Barrington Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Minutes from Tuesday, November 28, 2017

1. Call to Order 6:35 pm, attendance list on file
2. Minutes for 10/24/17 approved by voice consent, no objections
3. **Updates**:
   1. **BMS Buddies** at the Middle School has begun
      1. starting on a small scale with 10 or so pairs of students.
      2. October and November events have taken place.
      3. Faculty have been very supportive: facilitation from Mrs Robinson, Mrs DiMarco, and Mrs Morey.
      4. More applications are coming in for peer buddies, and IEP case managers are identifying friends
      5. Mrs Canario and Mr Kearns will do Buddy training on December 11, the PD day
      6. There are plans for a monthly “Buddy Café”
      7. Extensions of the program are hoped to include pairings on snack cart, in APE, maybe eventually group for Sports Night
   2. **HMS Fellow Friends**: update not available
4. **Overview of Special Education Funding** from Douglas Fiore, Director of Administration and Finance for Barrington, and Kristen Matthes, Director of Pupil Personnel for the district
   1. 11.7 million dollars of a roughly 50 million dollar budget goes to Special Ed services; this is a bit over 20%
   2. 90% of this is local funding, with roughly 10% being state funding
   3. There is a federal grant of 800K through IDEA. This requires rigorous documentation
   4. Where do Special Ed dollars go in Barrington?
      1. About half goes to personnel (includes benefits)
         1. 4.5 million for teachers
         2. 1.8 million for aides
         3. 2 million for out of district costs
         4. 2.4 million for specialized services
         5. Program management, materials, and supplies are a less significant line item, at about 300K
   5. While there is a state funding formula by which, after a certain threshold of spending for services, the state reimburses (example: very high out of district tuition, such as a hospital school), only a fraction of these dollars come back
   6. Costs for compliance with ADA (ramps, accessible doors, etc) are capital expenses that come from reserve funds
   7. Medicaid does provide some funding, and governmental cuts to Medicaid would impact the district
   8. In comparison to other districts, Barrington’s costs are relatively high, but this can easily be thrown off year to year by a single or few high cost cases
5. **Other updates**:
   1. **Webpage** editing privileges have been given to SEAC leadership. Format is Weebly. So far, just getting started by posting agenda and minutes, but the format looks flexible and customizable. SEAC welcomes suggestions of links for posting and/or other formatting ideas and contributions.
   2. **Facebook** page should be up and running by our next meeting. It will be informational only, and posting will be open only to administrators
   3. **Mentoring** for new families:
      1. Possibly create a link on the SEAC website for families to connect with a mentor, and have mentors available for each school
      2. For mentors, a quick application would be helpful, as well as some level of “training,” so that the mentors and the district would share some understanding of the boundaries that would be respected/observed
      3. Brainstorming on what new families might need or want: A binder with resources, including: What to expect at an IEP; Explanation of Acronyms; List of helpful resources outside of the district (RIDE, RIPIN, Understood.org); A breakdown of the district—where are the Special Education resources and personnel located, and how can they be contacted, etc.
   4. **Survey for families**: what to ask?
      1. State who we are, what we do/can do
      2. Ask: ever attended?; what are your expectations from SEAC?; how can we best support you?; how can we best support your student?; what topics would you like to see covered
      3. Perhaps format as several multiple choice questions with an “other” open box?
6. **Information about RI SEAC**:
   1. Statewide committee, made up of state and local administrators and parents
   2. Same mission as local SEAC
   3. Currently accepting applications; February is their recruitment month
7. **New Business**
   1. We need new brochures
      1. Should include our new mission statement
      2. Should list facebook page and new website
      3. Use cardstock or even bookmarks
      4. For Open Houses we need posterboard
   2. Discussion of keeping abreast of School Committee meetings when unable to attend—can watch meetings later or read summary reports; should stay alert to when financial meetings are relevant to us
   3. Upcoming workshops: RIPIN: several available workshops and webinars, topics include MTSS, 504s, Basic Rights in Special Education, Bullying, Transition Planning. In March there will be a College Planning workshop.
8. **Adjourned** at 8:05 pm