Facilitating SAT Meetings

Beginning

Introduce all in attendance and their respective role

- Someone should be facilitating the meeting and keeping discussion on track
- Someone else should be taking notes
- Sometimes may have to be the same person (caution!)

Ground Rules

- Stay on track in the interest of time, may have to move the conversation on if get stuck on one particular issue
- Refrain from engaging in side conversations
- Parent/student input is just as important as staff input

Explain the purpose

- Children do well if they can
- Identify specific concerns
- Develop strategies to be implemented, monitor progress, evaluate outcome

Middle

Review reason for SAT meeting

- Discuss strengths
- Drill down on academic/behavior concerns
- Remain positive, refrain from resorting to a gripe session (repeating same problems using different words or examples)

Clear Communication

- Throughout the meeting repeat/paraphrase what others say to make sure notes are accurate
- Ask questions about inaccuracies shared in the meeting
- Encourage open & honest communication...if you would not say it with parents present then it is not worth saying!

End

Summary

- Review notes and the plan developed
- Review next steps (strategies will be implemented and monitored)
- Schedule a follow-up meeting (if not the exact date, decide on a time frame)
- Tell the parent who to call with questions

Follow-through

- Finalize notes in IC
- Make sure everyone who needs the notes has access to them
- Monitor the interventions being implemented AS WELL AS the student’s response
- Review data during the follow-up SAT meeting
Facilitating SAT Meetings

(Script/Guide)

What follows is NOT a script to be read during meetings but rather these are sample statements that are meant to assist with meeting facilitation.

**Beginning**

Thank you all for coming today. We are going to start off with introductions....In the interest of time, I (or the timekeeper) will keep us on track so do not be offended if we have to move the discussion forward. It is important for everyone to hear all that is shared so please share your concerns/comments with the entire group. Parent and student (refer to them by name), your input is very important, please share your thoughts and concerns and ask questions as needed.

*When there is an interpreter: (Name the Interpreter) will be translating everything that is said in the meeting today. Please make your comments brief and clear (not too much jargon or idiomatic expressions) to help with the translation process.*

We are all here with the belief that students do well if they can. Our goal is to examine the learning environment, instruction, materials as well as the student’s strengths and needs in order to come up with a plan to help him/her be successful.

**Middle**

Let’s discuss the student’s strengths...what is going well for the student? What are the primary areas of concern? Drill down using any of the following statements: Can you give an example of that? What does that look like? What skills within reading/writing/math are missing? How does the student compare to the next lowest student, highest student, etc.?

Now let’s discuss specific strategies that can be implemented to address these concerns (use the SAT documentation of interventions chart). Fill out the first 5 columns.

**End**

We will implement these strategies for the next 6 weeks. If anyone has any problems with the strategies or questions, please call _______. We will meet on (specific date) or (at the beginning of specific month). At that time we will review the data collected and determine next steps. Thank you for your time and input.
Techniques to use as needed:

When someone is moving on to concerns when discussing strengths say:

“We are going to discuss concerns in a minute, please share any of the student’s strengths”

“I’m sorry I’ve got to stop you there, we are still discussing strengths right now”

When someone is talking for too long repeating the same things in different ways say:

“I understand that ____ is a concern, I’ve got that listed, let’s move on to ____”

“Sorry, I want to make sure we cover everything, I have noted your concern now we are discussing ____.”

When someone is discussing something that is not appropriate for the entire group say:

“I think that is a topic that should be discussed at another time with only the parent and ____ , ____ , etc.”

“That is an important issue to discuss but not at this time, let’s visit about that after the meeting.”

When a group member (parent or staff) goes on and on about a lot of unrelated issues say:

“I know you have a lot of concerns but we need to stay focused on the educational issues that we need to address”

“Sounds like there is a lot going on, can we meet afterward to talk about those things. For now we need to stay focused on the educational issues that can be addressed by the school staff”

When anyone engages in a side conversation ask (need to clarify if it’s for the group or for later):

“I noticed you all were discussing something (referring to the side talkers☺) should we add that to the notes?”

“Is there more information you want to share with the group or is that for later?”

If a meeting becomes negative, extremely contentious and NONPRODUCTIVE say:

“You know I think it would be better if we suspend the meeting for now, I will visit with (parent) and decide when/if we need to reschedule”

“Let’s stop the meeting right now; it will be more productive once we clarify a few issues. I will be in touch when/if we will meet again.”

Bottom Line: When facilitating a meeting, it is important to be direct with the group. Open and honest yet respectful communication among all parties is paramount to this process.