

HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM CHARTER FOR COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

Committee: Review of Howard County Public School System's (HCPSS)
Continuum of Early Intervention Services for Students with
Autism, ages 0-5 years

Contact Person: Dr. James Walsh
Director, Department of Special Education

Submitted To: Mr. Robert Glascock,
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

Date: February 27, 2004

OBJECTIVE: In a brief statement, describe what it is the committee is meant to accomplish. Does the committee serve as an advisory to another's decision or as a group that takes action? How does this contribute to improving student outcomes?

The committee will review and make recommendations regarding the current continuum of early intervention services provided for students with Autism in light of current research and best practices. The committee will also make recommendations regarding the development of a process whereby school Individual Family and Support Plan (IFSP)/ Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams and parents could resolve differences regarding the provision of services. The committee will generate student profiles and offer possible suggestions for parents and IFSP/ IEP teams to consider when attempting to resolve disagreements over services requested.

This review of the current continuum of educational services provided for students with Autism, ages 0-5 years supports the goals outlined in the HCPSS Comprehensive Plan for Accelerated School Improvement. This review also supports the Department of Special Education's efforts to continuously improve special education services provided for students with disabilities.

NEED: Document the needs to be met or problems to be solved and indicate specifically who will be affected.

In response to parent concerns regarding HCPSS continuum of early intervention services for students with Autism, ages 0-5, the Department of Special Education will review and update

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the provision of early intervention services in light of current research, best practices, and state and federal law. Parents, students with Autism ages 0-5, and special education staff will be directly affected by the recommendations of committee.

PARAMETERS: In a general way, describe the boundaries or limits such as time, budget, human resources, etc. within which the committee will function. Is the committee's work particularly sensitive to changes in any of the parameters? Does the committee have a process for checking compliance with laws, contracts, regulations, district policies, etc.?

The committee will submit a summary of their review and recommendations to Dr. James Walsh, Director, Department of Special Education no later than July 30, 2004. All recommendations will be in compliance with all HCPSS policies and procedures and all state and federal laws specifically the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-R) and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13.A.05.01).

PARTICIPANTS: Who should participate on the committee? What will be required of the participants? If necessary, address information and training needs?

Participants on the committee will include central and school based staff, parents, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) staff, and members of the Special Education Community Advisory Committee (SECAC) and Howard County Chapter of the Autism Society of America (HCC-ASA). The committee will be co-chaired by Ms. Diana Mitchell, Special Education Consultant, and Mrs. Deborah Clutts, parent. Ms. Mary Teague will serve as facilitator. Committee members will be provided any necessary background and information. Other providers of early intervention services for students with Autism outside of HCPSS may be utilized. Participants will be required to attend a minimum of four meetings prior to June 30, 2004.

CONNECTEDNESS: Where does this committee fit in the overall decision making structure of the district? Who needs to know about committee decisions? What are future implications for other parts of the District?

The committee's final recommendations will be reported to Dr. James Walsh. Dr. James Walsh will share the report with HCPSS leadership team including Mr. Robert Glascock, Assistant

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Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. Dr. Walsh will review the recommendations and department response with the HCC-ASA and SECAC by September 30, 2004.

Recommendations will be evaluated and implemented as they align with school system targets and goals and IFSP / IEP processes.

RULES OF THE ROAD: How will the committee conduct its business? How will its agenda be determined? What communications will be produced (agenda, minutes, reports)? Will consensus, majority, or other make decisions? How will committee members be selected, what is their tenure and what duties will they have?

Dr James Walsh will appoint a planning committee consisting of co-chairs, facilitator and parents to generate draft agendas and meeting content. Ground rules and agreements will be established by consensus. The co-chairs and facilitator will be responsible for the production and dissemination of minutes and any needed documents. The planning committee and Dr James Walsh will select and invite committee members to participate. Tenure will end as of June 30,2004.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Which individual, by name and position, will be accountable for the results of this committee?

Dr James Walsh, Director, Department of Special Education

EVALUATION: How will those impacted be able to assess how well the committee's decisions met the objective and how well all participants and those impacted were treated? How will the evaluation process be used to improve the committee's decisions?

Committee recommendations will be evaluated for clarity and effectiveness in reaching the intended outcomes. Committee members will be provided an opportunity to comment on both the committee's process and product after each meeting.

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