

SEPAC Meeting Minutes March 27, 2018  
Location: Chelmsford High School, Learning Commons

Board Members Present: 4

Ali Barnes, Co-Chair

Kristen Eriksen, Co-Chair

Laurie McCarron, Secretary

Bethany Rappoli, Treasurer

Director of Student Services: Amy Reese - Present

School Committee Liaison: Dennis King - Not Present

Other Members: approx 13 Present

SEPAC sign in sheet typed - original copy filed in Secretary SEPAC binder

**Handout:** Agenda, SEPAC Presentation for School Committee Draft Outline

**Handout:** Meeting Minutes 3/12

\*denotes amendments made at 4/24 meeting

**Handouts:** AANE Packet (from guest speaker)

**Handouts:** On table - *Therapy Search Checklist; Insurance Support Services; Family Resource Centers; Annotated Massachusetts Resources List; Adaptive Sports; Understanding Basic Rights in Special Education*

Meeting Called to order by Ali Barnes

Time: 6:35

Ali asked members that speak to please state name for meeting minutes. Ali mentioned blank note cards available for questions that parents/members if they want to submit/ask a question to Amy Reese.

**Agenda Item: listed in accordance to posted agenda sheet format**

**1. Approve minutes from March 12, 2018 Meeting:**

Members were asked to look over minutes, corrections to make were noted by Ali regarding an amendment needed for the date \*change from 3/13 to 3/12; \*add location of meeting CAREER CENTER CHS; Other amendments include: under 4. Liaison Update C, Center liaison: "new PTO chair" misprint - amend to SEPAC has a new Chair; under D, Harrington liaison, Amend from Principal search to Pickup/Drop off; under 2. Good News: omit "marching in Boston".

UPDATE Amended on the SEPAC FB Page, mentioned at meeting 3/12 not mentioned at meeting 3/27: Under 5. Old Business: E, Open Meeting Law Training in Reading, Ma. is on Thursday, April 19, 2018 from 5:30p-7:30p more details on mass.gov website.

Motion to Approve Minutes: Kendra Barbanti

Motion Seconded: Cara Dellaterra

Minutes Approved \*with amendments

**2. Liaison Update**

Ali addressed to members that John Salmon has stepped down from the liaison position at Harrington Elementary School.

CHIPS: Heather Sexton not present. Teacher from CHIPS (name not given) spoke about how CHIPS is reaching out for enrollment. Currently enrolling new students. Brief discussion from members and Amy Reese about a position regarding Social Emotional Staff member. Amy commented that the position will be for next year, it is not posted yet, it is a part-time, contracted position.

BYAM: Kendra talked about the Walk-a-thon on May 5th. Brief discussion from Kendra and members about a Health Tent, a SEPAC area, inside the school. A member mentioned this event was "the best event" due to safety and location; road is blocked off.

CENTER: Laurie McCarron - No updates since last SEPAC meeting on 3/12, PTO's next meeting is 4/4. Laurie asked if there were any updates that SEPAC would like to add for Center PTO meeting. Ali responded that will come later in the meeting (note: Laurie left meeting at 8:00 to attend anxiety meeting held in PAC).

HARRINGTON: Jamie Dillon - No update since last SEPAC meeting on 3/12. Upcoming PTO meeting Thursday.

PARKER: Beth Rappoli - No updates from last SEPAC meeting on 3/12.

HIGH SCHOOL: Beth Morrill not present. No updates from CHS

Questions? None

### **3. Guest Speaker: Michele Cantera, AANE**

Michele introduced herself as an alumna of CHS and precious resident of Chelmsford. Michele also ran the Chelmsford SEPAC years ago. Michele's son Joseph has a diagnosis of autism, he also graduated CHS and in 2008 started working with AANE. AANE stands for Asperger/Autism Network. The Presentation included topics listed in the slide-show handout: Who We Serve and What We Do; Our Focus, Our Perspective, The Aspergers Challenge, What we do: Child & Teens, What we do: Adult Services, Life Management Assistance Program (LifeMAP), Additional Services for Adults and links with more information. Some of the highlights noted from Michele's presentation included Working with parents that have kids on the spectrum, coaching parents on this critical path and offering IEP reviews to understand what the student needs, using the appropriate language and crafting a "win/win" situation.

Labels, Syndrome and Perspective was also part of the talk, empowering people to understand their challenge and get to know their strengths. A question often asked by parents is "will it ever go away?". Michele answered the often asked question with "No" and how to do the "balancing act" of regulating executive functioning, emotions and social communication with support and learned methods to be one's "own self-advocate".

