



SEAC Meeting

October 8, 2008

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

St. Anthony-New Brighton Staff in attendance;

Michelle Dunaski, Special Education Coordinator mdunaski@stanthony.k12.mn

Dana Niklaus, School Social Worker dniklaus@stanthony.k12.mn.us

Andrea Iyegha, School Based Mental Health Therapist aiyegha@stanthony.k12.mn.us

Hope Fagerland, High School SpEd Teacher hfagerland@stanthony.k12.mn.us

Matt Olmstead, Middle School SpEd Teacher molmstead@stanthony.k12.mn.us

Kim Lannier, SpEd Secretaryklannier@stanthony.k12.mn.us

Agenda Items:

Resources sharing: (Please refer to attached documents)

- The Mix Blood's Theater production of *Distracted*, is "a sound and video fueled comedy about ADD and AD/HD.
- Arc Networking Groups, workshops, caregiver groups and topic specific groups.
- Election 2008 tips and hints on SpEd in the political arena.

Parents in attendance of the meeting continue to share valuable resources with the group.

- Nutritional Medicine (gluten free/dairy free) as an option for those diagnosed with ASD. The "Fresh & Natural" grocery stores offer a wide selection of clearly marked gluten free/dairy free products.
- Dr. Alison Golnik was mentioned as pediatric doctor who is a supporter of nutritional medicine as an option for parents and their children with ASD.

Andrea Iyegha's presentation (Keith TerHaar was unable to attend): (Please refer to attached documents)

- Andrea offered an enthusiastic overview of her position in our district. Andrea and her counterpart Keith TeHaar comes to us from Nystrom and Associates. They are clinical based family mental health therapists with the benefit of being able to service our students and their families in a school environment. This option is favorable for parents and students to attend appointments without having to drive to a clinic. They are able to serve under/uninsured clients through funding from a Hennepin County Grant. They currently service about 70 students within our district. Their caseloads are built mainly on referrals from the student assistance teams. They help students with a wide variety of issues including anxiety, depression and coping skills. They are also involved with family counseling and parent/staff education. Please refer to the attached document on the flow of the referral process. The document is a chart that illustrates the flow of access to service and data for school based mental health services.

Introduction of Dana Niklaus

- Dana Niklaus is the district's new school social worker. Her time is divided between the middle school and high school, along with Wilshire Park if needed and special education. Dana has a variety of duties which include handling the drug violations within the district, health awareness groups, student groups and working with teams, mainly in the middle school. Dana is currently involved in the planning stages of a behavioral management model focusing on EBD and OHD students. This necessary program will be piloted this spring and is scheduled to be implemented next school year. Welcome Dana!

Referendum Update

- The passing of question number one on the school's referendum allows our district to improve the current special education teaching facilities at the secondary level. The staff is currently touring other district's special education teaching area to gather ideas on how we can redesign our special education areas in the high school and middle school. Look for updates throughout the year on this project. Exciting times for special education and our district!

Specific Learning Disabilities criteria change.

- The state has finally approved the new non-discrepancy based way of qualifying students for a SLD. Please see the attached document for the specifics. This alternate criterion is optional for districts. St. Anthony-New Brighton is not ready to adopt this and will stick with the current discrepancy model.

Points of interest to share:

- Will providing child care at SEAC meetings be a benefit for parents? Michelle can work with honor students who are looking to fulfill community service hours. Email Michelle at least one week prior to the meeting if you have childcare needs.
- The opportunity for an autism parent group is in the beginning stages. Jean Lynch and Christine Rodrick are willing to do the initial coordinating and ongoing support as needed.
- Bob Hazen is a local author with great ideas on how math makes sense! Check out his website www.algebraforkids.com
- Dr. David Walsh is also a local author. Two of his books are a popular reads among parents. We were honored to have him speak in our district this spring. Check out Dr. Walsh's website www.mediafamily.org for information on his books.
- Parents mentioned how they would like to have an open house for the transition of 5th graders moving to middle school and 8th graders moving to the high school specific to the differences between the special education departments/models. Currently the district helps the students make the transition and informs teachers of incoming students, however it seems parents are left out of the process. Michelle will discuss this with staff and building principals.



Thank you to the parents and staff for their contributions in making this first SEAC meeting of the school year so positive and well attended. We hope to see you at our next meeting. Bring a friend (or two)!

