

Lexington Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

Sponsor: Lexington Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)
Topic: Informational Meeting with Dr. Paul Ash and Linda Chase
Date: September 20, 2012
Time: 9:30—11:30 am
Location: Estabrook Hall, Cary Memorial Bldg. (Cary Hall), 1605 Mass Ave.

Preliminary Meeting Agenda

Topic	Owner	Time Allotted
<u>Introduction</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the Lexington SEPAC?• Today's Meeting Goals• Ground Rules	Jennifer Yaar	10 minutes
<u>Question & Answer Session</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behavior Plans—Current Policy (15 min)• Staff Training Behavior Plans—Current Policy (15 min)• Staff Training (15 min)• Time-Out Procedures (15 min)• Parent Concerns/Communication (15 min)• Out-of-District Placements/Settlements (15 min)• Open Questions (15 min)	Sue Cusack (Facilitator)	1 hour 45 minutes
<u>Next Steps</u>	Jennifer Yaar	5 minutes

I. Introductions – Call to Order at 9:35 am

a. School District Representation

- i. Panel included Paul Ash (Superintendent), Linda Chase (Director of Student Services), Laura Dudley (ABA Coordinator, Lexington Public Schools)
- ii. Additional District Representatives in Attendance included Diane Pelletier, (Interim Director, Special Education) and program staff including pre-school and high school coordinators, Evaluation Team Supervisors and Out of District Placement Liaison)

- b. SEPAC reviewed the meeting objectives, summarized process for meeting preparation and suggested ground rules for meeting
 - i. Approximately 25 questions submitted by members of the public in advance of the meeting and those questions were provided to administration without identifying information
 - ii. Questions were grouped into larger themes to allow for responses in given time
 - iii. The SEPAC is actively working on scheduling follow-on meetings as necessary to maintain open communication channel with administration and address parent concerns
 - iv. Audience was reminded that SEPAC meetings are public
 - v. The moderator for the event, Sue Cusack, was introduced
 - vi. Throughout the minutes **Q** = questions posed by moderator or audience member
 - vii. Please note that minutes are taken by a SEPAC member and should not be considered verbatim responses to questions.

II. Behavior Plans

- a. Ms. Dudley provided an overview of behavioral support in the district
 - i. Two district wide behavior specialists provide consultation and support to any teacher/administrator in the district when a child does not respond to typical classroom management strategies
 - ii. Behavior plans are based on observation and are designed to help replace challenging skills with more expected/appropriate skills
 - iii. It is expected that the parent is notified of the plan
 - iv. Monitoring takes place to determine if the plan is effective – increasing positive behaviors/decreasing challenging behaviors
 - v. Strategies for fading or adjusting the behavior plan are considered as well

III. Use of Time Outs in the District

- a. Ms. Dudley provided an overview of timeout procedures in the district
 - i. Traditional clinical definition = Time Out meant remove reinforcement for engaging in attention seeking behavior ; currently Time Out often refers to the removal of a child from an environment or have a child go to a particular area
 - ii. There is a spectrum of Time Out scenarios within the school environment
 - 1. Move child from group instruction to a desk within the classroom
 - 2. Removing other children from the area where the child is (may be used with aggression for safety reasons)
 - 3. Have the child leave the classroom and go to another area in the building
 - iii. In Lexington, Time Out implies that a student has access to staff
 - iv. Parental notification should include information on the location of the time out, teacher language during timeout and procedures to teach child to ask for a “Break” for self-regulation as appropriate

