

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

Location: Chelmsford High School

### **Board**

Ali Barnes, Co-Chair - Present  
Kristen Eriksen, Co-Chair - Present  
Laurie McCarron, Secretary - Present  
Jane Zhao, Treasurer - Present

### **District**

Amy Reese, Director of Special Education - Present  
Donna Newcomb, School Committee Liaison - Present

### **Members**

Attendees Present: 7

### **Handouts:**

#### **AGENDA**

#### **SEPAC PACKET**

#### **MINUTES 10/25/18**

#### **MINUTES 11/29/18**

#### **WRITING GUIDE FOR THE IEP**

#### **WHAT IS RTI**

#### ***AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION-***

#### ***FAMILY & FRIENDS COMMUNITY CPR***

#### **WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE INTERFACE REFERRAL SERVICE**

#### **CHELMSFORD SPECIAL NEEDS PARENT SUPPORT GROUP NEWSLETTER**

#### **AN IEP FOR MY CHILD**

**Agenda listed accordingly**

**Meeting Called 7:04 p.m.**

### **1. Review and Approve Minutes**

Minutes from October 25, 2018 and November 29, 2018 were reviewed and approved.

Motion and review of minutes with the opportunity for input.

Motion made to accept minutes from K. B. Motion Seconded by J. D. - Motion Approved by Chair.

### **2. Election: Secretary**

Voting membership according to current By-laws read by Ali Barnes. Laurie McCarron announced in November of 2018 for SEPAC Secretary. Vote by SEPAC members: Unanimous. Statement from Ali: Laurie McCarron served as Secretary for the Chelmsford SEPAC from March 2018 - June 2018. Laurie took the fall to focus on more training and volunteered to serve as the SEPAC Secretary in November of 2018 for January. Laurie gave a brief introduction to members.

### **3. Guest Speaker:** Amanda Glaser from the Department of Public Health introduced Heather Burns, Licensed Mental Health Councilor from William James college, Project Interface.

Heather gave a presentation on Interface and provided resources and information for parents regarding individuals struggling with mental health and gave an overview of who they are and what they do.

- Discussion took place with Q/A and information was given to SEPAC members.

#### NOTES TAKEN: - Space for Co-Chair Notes added

How Interface works: Parent calls the number, Interface will return call and do an intake to help provide a good match for the required therapist. Interface is a mental health resource help line (not for an emergency situation) and they are available Mon-Fri 9-5. The town of Chelmsford has contracted for this free service. Intake process takes about 20-30 minutes of a specific targeted intake to understand what the child is in need of, they do a lot of information gathering. All information is confidential. No names are used, child is assigned a client ID number to help protect privacy. Topics during this presentation included questions and answers regarding...transportation, availability, insurance, Pediatrician relationships, Interface is thoughtful about referrals. There are 9000 providers in the data base - they reach out 2-3 days within the initial call and it may take 2-4 weeks to make a match typically. When they find a potential fit, the provider calls Interface back w/Yes, good fit, Interface calls family back...w/Providers info. A Lead Council will call family to follow-up approx. 2 weeks. Interface is focused on Out Patient Mental Health Referrals - They are phone based, they don't see people in person. Outpatient support covers most services, support groups, family/couples counseling, neuro-psych testing and Children's Behavior Health. If a Provider is not a good fit, people are welcome to call Interface back. This services is free for residents in residing in Chelmsford and can call for all children including support for siblings. Flyers and Postcards given to meeting members. The info given includes their website and what to expect when parents call. Website is available to anyone. National/International info and resources. QUESTION and ANSWERS with Discussion - William James College has it's own assessment Center - they often can turn over referrals quickly - possibly fastest option for parents looking for an assessment. Q. Talk about what kind of evals you do in assessment center? Comprehensive Neuro Psych - full - Autism evaluations. SAGE program, working with older adults - Dementia, cognitive ability over time. Q. Do you help find referrals for financial side of things? A. They don't, but they can help direct parents to find places regarding the concern. They collaborate with every town and city they're a part of. Q. Counseling - How long are you finding you're able to get an appt. and start the process A. Goal for us, 2 weeks to make a match, try to find someone available fairly immediately. Varies based on needs. Insurance Guide on their Website. Help parents figure out language - Trichotillomania example given. Insurance example given. Turn around could be 3-4 weeks. Most clinicians have set slots. Q. can you help parents choose insurance policies? A. Not going to be able to drill in detail, but possibly info on some insurances. Can child be eligible for MassHealth, for secondary is a question they help answer. They don't help w/that process, however, but can help point to people who do help. FCSN (Federation for Children with Special Needs) is a program they refer people to for answers on how to apply and what office to send it to and where to mail Masshealth. Big change in March to MassHealth, it can be confusing to inquiring parents. Q. Limited English other languages Translation offered? A. Yes, Spanish translators, working with others for specifically needed languages. Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian-Creole staff that speak/help translate the languages. Amanda: There is an event in Feb. Board of Health Community CPR training - for people who do not need credentials. During Feb. vacation. Reschedule date for April if bad weather. Q. Do you help families find ABA services? A. We can, it's not "our" expertise. Group Talk-over (Certain docs needed to be eligible. Centralized Place for Resources is lacking. They check their licenses and concerns. ABA how they're credentials - Should have BCBA write plans. Vetting resources). Ali will make sure people have info on FB. Heather gave contact info. SEPAC thanked Heather and Amanda for attending and for their presentation.

