

## **SEPAC Meeting Minutes October 24, 2019**

Location: Chelmsford High School  
Learning Commons, located on Floor 3

### **Board**

Ali Barnes, Co-Chair - Present  
Kristen Eriksen, Co-Chair - Present  
Laurie McCarron, Secretary - Present  
Vyas Sanzgiri, Treasurer - Present

### **District**

Amy Reese, Director of Special Education - Not Present  
Donna Newcomb, School Committee Liaison - Not Present

### **Members**

Attendees Present: 10+ (late attendees 1)

**Handouts:** added to SEPAC Binder

Start: 7:02 p

### **Agenda Item**

#### **1. Review and Approve Minutes from October 3, 2019**

Recommendations for amendments asked, none made. Motion to accept. Motion 2nd. Vote: Unanimous.

#### **2. Special Guest: Donna Goreman, Presentation on **Conscious Discipline****

Donna introduced herself to the Members: Asked the members if they have ever heard of Conscious Discipline then went to explain what it is and how she got involved. Donna worked for 8 years at Anne Sullivan, Early Intervention and at the Goddard School in Westford. She is the mom of a 12 year old. Donna does teacher trainings and advocacy support for Conscious Discipline (C.D.) Donna's presentation included...C.D. Core: how it comes from a place of connection vs. control. It starts with Connection. 3 parts of brain that get triggered: brain stem, flight or flight. Mid Brain, emotional state to make a decision. Higher level part. "Suppress into primal state of function. Hand gestures. Primal, Alert, Emotional. Ideally to be "here". "only model what we are giving them". "kids cannot learn when they are in that state" can only learn when they are..."here". Ready to try, ready to learn, Fearful of things, cannot learn. Started using CD in Westford. Sensory process (may trigger control from professionals). Place of connecting is CD. "help me understand" one of Donna's fav phrase. If school system would adopt this, this would be a place to start. Choice to react in a situation. Time is more open based on choice to react. Books on CD. Longer process: to integrate in school system: high 5's and morning greeting is part of CD. "need touch" physical touch is needed...child that doesn't want to be touched...eye contact. find your way to let them know you are there. "here when you're ready". Being present in that moment with that child is important to a child to help regulate...child learns how to articulate what they need. Teaching correct emotional vocab. More emotions than "happy sad or mad" identify those emotions early on so they have accuracy. Questions: Comments: "Is what you're doing right now working?" "Try it"

Q. How do you promote in school? A. to get into school system, going to need a leader who is passionate and committed. Someone to propose. Think of CD as a language, the more you do it, the more fluid it becomes. It's their "first language". Integrated Pre-School. Private pre-schools to help build foundation. Give school system time to learn as you go. Ground work and builds from there.

What are other strategies? A. Connection piece. Starting w/a connection. What ever works. It can be anything, intention: I am here, I am present and I'm glad that you are here. Gave examples about situations where parents/kids don't know what to do, how to resolve. Acknowledging emotions. Taking a

deep breath, getting to breath. Problem Solve. Even children who do everything “right” internalize. Beat themselves up. What you say to kids becomes their internal voice.

Note: “next year will be harder” - middle school, high school, college. Undoing what told. Can be threatening. Scared/Worried they are on another level. Foster parent community: Parent: trauma, “trust based relational intervention TBRI”. “The Connected Child”. These kids in heightened state: “4am brain”. “hear a rustle in bushes”. constantly terrified. getting public schools to recognize this. Q. How does it work at HS level? Not allowed to touch kids: frowned upon. A. If touch is unavailable: eye contact and presence. Knowing someone is there. Q. how long has this been around? (methodology) A. 20 years approx. 3-4 years ago when speaker when to conference for C.D. consciousdiscipline.com Print Book “Conscience Discipline” Dr. Becky Bailey.

### 3. Public Input: Public comment on general matters related to special education

Introduce Meggie “Co-Sec special guest” at CSEPAC. “MeggaStar”, “Meggnificent”.

Ali: All parents able to provide input, quantify concerns/topics: keeping track by filling out Public Input Sheet Public Input Record.

Ali read: “You are Not Alone” by Alison Barnes.

Open floor to Public Input:

Kathy Healy Norton: Chair of SEPAC in Westford, entering in 11th year. Daughter Meggie here tonight. The Coalition for SEPAC Awareness just started, Laurie M. Alicia and Kathy working for last 2 years for SEPAC Awareness, helping parents connect w/SEPAC and getting one started. Wrap initiatives up. MA chapter, hoping other Chapters. SEPAC BOR: SEPAC Awareness month: another initiative. elevate to State level: Alicia co-authored a Bill at State House now, allow non-voting seat on S.C. A Voice at the Table, modeled after Student having voice at table. Working on Networking SEPAC leadership with PAC-2-PAC, Coaching parents to help launch SEPAC in their town. Through Alicia working with Mass with S.C. (currently no SC policy with formation of SEPAC w/district) they have policies for everything....try to establish policies for the SEPAC. If there is a district that wants to form one, what does that look like, for the parents and the district. Initiate: APRIL hosting a SEPAC Day on the Hill (date TBD)- Statewide event with the importance to bring parents together for formal Celebration at State House, meet w/their Legislators. Web site SEPACawarenessma.com : Feel free to reach out to Kathy, Alicia or Laurie. Q. from Ali: Are there any districts that have adopted the BOR yet? Westford SEPAC adopted the BOR, then brought before the SC, they have it under review, currently.

