AAPAC for Special Education Committee Report to the AAPS Board of Education June 28, 2017



Committee Report June 23, 2017

Good evening, President Stead, trustees and Dr. Swift. I'm Mary Duerksen, and I am the chair of the AAPAC Executive Committee for the coming school year. I've served as the co-chair for the past three years, and next year will be my fifth year on the committee. I have a son who is in the Young Adult Program, and I have three daughters who have graduated from Pioneer High School—my youngest just a few weeks ago!

As you know AAPAC for Special Education is a district parent/guardian group for those who have students with IEPs and Section 504 Plans. The AAPAC executive committee has not given a committee report to this board for some time, and we apologize. This report is an update of what we've done over the past school year and will give you an overview of what AAPAC does.

This past school year's executive committee was comprised of Andrea Bond and Melissa Epstein, with Barb Byers and I serving as co-chairs. Patricia Memmott, who was the secretary of the executive committee for three years previously, stayed online with us to help field parent questions and support the executive committee. Gail Einhaus took minutes of our monthly parent meetings. Valerie Mates is our webmaster. This model is not what the bylaws intend, but it reflects the difficulty this committee continues to have with finding parents who can do all that is needed to meet its responsibilities. In addition, we have a real need to round out AAPAC leadership representing parents of students from all levels.



August, Dr. Elaine Brown again included a table for us at the SISS parent orientation for those who have students with IEPs or 504 Plans. Parents were greeted there by their children's building principals, special education staff and many service providers. AAPS turn-out to welcome parents was widely appreciated. Our exec committee introduced AAPAC and referred parents to our website where our meeting schedule, current officers and building reps' contact information are listed. This past school year we had building reps for 25 out of 33 schools, most of whom introduced themselves to parents from the stage at their school's Curriculum or Capsule Night using a template script that we provide and the distributing the AAPAC brochures that Dr. Brown prints for us.

This year, as is usual, several building representatives, Barb and I have supported parents preparing for and at staffing and/or IEP meetings, in addition to giving parents support by phone or online. And SISS invites parents to be on interview committees via the executive committee as well.

We held parent meetings monthly from October to June. Our parent meetings are preceded by 45 minutes for parents to conference with SISS administrators and Terra Webster, the Section 504 Liaison. This conference time was implemented three years ago and has been very well-received by parents.

(Oct) Dr. Swift welcomed parents to the new school year with information on the district's progress with our students, and Melissa Epstein moderated a panel of BOE candidates

AAPAC Parent Meeting Monday, November 7, 7 pm LOCATION CHANGED TO: Slauson Middle School

SISS ADs available to meet with parents at 6:15 pm





Sgt. Tom Hickey, Ann Arbor Police Department

Preparing for Emergencies Involving Your Child with Special Needs

what first responders need to know

helping your child understand helpers-people, and even dogs!

helping your school prepare for an emergency involving your child

> Just announced! Children are welcome to come to the meeting with parents to meet K-9 Officer Jeff Robinson and his partner K-9 Jase!



(Nov) Two AAPD officers and a K-9 officer gave a session for parents and children on preparing for emergencies with special needs children

AAPAC Parent Meeting Monday, December 5, 7 - 9pm Tappan Middle School

6:15 - 7pm Dr. Brown and SISS Assistant Directors and Section 504 Plan Liaison Terra Webster meet individually with parents





Alison Paine, MS



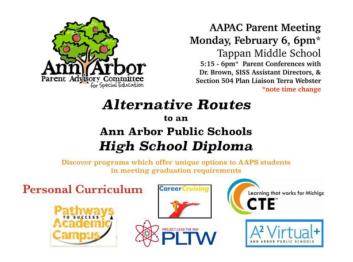
President and CEO, WACA

(Dec) Presentation by a local National Alliance on Mental Illness trainer and clients who told their stories, and from WACA on trends in special education and their services

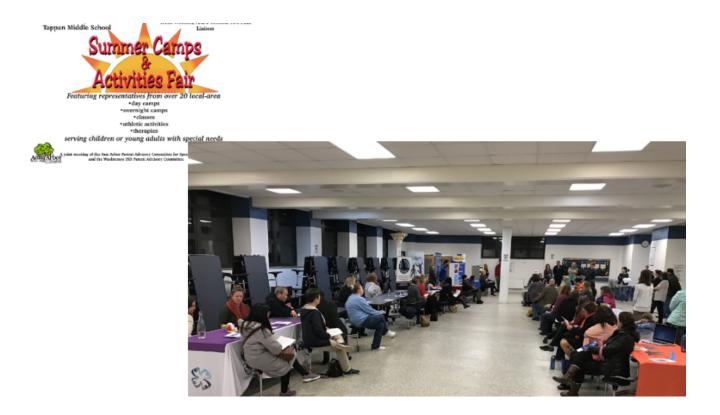
Parent Panel: Successful Transitions to Inclusion



(Jan) meeting was a Parent and Professional Inclusion Panel focusing on personal stories of children who began special education in inclusion or those who have had successful transitions from self-contained classrooms to inclusion.



