

SEPAC Meeting Notes January 23, 2018
Location: Chelmsford High School, Learning Commons, 2nd floor.

Board Members: Interim Co-Chairs Donna Newcomb and Jen Bartleman
School Committee Liaison: Dennis King
Director of Student Services: Amy Reese
Other Members: approx 16

SEPAC sign in sheet 1/23/18 Typed - Original Copy filed in Secretary SEPAC binder

Packet: Agenda, Nov. meeting minutes, prepared material for Jan. meeting

Handout: *"THE INSTITUTE BRIEF ICI" Advancing Parent-Professional Leadership: Effective Strategies for building the capacity of Parent Advisory Councils in Special Education*

Handout: *"Chelmsford's Free Agent TAP" (Team Action Plan) from APPLE Training 2017 (p. one) APPLE Training 2018 "welcome back" (p. two).*

***denotes amendment noted and made at 3/12/18 meeting**

Meeting Notes: Laurie McCarron
Meeting called to order - Donna Newcomb
Time: 6:07 p.m.

Agenda Item: listed in accordance to posted agenda sheet format

1. Approve minutes from Nov. 2017 meeting:

Members were asked to look over minutes, make any changes for correction.
Donna asked at this time for a volunteer to take minutes for the evening's meeting as a "substitute secretary". Laurie McCarron volunteered to take notes.

Correction to be made to Nov. minutes: Director of Student Services listed as Amy "Matson" - actual name Amy "Reese".

Motion to Approve Minutes request: Donna Newcomb - motion made.
Motion Seconded: Ali Barnes
Minutes Approved

2. Board Elections:

Donna gave a "quick recap" and "where we are at"; Sept. regarding Jan. elections. Oct./ Nov. Nomination Committee and Nominees. Current status - Ali Barnes is the nominated Chair. Two open positions for Board Members: Secretary & Treasurer. Previous nominated Secretary - Laura Miller has new time/work commitment conflict, unable to take position. No contact from Treasurer nominee Jane Zhao. Member discussion on options for open positions, transparency, group decisions; Motion to Nominate President. Nomination Committee Member Kendra Barbanti nominated Ali Barnes for President of the Chelmsford SEPAC. Vote by show of hands requested, 8 yes, 2 oppose, 1 abstain. Donna dissolved Nomination Committee, turned the meeting over to the elected SEPAC President for continuance of the agenda.

3. Board Member Introductions: Ali Barnes, SEPAC President (Chair)

Reason for interest: children with disabilities, parent(s) in need of direction, resources,

was told to go to local SEPAC, couldn't find one, created a Facebook group to help Chelmsford establish a SEPAC.

4. Vision - discussion

Ali met with Director of Student Services, Amy Reese, to collaborate a "working together" open communication regarding ongoing district topics:

Member discussion: staff changes, parent interviews, selected candidates for positions. Russell Hoyt, Preschool Coordinator, background in student services, Merrimack Valley and DESE, Amy Reese stated "Russell loves Preschool and is a great addition to Chelmsford, we are fully staffed and in good shape".

Ali Barnes and Member discussion: SEPAC structure, in district trainings, reaching out to Town Clerk. Voting in your district, share ideas, Open Meeting Laws and where to find the balance. Inclusive, transparency for everyone to join SEPAC. School liaisons communications with SEPAC/PTO: Giving back to PTO, hosting events together offering SEPAC booth/space/therapy dogs. Heritage Festival (next week). Liaison Question: "Who would manage the event(s)? What can 'we' talk about/not talk about?" Ali to work on outreach and details for specific questions: if there is anything to acknowledge for an agenda item contact her.

SEPAC structure - proposed 2017-2018 table introduced (*packet*). Feedback requested. Open House for 2018-2019 discussion having SEPAC set-up, liaisons possibly representing for another school if parent liaison has commitment. Time/Day Elementary Open Houses same day? Spring Orientation Kindergarten and Registration parents/caregivers - having SEPAC represented/information available. CHIPS Open House connecting E.I. (Early Intervention) to give SEPAC info.

Harrington Liaison discussion "Inclusion in Classroom". How to coordinate next steps with school/PTO. White Board ideas, improving people's knowledge of special needs/special ed is needed. Amy discussed Inclusion at Elementary Level. Donna suggested special ed liaisons and teachers come to meetings, discuss inclusion, how to use resources in the building. Discussion on SEPAC liaison(s) working with Principal/PTO President. Suggestion for PowerPoint presentation and coordinated efforts, protocols. Important that everyone have same info.

5. Actions for the 2017-2018 school year - discussion

Basic Rights Workshop - Ali Barnes: Workshop needs to be re-scheduled based on discussion with Amy Reese (decisions made for best intentions). FCSN (Federation Children Special Needs) was suggested recommendation for Basic Rights Workshop as parents may be "unfairly solicited" by an outside presenter. Question asked: "Is there a Basic Rights currently scheduled?" Answer: "no". Question: "When should one be scheduled?" Answer "ASAP".

Suggestion to have one in March through the FCSN. Ali will reach out to Leslie M. Leslie (MassPAC), preference for SEPAC meeting night or different night asked. "Different night" reply. Concern that March is a big concert time of year. Possible to offer Webinar of Basic Rights for those unable to attend? Other workshops and info in packet.

A.P.P.L.E. Training in May - (*TAP packet/Institute Brief*). Ali Barnes explained 4 parents can attend, 2 already interested. Training is 2 full days. Deadline to register. Amy Reese hasn't met with Superintendent about scheduling. Ali asked if there was anything we could do to help the process along, worth the while reading about, asked if other parents want to attend to contact her.

