

**Lincoln Public Schools
Special Education Parent Advisory Committee
Thursday, April 12, 2007, 7:00 -8:30 p.m.
Lincoln Public Schools District Office Room E111**

The final meeting of the 2006 - 2007 Special Education Parent Advisory Committee was held at Lincoln Public Schools District office April 12, 2007. This meeting focused on transitions at each level. Mary Phillips, LPS Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor, spoke regarding ECSE to Kindergarten transitions. Karen Russell, Coordinator at Hill Elementary School, addressed transitions at the elementary level into middle school. Kristi Groth, department chair of Special Education at Lincoln Southwest High School, spoke about middle level to high school transition and beyond high school transitions.

Mary Phillips discussed the process for identifying children in need of services for Early Childhood Special Education. She shared an ECSE brochure that addresses the following:

1. What to do if you are concerned about your child's development
2. Early Childhood Special Education Services provided by Lincoln Public Schools
3. ECSE Core Values
4. How children qualify for ECSE services
5. What ECSE Services are available
6. What services are available to infants and toddlers
7. What services are available for children ages 3-5

Mary emphasized that programs for ECSE children are as open and varied as the individual child.

Karen Russell transitioned into placement into elementary school. This transition occurs when the child enters kindergarten. There is a thirty (30) day placement period for the school team to get the information needed to develop an appropriate IEP when a child moves from another setting/district.

Karen also talked about transitions within the elementary grade levels. She explained that K-2 focus on developmental processes and in grades 3-5, children application of these processes take place.

As students transition from fifth grade to middle school, information is shared between coordinators/teams/teachers from each child's elementary school. This is done confidentially and systematically on every student.

Fifth graders and their families get information regarding the expectations, student responsibilities, and course offerings for their designated middle school. The children visit their school, touring the facility, ask questions, and practice opening lockers. Children who need accommodations or practice with lockers are given more time and private practice time.

Karen emphasized the importance of parents being comfortable with the transition process. Children who have special accommodations without an IEP (SATs) also require special transitions.

Kristi Groth spoke next regarding middle to high school transitions. She shared that there are often several transitions when students transition from the middle to high school setting. At the student's Eighth Grade IEP, students learn what high school is like, talk about what classes they might take, and learn about various club offerings & extra curricular activities.

High Schools offer nights for incoming ninth graders to learn more about the school. Opportunities for Special Education Students include one-on-one support to sign up for classes. Tours are given by Junior & Senior Special Education students for incoming freshman to learn the "important" stuff about the school.

Special Education Students are assigned an IEP manager. A letter is sent home and IEP managers contact and meet student and his/her family.

Programs look very different for each child. Some students have FCR (Functional Curriculum) and other students have regular schedules with accommodations.

Many special education students qualify for services upon turning 21. If parents and students decide to remain in school after the graduation ceremony (students get a certificate of attendance and go through graduation with his/her peers), they can enter the VOICE Program until 21 years of age. VOICE stands for Vocational Opportunities in Community Experiences. There are currently nine community sites, which include HyVee, Super Saver, Shopko, Madonna, The Duplex (daily living/budgeting), Zoo School, Bryan Warehouse, & Bob Devaney Sports Complex. VOICE students follow the rules and learn the jobs at each establishment. There are 80-100 total students in the VOICE program.

Students in VOICE still receive related services (OT, PT, etc) and have an IEP. Each year a student has two site opportunities. Students can participate 2-3 years, depending on when they enter the program.

A transition is made at age 21 to “The World of Work.” Transition is facilitated with Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Services.

There is a celebration for students who participate in VOICE at the end of the year.

Additionally, Susan Safarik, Supervisor of the Behavior Disorders Program, had four key components to effective transitions and planning for students.

- 1. One can almost never do “TOO MUCH” transition.**
- 2. Effective transitions require parents as partners. Someone needs to speak for every child.**
- 3. It is imperative to keep an open line of communication between school and families.**
- 4. Parents/Student need to connect with someone in the building. This “go to” person may be the IEP manager, Coordinator, Counselor, etc.**

For the committee,

**Shannon Butalla
Parent Liaison
Maxey Elementary School**