#### 4. Public Input:

Advocacy In Action: discussion

- Therapy and Child Needs; long wait lists for needed therapists; times during pull-out services and bringing in outside therapists, something to work with the school on...further discussion with Amy Reese and Donna Newcomb.

#### NOTES TAKEN: (Space for Co-Chair Notes added)

Have we asked if these people can come to the school? Policy in place? Only time offered is during school day, - Amy and Donna - group talk-over (therapy in school w/private therapist) it has happened, doesn't happen frequently. "Don't think anything formal in place" - if it is school based the district would provide.

Donna takes Mental Health issues as example - having their therapist come into the school to see them. Insurance can be a deciding factor. Donna - check with Amy and school to see if that could be an option for student. Outside and school setting professionals communicate with one another (school and private). Amy - depends. 10-15 years back, SouthBay practiced this as an option. Member Discussion. Donna, benefits; limited to no disruption. Missed

days when child receives in school therapy. Amy, start with Liaison to see if there is flexibility. (Amy regarding ABA wait list, Lord National on Littleton Road - do not have a wait list CARD. New in area. The Rec has a waiting list. Creative Behavior Services: one is in home services. Amy will find out if waiting list for both or just in-home. MassHealth as a secondary insurance.) End of group talk.

## **5. Liaison Reports**

CHIPS: Mary Ellen gave an update on the opening of a new classroom in CHIPS including peer models, and asked to please send their way. They are continuing to spread the word of SEPAC. Amy mentioned that the CHIPS numbers are growing.

*Group talk: Q. was sidewalk shoveled this morning? A. yesterday was not, don't know about this morning. Just entrance was shoveled, not the whole thing.*

Byam: Sweetheart dance coming up next weekend. Zen Den will be there. Volunteers welcomed.

*Group talk: Q. is CORI needed. Answer is No, because it was not school time, but discussion followed. Discussion also included Kohls volunteers - \$500 (details discussed). Science Fair coming in March.*

Harrington: (no update recorded)

Center: Liaison not present, no update. PTO next meeting scheduled for morning rather than afternoon.

*Group talk*

McCarthy and Parker: Open position for Liaisons, volunteers are needed.

South Row: Donna Volunteered to be Liaison - Thank you Donna!

Feb. 4th next meeting. Science Fair coming up.

High School: No updates from Beth.

*Group talk: Are SEPAC updates in Lions Roar still?*

*Donna mentioned that Beth brought up the Sign Language program at the PTO meeting as something the HS is considering. After school enrichment, Donna will recommend we look at Sign Language. Discussion included possible pilot at South Row - Goal to roll out to other schools. Discussion on the benefits of Sign Language.*

## **6. Workshop Coordinator Update**

Amy Domow was not able to come to tonight's meeting, Ali read an update.

