolized in ADHD. So the ADHD mind is seeking dopamine producers because Dopamine is suppressed in ADHD brains. Video games produce dopamine,
- g. Dopamine can also be a positive. Try to get dopamine in other healthy ways, such as extra curricular activities. Stay active and join a group. Vigorous physical exercise (VPA)
- h. Cue cards for children and young adults are in "Smart but Scattered" series which has elementary, teen and young adult books geared to each age group. (See resources below)
- i. Hyper focus, do together something that they enjoy.
- j. Use Stop and Think visual.
- k. Do it with them. Model a good decision.
- l. Individualized education, gamification, electronics. Individual topics, but also need social exposure and peers.

Bottom Line: Kids with ADHD have little energy and low motivation if the reward (Dopamine) is in the future, if the reward still motivates them at all.

From the slides of Frand Kros:

In My Experience, Kids with ADHD are:

- Misunderstood
- Blamed for Their Genetics
- Judged for Differences They Did Not Choose
- Extremely Stressed
- Under Appreciated for What They Accomplish
- Shamed More Than Validated
- In Need of Advocates, Protectors & Champions

RESOURCES:

Frank Kros started with the best resource for ADHD attitudemag.org
 ADD.org is another good resource

Frank Kros stated he would send to SECAC his presentation in PDF that will include resources (which he did and SECAC forwarded to all in attendance).

Additional excerpts from the slides:

Really Good Resources:

Smart but Scattered by Peg Dawson, EdD, and Richard Guare, PhD
 Smart but Scattered Teens by Richard Guare, PhD, Peg Dawson, EdD, and Colin Guare
 Executive Function in the Classroom by Christopher Kaufman

The Executive Function Guidebook by Robert Strosnider and Valerie Saxton Sharpe

Good News! You Can Boost Your Own EF Skills:

The Smart but Scattered Guide to Success by Peg Dawson, EdD and Richard Guare, PhD

Submitted by Suzanne Oshinsky and Jeanne Erdley

Adapted for accessibility by Pauline Timmons