Parent Q. Laurie Grant: End school year 5th grade. Anyone have a concern that they switch special ed teachers. Every year having to explain disability to new special ed teacher, explaining over and over again. Has anyone brought that up? Why is student not with same teacher over the course of MS.

Discussion

Middle School convo: suggestion to have a Middle School liaison between SEPAC and District. Topic of Interest/Concern: Having more Middle School support. Having to re-explain diagnosis: Compensatory skills related to the student’s disability. Q: Do we have someone specifically to Dysgraphia? Concern: Progress report does not accurately reflecting students /lack of data for progress monitoring. Teachers needing more support. Parent/Member discussion on Topics of Concern: Parents were reminded to put their concerns on the Public Input Record for SEPAC to sort and address w/district. Para’s needing more support.

Ali: Sharing detailed specific concerns to look into. Additional input for tonight.

### 4. Good News:

Vyas: TOPS program: Soccer First time we had spring session. End of spring session got email from Mass Soccer Nominations for people that have gone above and beyond...Announce Abby Berry: 2019 Admin of the Year Mass Youth Soccer Association. Promotion, Involvement, Budgeting Scheduling, goes out her way to help kids on the field. Interacting. Photos. Fundraising. Sensory Balls. 2n person Mike Sexton 2019 TOPPS Coach of the Year. Patience, Understanding, dep/flexability. leadership and support. Love his drills. Involvement in program, Coach, role model, cheer leader, Dad, Both honored formally sometime January. In Bedford, Ma.

Good News: SEPAC Awareness.

Hoyt's Grant: Mary Ellen \$50,000 - purchased items. CHIPS sensory room. Ways to include kids, chairs, tricycles. Clarify, not just for CHIPS, for other schools as well.

#### 5. Liaison Appointments:

Leave appointments as standing: Anyone who was a Liaison will cont. to fill unless notified otherwise.

Vyas: Center

McCarthy reached out: ? Currently no Liaison

#### 6. Liaison Report:

CHIPS: Open house coming up: Data/Developmental Check list. On Nov. 14 at Westland's.

Byam: Just had Halloween event last Sat. successful. Ali dec trunk for truck or treat. Zen Den? Went well, set up near playground. Sensory bins inside. Thinking about for next year, having a dedicated time for Truck or Treat, sensory friendly environment.

Harrington: Trunk or Treat postponed until Nov. 3rd. and Zen Den

Center: Trunk or Treat. did not request Zen Den. Ice Cream Social was successful. J

Nov. Saturday 8-12 Junk Drop off Admin Office.

HS: no updates

Parker and McCarthy need liaisons, let SEPAC know if anyone is interested.

#### 7. Workshop Coordinator Report

Basic Rights here (HS) good turnout. Eligibility/Eval.

Next one Nov. 6th at CPL Integrated Living - inauguration. Note: Short meeting prior to the Workshop for Public Input and Announcement.s

Dec. 11th at HS Effective Communication: FCSN.

Jan. is TBD

Feb: Suspension and Discipline in Billerica. Parker School on River St. (look up to verify w/Amy D).

March April and May: TBD based on parent survey. ADHD, anxiety and behavior projecting

SpedWatch: Training Basic Rights Denied: Dec. 18th No. Chelmsford at Chelmsford Community Center 5:30-8. Info is posted on FB page.

#### 8. Old Business:

##### a. Volunteer Opportunities

i. Zen Den & Trunk-or-Treat - Discussion

ii. Winter Tree Scavenger Hunt - Discussion - Kristen E. and Heather will update

##### b. School Committee Presentation Subcommittee - Vote

Parent concern: Rec: Responsb. 2-4 x meet, have rough draft meeting at Jan. SEPAC meeting.

Presented to SC Feb or March. Motion to form Sub. Committee made 2nd. further disc? Vote: Unanimous

##### c. APPLE Follow-Up: Table with Vyas Jan to make official changes.

i. Define Board Member Roles - Vote to amend bylaws Table for Jan.

ii. CSEPAC Procedures Manual Subcommittee - Vote

Protocols for Board members, liaisons and volunteers: something more detailed. Motion to form Motion made and seconded: Vote Unanimous. (Laurie M. to reach out for more info).

#### 9. New Business

##### a. Subcommittee for School Committee Advisory Based on Public Input - Vote

Based on public input. Topics that makes advisories to subcommittee. pick a specific topic...Some are Reading and Middle School. Motion to Create a Subcommittee for Advisory. Motion made. Motion

Seconded. "How are we going to define one or more Subcommittees?" Ali propose: 1 Subcommittee, one addresses Reading. Discuss Topics with Administration to talk about another Subcommittee based on Topics of Interest and Concern that parents have.

Communications: How is it going with District? SEPAC communicates with Amy Reese and Amy Matson. Clarify Admin expectations. Discuss Title 1.

Meeting in Nov w/Amy R and Amy M. Create a subcommittee for Literacy - Role Resource Recommended Practices. What's currently being done in District, determine if there are any recommendations to district.

2-4 times (to meet) depending on need. Minutes must be taken. Feb/March for a rough draft for SEPAC.

Vote: Unanimous.

10. New Items Expected for November 6 Meeting - Ali

- a. Public Input at Chelmsford Public Library, 6:00 PM
- b. Presentation on Integrated Learning by CPS Principals & Staff at Chelmsford Public Library, 6:30 PM

11. New Items Expected for January 23 Meeting - Ali

- a. Establish Subcommittee for Community Awards
- b. Presentation from the School committee Presentation Subcommittee

Close 9:22