

Special Education Parent Group

January 27, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Welcome/introductions

Information was available on programs offered at Turnstone for their January to March scheduling for: intellectual and developmental disabilities programs; and physical disabilities and visual impairments programs.

Guest Speaker

Genia Kottkamp, Mild Disabilities Teacher from Covington Elementary gave a presentation entitled "IEPs Behind the Scenes." This presentation helped parents understand the parts of an IEP and how the staff work to think about and develop the different areas. Parts of an IEP include the strengths of the student and their present levels of performance, including data. The goal is for students to be working toward grade level. Individual academic needs, medical needs, attendance issues, etc., are also included in the IEP.

Re-evaluation can be done at any time, but the decision to conduct a reevaluation and the time it takes the student out of the classroom should be weighed against the need, if any, for new data.

There are 13 areas of eligibility. A student can also be dismissed from specialized instruction if it is no longer needed.

The testing section of the IEP includes accommodations and/or modifications needed to for the student to participate. Accommodations level the playing field. Modifications can change the actual content.

Development of goals takes a lot of time. There has to be an educational need for a goal. Goals are aligned with state standards, and it has to be determined how each goal will be monitored.

Eligibility and intensity of need (1:1 or small groups) help decide placement and services. Any potential harmful effects of placement (in general education or pulled out of general education classroom) have to be considered. An IEP can include direct and indirect services.

Parents are an important part of the IEP team and can suggest goals, too. If there are larger concerns, the parent can call their child's teacher at anytime and shouldn't feel they have to wait for an IEP meeting to discuss a concern.

Education Update

The vote for President Trump's nominee for secretary of education will be on 1/31/17. Senator Donnelly has said he will vote against this nominee.

Special Education Director Roxanne May gave an update of legislative proposals. A replacement for ISTEP is being developed. It may be called ILEARN. It will take two years to develop the new test. Jennifer McCormick is the newly elected State Superintendent of Education for Indiana. There are some Early Childhood Grants in Indiana, but our district unfortunately does not qualify for them. One legislative proposal would increase from five years

old to nine years old the state allowed age for Developmental Disability eligibility. This change, if approved, would have Indiana match the federal eligibility criteria. There are other proposals related to the start of the school year date, criminal background check frequency, latchkey programs for Pre-K and much more. At the federal level there is much discussion about ESSA, which replaced NCLB. Parents are encouraged to keep informed of legislative proposals and to contact their local and national representatives to share their thoughts and ideas.

Parent Group

Disability Awareness Month is in March, and parents could do something to show appreciation for the staff (thank you notes, donuts, etc.). The Governor's Council for People with Disabilities offers free posters, stickers, bookmarks, coloring pages, etc. Parents can contact their school to discuss ideas or contact other parents at their school to plan.

Speaker ideas for future meetings included a representative from Easter Seals ARC, summer camp information, and financial planning.

The next meeting is April 28, 2017 at 12:30-2:00 pm.