

Kent County SECAC Meeting

May 26, 2021
5:30pm – 7:00pm

Participants: Wendy Keen, Dan Hushion, Nancy Martin, Elizabeth Proffitt, DeLia Shoge, Kristina Welch, Annette Walls, Danielle Cudone, Stephanie Wishart, Tamyra Dupree-Jones, Nivek Johnson, Gwen Powell

Notes: The meeting was held virtually in accordance with Covid-19 precautions.

Summary of the school year. What has worked? What went well? What would you change? Discussion led by Dan Hushion.

A parent spoke up about the convenience of the virtually learning. Her child has stayed remote, and it has worked for her. She was satisfied with the transfer to the Schoology platform, which worked better than Google Classroom. She stated that she would change some things about teacher involvement: she feels as those teachers have not been as involved as they have been in previous years. She also stated that the communication from and with the Family Support Resource Center has been consistent. The social media post, the emails are all being noticed, and the community resource night was great.

Tracy shared that the virtual format worked well to get more parent involvement in meetings and others agreed. She thought that virtual learning worked well at the start but was less engaging for the students as time went on.

Danielle spoke on how virtual has been great, however it is becoming boring because its being a steady routine of the same thing.

Annette stated that the lack of consistency of hybrid learning has been a struggle with small children with hybrid because they are used to being at home with their caregivers and, once they come into school, their behavior is different.

A parent would like to see more PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) used by schools, incentives for students to maintain motivation.

Special Education Recognition Awards Ceremony:

Each year we ask parents and caregivers to nominate a special teacher, staff member, specialist, or any person who has gone “above and beyond” in their efforts to help students this year. Each nominee receives a certificate signed by the Chair of SECAC, Elizabeth Proffitt, and Supervisor of Education, Dr. Wendy Keen.

This year’s nominations include:

- Kristina Welch, nominated by Andrea Ewing
 - “Kristina, our family is so grateful for you! Your patience, perseverance and kindness is demonstrated daily as you work with Aliza and help her to grow in so many aspects. God bless you for all you are doing. Teachers like you make the world a better place.

- Tykeya Jones, nominated by Christina Newman
 - Mrs. Jones has helped my daughter Keyasia in more ways than one. You're an amazing person and teacher and you are greatly appreciated. You have given my daughter someone to turn to for help, guidance, and support in the school setting when I can't be there, and she has nothing but kind words to say about you every single day. Thank you!

- Annette Walls, nominated by Tamyra Dupree-Jones
 - Thank you for believing in my daughter. We appreciate all the support you have provided to her these last couple of years. You have made an imprint on my daughter's life. You go above and beyond the call of duty and we are very thankful.

- Dan Hushion and Sue Nickerson, nominated by John and Alix Rickloff
 - Thank you, Mr. Hushion and Ms. Nickerson, for all you've done this past year. You both have been more than generous with your knowledge and ideas, your encouragement, and your unfailing support as we puzzle our way towards Tom's transition from school to work. His success is, in large part, a result of your determination to see every child, no matter their challenged, find their place in the world.

- DeLia Shoge, nominated by Gwen Powell
 - Thank you for making 8th grade fun Angel. Thank you for being there, making sure she's on point and helping her everywhere needed, especially beyond the paperwork. She speaks highly of you and always mentions how great you are and that she loves you & Mrs. Jones (Tykeya) so much for all you guys have done for her this year. Thank you so much for all of your hard work!!

- Rebekah Baker, nominated by Maria Libby
 - She has gone above and beyond year after year no matter how difficult. When my son first entered her class about 3 years ago, I had just about given up on him making it in public school, but she never gave up on him and always went above and beyond for him. Without her, I don't know where he would be or what he would have done. She is truly a blessing to our school and words can not describe how thankful we are for her and what she has done for my son. Thank you so much!!!

- Danielle Cudone, nominated by Elizabeth Proffitt
 - Thank you for not only giving my own child the very best start in her language skills, but to all the young ones that you've had the opportunity to teach and still are teaching. You have always gone out of your way to make sure families understand what you're explaining, especially the IEP stuff that can be frustrating. Your patience, sweet demeanor, but also your determination to our children. Our children see tremendous growth in their social skills, Speech and creative play

and that is because of you! You give our little ones the words to communicate. I know this firsthand with Avie! Thank you for all your hard work and dedication!

- Stephanie Wishart, nominated by Elizabeth Proffitt
 - I just want to thank Stephanie for all that she is doing for the infants and toddlers' program. Early Intervention for our little ones is very important and the outreach she is doing to make sure our infants and toddlers get the assistance they need to make great strides has been amazing. Children learn more during the first three years of their lives than any other time, thus why you deserve all the thanks of getting these babies screened to measure their development and give them best opportunities for not only them but the families to have a great impact on their lives. Thank you!

- Nancy Martin, nominated by Wendy Keen

Legislative updates:

Dr. Keen spoke about Maryland bills related to Special Education

- SB 371/ [HB 716](#) – this bill allows a parent to request an independent educational evaluations at the public expense if the parent disagrees with the educational evaluation of the student that was conducted by the LSS or the parent submits a written request for an educational evaluation to be conducted by the LSS and the LSS doesn't respond within 30 days
- SB 300/ [HB 714](#) – this bill requires every IEP developed for an eligible student with a disability contain a learning continuity plan to be implemented during emergency conditions.
- SB 958/ [HB 1365](#) – This bill allows for nonpublic Special Education Schools to have a 4% state contribution increase which is exclusively for direct classroom positions, related services positions and general support positions.
- [SB 138](#)/ HB 288 – This establishes audiology and speech/language pathology interstates compacts, allowing LSSs to hire therapist from other participating states, and [SB 139](#)/ HB 540 – establishes an Occupational therapy Interstate Compact.
- SB 965/ HB 1372, which is the [blueprint](#) for Maryland's future – revisions/increased funding for programs including: Early Childhood/Family Support (expanding prek & Judy Centers), At-Promise Students, Diverse Teachers & Leaders, College & Career Readiness, Accountability & Governance.

A new Parent's Guide for Navigating Compensatory Education/ Recovery Services. This guide was issued May 11, 2021 and is available from MSDE. This was grounded in law to help parents understand effective strategies before, during, and after the Compensatory Education/ Recovery Services discussion. This [interactive tool](#) accompanies the guide to support families. Check it out!

The final update was that MSDE expects all schools in Maryland to be fully open for five days per week, with no hybrid learning, in fall 2021.

To see the power point that was presented, click [here](#)

For any additional resources, including workshop information, IEP assistance, IDSP Assistance, lending library, support groups, or community resources and service referrals, please contact the Family Support Resource Center at fsupport@kent.k12.md.us or call Elizabeth at 410-778-5708. The center is located at the Kent County Middle School, room 114, 402 E. Campus Ave, Chestertown MD 21620

Submitted by Elizabeth Proffitt
Chair, Kent County SECAC