

Parent Advisory Committee
10/24/2024

Due to a conflict for Dr. Causey, Elizabeth Vincent facilitated this month's meeting. Minutes are less detailed than they would otherwise have been. Thank you for your understanding!

Dr. Luna-Vedder greeted the group and provided some updates about the District. Her updates included information about scheduling for the first week of November due to election day, and she shared a few updates about embargoed Student Achievement data that we will be sharing next month.

- Scheduling questions - There were some questions from the parents about scheduling Spring Break later in the spring, since it has typically been scheduled in the second week of March or earlier.
 - Dr. Luna-Vedder highlighted that there is going to be a gradual pushback of the Spring Break over the next few years.
- Policy Governance Questions - One parent asked questions about the policy governance system that our board uses to conduct business, because she had read an article recently about a desire to make adjustments to that system based on another change that has made our board partisan.
 - Dr. Luna-Vedder discussed the state law change that has made school board elections partisan in the most recent election cycle. She clarified that before, when an individual ran for a school board seat, they did not have to declare a party affiliation; after a recent change to state law, they can declare a party affiliation. This does not change how board members serve in their roles or how they interact with the Director, the school system, or the students. It simply informs voters of their party affiliation.
 - The policy governance system is the set of rules that our board follows to manage the school system. Compared with other systems across the state of Tennessee, our board writes policies to set expectations and goals that the school system is expected to meet, and then we update them on our progress in those areas; other school boards write policies about more specific areas related to school system operations. The system we have was implemented about 20 years ago because the board at the time felt it would free up the Director of Schools to make day-to-day decisions about operations, and would free up the board to focus on big-picture areas, like the budget, the Code of Conduct, and student achievement goals in the school system.

Shannon Peacock, Director of Special Populations, and Jami Skevington, District 504 Coordinator, delivered information for parents about how the District provides services with students who have IEPs or Section 504 plans.

- Visions - the Instruction and Curriculum Department has set several visions for student achievement in the district, specifically in Math and ELA. There is also a vision for students with Unique Learning Needs:

- Our vision is to work in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure every student's individual needs are met in their least restrictive environment through quality education plans to achieve their fullest potential.
- One of the ways they operate is through collaboration with other departments
 - SPED Teachers attend meetings with coaches
 - RTI coordinator, Dyslexia coordinator, ELL coordinator all serve on a Unique Learning Needs Team to ensure everyone in the district is on the same page to meet unique student needs in the classroom.
- The point of IDEA is that a student's individual needs will be met in their least restrictive environment, for free (FAPE).
- Instructionally Appropriate IEPs
 - Just because a student has been diagnosed with something does not mean that they are eligible under state law. There is a step-by-step process to determine a student's eligibility, and ultimately, ensure they receive services.
 - Eligibility - Adverse Impact - Present Levels of Academic Performance - Goals - Services
 - ***This flowchart can be found in the slide deck shared by the Special Populations Team and the Student Support Team.***
 - Both IEPs and Section 504 plans require eligibility, but IEP process is more comprehensive
- The team shared information about the improvements the district has seen to LRE (Least Restrictive Environment) data, which indicates that we are continuing to improve on ensuring that students with IEPs are receiving instruction in their Least Restrictive Environment, according to their IEP. ***These data can be found in the slide deck shared by the Special Populations and Student Support Teams.***

Please [click here to access the full slide deck](#) provided by the Special Populations and Student Support Teams.

Questions

- My student previously had a 504 plan, but it was recommended that he move to an IEP, and I was told the 504 plan would go away. Is this correct? Will there be anything missing that he should get from the 504 still?
 - Yes, that is the correct course of action. Whatever is in a 504 is encompassed in an IEP.
- I heard recently there was an opportunity for parents to bring their student to a dyslexia screening. Was the screening publicized?
 - The screening opportunity was shared through the schools, most likely through ParentSquare. There will be other opportunities for screening - the next one is November 21st.
- What about dysgraphia?
 - There are opportunities for screening in this area too. The district hosts and facilitates these screenings.
- How does that work when the findings are different from a district versus individual

- Ours are very general, in the sense that they look for flags that may indicate the presence of dyslexia; if you take your student for an individual screening, it's possible the results will be different because they will take a different approach to screening at an individual level versus the broad screening that we do.
- It can be challenging when you get these results, because before we can begin the process of providing services for that student, we have to determine whether the presence of those qualities actually makes a student eligible for services.
There is more information about IEP eligibility in the slide deck provided by the Special Populations and Student Support Team.
- Screening process can happen at your schools, as well. If you need to coordinate something like that for your child, email the teacher, or reach out to the academic coach, counselors and school psychologists can also help facilitate coordinating these.