

CAN-DO Business Meeting

10/12/2023

Attendance: Todd Snider, secretary; Kelly Brown, co-chair; Sam Hunter, co-chair; Pilar Goldstein-Dea; 2 caregivers

Meeting Notes:

General discussion of 1st month

September flyer did not get sent out

First support meeting and guest presentation went well, working on building our audience

Open House (MVS)

- Some email addresses were collected, w/ Sam having already followed-up with some, Kelly to follow-up with others
- Heavy foot-traffic, but sensory overload at Elementary School Entrance (much quieter at Middle School according to Sam)
 - Proposed solutions: providing special/quieter/early access, sensory activities (i.e. toys), work with school specialists and Jean Libby, Family & Community Engagement Coordinator
 - Sam will email Dr. Jill Pasquini-Torchia, Head of Schools (MVS)

Open House (EHS) - Kelly to email Bill about future 2nd open house (date unknown)

Portrait Day

- Antigoni Lively, Director of Special Education, had reported students were offered some support, OT created a social story around picture day
- Todd will follow-up with Antigoni by April re: additional ideas for future Portrait Days

October PTO meeting

- Todd reported he was given time at beginning of meeting to speak, it was beneficial to have some face-time, and hopes CAN-DO can collaborate with the PTO on future projects

New SEPAC Officer Orientation

- Sam missed scheduled 10/4 orientation, says there is another in December

Old Business Items:

School visuals - Kelly working on it (possibly with Jenn C.)

ESY Survey - Kelly nearing final draft, awaiting clarification on possible edits from Pilar

Failure to provide services

- OT & Speech were not provided in ESY
 - *Some* families were mailed a letter from former Director of Special Education, Sarah Mochak (dated 7/10/23, postmarked 7/12/23)

disclosing lack of Speech Language Pathologist and Occupational Therapist for ESY, and “the Special Education Coordinator will contact you in the fall to discuss next steps.”

A number of families with students in OT and/or Speech did *not* receive this letter

- 10/11 email sent from Antigoni’s office further acknowledging there was no Speech in ESY and “at a later date, our Speech Language Pathologists will be in touch individually to arrange for compensatory Speech services.”

OT is *not* mentioned here, or in separate email

- PT has yet to be provided this fall
 - 10/13 similar email sent, sharing new PT expected to start 10/30, mentioning compensatory services will supposedly be discussed at some point in the future
- Sam requests anyone with emails or letters from EPSD discussing lack of services to forward them to them, so they can be shared with Leslie, FCSN/SEPAC liaison
- Todd will email Antigoni (cc Heather), inquiring what happened, and try to sort out inconsistent communication between EPSD and affected ESY families

CAN-DO link on EPSD website

- Kelly will reach-out to Jean Libby about making CAN-DO more visible on EPSD website (searchable, add to Special Ed section)

Vacant board seats - need to further promote need for treasurer and outreach coordinator

Accessible parking at MVS

- Todd emailed Commission on Disability chair Angelique Baker about the ongoing issue of accessible parking spots at Elementary School being both blocked-off/in and used by vehicles not displaying a placard, or having the necessary license plate. Angelique forwarded the matter to City Counselor Brady Riley, who reportedly reached out to town and school officials, which subsequently led to MVS specifically highlighting not to block or misuse accessible spots in their October newsletter.
- Todd also spoke about the matter at the Commission on Disability’s October 12th meeting. Very nice group of people, and both us and Comm would like to keep each other in mind going forward.

Upcoming events:

Basic Rights Workshop by FCSN to be 1-2 hours, with hopes that there will be time for community engagement after the conclusion of the workshop

- Antigoni needs to be notified there will not be the previously scheduled 8pm slot for her to engage with community (Todd will reach out)

Kelly says library is ok with being recorded at November’s support meeting
DDS Children’s Autism Waiver Open Request Period (kids 10 and younger)

- Sam will provide blurb to Pilar for social media posts
- Sam also to email Antigoni (Judy Averill)
- Anyone needing info, or has questions, direct them to Sam at: sam.linnell.hunter@gmail.com

November Meeting Needs:

Forums to request CAN-DO events and information is shared:

- Mayor's Office - press release and meeting dates (Kelly will email)
- MVS Monthly Newsletter, EHS weekly email, EPSD Facebook, PTO - All parties have willingly shared information when requested, and Todd will continue to submit future requests, as needed

Support Meeting - Kelly will be absent, so Todd will fill-in as liaison for presentation

Future Events:

Winter/Spring Presentations (1 of 5 slots filled)

- Set (1): Sarah Chaplin @ RSI for 1/17
- In-progress (1): Sam
- Needs development (3): caregiver roundtable, neurodiversity training, MVS & EHS Neurodiversity Club
- Other groups to consider whether for support meetings this year or next, other events (i.e. Transition), or for other collaborations: SPIFFY; Jillian Sullivan, Campus Disability Coordinator at Asnuntuck Community College; mental health professional; Easthampton Commission on Disability

Other Winter/Spring CAN-DO events:

- Transition Planning - Kelly
- Sensory fun - Kelly
- Disability Awareness Month (March) - November agenda
- Fundraising - November agenda

FCSN monthly events - discussion for each board member to review the calendar on a monthly basis

Tech

New CAN-DO email has been set up, and now we need to spread awareness
Google Drive (and back-up drive) is a work in progress and is being rebuilt after we lost access from EPSD

New Zoom account up and running

Hybrid meetings - nothing currently scheduled, but we will employ when deemed necessary. We would need to complete a Facilities Request form before officially declaring a location.

YouTube channel - still needs to be setup for archiving Support Meeting presentations

Website and socials data discussion - Could we get monthly reports to help evaluate interest and engagement?

Other notes:

Emails - from now on please include the word "URGENT" in emails that require immediate attention. In addition, you could use "RESPONSE NEEDED" for emails that you are looking for folks to respond to. We are hoping this helps with the lag in email communication and confusion around what needs responses and what is just sharing of information.

Future Business Meetings - starting next month (November), we are going to have our business meetings being just the board from 7pm-8pm, and then invite families to join from 8pm-8:30pm if they want to contribute ideas, suggestions, volunteer, etc. in improving CAN-DO as an organization. These meetings will not be about sharing issues that folks are having and we will not be going through an agenda during the time that families are with us. We're hoping this allows us (the board) to have more focused attention on items that need to be discussed that families really don't need to worry about/have input on.

Meeyoung (caregiver) met with Katya Schapiro, MVS head librarian, and Emily Prabhaker, Children's librarian

- Discussion topics included: collaborating on sections for adults and children, missing expressive language in regards to accessibility, improving accessibility to neurodivergent children, Disability Awareness Month (March), and library's call for suggestions on books they can order

Caregiver requested listing local resources for families on CAN-DO website, which was an opportunity to recognize that such resources already exist on the website (see "[Resources](#)" section on <https://epsdcando.org/>). All are welcome to propose additional resources for posting.

SPIFFY joined us for second half of meeting for a discussion