

Blue Ribbon Task Force
May 17, 2022

Agenda:

- HIGH FIVE
- Greetings, Introductions, Housekeeping
- Charge to the Committee
- Setting Our Group Norms
- What Brought Us Together
- TAKE TEN!
- Table Talk
- Meeting Schedule & Location
- Reflection

- HIGH FIVE (raise your glass!)
 - Fun getting to know you!
 - Why are you joining the task force?
 - One fun thing you are looking forward to this summer?
 - What is your superpower?

- Greetings, Introductions, Housekeeping
 - Who are you, what/who do you represent, why are you here?

- Charge to the Committee
 - The task force will be charged with reviewing current programming and practices associated with FCPS specialized programs. In addition, the task force will be asked to explore proactive best practices for behavioral intervention. Through recommendations of the task force, program structures, resources and training will be augmented to guarantee optimal outcomes for the students of FCPS.

- Setting Our Group Norms
 1. Adhere to time limits while speaking - give all an opportunity to share
 2. Respect passion and the story people may bring (agree to disagree)
 3. No student names will be recorded in meeting notes.
 4. Be open minded, listen first, then share.
 5. Use the parking lot to avoid sidebar conversations, be mindful of time
 6. Eyes on the future and What is Best for Kids
 7. Respect the Journey - we need to know where we have been in order to see where we are going
 8. End meetings on a positive note & end on time

What brought us together, Special Education Presentation::

- Special Education by the Numbers (highlights)
 - When looking at the numbers, keep in mind that the racial make-up of Special Ed students should look like our community, not lopsided to one race

- We also want our our disability numbers/percentages to mirror the country which is what FCPS is in line with
- Staff highlights - we have a 1:7 ratio of SEIA's (Special Education Instructional Assistants) to students in Special Education based on the total number of SEIAs we have allocated
- Continuum of Services
 - The continuum of services can look very different depending on what school/program you are in
 - Co-teaching is not yet a norm in FCPS-
 - “push-in” is when a specialist comes in for a time block to assist a specific student in an area of study
 - Pull out- you are visiting a special ed teacher outside of the general education classroom to assist with an area of study
- We will take a deeper dive into the specialized programs in subsequent weeks.
- Data
 - The state goal is to have 70% of Special Ed students in general education classes, we have 85%. This committee can debate/conclude if this is a good or a bad statistic
 - We agree that we need some help w/ our continuum to bridge resources and are excited to see what the task force can recommend
- Continuum of Behavior Supports
 - MTSS- we are working on creating a framework for behavior supports through three tiers of intervention
 - Tier I interventions – Universal school wide interventions
 - Tier II interventions – Small Group Interventions addressing school-wide expectations
 - Tier III interventions – Individualized interventions addressing specific student needs
- Member question- where does the IEP fit in here?
 - The needs of the student may lie within multiple tiers depending on the subject or behavior.
 - In the state of MD, you can get tier III support w/out being on an IEP.
 - You can also be on an IEP for just behavior issues.
- ***It was requested that we get a list of definitions for terms/services
- Proposed Budget Enhancements
 - All SEIA positions will become benefitted
 - Expressions Teachers & SEIAs move to 11 months
 - Expressions, Learning for Life, Pyramid SEIAs move to grade 8 pay scale
 - 24 Additional SEIAs for Pyramid
 - Question- do these positions go through the 12th grade? A- Yes
 - 17 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs)
 - We must have a 1:20 ratio by the end of the school year 2024-2025. 1:20 Ratio is for Pyramid, Expressions, and Rock Creek programs
 - 2 Special Education Supervisors for Specialized Programs (Elem & Secondary)
 - 4 Adaptive PE Teachers
 - Will need additional increases over time
 - 21 Hours Per Diem for Special Education Case Managers

- Increase Speech-Language Pathologists to 11 months
- ***This is pending final budget approval, if they go through, will enact on July 1
- Question- This doesn't include behavior support specialists to the general education setting?
 - No- But this is something that we will, over time, decide to enact as part of school improvements, individual schools can also elect to hire one depending on their staffing needs and budget

