

November 28, 2017

Chelmsford, MA SEPAC Meeting Minutes; recorded and submitted by Laura Miller
CHS Library
6:30 PM

Board members present: Interim Co-Chairs Jen Bartleman and Donna Newcomb, Interim Recording Secretary Laura Miller
School Committee liaison, Dennis King
Director Student Services, Amy Matson

Sign-in sheet was provided and is on file.

Meeting called to order by Donna Newcomb @ 6:35 PM

Approval of October 24, 2017 Minutes
Donna motioned to accept the Minutes
Seconded. Minutes approved.

Panel Discussion Feedback:

Panel was an open discussion about kids with ASD, ADHD, etc. Parents were able to ask questions and get feedback. It was a helpful parent discussion. The group would like to see more workshops offered going forward.

Workshop Ideas:

Sib Shops: Laurie McCarron explained what Sib Shops is. Support for siblings of kids with special needs during daily routines, doctor's office visits, etc. Offered for siblings only. There is a session offered on January 19, 2018. Registration ends December 29, 2017.

IEP Page -by-Page workshop: Offered by Joe (?). Explains what the IEP should look like at each step.

Advocate Open Discussion/Q&A: Jen Bartleman

Overview of Chelmsford Special Education; Procedures in place, etc.

Teacher training on Special Education; expanding knowledge of teachers/paras who may not be trained in special needs. Not all paras are trained by the BCBA. There are 2 BCBA's in Chelmsford. Board Certified Behavioral Analyst. ABA training workshop is being suggested. Also mentioned is the lunch/recess aides being trained on special needs / disability awareness.

Mentoring workshop; high school students mentor younger kids

Going forward with SEPAC: Donna Newcomb

We want to think about ‘what do we want to see happen, what do we want to recommend to the School Committee’? She suggested Social Workers in the schools. They can provide support in classroom, mentoring programs, family therapy, empathy compassion training, special needs awareness, etc. There is a lot of support for the social work idea. Can we review all staff within the school district, so we have a starting point to know how to make recommendations to the School Committee?

Amy Reese said that every school has a Clinical Psychologist, which acts similarly to a Social Worker. Laura Miller asked Amy if there is a CP at CHIPS: Amy said there is not. The role is not being actively pursued to be filled at this time, as she says there is not a great need for a CP at the preschool level. Parents voiced their disagreement.

Surveys were discussed to get feedback from all parents, teachers, staff, etc. on town wide special education needs and strengths.

Donna discussed more details about the school budget timing. We want to make sure to get any suggestions in before the budget is finalized. We want to prioritize our ‘wishes’. What are our greatest areas of need that the SC should focus on? Amy Reese explained that one of the grants the District used to get will not be available this year, which will limit extra workshops or professional development programs.

Involve the Council of Schools – can they help with educating everyone / kids about special needs.

What is SuperFlex? It was a paper that came home with a student – part of the curriculum. It is not District wide. Each sheet has a villain that takes over your brain. Now they are teasing each other using names like “rock brain”. Parents says this is not productive for inclusion. To tie this into ‘going forward’, who decides the curriculum, and can we look at that?

Donna then reiterated that we need to stay focused on what we want to accomplish as a SEPAC Committee, the timeline and financial restrictions. Create a list of priorities to present to the School Committee at one of the upcoming meetings. A survey can be created to send out through ConnectEd to get a starting point for the SEPAC needs.

Grant question: are there grants we can go ask for? There may be private grants available; need to research. Suggested getting a sub-committee to explore SN grants for the schools.

Jen suggests that we have a leader/point person for different categories of disabilities where someone is more of an expert on.

Newsletter: Laurie volunteered to do a periodical newsletter for the SEPAC. Thank you Laurie!

Chelmsford Public Library: There is a new SEPAC section, formerly called SPED section. Books can be donated to the library if you have a good resource you want to share. The library can also order books for you to add to the section.

OOD services:

A parent (name withheld for privacy) came to the meeting with a concern/question about OOD transportation. She has one child OOD and when there was a multiple day power outage, her child's school was open, but Chelmsford was closed, so there was no transportation. There was also no communication from Trombly if the bus is cancelled or not. Amy responded: When Chelmsford cancels school, our busses will not run, meaning the OOD transportation is not provided. If there is a transportation issue, contact the bus company. If not satisfied, contact Amy Reese.

Nominations:

3 board positions are open:

Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer

Ali Barnes was nominated for and accepted the position of Chairman.

Laura Miller was nominated for and accepted the position of Secretary.

Jane Zhao nominated herself for Treasurer.

The nomination committee will create a ballot to be voted on at the January meeting. These positions will be in place for 1.5 years. The new elected board will then review by-laws to see if the timing of positions fits the SEPAC need.

Meeting called to adjourn by Donna Newcomb at 8:10 PM

