SELM meeting

Present: Angie MacCracken, Melissa Grossman, Caroline Long, Greta Callahan, Sheila Webb, Gina Forman, Jennie Wessinger, Michelle Lee-Reid, Jill Rentmeester-Disher, Ginny Nyhus, Kris Geiger, Sarah Stack, Deequifrah Hussein, Korto Dixon, Rob Purple, Aria Campbell, Jodi Dezale, Kristen Berry

Updates: Caroline reported that links are not working for special education testing on MPS special education website. Ginny Nyhus, DPF to follow up.

Continued discussion about Equity

How is the district handling students with multiple layers of trauma upon returning to buildings? Students will be returning to schools with different experiences being 10 months out of school and staff will not know these experiences. The opportunity gap has grown as well. What can we do? Nobody can answer these questions at this time per DPF.

DPF reported that ongoing work of racial justice is continuing at a high level in the special education department. A concern was expressed that white people making decisions is where the racial injustice starts. DPF reassured that they are here to do the work.

SERTS don’t feel as supported from their leads as Related services when IEPs are not being followed by General Education teachers. DPF stated “all of our students are general education students first. The IEP is a legal document that identifies the rights of the IEP. It goes back to FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education). SERTs duty is to advocate for the child and if their needs are not being met, please ask your DPF for support. DPF’s take this very seriously and want to support students in special education. MPS needs to work toward a culture where general education teachers are vested in students that receive special education services.

What is the turnover rate of special education teachers, especially teachers of color? No DPF had the answer. Will get back to group next month.

We need better protocols for mentoring new special education teachers. If we will depend on building special education staff to provide training there needs to be a stipend for those teachers to provide the training. The current system for mentoring does not provide enough support

The survey to return to school or stay in distance learning is very difficult for parents to fill out.

Many special education staff are nervous to return, especially in level 3 and 4 classrooms, because the students are very hands on (help with toileting, eating, dressing, hand over hand assistance to complete activities), have difficulty wearing a mask and following social distance measures.

Can special education students have modified school days? Yes, only if it relates to their IEP plan. (e.g. need access to equipment, low stamina, social skills, phase in plan for students that can’t tolerate the long day, etc.) The reason can’t be because OF COVID19, it must be related to learning at school.

Beginning of February, plexiglass dividers will be sent to schools for special education staff to use; some related services providers will need to pick theirs up from PIC (i.e. speech.) Every staff member will have one including special education support staff. If you work at multiple sites, there should be a divider for you at each site.

There are a lot of missing pieces to the puzzle for students and staff to feel safe about returning to in person learning.