- iv. *Q: How does the plan differ if the child is on an IEP or not?*
- v. Behavior specialists provide services to any child in the district
- vi. Children in different programs may have access to Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) if in specialized program
- b. *Q: What should parents do if they believe staff is not following a behavior plan?*
 - i. In the General Education setting, start with school site team that works closest with student (Teacher/behavior specialist/guidance/Principal)
 - ii. If child is on an IEP – notify teacher/BCBA/ETS
- c. *Q: When was seclusion stopped in the district and what is the policy now?*
 - i. While seclusion and time out are used interchangeably by some they are different per the law; Seclusion, per the state code, indicates that the student is alone, closed door, and had no access to staff
 - ii. Lexington does not practice seclusion
 - iii. Time out is a continuum with a hierarchical chain of responses
 - iv. Response begins with the least restrictive response
 - v. If a child needs a “removal” time out – staff always accompanies a child
 - vi. As more resources have been added around behavior support to the district the team strives for continuous improvement
- d. *Q: How does the district ensure that the district is following behavior plan and best practices?*
 - i. Each student is monitored with respect to their individual plan
 - ii. Each plan has clinical and administrative supervision, support and direction
 - iii. The Student Services undergoes a PQA review (compliance review)
 - iv. Additional trainings/monitoring include CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute) Training and Curriculum
 - 1. Focus on how to avoid the use of restraint
 - 2. Reviewed with staff members
 - v. Best Practices
 - 1. 4 BCBA's (Board Certified Behavior Analyst) in district who have ongoing training
- e. *Q: Who is responsible for training the aides and who supervises them?*
 - i. All district employees under a series of training required by law at the beginning of the school year
 - ii. Aide training depends on role
 - 1. Instructional Assistants (IAs) present in general education environment received 13 hour per year minimum
 - 2. Student Support Instructors (SSI) are assigned to Intensive Learning Program (ILP) and Autism Spectrum students and engage in home services. SSIs and Hastings Autism Support Assistants receive approximately 28-30 hours of direct training and well in excess of 30 hours including imbedded professional development/training.
 - 3. receive 30 hours of intensive training around the population they serve
 - 4. Hastings Autism Support Assistants do not do home services and receive 30 hours training related to population needs

- iii. Supervision depends on setting
 - 1. General Education Student - Behavior Specialist provides training to teacher and assistant through modeling and observation; Principal of the building is the evaluator of the assistant
 - 2. IEP – BCBA models for staff, ETS is an option for queries
- f. *Q: What is the definition of Access to Staff?*
 - i. District has sought clarification from Department of Education
 - ii. Currently access is defined as staff is in room or outside the door with an open door policy
 - iii. The role of access is two way –staff to monitor student and student can approach for help or state “I am ready to go back”
- g. *Q: What documentation is required to notify parent about a behavior plan?*
 - i. It can be part of the IEP discussion; usually it is not in the IEP itself because it is a fluid document
 - ii. Options for communicating vary by child – examples include phone calls, logs
 - iii. Each behavior plan should include a communication plan for updates
- h. *Q: Are there Time Out rooms on each campus?*
 - i. Lexington does not have designated rooms for a time-out purpose – a time out space can be anything e.g. section of a room, small group instruction room, literacy specialist rooms, SLP, other classrooms, staff office etc.
- i. *Q: How is data collected and monitored regarding Time Out space*
 - i. Practice is that information is documented in relationship to the specific behavior plan; a summary is often included in a report for a meeting
 - ii. ILP kids may have additional clinic/program team meetings
 - iii. Periodic compliance and program reviews are completed
- j. *Q: How are other districts handling these issues?*
 - i. In ASD and Emotional Disturbed (ED) populations, time out procedures are used across districts
 - ii. As districts create their own programs; teams must identify ways to provide instruction to all kinds of students
- k. *Q: At one point do you inform parents about a child being restrained/secluded/timeout?*
 - i. Seclusion = not used in district
 - ii. Timeout as classroom strategy - parents are not usually notified; however as frequency increases, the parent maybe contacted
 - iii. Restraint such as time out is more restrictive
 - iv. Expectation is that parent is notified as soon as it is safe to do that (practical and possible); Teacher/Principal/ BCBA
- l. “Post-vention reviews” as an evaluation tool
 - i. During a post-vention review, people involved in the situation will get together and review how things went
 - ii. Occurs with child at their level if appropriate and the student may be able

- iii. Objective of the “Post-vention” is to leave that situation with a plan for future occurrences - If we had to do this again – how did we do?

