

Weston  
Parent Advisory Council  
for Special Education  
Spring Update  
2011–2012 School Year

Kim Costello  
April 24, 2012



[www.westonpac.org](http://www.westonpac.org)



# Weston PAC 2011-12 Objective

Advisory  
Role

Community  
Role

Advising School  
Committee

Planning, Development,  
and Evaluation of  
Programs

Meeting w/  
Administrators

Educational Lectures

Membership

Monthly Coffees

Advocacy/Support



# Community Outreach

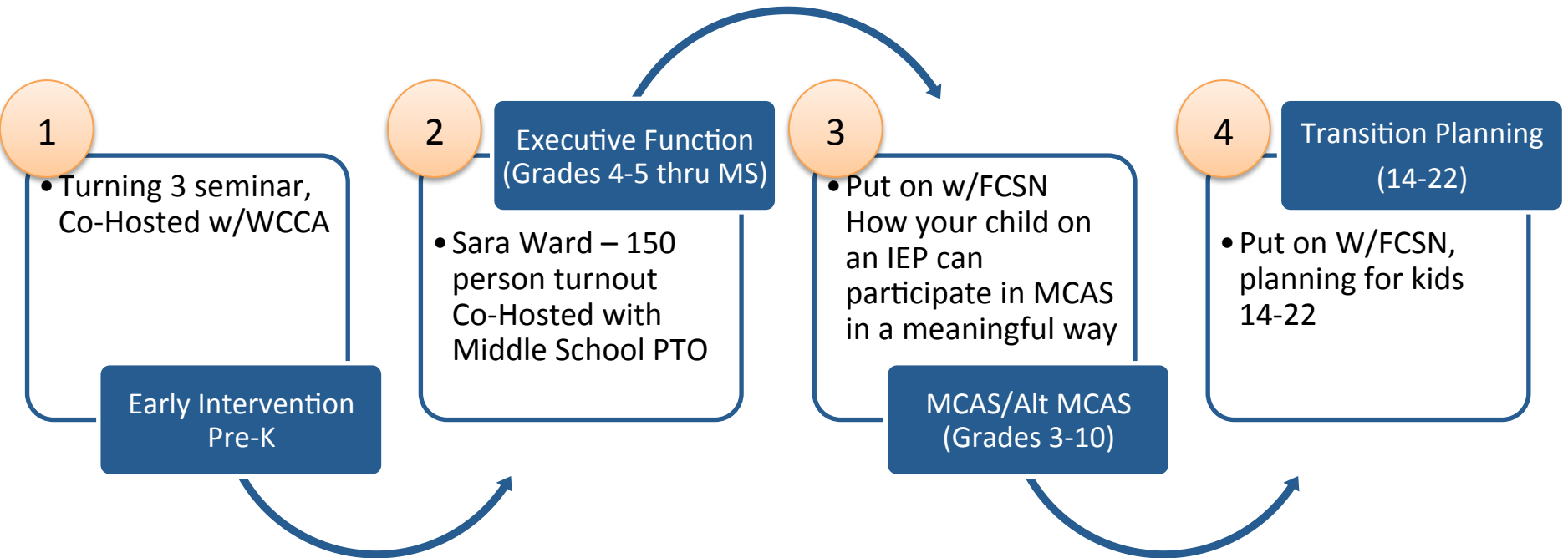


1. Manage MassPAC Info – share information on Facebook
2. Manage Facebook Group – 65 members
3. Member Coffees (Welcome, Holiday Gathering, Spring Get Together)
4. Special Ed Back to School Nights at all schools
5. Contact info in PTO Calendar, WebSite
6. Just started using Weston GrapeVine – 95 members
7. Lot of time is spent providing informal support and advice



# Community Role (education)

Main Objective was to focus on different subject areas and ages - \$1,000 PTO Budget



10 educational lectures targeted for 2012-2013



# Advisory Role

1. Established regular monthly meetings with interim Director of Student services
2. Discussions with Superintendent and administration to open up direct parent communication
3. Met with other PAC's to share "best practices"
4. Parent forum with administration

Important to Note: PAC made some progress in 2012, but still has a lot of work to do in this area



# Parent Concerns

1. Main issues tend to arise around curriculum, instructional time, staffing, and outplacement. *See appendix*
2. Specialized programming is lacking: Dyslexia, Autism Spectrum, Language/Communication Disorders, Cognitive impairments. *See appendix*
3. Given the disparities in the SPED budget when looking at peer communities and state averages; Parents want a better understanding of Weston's SPED budget
4. The challenges of accommodating all needs with one tutor model



# Parent Concerns

5. Transition Services planning for 14+ need improvement. *See appendix*
6. Better relationships with vocational partners for post HS placements
7. The number of addressed concerns were cited in 2006 and 2008 special education audits. *See appendix*



# Moving Forward (2012-2013)

Discover

Tutor Model Report  
Survey from Parent  
Coffees  
DESE Survey  
CPR Review/Report  
Interim Dir.  
Recommendations  
New Dir. Ideas

Understanding

Prioritize and Set  
Goals for Special  
Education

Action

“Our Children’s  
Learning time is  
Now”





# School Committee' Role We need you!

A few ideas...