Visions of Community (VOC) held by FCSN in March: (*Packet for detail*). One person

from a MassPAC membership district may attend for no cost, lottery suggested for those interested. Session details in packet. Jen Bartleman asked if Ali has received any e-mails regarding persons wanting to attend. Ali did not receive personal e-mails but does not have access to SEPAC e-mail yet. Three people interested to date. Lottery system can be organized, info for parents in school Newsletter/Bulletin - no later than Feb. 7th for lottery slot.

Website creation: Discussion. Needs to be public, all parents to have access. Facebook page is exclusive. Yahoo group? Amy Reese looking into removing Yahoo link on Chelmsford Public School (CPS) website. Suggestions: link to SEPAC website (once created) on CPS website for all parents to access. Questions during discussion: cost? companies? Discussion on Social Media, having a webpage vs. social media page/both. Ali: Help with maintaining webpage for SEPAC volunteers? Cara Dellaterra will help maintain when able. Next meeting to bring back more info. Facebook Rules: discussion (*packet for link and rule suggestion*). Link to Chelmsford Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2024749314427750/> Ethical standing/blocked members regarding concerning posts. Jen Bartleman mentioned parent feedback she received on posts - specific sounding board/venting. Ali suggested member commenting be allowed only by Admins of page. Amy asked if any recent concerning posts were made: Answer reply, no. Ali will redirect any personal questions/info made from members. Guidelines can be pinned to top of page. Changes to be made to page.

By-Laws: discussion - (*packet - current by-laws*)

Ali Barnes revision vs. amending. SEPAC By-Laws mentioned at School Committee last year.

Current discussion: "Our By-Laws are old, structure is great". Not too detailed gives flexibility for SEPAC to update as needed. 2 options: SubCommittee to form and amend By-Laws - or add/update By-Laws at a business meeting. Opinions asked for. Donna Newcomb suggested a Committee be put in place 1 time a year to work on and update. Suggestion of changing titles. Ali asked if anyone is interested in the Subcommittee, a sign up sheet to be made available.

6. School Committee Presentation Prep - (*packet - summary statement*)

Ali Barnes reached out to other SEPACs. Presentation for introductions/interests to be shared with School Committee, time concern in regard to addressing a detail budget for SEPAC's next appearance at School Committee meeting. Donna Newcomb, Dennis King, Ali Barnes, Amy Reese discussion: budget summary, what to consider having in place for next year, budget not "sealed in stone" and people can reach out to the School Committee. Concern and topics addressed: shifted structure in staff, subgroups, looking at Elementary level/social emotional. Amy stated full time psychologists in each elementary, Program Coordinator looking at supports, re-naming Student Assistance Program to have a better acronym. Visiting different districts (including Billerica, Groton-Dunstable, Lowell), tour programs, BCBA's visiting. Will take time to "do it right". Special Ed not be left out of the budget, what the time-line will look like. Amy stated our Superintendent understands Special Ed and supports, members agreed and commented "Dr. Lang has made himself available and is open to speak where he sees special ed headed".

Parent questions on Town Manager: discussion related to town meeting budget, misinformation about a quote of 70 or 74% of budget goes to schools, 46.7 % was the

actual. Parents attending town meetings is needed and important. Town Reps needed, long range vision discussed: Parent discussion continued on district needs, modulars, parking lots and budget process between Donna, Amy, Dennis King and parents - on finance committee, Hurricane in Puerto Rico, parent questions/concerns - questions to be addressed to Kelly Rogers and Dr. Hirsch regarding educational piece, health care etc... Ali on sharing information, awareness and budget focus important and can be discussed as needed.

School calendar discussion: Member open discussion of issues with half days, service providers, pullout services, different grades/different schedules. Difficulty in coordinating schedules - Cara Dellaterra works with a lot of districts in planning and coordinating, offered her perspective of flipping/input on difficulty of rescheduling school calendars.

7. Needs Assessment Survey - discussion

Ali Barnes: Point of survey is "wish list" listening to parent input/feedback. Donna Newcomb, Jen Bartleman Amy Reese explained confusion of survey purpose - the survey discussed last meeting was to get school budget input/what's important in special ed budget. Clarification needed.

8. New items to be discussed at February meeting:

Discussion - Ali Barnes asked about MCAS with Jen Bartleman; undecided, will get back with calendar schedule at another time. Amy, Donna, Jen, Ali discussion: Beth Rappoli (not present) started a group in Chelmsford on Dyslexia. *Beth and her child testified at State House for Pending Dyslexia legislation. Importance of screening for Dyslexia in Kindergarten, subtests. Support Beth from SEPAC recommended. Follow up with Beth for Reading and Dyslexia Workshops/Resources for future meetings.

9. Other business

Donna Newcomb stated SEPAC needs a Secretary and Treasurer. These positions are to be filled. Options discussed for having temporary/interim Sec. and Treas. until May elections. Give parents a chance to "try" the position before committing to a full term. This to be covered at next meeting.

Parent discussion, Report Cards: John Salmon, Amy Reese, Donna Newcomb - John asked if any parent got report cards, how are teachers grading (DV, meaning developing). Concerns of privacy with special ed services/plans discussed. Questions included based on standard or modified? Behavioral? "Asterisk" marking concern. Amy Reese will be looking into those questions/concerns right away. Follow up discussion. Donna Newcomb's last meeting. Donna thanked the SEPAC for their great resources, valuable insight, level of involvement. Advocating for what is best for our children. Donna states working with the SEPAC has been a pleasure and she learned a lot. Erin Tallent thanked Jen Bartleman for her hard work and involvement with the SEPAC.

Motion to Adjourn: Kendra Barbanti

Motion Seconded: Shannon Manning

SEPAC Meeting Adjourned at 8:04 p.m.