

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BERRIEN REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCY

Proposed Minutes of September 18, 2018

PRESENT: Sarah Douglass & Nicole Birmingham-Moersch (Bridgman), Mattie Book & Britney Martin (Buchanan), Charles DeGraaf & Tia Shaw (Countryside), Corie Siik & Jackie VanHorn (Lakeshore), Martina Ciccarelli (New Buffalo), Kevin Carter & Sarah True (Niles), Mindi Mach & Meghan Wooldridge (St. Joseph), Wendy Stainbrook & Leah Dibble (Watervliet), Autumn Poole (Berrien RESA)

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Holly Pomranka (Brandywine), Donna Messinger (New Buffalo)

ABSENT: Mary Duschek & Kandice Agee (Berrien Springs), Melissa Blair (Coloma), Charity Hackett (Eau Claire), Joyce Anderson & Michelle Stone (River)

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Danny Bartz (Berrien Springs), Karin Falkinstein (Buchanan), Karra Hafer (Coloma), Melissa Troup (Niles), Eric Hoppstock & Robin Snyder (Berrien RESA)

- I. Call to Order – Jackie Van Horn, President
 - A. 6:30 p.m.

- II. Welcome local Special Education Directors/Coordinators
 - A. Small group discussion with a focus on 3 areas, followed by a share-out
 - i. How can PAC Members help to support parents and others in the district?
 - a. Advocating for parents, be present at activities/conferences,
 - ii. Identify positive initiatives in your district
 - a. School safety, Peer-to-Peer, Reading Now, Buddy Benches, Trainings, PBIS
 - iii. Strategies to increase communication
 - a. School Messenger, PTO, social media, communicate with transportation staff, PAC members to attend district PD.

- III. Approval of the minutes from the May 15, 2018 meeting
 - A. Tia Shaw motioned for approval, seconded by Martina Ciccarelli. Motion carried.

- IV. Special Education Updates
 - A. Eric Hoppstock of RESA discussed deviations:
 - i. Berrien Springs Hearing Impaired Program has requested a deviation.

- B. Eric Hoppstock of RESA gave updates on current staffing:
 - i. RESA now has a full special education staff, 40 people were hired this year. Other districts are understaffed; applicant numbers have been low.
 - ii. Jackie Van Horn asked about schools having a Plan B in understaffed situations.
 - 1. Eric Hoppstock replied by discussing the utilization of technology more as accommodations, and how it also offers students life skills that can be used down the road.
 - 2. Eric also discussed PBIS: about expectations, how to teach, provides positive feedback on how to correct and reduce unwanted behavior.

V. Old Business

A. Festival of Families

- i. Jackie Van Horn, discussed details about the annual event taking place on Saturday, September 22, 2018 from 10:00-2:00 for families of children 0-26 years old. It's a great resource for families and fun activities for children.
- ii. PAC has a booth and need volunteers to "man" the table. Sign-up sheet will be passed around.

B. Agenda

- i. Reminder that PAC meetings are now at 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- ii. Michigan Special Education Mediation Program will be presenting at our October PAC meeting.
- iii. January is the planning meeting for the Excellence in Education Awards Banquet
- iv. February: considering a learning opportunity for parents

VI. New Business

A. Membership

- i. PAC Member Demographic data updated/verified. Correction to Jackie VanHorn's phone number: (269) 487-6156
- ii. Call Jackie or Autumn with questions or concerns about IEP's, etc.
- iii. A member had a question about getting in contact with others who have the same eligibility as their child and reaching out to them. Contact Jackie Van Horn for that information.

B. Bylaws

- i. A member asked if there were any PAC subcommittees: we can add them as needed.

C. Concerns

- i. None expressed. Autumn encouraged members to address concerns they may have at our meetings.

D. Resources

i. Review of local and state resources:

1. Festival of Families
 2. Family Matters, initiative of MDE on michigan.gov website, to provide special education information to families.
 3. Special Education Parent Information Handbook
 4. Training opportunities
 - a. Autumn will let PAC members know if there are any coming up. You can also look on the RESA website, they are often “open” to PAC members, we can verify as needed.
 - b. Upcoming training in Van Buren ISD: “Let’s Talk Transitions”- covering transitions for older kids into adulthood, medical concerns, adult foster care. October 16, 2018 from 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Registration is on Michigan Alliance for Families website; Autumn will send out the flyer as well
- ii. We are resources for each other!

E. Other

- i. No other new business.

VII. Adjournment

- A. Motion by Sarah True at 8:30 p.m., seconded by Charles DeGraaf. Motion carried.