

CAC Special Education Committee – Meeting Minutes of February 7, 2012

Meeting called to order at 6:40 PM

In attendance:

Melissa Owens, Sarah Thompson, Pamela Harris, Carol Dimitroff, Deborah Caruso.

I. Presentation of the Meeting Minutes from February 7, 2012:

A quorum was not reached for voting on the previous meeting's minutes; tabled until next meeting.

II. 2012 Parent Resource Fair Debriefing:

Prior to the meeting, Melissa Owens took the Resource Fair parent feedback surveys and tabulated the results in Survey Monkey, and compiled the results into a report. Some observations by the committee on the survey results:

- The Total Health Care panel discussion was neither well attended nor well received. Furthermore, some respondents requested more information on issues such as emotional/behavioral issues, ADD & ADHD, counseling, and clinical therapists, which suggested to the committee that perhaps the panel was too broad, and that next time specific categories should be the focus, especially for emotional disturbances.
- There were clear issues with directing parents to appropriate service providers and to the panel discussions. Many respondents wrote that they did not hear the announcements in the library, that they wished for more signage, and that they were unclear as to which provider to talk to regarding a specific issue. It was agreed for next year that:
 - A better announcement system will be implemented
 - Larger posters of the schedule will be posted at key areas
 - The video screen in the library will be used for announcements and schedule information.
 - A directory of the service providers will be created, along with their specialties, and will be given to the volunteers working the registration desk, so that they may be better able to direct attendees.
 - Volunteers at the front desk will be directed to be more proactive in asking attendees if they need accommodations, so that other workers can have time to get those accommodations in place.
- One of the most frequent remarks by attendees was that the IEP sessions were much, much too short. Many attendees wanted more information and more time for Q&A. A few attendees remarked that the IEP discussions were their primary reason for attending.

The committee then discussed the idea of completely separating IEP sessions from the Resource Fair. Pamela Harris expressed the idea of having an "IEP University" next year, at more frequent intervals during the school year. The first session would have a set agenda; subsequent sessions could review the first and build from ongoing questions/feedback. As the committee had already made the determination to scrap the fall Meet & Greet due to lack of interest, the IEP University seems like a logical programming replacement. One session per trimester seems like

a good start.

Regarding U-46 presence at the Fair, it was agreed that more district information of available services should be included at the U-46 table.

- Some of the more requested additions for the next Fair: assistive devices, behavior management, transitions, early childhood, and parent support groups. Melissa Owens mentioned that a fair featuring vendors of assistive devices is taking place at Nature Ridge Elementary in May – perhaps it would have been more beneficial for parents and for staff if these vendors were included in the Resource Fair instead of their own event. Going forward, it was agreed that more work needed to be done to make sure we were encompassing as many special needs groups into our Fair as possible.
- The school flyers seemed to be the most frequently mentioned way that attendees learned about the Fair. Also frequently mentioned: Connect-Ed email/message, Facebook, newspaper articles, and word of mouth.

Sarah Thompson suggested that we create a post-event press release for one more outreach attempt this year. This release should go through the same channels as prior to the event.

Melissa Owens began discussion on funding for next year, and stressed that a better solution needs to be found, as it was very stressful on several committee members to be chasing down small individual donations. In addition, the Fair is dependent upon donations from current committee members, especially for printed materials, and may not survive a change in the committee membership. It was decided that other avenues, but especially pursuing grants or sponsorships, need to be explored.

Sarah Thompson suggested that we survey the vendors, as their input would also be valuable in planning next year's Fair. Questions should include: best features, suggestions for improvement, recommendations for other service providers, whether they will be back next year, and whether they would like to host a discussion panel.

Action Items:

- *Melissa Owens will create an online vendor survey on Survey Monkey; Sarah Thompson will ask Pam Sodemann to send a request to the service providers to fill the survey out in a timely manner. Melissa will monitor the survey online and tabulate the results.*
- *Melissa Owens will draft a post-event release and send to Sarah Thompson and Carol Dimitroff for review. Once the draft is finalized it will be sent to Karen Fox for media distribution.*
- *Sarah Thompson will contact Karen Fox to set up a meeting to discuss funding ideas. Melissa Owens is also interested in attending this meeting.*
- *Sarah Thompson and Melissa Owens will begin drafting the annual report for review at the next committee meeting in April.*

Other Business

- Nothing was raised.

A motion was to adjourn was not taken due to low attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30PM

Next committee meeting will be held on April 3, 2012 at 6:30pm in Room 483 of the Central Services Building.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS THE LAST MEETING OF THE YEAR, AND THAT WE WILL BE VOTING ON THE ANNUAL REPORT. MEMBER ATTENDANCE IS NEEDED FOR A VOTING QUORUM!

Respectfully submitted by:

Melissa Owens, CAC Special Education Committee Co-Chairperson.