

SEPAC Meeting Minutes November 6, 2019

Location: Chelmsford Public Library

McCarthy Room

Board

Ali Barnes, Co-Chair - Present

Kristen Eriksen, Co-Chair - Present

Laurie McCarron, Secretary - not present

Treasurer, Vyas Sanzgiri - not present

District

Amy Reese, Director of Special Education - Not Present

Donna Newcomb, School Committee Liaison - Present

Members

Attendees Present: 10

Co-Chair Ali Barnes calls meeting

Start: 6:18 p.m.

Agenda Item

Ali calls meeting to order and makes a statement that the purpose of this meeting is to allow the public to provide input to the CSEPAC. CSEPAC planned to hold more workshops this year and reduce the number of meetings so that parents can get support and more information. In order to ensure that we provide adequate forum for public input, we will host public input prior to November and March workshops.

Attendees are welcome to speak openly during public input. There is a written form for public input. We ask that everyone complete one, even if you speak openly. It helps us to quantify the topics that are bringing people to our meetings and to then plan for follow up on those topics, whether it be advising the district or planning workshops.

1. Public Input

Mary Ellen Forty - concern is how can we better connect with families? Went to presentation by federation. Parents asked a lot of great questions who seemed to know the process. How can we get the information to parents that aren't attending events? What are main points that can be shared when speaking with parents? How do we reach non-English speaking families?

Response: Kristen - that is a recurring issue on many issues. Will be a frequent topic.

The CPS website is being updated and may include more information for parents.

Response: Ali - hand out brochure and direct parents towards FCSN workshop

Response: Donna - It is a lot of information. There are team summary forms. We could work on developing a form "what is the next step?" "who to contact if you have a question" "in this school year, you can reconvene team at any time. You can call/email with question" include what the next meetings or data collection that will be done. Understanding the IEP is very complicated.

Professionals are better at reading it. - Maybe "A questions to ask before you leave the meeting" could be created by SEPAC as a resource for parents.

Response: Jason Fredette - Maybe it is something that should be prepared before meeting? Emotions can affect communication

Response: parent attendee - Has been doing this for years, had 90 minute meeting today, and now still has 100's of questions. If someone could come out with "what you should ask" for each child, that would be more appropriate because it is an individualized plan. It would be different for each child. Most parents don't even know that they can get reports 2 days before the meeting. It took 3 ½ hours to read through it, had to go through it twice because it was so emotional to get through it and try to understand what it says. Then the meeting is only 60 minutes. You can't get through everything in that time. The parent felt like the teachers didn't even get enough time to present at the meeting.

Response: Donna Newcomb - You don't have to end the meeting, you can ask to reconvene.

Response: parents stated that it would annoy the team

Response: Donna - You have a big seat, if not the biggest seat at the table. You know your child best.

Response: parent - include [on an informational sheet]"You have the right to.... Ask for more time. Etc. etc."

Response: parent - Thinking what is helpful going into these meetings as a parent "What questions do I need to ask going in?" is difficult even though. I'm well versed, should be asking about what the assessments are, what is that based on, what was the communication of progress since the last meeting. Tell parents it is ok to ask the teachers "What are your biggest concerns for my child" before you go to the iep meeting.

Response: Elizabeth Dolan - Not everything is about that just one meeting, if there is a parent that has more questions, they can call or make a meeting to sit and talk about it more. Sometimes people feel like it has to happen at annual meeting, but you can schedule more meetings. It is a team of teachers, parents, administrators. Would welcome meeting with a parent at any time.

Response: Fredette - It would be important to know that the parent know that it would not change anything on the iep, unless it was a team meeting.

Response: Donna - It is ok to ask questions, need clarification from the team.

Response: Fredette - clarify who to contact for which thing, previous district had a detailed list so you know who would be the correct person for your question. Stated that when the team chair says "please contact us if you have additional questions or concerns, they really mean that."

Response: Kristen - maybe there could be a script for the team to go over with parents before the meeting starts.

2. Announcements -

The next CSEPAC meeting date is Thursday January 28 at 7pm at CHS.

The next workshop is Effective Communication presented by FCSN on Wednesday December 11 at 645pm at CHS.

Please stay for this evenings presentation by CHS Administrators on the subject of Integrated Classrooms, beginning at 7pm.

Close 6:48pm