IV. General Discussion of CPI

- a. District Wide Trainers provide training that focuses on how to avoid restraint and use of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) to improve behavior and reduce challenging behaviors
- b. Approximately 142 people trained last year in the district across all buildings; each building has CPI leader and a communication system in place
- c. Since 2008, staff behavior specialists and Laura Dudley serve as specialists
- d. Crisis/Incident Management Teams are different; they are designed to respond to emergency for school safety (tornadoes, chemical spills)
- e. Other resources include Child Protection Team - a group of people who are there to discuss and determine if there is a case of abuse or neglect; a District Level Protection Team

V. Additional Questions

- a. *Q: Could the team please provide a general understanding of the scope of this situation and trends that may be occurring?*
 - i. Difficult to track because discipline vs. clinical intervention may be separated and different types of populations have different legal reporting requirements; For example ILP = 24 kids at Fiske of which a small number might require this level of intervention
 - ii. Suspension logs must be kept; may keep data on how many referrals to the office/attendance
 - iii. Behavior plans are reviewed from a programmatic view
- b. *Q: Is the staff trained across the board about disabilities and PBS?*
 - i. District is engaging in professional development; for example 38 staff members sent to social thinking training courses
 - ii. Topics are embedded professional development and Professional Learning Communities (PLC)
- c. *iii Embedded professional development occurs when a teacher has a student with a particular disability—district might work with that teacher around what to expect*
- d. *Q: Has there been an uptick in the number of behavior plans?*
 - i. Special Ed Directors are seeing more and more students at younger ages with behavior issues – not unique to Lexington
 - ii. Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a district wide goal for kids social/emotional well-being and is included in each individual school’s site improvement plan
 - iii. Lexington as a district has been able to bring back students in 2012 who were previously in much more restrictive settings and have students be part of the mainstream with positive role models
- e. *Q: Are there any prerequisites for a person to serve as an instructional assistant and how much of the training is legally mandated prior to direct access to children vs. on-the job/extra-curricular for a person already in place?*
 - i. IA is not required to have a college degree or specific training

- ii. SSI or the Hastings Program – required to have a degree and training done if hired prior to school year
- f. General Communication Issues
 - i. Parents are not hesitant to use e-mail or vocalize concerns; if you feel that your needs are not being addressed at the appropriate level
- g. *Q: How can you communicate concerns about the system breaking down for you and your child in an age of staff/turnover?*
 - i. Talk to the people – talk to their supervisor
 - ii. Feedback is welcome to Dr. Ash and team; possible suggestion for SEPAC to engage in a general survey of parents to highlight issues in an anonymous manner
 - iii. Diane Pelletier, Interim Director of Special Education, is working on some projects such as parent coffees to review process and other issues to facilitate communications with parents (e.g. what to expect in an IEP meeting and interpreting components of an evaluation)
- h. *Q: What are the procedures when there is a complaint of a staff member?*
 - i. Team must determine if is a Learning Program Issues vs. Staff Issue (Misconduct)
 - ii. Report to team or site administrator
 - iii. If a parent is not satisfied with the response they see – they can contact central administration or outside agency. and what safeguards to integrate parents who may not be as in touch? (Is this a question?)
 - iv. *Q: If there is a child abuse or neglect allegation and an educator is put on leave and then the professional agency drops the case, is the staff rehired?*
 - v. If the allegation is related to conduct unbecoming to a teacher, the educator is put on administration leave during due process; outcome of due process will determine status.

VI. Out of District Placements and Settlements

- a. Out of District Placements
 - i. Barbara Fortier works with school and receives incident reports from host school/placement
 - ii. Follow-same protocol for site as one would use in district
 - iii. Approximately 100 students are in Out of District Placements
- b. Settlements
 - i. Three methods: Mediation, Other settlement such as pre-trial hearing, BSEA Trial
 - ii. Numbers vary by year and topics/end-results may be service oriented not just financial
 - iii. Majority of cases are about placement of educational program

VII. Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am