

SEPAG MEETING MINUTES

Date: Jan 30, 2025

Committee Members present:

Juana Trejo-Reyes

Administration Present:

Lori Cohen- Director of Social Services

Juana Trejo-Reyes - Welcoming remarks

Bridging the transition: Hillside Elementary School to Tenakill Middle School led by Lori Cohen

Ms. Cohen discussed the 5th grade special education programs

- 1) In Class Resource- Taught by general education teacher and special education teacher
- 2) Out of Class Replacement- Small group instruction taught by a special ed teacher (example, ELA, math)
- 3) In Class Supplemental Support- Taught by a general education teacher in general education classroom with support from a special education teacher or a paraprofessional
- 4) Self-Contained Small Group Learning Community (SGLC) – Small group class taught by a special education teacher for students who have mild to moderate disability.

Ms. Cohen discussed Tenakill Middle School (TMS) Supports for Special Education Students. Staff members and their roles were discussed (administration, case managers, school nurse, region 3 behaviorist, occupational therapist, speech therapist and special education teachers)

Ms. Cohen discussed Spring preparations including;

- 1) Transition meetings- TMS and TMS Special education teachers and case managers meet.
- 2) School counselors communicate with parents and TMS counselors regarding 504 plans

- 3) SEPAG meeting regarding transition from Hillside to TMS and from TMS to High School.
- 4) Parent Orientation Evening- Hosted in June by the principal of TMS
- 5) VIP Tour- For students who are in Replacement Classes or SGLC- takes place in late May/early in advance to grade-wide visit.
- 6) Grade-Wide Visit- All 4th grade students visit TMS for a morning during the month of June.
- 7) Practice being a Middle Schooler- Students are given the opportunity to practice opening a combination lock and may do a trial “switching classes” with the 4th grade team.

August Activities

- 1) Orientation activities at TMS (August 2025)
- 2) Schedule is Received and discussed (advisory period, character lessons, A/B days, specials, lunch/recess, band/chorus)

TIPS for preparing your child for middle school-

- 1) Teach organization skills- Practice using a planner, organize materials etc
- 2) Encourage Self-Advocacy- Encourage child to speak up for themselves
- 3) Practice New Routines- Role-play or rehearse middle school routines
- 4) Provide Emotional Support- Provide your child with reassurance that it's okay to feel nervous and remind them of their strengths.

Ms. Cohen announced that all teachers will be using Google Classroom going forward.

Bridging the transition: Tenakill Middle School led by Laurie Rochlin

Ms. Rochlin explained that placements are determined by the level of support services. She discussed placement conversations to make sure that students are placed in the appropriate classes. Although most students attend Northern Valley High School. The different programs available were explained.

- 1) **Northern Valley High School -Demarest**
- 2) **Bridge Program- Demarest H.S-** Self-contained for adolescents with significant emotional disabilities, full continuum of services (self-contained to Honors/AP), Related services (speech, OT, counseling, adaptive physical education, Vo-Tech educational options and daily lunch support.
- 2) **STEP Program- Old Tappan HS-** self-contained program for adolescents with multiple learning challenges (Full programs based on need, 4 year elective

curriculum, related services, extra-curricular activities, daily lunch support, summer enrichment programs)

3) **ACCESS Program- Demarest H.S-** Electives and physical education and/or APE, transition store, athletic department-extra curricular activities, more applied learning,

4) **Valley Program-Norwood-**

- * Nationally Certified Staff in Applied Behavioral Analysis oversee the Valley Program.
- * Staff to student ratios 1:1 for preschool and 2:1 for primary and upper elementary. Additional teacher assistants meet individual student's needs per the IEP.
- * 6.5 hours of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) per day.
- * Fourteen masters-level speech therapists serve our children. Speech services include individual sessions, group sessions, and pragmatics consultation within the classroom.
- * Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy are provided as directed by the IEP.
- * Parent Clinics and written progress reports four times per year to update families regarding student progress.
- * Parent training for parents of students newly enrolled in the Valley Program to assist parents with techniques used in the classroom/home/community. All parent requests will be reviewed by administration.
- * Opportunities for inclusion with typical peers is available at all Valley locations, when appropriate.
- * Community experiences for the students to develop appropriate social skills, behavioral controls, and generalization of skills into a variety of natural settings.
- * Valley Regional Programs P.T.O

Transition Process to NVD

- 1) Visits HS in October- Tour- See electives
- 2) Eighth grade IEP meeting- CST from HS attends 8th grader participates in meeting
- 3) Student chooses their electives
- 4) Eighth grader participates in the transition meeting in February
- 5) June picnic at the High School
- 6) August- Schedules and lockers

Transition for other programs (Step, Bridge, Access, and Valley)

- 1) Parent Visit
- 2) Step and Bridge- Arrange for a partial day visit for the student to shadow another Student.
- 3) Access- Transition visits take place throughout the year with their classes.

Full Continuum of Services

- 1) Special program
- 2) Pull Out Replacement (Resource)
- 3) College Prep-In Class Resource (CP)
- 4) College Prep (CP)
- 5) CPE- College Prep Enriched (CPE)
- 6) Honors

Ms. Cohen also discussed the following;

- 1) Different classes offered, electives, NJ 1 year foreign language requirement (colleges like to see 2 years)
- 2) Sample student program (4 Day Rotating schedule, 56 minute periods)

Other Programs available

- 1) Bergen Tech in Paramus (9th-full or part time)
 - 2) Eastwick/ Ho-Ho-Kus School of Trade- Shared time- Junior-Senior Year
 - 3) The Summit House- 18-21 year old program, full life skills, related services, physical fitness, parent evening workshop, July Summer Program,
- Parents were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments regarding the transition process and placement options. Parents expressed feeling grateful for the opportunity to attend such an informative meeting.