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Bedford Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

Presentation to the School Committee
October 11, 2022

Agenda

Introductions

What We Do

APPLE Institute

- Identified Areas of Opportunity
- SNOT Analysis
- Team Action Plan

Feedback - Strengths and Challenges

Upcoming Events

Introductions

Marianne Vines - Director of Special Education

Erica Callahan - SEPAC Board Member

Erica Colbath - SEPAC Board Member

Coreen Garrett - SEPAC Board Member

What we do

- ▶ Bring together parents and caregivers of children receiving special education services to provide support
 - ▶ nights out, daytime coffee, walk and chat
- ▶ Host quality speakers and trainings to educate families and the community
 - ▶ Lenora Campoli Speaker Series
 - ▶ FCSN presentation
- ▶ Host other events of interest during the school year
- ▶ Host social get togethers (caregivers or caregivers and families)
- ▶ Work closely with school administration and leadership to help improve special education services
 - ▶ Meet with Director of Special Education monthly
 - ▶ Meet with Superintendent 3x per year
 - ▶ Meet with School Committee 1-2x per year

APPLE Institute

Advancing Parent-Professional Leadership in Education

What is the APPLE Institute:

a free training program offered by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) to help parent leaders, special education administrators, and school community members build collaborative leadership teams to increase parent engagement in their school district

Districts accepted:

- Bedford ~ Blackstone-Millville ~Chicopee ~ Groton-Dunstable ~ Watertown ~ Wilmington

Dates:

- Full APPLE Institute meetings - May 6, June 10
- Bedford Meeting with FCSN representatives - May 18 & 27, June 7 & 10
- Ongoing district meetings to move toward implementation

APPLE Institute - Identified Areas of Opportunity

Vibrant SEPAC
Engagement

Promoting
Community
Acceptance and
Inclusion

Increasing Awareness
of Special Education
Department
Initiatives

Advancing School
Success

Collaborate with
Recreation
Department and
other town
organizations

Enhancing in school
social emotional
supports for
students with
disabilities

APPLE Institute – SNOT analysis

Strengths

- Relationships with SEPAC, Administration, other Parent Led Organizations
- Committed group of SEPAC members

Needs

- Parent engagement - (survey needs)
- Improved academic success
- Social needs and friends

Opportunities

- Communications channels (both one way and two way) between students, school and community
- Collaborate with Recreation Department and town

Threats

- Capacity and bandwidth to invest time to achieve objectives
- Lack of community empathy, social exclusion
- Engagement

APPLE Institute Team Action Plan

Action: Create a monthly Director of Special Education Newsletter

Success: Increase awareness and transparency of the Special Education Department initiatives and successes

Status: Ongoing - started in September 2022

APPLE Institute Team Action Plan

Action: Create a Bedford SEPAC flyer to be shared by the district and SEPAC at IEP meetings and other opportunities
Translate flyer into multiple languages for accessibility and promote a welcoming supportive community

Success: Increase awareness of SEPAC and increase family engagement

Status: Flyer in process of finalization

APPLE Institute Team Action Plan

Action: Create and distribute a survey for special education parents and caregivers
Consider need for additional survey for additional groups

Success: Identify areas of strengths, needs and weaknesses for surveyed families
Leading to increased engagement with impactful programs and offerings

Status: Target launch date - January 2023

Feedback – Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- ▶ Collaborative relationship between SEPAC and administration
- ▶ Teachers and staff engaged in student success
- ▶ Orton Gillingham trained teachers and the impact on increased students
- ▶ Recreation Summer Adventures / ESY collaboration
- ▶ Dibels and sharing information with parents and caregivers

Challenges

- ▶ Increasing family engagement
- ▶ Community acceptance and inclusion of children and families with differences
- ▶ Social inclusion opportunities
- ▶ Increased programming throughout the town to make programs and events accessible to families with visible and invisible disabilities
- ▶ Sibling supports for family members with special needs

Upcoming Events

10/20 at 8:00pm - October SEPAC meeting on zoom

11/03 at 7:00pm - FCSN presents Learn about Section 504 Plans on zoom

11/09 at 8:00pm - Bedford SEPAC Parent and Caregiver Night Out at Red Heat Tavern

11/17at 8:00pm - November SEPAC meeting on zoom

Fall Speaker - in process of scheduling, details will be shared once finalized