Michele spoke of the webinars offered online, discussion forums, Parent Support Groups (for tweens, teens, tween girls etc...) more on LifeMAP and how the Coaching Program is offered through SKYPE for clients (a client in Brazil) to reach various locations. Couples Coaching for those with a partner either neuro-typical or on the spectrum. A Forms Clinic which is a discreet service to help with SSI, DDS and Transition Planning. There will be a conference on April 7th, 2018 on Self Esteem Resilience in Watertown, Ma. Details in Handout. For parents interested in Parent Coaching/IEP the cost is \$125 an hour. AANE received a Grant that include Middlesex County residents (and a few other counties) to help with the cost. AANE is based in Greater Boston and New England, they have clients and approx 70 coaches from various places throughout the country. They offer trainings for educators for teaching learning styles related to anxiety.

Questions?

Member question about being on a wait list for ABA, child doesn't qualify for services through school, can't be on more than one waiting list. Michele suggested that parent call "Stephanie Lou (sp?)".

LifeMAP does not take "young children"? This was unclear. Michele mentioned two Webinars

- Parenting without Panic

- Parenting without Power

More Webinars available that offer tools and techniques to parents. A Mom's Night Out is offered in Newton, click on "Events Page". Laura Perez does presentation in Spanish. Michele's contact info is michele.cantara@aane.org

SEPAC members thanked Michele for her presentation.

#### **4. Q&A with Amy Reese, Director of Student Services**

Ali opened this part of the meeting with previous questions that SEPAC parents/members had regarding reading programs, reading plans, how scheduling during IEP/504 meetings are determined and how the process works along with Open House questions/comments/concerns/suggestions for Special Ed Parents - including where to find Special Ed staff (speech/ot/therapists) during open house. Questions were met with discussion from Amy Reese and participants of the meeting.

Q. How scheduling IEP/504 is determined in the district - How does the process work?

A. Every school has a meeting day. Ex. Harrington Mondays, Byam Tuesdays etc... This is so schools and staff that go between schools can plan ahead. Discussion Followed.

Q. What is the "End of Meeting Summary?"

A. A form is given at the end of an IEP (when it is given was unclear, 1 week? 2 weeks?). The form is called "Team Meeting Summary Form". Goals are outlined. Team discussion summary. The Team does not provide "Team Meeting Notes" after an IEP meeting. This answer was unclear for a specific answer to be noted.

Q. Open House, what that looks like for Special Ed Parents...Do you know of any current plans?

A. Open House happens usually on the same night for every Elementary School in the district. Every Staff member is required to be there. Related Service Providers are there.

Q related: If SEPAC wants to be more involved, how can we help this set-up?

Points Made that Parents have to go and find special ed staff during open house - maybe having a "Point Parents can find...". In depth discussion with members on this topic. OT is not at every open house. One speech splits time 1/2 and 1/2 between schools. Amy Reese suggested sending an e-mail to the particular staff member. Parents "don't know where the special ed rooms are located". Teacher feedback - that special ed staff wait in their rooms for parents, sometimes with no visitors. Parents and members wanted to know how to be ProActive. Should the SEPAC Liaisons have a part in reaching out to the schools? Should there be a separate open house? Amy reiterated second open house may be tricky to setup as staff are only required to work certain hours. Discussion on how to be ProActive continued with members. Center School has bulletin "meet the teachers/staff". Byam, pictures. Meet and Greet arranged? Name with face. Gets tougher at middle/high school to know staff. Transition, co-herts, tricky scheduling...Ali asked "how does it work?" Amy answered, "we get creative and make it work".

Q. What does the program development look like for South Row (Social Emotional, on the budget for next school year).

A. Looking confident to be at South Row. Byam and Center already have specialized programs. School psychologists at every elementary school. Amy talked about the Updated Leadership Project, the Subgroup she is on working with others, visited 8 different programs in 8 communities. Pertinent info gathered. Planning meeting to talk about/name program. It will be a program through the IEP process. Amy mentioned how to know when someone is transitioning out of the program being a discussion "stage it is in now". Ali asked "When?" Amy reiterated that Dr. Lang has put funds aside for it. They will be starting small, could change - working through that and including PBIS. Discussion went further to the new staff person a Chips is great at Social Emotional. Hopes to help pre-school to kindergarten transition. SEL standards - Jason Fredett (sp) and training to help the transition process

were mentioned. This part of the discussion was unclear. Multiple folks speaking about how social levels start with little ones, special ed process, case by case, tiered intervention...

Q. Baseline on Social Emotional Needs?

A. Based on Team decision team comes together to decide in determining eligibility. Amy stated that DESE has specific disabilities listed (on website?).

