



MEETING MINUTES

February 12, 2019
Lewes School Library

Attendance:

Vivian Bush	Steve Huber	Nadia Nuebling	Chris Nuebling
Tom Stolle	Joy Smith	Tia Dimopoulos	Pam Graves
Chuyen Kochenily	Shannon Palmer	Doni Rust	Kay Vincent
Sharon Hesse	Barbara Powell	Kelly Cook	Dale Bellinger

Principal's Update: given by Dr. Vivian Bush

- Vivian explained the purpose of the Delaware Autism Program (DAP) and the role they play within the State of Delaware. They work closely with the school district as well as Autism Delaware, a separate non-profit organization.
- DAP has been headed by Vince Winterling for many years, but he has now retired. He has been contracted by the Christina School District until June 2019 to continue as a consultant while they fill his former position as statewide director.
- The school district has received word that the Office of the Statewide Director will transfer from Christina school district to DOE. No details have been provided and the impact of this change is unknown. She explained that the biggest potential impact area for SC families is the respite program run by DAP.
- Copies of the Information Sheet compiled by Autism Delaware (AD) regarding the change in DAP were distributed.
- Questions were raised regarding item 13 of the AD Information Sheet (Special Ed. Strategic Planning Advisory Committee). Vivian shared what she knew of the history of the committee, but had little information about the current status. It was decided that SusPAC should make further inquiries to learn more.
- Vivian has secured speakers for the March and April meetings.

• **Action items:**

- Vivian to ask Vince Winterling and Barbara Powell to ask Dafne Carnright at DAP for an update on the Special Ed. Strategic Planning Advisory Committee.

Guest Speaker: Pam Graves, Sussex Consortium Vocational Program Specialist

- Pam shared a very uplifting PowerPoint presentation featuring photos of many students at their worksites, as well as employer testimonials. She indicated that there are currently 30 vocational partners.
- It was explained that in the front of the new school building there will be space for five vocational partner businesses. These will be for businesses in the community that want a commercial presence with minimal overhead costs and who will provide training opportunities for SC students. Two businesses that have already expressed interest

are Surf Bagel and Bad Hair Day.

- The SC Vocational program starts at age 14 and continues through graduation (up to age 21). At age 21, the post 21 agencies take over employment support for the students.
- The program works on a “building block” concept starting with basics, like wearing uniforms and progresses to finding opportunities that focus on students’ strengths and interests.
- Business partners’ concerns over liability are covered by the District’s liability insurance policy.
- Parents are welcome to visit job sites, even those whose children are not yet in the program, by notifying Pam so that she can arrange it with the employer and also accompany the parent(s).
- A question was raised about attending job fairs and Pam explained that they do better with one-on-one approach with employers.
- A question was raised about working through the Chamber of Commerce and Pam explained that the CofC have not been very receptive when approached in the past.

SusPAC Organization Structure

- Following the January meeting Vivian and Tom Stolle met with members of the school district finance department to explore the idea of establishing SusPAC as a non-profit entity registered with the IRS as a 501c3.
- They reported that if SusPAC were to become a registered non-profit there would be a requirement for annual reporting (form 990) to the IRS. Fundraising would be subject to supervision and audit from the school district finance office. Fundraising forms would need to be developed and a separate bank account would need to be established.
- Tom Stolle volunteered to assist with applying for non-profit (501c3) status if that is the direction the SusPAC officers choose to go in once pros and cons are researched and considered. He has some expertise doing this for churches, but recognizes this process for SusPAC would need more research.
- SusPAC web presence has been created and pages now live on CHSD website under Sussex Consortium > Parent Information.
www.capehenloopenschools.com/suspac
- Officer nominations were discussed and bylaws referenced to determine any stipulations for officer terms. The group concluded that it would be in the best interest of SusPAC to retain the current four officers until the October 2019 meeting/election, if they were willing to do so, rather than hold an election now.
- After a review of the bylaws, it was determined that a nomination process needed to be established and initiated at the September 2019 meeting, with officers being elected or re-elected at the October 2019 meeting. It was suggested that creating an election process could be handled by the officers and/or a subgroup before the end of this school year.
- It was suggested that the officers and/or a subgroup look at reviewing and updating the bylaws to clarify certain areas, including meeting requirements, nomination process and officer terms.

- Parent involvement and meeting attendance was encouraged so that all responsibility is not on the shoulders of the officers.
- The automated calls deemed as very effective and should be continued for each meeting to including agenda items and speaker information.

Action Items:

- Vivian to contact SusPAC officers to ask if they will retain their current positions until new elections can be held in October 2019.
- Vivian to request page be added to the SusPAC website for meeting agendas.
- Tom Stolle and Barbara Powell volunteered to meet with the officers and update them on the this meeting (if they desire) with the group's suggestions that some action items (e.g., reviewing/updating bylaws, creating an officer nomination process, consideration of a non-profit registration) could possibly take place outside of the meetings and before the start of the new school year.
- Vivian to send automated call inviting all to attend March meeting – include speaker information.

Autism Advocacy

- A reminder that “Smart Cookie Day” is on April 19, 2019 from 12:00-4:00pm at Legislative Hall, 411 Legislative Ave, Dover, DE.
- SCD is a day for parents, staff and self-advocates to meet with legislators to share their stories with state leaders about issues of importance and to advocate for legislation that benefits individuals on the spectrum.
- Individuals can go on your own, or join Autism Delaware by registering on eventbrite.com or calling Annalisa Ekbladh on 302-224-6020.
- It was also mentioned that our local representatives hold a “constituent coffee” at Surf Bagel monthly.

Next Meeting

March 12, 2019, Lewes School Library, 6 – 9 pm

Speaker: Margaret Haas, Sussex Consortium Transition Specialist
