

IPAC MEETING SEPT. 24, 2014

Meeting began at 7 p.m. at the YMCA of Martha's Vineyard and was attended by: Kate Devane, Kim Leaird, Amy Houghton, Connie Berry, regional high school Special Education Director Nancy Dugan and Director of Student Support Services Philip Campbell, and parents Janet Sylvia and Kevin McGrath.

It was acknowledged that there is now a link for the Island Parent Advisory Council on Special Education on the MVRHS website within the Special Education department.

Amy Houghton began by saying a goal was for the IPAC to meet the third Wednesday of every month and to develop topic ideas with input from parents. There was discussion surrounding how to successfully get information about the IPAC into the hands of parents. Kate Devane suggested information about the IPAC, such as a brochure, be handed out to parents as part of their IEP meeting. Nancy Dugan offered that she could have an IPAC brochure available for parents in her office at the high school. She also suggested it go out in a summer mailing to parents.

Phil Campbell suggested a calendar to map out the topics for the whole year. Kim asked about cost for printing and asked Phil if he could arrange to cover those costs and he responded that he thought he could do that.

It was then decided that the IPAC could have a presence at the back to school night at the high school, outside Ms. Dugan's office. It was suggested that a representative try to get on the agenda for the PTO.

Amy Houghton said she had been speaking with Kathi Hackett, family support services, at Community Services and that she could possibly help fund bringing some speakers to the Island to share information with parents and the IPAC. She said Ms. Hackett suggested Jim Ross, (Project Coordinator for Real Friends), would be a good option as he speaks on developing real relationships between persons with and without disabilities.

Discussion shifted to conducting some type of resource fair for parents this spring. Relevant parties could attend and explain their programs allowing resources for children of all ages. Nancy Dugan said there is a resource fair planned for Oct. 18 at the Bourne Middle School. She said that last year at her previous job there was an opportunity for a graduate with an IEP to come back and talk about his/her transition experience. She said this is a huge issue for kids and there is a need to build services here.

It was tentatively decided that a resource fair would be a good idea for March or April 2015.

Amy Houghton said she had been in contact with Patti Doherty about unified sports Special Olympics. She suggested a topic for a meeting could be preparing students for the long term. There was more discussion surrounding Community Services and its collaboration with YMCA, the regional high school, Youth Task Force and DMH.

The meeting closed with discussion about how to support parents and make sure they are comfortable in attending the IPAC meetings, which also according to regulations must include school district representation.

It was determined that it would be effective to have Leslie Leslie from the Federation for Children with Special Needs so that she could share resources about her organization and explain the role of a Special Education Parents Advisory Council. It was also determined that Kathi Hackett would be asked to come to a future meeting to discuss what Community Services has to offer persons with disabilities in the Martha's Vineyard community.

The meeting ended at approximately 8 p.m.