A Follow-Up Discussion about the asterisk on the report cards was discussed. Amy mentioned she may not be the best one to answer "that", but did look into the matter greatly - consulting the special ed attorney, OCR and DESE. It took her a while to research this. Vetted through standard based report cards - OCR letter (09?) is "a good document for questions" regarding this concern - why it is "okay". Report cards are not a public doc, not a "transcript", they are more of a progress report between the parents and school. Transcripts are only at HS level, they are shared w/colleges/organizations. Member discussion on this matter included questions

Q. Who determines that the asterisk go on the report card?

A. Collaboration of Team/Teacher - could be anyone of them, special ed teacher

Q. What's the purpose?

A. Grades, what they mean - calls for modification "grade typical" - Conversation continued back and forth/including discussion and questions/concerns for Sports Teams, marital arts or private schools needing report cards - posted public - on bulletin boards - Amy said that is "parent's choice to do so". Questions to have asterisk removed? "Good Question". ? unclear answer. Ali mentioned she e-mailed teacher over a concern, teacher removed the concerning (mark/words?). Amy stated that after researching, according to OCR, it was not violating any rights.

Q. Principals attending IEP meetings - when do they? when don't they?

A. They attend when ever they can, as many as they can especially if there is an issue or a problem. Depending on where Principal needs to be in the building at the time. Parent can request (or not request - if that were ever an issue) for the Principal to attend meeting. Asst. Principal may also attend - in place of Principal. If there are any specific cases, parent may reach out to Amy about it.

Any other Questions, contact Amy, Kristen or Ali.

At this time, Laurie McCarron asked permission to leave the meeting to attend another ongoing meeting/workshop at the HS regarding Anxiety. Beth Rappoli offered to take over minutes for the meeting. A quick discussion about possibly having SEPAC meetings on Wednesdays next year (instead of Tuesdays) so as not to conflict w/school committee meetings.

**(END OF MINUTES NOTED FROM LAURIE McCARRON, INSERT MINUTES FROM BETH RAPPOLI)**

## **Q&A with Amy Reese (Summary)**

Regarding reading programs, Amy noted that new Gen Ed reading programs had been brought into the District. She noted that educators in the early grades have received training in LiPS. There are special ed staff trained in RAVE-O, Wilson and Orton Gillingham at every school. In addition, Language Live! is now available in the Middle and High Schools. In addition to helping with encoding and decoding skills, Language Live! incorporates comprehension and writing skills.

In response to a parent questions regarding procedures for IEP meetings, Amy noted that parents should receive adequate notice of meeting dates. At the conclusion of the team meeting, parents should receive a "Meeting Summary" document that should note the goals and services agreed during the meeting. If a summary is not provided, the team should work to deliver the IEP to the parents within a week; otherwise 2 weeks is the standard.

In response to a parent question regarding scheduling, Amy noted that they are working to prioritize

specific needs for cohorts of students with similar needs first and to build the remainder of the schedule around these needs.

In response to a parent question, Amy noted that South Row will host the new program for students with behavioral needs and noted that a team has been visiting similar programs in other communities.

### **Old Business**

School Committee meetings will be held on the 4th Tuesday of the month.

The SEPAC Bylaws Subcommittee is looking for feedback from the school liaisons.

The SEPAC School Committee Presentation Subcommittee is working to bring a draft presentation to the April SEPAC meeting.

A Basic Rights workshop was held on March 15, 2018. The presenter brought a resource flyer (see [Stepinc.us](http://Stepinc.us)).

Beth Rappoli noted that an outside speaker has been secured for a presentation on learning to read and reading goals. Nancy Duggan, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Decoding Dyslexia Massachusetts and Member of the Advisory Group to the International Foundation for Effective Reading Instruction, will present on May 2, 2018 from 6:30-8:30 in the McCarthy Conference Room of the Chelmsford Public Library.

Kristen Eriksen provided a brief update from the Visions of Community Training through the Federation of Children with Special Needs. She felt the training was worthwhile. While she was there, she learned about various local resources, including adaptive sports programs.

Although an update on there was no update on the ALEC first responder training, a parent who teaches in another District spoke of a recent extended shelter in place at the High School he teaches at. It was noted that teachers who had students requiring movement breaks had significant difficulty. It was recommended to have a protocol in place for these students and to proactively identify the students with the greatest needs.

It was noted that SEPAC will be hosting an event at the Chelmsford Public Library on April 22, 2018 from 2:00-4:00 called Lending a Hand. The children will be creating a piece of artwork to hang by the SEPAC section of the Children's room in the library.

### **\*Other Business**

Parent raised concerns about recess being taken away as a punishment.

\*Motion to adjourn 8:30 by Kendra, seconded by Cara.