

# **Holmdel Township Board of Education**

## **Special Services Committee**

### **Meeting Notes for May 26, 2010**

**Present:** Board Members: Ana M. Vander Woude–Chair, Phyllis Pascucci, Chiung-Yin Liu and Dennis Pavlik  
Administrators: Barbara Duncan and Meryl Gill

**1. Special Services Orientation:** Ms. Gill provided the committee with an overview of the Special Services Department.

#### **2. Preschool Disabled Full Day: Proposed Change in Schedule**

- a. With respect to classified students, there are currently two types of preschool offerings in Holmdel: half-day and full-day. The Child Study Team determines the placement of a preschooler based on his/her individual needs.
- b. Preschool teachers work 5 days per week full time. The half-day preschool provides 4 days of student instruction (Tuesday-Friday). Mondays are used for such staff needs as teacher preparation, professional development, evaluations, and conferences. However, the full-day preschool provides 5 days of student instruction.
- c. Meryl Gill would like to align the full-day program more with the half-day by only once per month not providing instruction on Mondays and allocating that time for such needs as stipulated above. Specific focus would be given to follow-up High Scope training (the recently approved preschool curriculum). Ms. Gill explained that the NJ Department of Education does not hold preschool disabled programs to the 180 school year days of possible enrollment and attendance that is mandated for all other grades. Consequently there would be not a compliance issue in this regard. Moreover, Holmdel provides more days per year than most school districts. Tentatively proposed dates are: 2010: October 28 and November 15; and 2011: January 31, February 28, March 28, and May 16.
- d. While the committee supported Ms. Gill's recommendation, concern was expressed about parent buy-in supported by an understanding of the rationale for this schedule change; as well as timely notification to the parents so that arrangements could be made for their children on the one Monday per month that they would not be attending school. The committee also recommended, when appropriate, that parents be included in workshops such as ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis) and social skills training, so that such skills could be carried over to the home. Ms. Gill was supportive of this recommendation as it would be consistent of the department's identified goals during self-assessment.
- e. Both preschool programs will begin on September 13<sup>th</sup> for students (the week after Holmdel schools open). However, teachers will report in as of the first official week of school for preparation and parent interviews.

#### **3. Transition Autism Committee Update:**

- a. In response to the rationale below, this committee was formed to develop an autism program at Indian Hill School of comparable quality as that already established at Village School. The focus is for those students who require special class placement (self-contained).
- b. *Rationale:* Several students currently in the Village School Autism Program will enter third grade in the 2010-2011 School Year and then be ready to transition to Indian Hill the following year. Currently no autism program exists at Indian Hill.
- c. *Committee Members:* To ensure the development of a program to meet the needs of all involved, the committee is comprised of all significant stakeholders: Ms. Gill, Brian Schillaci (Indian Hill principal), teachers, therapists, case managers, and the parent of a child expected to transition to Indian Hill. Village School staff will also participate. Vivian Attanasio serves as committee chair.

- d. *Goals:* The committee is charged with developing all aspects of the new program, including staff training and classroom identification and set-up. Particular attention will be given to the training of staff of specials (e.g., physical education, art and music).
- e. *Timeline:* The program is expected to be in place by the 2011-12 School Year.
- f. *Donation:* Two thousand dollars was raised recently in a parent-sponsored fundraiser to support the autism programs at Village School and Indian Hill School. The committee will prepare for the donors a list of recommended items for purchase to help outfit the classrooms.

#### **4. 2010 Extended School Year Program (ESY) Update:**

- a. Summer 2010 ESY program is scheduled for July 6<sup>th</sup> to August 12<sup>th</sup> and will be held 4 days per week.
- b. Ms. Gill and Harry Dangler (director of the Summer Academic Enrichment program) are exploring the possibility of ESY students participating in suitable academic enrichment classes.

#### **5. Items for the Good of the Order:**

- The school district's official structure and description for this committee were reviewed.
- Ms. Vander Woude shared with the committee that she attended on May 14<sup>th</sup> the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Special Education Law Conference at Lehigh University, and that she would be compiling a handout of information that she felt would be beneficial to the committee.

#### **6. Next Meeting:** Wednesday, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 11:30a, at the Village School Child Study Team Conference Room.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Ana M. Vander Woude**