

September 26, 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

Non-board members: Director of Student Services, Amy Reese

Approximately 30 other people in attendance; sign in sheet to be filed

Meeting called to order by Donna Newcomb @ 6:40 PM

Welcome and discussion of SEPAC Packet (copies at front table for people to take)

(Paused for new arrivals; some attendees were in the Career Center, the original location of the meeting.)

2<sup>nd</sup> page of packet: MA State Law regarding SEPAC

3<sup>rd</sup> page of packet: Mission Statement

Donna emphasized that parents are an integral part of the IEP Team. Parents should feel comfortable asking questions at Team meetings.

We will follow Roberts Rules loosely.

Discussed the procedure for posting meetings, agendas and minutes.

SEPAC is bound by Open-Meeting laws.

Amy Reese is working with the school technology director to get a SEPAC link on the CPS webpage. The most recent set of Chelmsford SEPAC by-laws were proposed in 1998 and amended in 2007. There was an active SEPAC, but interest fell off. We will start with the most recent voted upon by-Laws and go forward from there.

Donna asked if anyone has any questions. No questions.

Amy Reese opened by talking about the Dept. Coordinated Review. There are 60 areas of special education compliance. In Sept the final report was issued which can be found on the Department of Education website. Chelmsford has 10 areas of partial implementation. There is a 20-day window for a corrective action plan to be written, due in October (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week), Amy was unsure of the exact date. Next steps are to have a plan initiated and accepted. Progress reports of compliance will follow. 6 parents were randomly asked to be interviewed by Amy Reese in March 2017.

Jen Bartleman introduced Laura Devita, founder and president of the non-profit group LionsARK. Laura hopes to have a high school student mentor program to help children with special needs / homework help, etc. She will work with SEPAC to coordinate with a January target date.

Special Ed Department contact sheet: SEPAC's email address is being established.

Meeting schedule: attendees agreed that the start time of future meetings will be 6:30pm.

Parent Input Survey: There were Parent Input Surveys that those in attendance had a chance to fill out.

School liaison volunteers: Each school will have 1 or more SEPAC liaisons. There is a sign-up sheet for any parents that want to volunteer.

Donna talked about the role of a liaison, they will communicate with school PTO's to get updates or info the parents/body of school needs to know. The liaison will also get the word out that SEPAC is getting up and running again, and will be a good opportunity for parents to get solutions to problems they may experience.

Upcoming committees: At the October meeting, we will appoint a nomination committee to coordinate an election for board members. Board will look at by-laws, review parent surveys, how can SEPAC best serve parents. Target date for elections will be January 2018.

Board members will be in place through the next year's elections in January 2019. (confirm date)

Motion by Peter Kelley to suspend the by-laws so elections can be held in January 2018. Seconded by Cara Dellaterra. Discussion: none. Donna moved to a vote: Raise of hand count; In favor, all. Opposed, none. Motion carries.

Jen reviewed the Special Education timeline process which is outlined in the packet.

Laurie McCarron asked, if a parent rejects the IEP, will the child still receive services? Amy Reese answered, parent can reject partial or fully. The last IEP would continue to be implemented until a new IEP is accepted.

Several parent questions about timing of receiving IEP, consent, contact turn-around time by teachers, team chairs, etc. Amy Reese said to contact the teacher, then the liaison, then team chair, then if your concern is not addressed to contact her. If a new report is submitted and the parent requests a meeting regarding an IEP, the team must meet within 10 days (or be offered to meet within 10 days). Can ask to reconvene the team at any time. A parent can request an evaluation at any time.

A parent spoke up about her experience. She wanted to reject a team decision to not offer services, but she was not told she could reject that decision. She felt railroaded. She wished there was someone or something in place for questions and resources. That is why she was at the meeting, so she can help other parents. Amy Reese said wants to discuss with this parent privately. Donna: "You have a lot of rights and we want to make sure you know what they are." Keep asking questions. Another parent asked about a Basic Rights workshop. Amy Reese said that is in the works. Date has not been set yet.

Another parent question: If you come from another district with a child on an IEP, is an entrance meeting needed? Amy Reese: not necessarily. Might be good to let the child settle in and then have a meeting with the Team after a few weeks. Donna said its best to have a meeting right away to make sure the current IEP works with Chelmsford's class timelines, etc.

Jen Bartlemen reviewed Wrights Law Boot Camp

Parent resources (in the packet).

Suggests a couple books about parent's rights, IEP's etc.

Amy Reese suggests "The Federation". Resources for parents – call center.  
Most special needs regulations come from IDEA, federal regulations. States must follow IDEA and can build on those regulations.

--End of Agenda--

Open forum:

Parent question: (Michele Saba) Will Amy Reese be at the meetings? Amy said she does not know, but she "can" be. She will not be running the meetings. Dennis King was then introduced. He is on the Chelmsford School Committee and will be the SEPAC liaison. Dennis will attend each SEPAC meeting.

Michele described her thought of how a good SEPAC meeting should be run. It should be for parents only where they can share grievances, concerns, etc. Donna said it is a great point. After the group gets going, it is not appropriate for her "Donna" to be in attendance. The elected board will make those decisions.

Donna explained SEPAC meetings are a public meeting. Anybody can attend.

Donna recognized Ali Barnes and Laurie McCarron regarding the FB parent support page. Ali Barnes said it is a private and closed group. Parents can ask questions confidentially. Support meetings are posted on that FB page.

Donna closed the meeting reminding everyone to sign up to be a liaison.

Donna motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Cheryl Kelley.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.