(Feb) Ms. Dickinson-Kelley moderated an AAPS Panel on "Alternative Routes to a High School Diploma in AAPS"



(Mar) We held our 2nd Annual Summer Camps and Activities Fair with over 20 vendors and at least 70 parents in attendance. Also in March, Building Rep Heather Eckner arranged for a program by AAPS parent and MSU associate professor Dr. Joshua Plavnick on Evidence-Based Practices and Implementation Fidelity



AAPAC Parent Meeting Monday, April 10, 7 pm Tappan Middle School

6:15 - 7pm Parent Conferences with Dr. Brown, SISS Assistant Directors, & Section 504 Plan Liaison Terra Webster

The WISD: (Washtenaw Intermediate School District) Its Roles and Resources in AAPS



(Apr) Dr. Jennifer Scott-Burton led a presentation by several WISD employees on the WISD's Roles and Resources in AAPS



(May) was our 3rd Annual Transitioning to Adulthood Fair with 14 local agencies and professional guests who gave overviews of their roles and spent time with individual parents



(Jun) SISS gave a Project Read Overview to parents and the executive committee conducted a Parent Needs Exercise for Planning



The executive committee meets monthly during the school year with district administrators. Our current bylaws (2005) require meeting with the director of SISS, but it was Dr. Brown's idea to have the SISS Assistant Directors join us at these meetings (when possible) starting four years ago. It has been really helpful to collaborate with them. Three years ago, Dr. Swift asked Instruction, meaning Lee Ann Dickinson Kelley and Dawn Linden, to be a part of these meetings as well. Bringing both departments to the table with AAPAC is so effective—many of our concerns are impacted by both departments and it has been very helpful to have both special education and general education at the table.

We are very proud of the executive committee's teamwork with Dr. Brown and Ms. Dickinson-Kelly. We view ourselves as team members helping to find solutions. Aside from the work that the district already does, the following items were brought to the district's attention by the AAPAC exec committee and were resolved in 2016-17:

• Students known to be at-risk for eloping are documented in a "Health Plan" at their building in addition to other heightened protocols

• An adapted sexual health curriculum was developed for implementation in Fall 2017

• The state's required annual notice to parents of the Personal Curriculum option is present in 2017-18 AAPS Course Selection Guide

• AAPAC (and other parent support groups) were included alongside the PTO in 2016-17 AAPS General Back-to-School Guide

• Regarding transportation safety, bus drivers and aides received Autism Safety Training in 2015; and new drivers and aides in 2016. This summer, parents of students with special needs will be sent a form to detail their child's specific needs for accommodations while riding bus— for drivers and aides to have on first day of school

• The order of upgraded secure door entries which will be accessible for those who are deaf or hard of hearing

2015-16:

• The required ADA notice to the public for requesting accommodations at district events is now on the district's and each school's home page

• Improved awareness of providing ADA Title II accommodations to students

The executive committee met quarterly this school year with Dr. Swift and had good conversations about the district's work. The co-chairs were on her Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel. She graciously invited us to join the district at the Center for Independent Living Gala.



2017-18 Executive Committee

Mary Duerksen (YA), Chair Melissa Epstein (Young Fives), Vice-Chair Barb Byers (HS and YA), Secretary Cindy Hines (Elem), At-Large Lisa Dibble (Elem), At-Large

In June, for the first time in several years, we made a concerted effort to formally seek nominations for next year's executive committee. The membership voted as follows:

Mary Duerksen (YA), chair Melissa Epstein (Young Fives), vice-chair Barb Byers (HS and YA), secretary Cindy Hines (Elem), at-large Lisa Dibble (Elem), at-large

Our committee has begun planning for next school year. We are setting goals and making programming decisions based on parent feedback that we gathered in June, with plans to send out an online survey to gather more data. And, we have proposed re-implementing a back-to-school meeting with district leadership.

Responding specifically to Trustee Kelly's request from May, our committee will be giving you another report after the new school year starts. It will give you detailed information on how well AAPAC is meeting the responsibilities given to the committee in its bylaws. We have had some preliminary discussion on this and will be forming a subcommittee to revise them this coming school year.

We are grateful for the opportunities that this committee provides for parents to have a voice and support each other.

Thank you, Mary Duerksen, Chair Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education