1. School Committee liaison for Weston Special Education Parent Advisory Council
2. WestonPAC presentation to School Committee 2X/year
3. Special education curriculum review



# Appendix: PAC Board

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Chair - Kim Costello


Patti Jurinski,  
Secretary

Lucine Kaprellian,  
Parent Education

Rebecca Stevenson,  
Member at Large

Carolyn Korbin,  
Member at Large

Penny Peddie,  
Co-Chair,  
Member Coffees




## House Bill 3720 (formerly H.159), An Act to Promote the Successful Transition of Students with Disabilities to Post-Secondary Education, Employment, and Independent Living

On March 9, 2012 the Governor signed H. 3720 (formerly H.159) An Act to Promote the Successful Transition of Students with Disabilities to Post-Secondary Education, Employment and Independent Living into law. The new law is Chapter 51 of the Acts of 2012

The new law requires the Board of Education to revise educator licensure regulations to provide a mechanism for current special education teachers and rehabilitation counselors to obtain a Specialist Teacher Endorsement in Transition Services. The new regulations must be issued by September 1, 2012 and shall include details on coursework and field experience necessary to obtain the Transition Specialist Endorsement. With transition specialists prepared to provide services already required under federal law, this bill will help to ensure that existing dollars are spent in a more effective manner and will improve competitive employment and independent living outcomes for students with disabilities ages 14 - 22 years old. The bill will also help reduce litigation costs, by providing school districts with trained personnel necessary to fully implement the transition requirements of federal special education law.

Upon passage of the bill, lead sponsor Representative Tom Sannicandro stated, “this legislative victory belongs to a lot of people, including students and parents who told their story, who collected signatures, and who delivered their message to policy makers in a powerful way. This legislation will empower students with disabilities by better preparing them for independent living. Skills such as navigating a bus route, cooking a meal, and managing a budget will now be integrated into the curriculum for these students. This training will help more students with disabilities hold jobs and be active and engaged members of the community.”



The Massachusetts DESE, as well as an independent Special Education Review Committee, had concerns about the Tutor Model as far back as 2006

### **2006 MA DOE CPR**


“While district documentation includes a general statement that all tutors are either certified/licensed teachers or are interns eligible for licensure within the school year, it is not clear what areas these individuals are licensed in, and whether these areas are appropriate to the instruction they deliver. In some cases, the service delivery grids in students’ IEPs indicate that the services will be delivered by a special education tutor, while other service delivery grids indicate that the services will be delivered by a special education teacher when in fact services are delivered by the tutor. Student schedules indicate that some students receive their only math and/or reading/ writing instruction by the tutor, not by appropriately licensed staff.” pg.56

### **2008 SPED Program Review**

“ We question whether special education teachers are able to utilize their teaching skills effectively and whether they are able to provide adequate supervision for tutors and assistants given their heavy case loads. We question whether special education teachers are sufficiently supervising the tutors and/or consulting with tutors/aides about student behavior because they are understaffed and required to do so much of the administrative work.” Page 8

“...there is concern that the more disabled inclusion students largely work with the tutors whose experience and training are most variable.” p. 10

“...the bulk of the responsibility for the direct service and for a good part of the accommodations/ modifications of instruction for the most disabled students (including the cognitively impaired and autistic students who have the most complex needs) falls into the hands of the inclusion tutors. While there is some supervision by the liaisons, the skills and training of the tutors are, again, most variable.” pg. 11



These reports also documented concerns about the lack of specialized curriculum and data collection/analysis in WPS Special Education

**2006 MA DOE CPR (Measurement)**

“...(IEP) goals are not always measurable.” pg.29  
“...progress reports do not always contain information on the extent to which such progress is sufficient to enable the child to achieve the goals by the end of the year. In some instances, progress reports are not related to current goals.”

“...it is not clear that the district uses information it gathers from annual IEP reviews to measure the effectiveness of special education programs, and identifies programs, services and administrative areas that need improvement or must be developed. In addition, the evaluations submitted do not show that the district measures the success of programs based on student’s local and statewide assessment results, drop out rates, and graduation rates for special education students.” pg. 59

**2008 SPED Program Review (Curriculum)**

“ We recommend researching a different method or model for offerings for students unable to participate in college preparatory courses. Students with intellectual impairments/needs require a comprehensive program with specialized instruction and an alternative curriculum in some content areas.” pg. 7

“Adapted curriculum is not adequate...” pg. 8

“On the middle and high school levels, there are not enough (curriculum) options for cognitively impaired students who are unable to access and meet the demands of the regular curriculum due to the severity of their disabilities, or for regular and special education students struggling with basic skills in reading and math.” pg. 9