Department of Justice Updates

- Staffing Changes
 - Behavior Support Specialists who are assigned to Expressions, Pyramid, and Rock Creek will need to be a Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA)
 - Each self contained classroom will have an assigned BCaBA
 - Question- Who is allowed to perform restraint?
 - A- Anyone who is trained- The person has to be training in Crisis Response (CPI is the company we currently use for training). Training is being overhauled and we are currently evaluating trainers who better suit our needs
- Any comments or complaints can be fielded either in paper form dropped off in a mailbox, electronically or can call the new BCaBA supervisor.
 - There was a concern voiced in the committee about the complaint reporting anonymity. For example, people can see people drop in a note, people can see names on caller ID, etc. The feedback to this comment addresses this by including multiple means to report a complaint or comment
 - Question- Are children allowed to file a complaint or comment?- Yes (via all ways listed above)
- Question- FBA/BIP requesting. What will the process be going forward? A- Everyone will be training (even Gen Ed students) but per the guidelines, an assessment will need to be completed by a BCaBA.
- Question- Are you getting a good response to staffing? A- To clarify, we submitted a staffing plan, however we haven't yet secured all of the staff. It will be difficult to hire the volume we need and are considering/suggesting certain incentives via the union agreements.

Subgroup work ("Chart it"):

Group 1:

- "Ah-Ha's":
 - Training opportunities & Requirements
 - So few options, need something in-between (many situations)
 - So bureaucratic/disconnects
- Wonderings:
 - How will it be possible to have the required (number) of BCBA's?
 - How will FCPS/DOJ oversee SRO's?
 - Accessing Federal Grants for Mental Health?
 - Will FCPS create Parent Advocacy groups?
 - What about former students?

- More music/art therapy
- Tell us more:
 - Need to be more proactive
 - Need to be immediate notice of all restraints performed
 - Want more data on continuum utilization (+more data)

Group 2

- “Ah-Ha”
 - Surprised by staffing
 - What about non-specialized programs
- Wonderings
 - What training for SEIA’s to avoid escalation?
 - Not every Principal, AP, or Special Educator is comfortable with management of IA’s due to lack of training or fear of hurting feelings- How can we address this?
 - In some cases, SEIA’s are “not allowed” to converse with parents
- Tell us more
 - Consistent training for SEIA’s
 - Accountability for support staff
 - FBA/BIP’s- Address multiple behaviors

Group 3

- “Ah-Ha”
 - State requires 70% in Gen Ed, FCPS has 85%
 - Additions of Adaptive PE
 - No FBA/BIP process
- Wondering
 - 40+ Central Office staff vs. school based openings
 - Why target support increases for programs but not L4L?
 - 3 Tiers of behavior supports
 - Effectiveness?
 - Consistency between schools?
 - Put complaint form online, front and center on website
 - Are we disproportionate in identifying BAA students? How many of those IEP’s were just behavioral?
 - Will these drive the process?
- Tell us more:
 - 24 hour requirement to communicate w/ families after restraint? What if (the) student cannot communicate w/ families? How can (the) family provide care for the child?
 - Private Placements outside of FCPS
 - Why can’t we provide more intensive behavior services that drive students to nonpublic?

Group 4:

- Ah-Ha’s:
 - Glad to see more training for special ed teachers
 - Glad to see BCBA
- Wonderings:
 - Without seclusion rooms, what are alternatives for kids who need quiet space?

- What about LRE for students (classmates)/classes who need to evacuate due to the behavior of a student in crisis?
- Is the compensation enough to address staffing needs?
- Tell us more
 - Continuum of services
 - High functioning autism
 - ADHD
 - What (is there) for kids who don't have needs met in general education but don't have a matched specialized program? (look at data in non publics, what does the data tell us is a need?)

Final discussion: Can we open this to public observation?

Comments:

- Do we need to do this right away?
 - Likely, we don't want the public to perceive that we are hiding anything
- Comment- Can there be a public/private portion of the meeting?
 - Would be difficult to arrange (also perception)
- What about the parents who are uncomfortable sharing?
 - The sharing will likely happen in the sub-work groups with the public observing from a distance. The observers will likely only hear
 - what is presented to the full group from the sub-groups.
- Will they just be observing?
 - Yes- if they comment they will be asked to leave.
- OK, but cell phones need to be silenced and put away.
 - A- It should be noted, we can't restrict cell phone use if someone wants to film.
- There needs to be transparency for families to heal, there is a lot of mistrust and allowing this process to be open and observable will go a long way to that healing process

Since we are divided, the committee chairs will discuss both sides with Dr. Markoe and circle back w/ the task force via email.

******New******

After members of the task force discussed concerns related to student privacy, Dana Falls consulted with Dr Markoe regarding striking a balance between a safe environment for members to share personal student experiences and the desire to keep the public informed of the work of the task force. As a result, task force meetings will not be open to the public. However, we will publish agendas, meeting notes, and presentations on the FCPS website at a quick link created for the Blue Ribbon Task Force. These documents will be uploaded by Friday each week the task force meets.

Next meeting will be on May 31, 20226-8pm