

Holmdel Township Board of Education

Special Services Committee

Meeting Notes for February 25, 2011

Present: Board Members: Ana M. Vander Woude–Chair, Phyllis Pascucci and Dennis Pavlik
Administrators: Meryl Gill and Mary Beth Currie

Absent: Chiung-yin Liu and Barbara Duncan

- 1. Meeting Cancellation:** The January 2011 meeting for this committee was cancelled due to unexpected scheduling conflicts.
- 2. Café 303:** To the pleasant surprise of the committee, the meeting was catered by students from Amy Clark’s high school class, otherwise known as Café 303. Although as board members we all volunteer our time because of our strong commitment to the kids, we very rarely have much contact with our students. Interacting with Mrs. Clark’s class was a very meaningful experience for us all. This opportunity was also a very valuable learning tool for our students at so many levels, including socialization, life skills training and academics. Even Art and Design were reinforced when the class designed and created special T-shirts.

The committee will continue this relationship and learning opportunity with Café 303. In addition to the satisfaction that it brings us (both emotionally and nutritionally), it affords our students more opportunities to refine very important skills.

- 3. Pre-school Update Registration for 2011-2012 School Year:**
 - a. A preschool information session was held at Village School on February 10th from 7p to 8:30p. About 30 parents attended. Brian Schillaci provided a tour of the preschool classrooms.
 - b. The deadline for registration is March 3rd. If the applications exceed capacity, then a lottery will be held. The Village PSA president will make the selections. Once the selections are made, parents will have two weeks to provide a deposit to secure their child’s spot. The deposit will then be applied to the last month’s tuition.
- 4. Extended School Year Program (ESY) Update:** The Special Services Department is now in the process of preparing for the Summer 2011 ESY program. It is scheduled for July 5th to August 11th and will be held 4 days per week, from 9a to 1p.
- 5. Professional Development**
 - a. On January 31st, all preschool staff received a full day of follow-up HighScope training.
 - b. Preschool parents and staff have two upcoming training sessions:
 - i. February 28th: Feeding and Language Training Workshop
 - ii. March 28th: Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) training sessions, Part 2.
 - iii. No workshops will be held in April.
- 6. Indian Hill Autism Program Update:**
 - a. The Transition Autism committee continues to meet regularly. The committee is focusing on, *inter alia*, curriculum and staff training. (Indian Hill staff is attending the parent/staff training sessions held at Village School.) Three students are expected to attend the program in September. The program is anticipated to consist of a combination of special class placement (self-contained), resource room, and fully inclusive specials.

- b. In May and June, tours will be conducted to Indian Hill to help students transition from Village.
- c. Another parent-initiated fundraiser is anticipated in April.
- d. Outreach has been initiated with area school districts for possible out-of-district placement at Indian Hill. Long Branch has expressed interest.

7. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Update:

- a. As previously reported out by this committee, Village School, Indian Hill School and Satz School failed to meet AYP safe harbor this year due the Special Education percentages.
- b. The principals of all three affected schools met with the director of Special Services, the supervisor of Humanities and the supervisor of Math and Science to develop an action plan. The principals subsequently met with their respective staff to ensure an understanding of the expectations, including a means to assess students. Learnia is being used as an assessment tool to identify areas of growth and shortfalls.
- c. An action plan was initiated to target those classified students who fell within the range of 190 to 210 (200 is deemed proficient). Specifically, the plan will infuse greater test preparation strategies into the students' day that will, for example, reduce test anxiety and acclimate them to sitting for a test for long periods of time. The goal is not to teach to the test.
- d. To facilitate the plan, test preparation books were purchased and benchmark tests will be reviewed. The cost of the materials was split between Village School, Indian Hill School, Satz School and the Special Services Department.
- e. The test preparation strategies will be provided to all students, not just the targeted group, thereby helping all district students.

8. Items for the Good of the Order:

- a. Starting March 1st, orientation mobility transition services will be provided to students transferring from Indian Hill to Satz.
- b. Ana Vander Woude shared with the committee that the Special Olympics of New Jersey has a school program titled "Get Into Our Game" that provides training in the Special Olympics events of soccer, basketball and Track & Field. Participation is free and free equipment is provided. Meryl Gill will look into to the program to see if is suitable for the district.

9. Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 16, 2011, at 11a in the Upper Library Conference Room, Holmdel High School.

Respectfully submitted,

Ana M. Vander Woude