

## SEPAC Meeting Minutes Feb 28, 2019

Location: Chelmsford High School

**Board** Ali Barnes, Co-Chair - Present Kristen Eriksen,  
Co-Chair - Present Jane Zhao, Treasurer - Present  
**District** Amy Reese, Director of Special Education -  
Present Donna Newcomb, School Committee Liaison  
- Present **Members** Attendees Present: 12

### Handouts:

Meeting minutes from 1/24/19 and 1/26/19 Multiple  
handouts from presenter Nancy Collier

Meeting called to order by Ali Barnes at 7:07 p.m.

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

1. **Review and approve minutes of meetings dated 1/24/19 (regular meeting) and 1/26/19 (subcommittee meeting):** After review, several corrections were suggested. Motion to accept minutes for 1/24 by KB, seconded by CD. Motion to accept minutes for 1/26 by KE seconded by AB
2. **Parent liaison appointment:** Jaimie Dillon has offered to be liaison for Harrington, so was appointed to same. Thank you Jaimie.
3. **Public Input:** Ali asked the members if they had any specific questions regarding the agenda items. None presented.
4. **Liaison Reports:** CHIPS: Mary Ellen Forty and Hiram P shared info about SEPAC at latest PTO meeting. Updated the SEPAC members that one parent was unaware. We plan to continue to promote SEPAC with all our events, and at open house. Byam: KB reported that SEPAC provided the Zen Den at the sweatheart dance. Center: Liaison not present, South Row: Donna - PTO meeting next Monday McCarthy: Volunteer Liaison position open Parker: Volunteer Liaison position open Pride run is June 9th, plan to offer Zen Den. High School: No updates
5. **Workshop Coordinator Update:** Amy D highlighted the two upcoming Workshops being hosted by the SEPAC. April 4, Executive Functioning at the Byam School Cafe from 7-8:30pm, (co-hosted with Maynard SEPAC has a lot of interest, which is why the venue was changed) and May 1, 504 Plans at the Chelmsford Public Library, McCarthy Room from 6:45 - 8:45pm. Kristen reminded members that free babysitting is offered for all SEPAC meetings and possibly for the SEPAC workshops. Interested members can contact SEPAC or [Murphyj@chelmsford.k12.ma.us](mailto:Murphyj@chelmsford.k12.ma.us). Guidance counsellors at Byam have offered to do a workshop re anxiety, but consensus is to table this until next year, since we already have a lot scheduled. Also will consider a panel q and a with staff for next year (principals, other staff)

Amy Domow plans to continue as workshop coordinator! Thank you! She hopes to get all workshops for next year scheduled by September.

**6. Special Guest: Nancy Collier: Family Support Specialist: Behavioral and Mental Health Services**

Nancy explained the evolution of her agency and position at the Parent Professional Advocacy League. Provided many handouts re support groups, brain development, the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative, insurance changes that improve coverage for Mental Health services, MassHealth Common health insurance benefits, and resources from PPAL. All are available by contacting a Chelmsford SEPAC member.

**7. School Committee Report:** Donna updated the SEPAC that the SC is working on budgets and contract negotiations. She detailed the changes re staffing, adding 2 asst. Principals, 1 new SPED chairperson. Many fees are being decreased. The budget still has to go to Town meeting for vote.

Donna discussed that Dr Lang is looking closely at class sizes, classes need to be supported with enough staff. Donna feels that school committee needs to hear concerns and issues directly from parents. Long discussion re finding a common language to use so parents don't have to have such a battle, but also that parents need to understand the obligations of the school system for FAPE. Long discussion ensued about IEP process. Some issues brought up were: It is hard to know who is "on your side and who is against it" when you go to an IEP or 504 meeting, the Sped team is the final Y or N, Is there a standard protocol for IEP meetings: answer was yes and no. This is difficult for parents to handle. One parent stated that growth is never addressed, and plotting progress does not seem to be standardized. Many stated that they are not hitting the time frames for IEP timeline.

Suggestion was to create a meeting flow chart to address all areas, that would be better than the Parents rights brochure.

**8. Special Education Report: No new updates**

**9. Parent Support Group Update: The update will be given at the April SEPAC meeting**

**10. Old Business:** Volunteers are needed for the Zen Den on 5.4 at BSA Walk-a-Thon and 6/9 Parker Pride Run. Visions of Community presented by Federation for Children with Special Needs is 3/9/19. Last day to sign up is 3/5/19. Does anyone want to plan a meet up for lunch at the conference?

School Committee Presentation Subcommittee to meet at end of this meeting to review goals and concerns and recommendations.

**11. New Business:** Laurie was planning to discuss Teacher Awards Program and SEPAC awareness, but she was unable to attend meeting.

**12. New Items Expected for March:** Nomination Announcements - ALEC Training update, discussion re School Committee presentation.

Ali called the meeting to a close at 9:28 p.m.