Ali: IEP for my child Workshop handouts were provided. Dozen people attended the Workshop. Coming Up: 1st week of April - Exec Functioning Workshop, Chelmsford will be Co-Hosting this with the Maynard SEPAC. Amy is finalizing dates in June for an Anxiety Workshop for parents and SEPAC members.

Information was shared regarding BSEA (Bureau of Special Education Appeals) as a possible Workshop suggested to the SEPAC. This Workshop was conducted in Westford with Chelmsford members in attendance and is highly recommended to parents and the district. Contact Info was given to the Co-Chairs. The SEPAC can request info from Myrto Flessas, Mediator at [Myrot.flessas@state.ma.us](mailto:Myrot.flessas@state.ma.us) or call 781-397-4794 for a free Presentation.

## **7. School Committee Report**

Donna spoke on the 1-1 Learning Presentation - looking for input from parents. Special Education Representation ...working out details. 5th grader and 9th grader regarding issuing a Chrome Book.

Budget Season. SEPAC coming to speak in Feb. Donna suggests that SEPAC make sure to ask for what is needed and to provide information.

NOTES TAKEN: (Space for Co-Chair notes added)

(Amy mentioned funds are for Special Ed, not just SEPAC - SEPAC has a line item. Issue of social workers came up. New Director of Student Support - trying to evaluate what it is we have/what we need.) K-12 Coordinator of Social-Emotional Learning and School Counseling.

(Guidance at Elementary level (Q. are they licensed?) Amy, Donna and members discuss School Counselors and their roles, licenses and social workers.

Donna - what it is we do provide? Amy: Psychologist and Counselors intertwine.. CHIPS has a social worker, no counselor or psychologist.

Paul Cohen putting in his budget Community Services Coordinator - future plans: discussion on town working for families for a "go to" help to get services (similar to Interface) - advocate - be available for parents, senior citizens. CHIPS creating a resource guide. Psychologists in the schools group talk-over.

Donna mentioned Dr. Hirsch presented about recent Dyslexia bill that passed. State hasn't given any direction.

(Notes taken during Group talk-over included discussion regarding...Assessment cover K, 1, 2, Amy and Dr. Hirsch will be working together - Amy and Kelly Rogers have been doing work on what 'this' entails. Amy clarifies discussion - Dyslexia components for assessment. MTSS (RTI) Tier 1, Tier 2, Same for Academics. Doesn't = special education. Confusing process. No guidance from the State yet.

Donna - Goal to address this. Ali Question: asks Amy to clarify - additional screening then protocol? Amy Answer: it's another piece of data. All data points, this screening are incorporated give them a sense if weak, could be at risk, doesn't mean they need special ed. We can identify RTI MTS - can put interventions in place for Gen. Ed.

Systematic Approach. Gain phonics skills.

Question - who's responsible - situation, there's a child with multiple flags and puts in RTI, who makes the call for special ed? Answer - The parents having concern can start the process for special ed, school putting processes in place, SST process, collect the data. Team Based Process. Lots of reasons kids not gaining skills.

Question. Are parents invited to the SST process? They are usually made aware - should be in communication loop. SST process. So it looks the same at all schools. Questions: Are parents allowed to attend an SST meeting? Answer: Parents are not excluded. Communication from parent? A. First meeting is typically school based. No written notification for this process. Kristen: "should be informed?" More discussion. Confusion related to SST process, parent involvement, RTI/MTS was discussed and noted.

Donna Q. Is this a formal meeting? A. It's a Gen Ed Process. Usually Principal, Asst. Principal attends - it's a brain storming session, to collect data. Q. Do parents need to sign a release? (no answer noted). Amy: If a parent puts a request in for special ed. the district has to respond. Amy: it is not a delay tactic for special ed. Further discussion. Question: Confused about Title 1. Is title 1 Tier 1?

Answer: Title one is not equated to Tier systems of support. Amy: This is Kelly's (Rogers) area of expertise.

SST comment from a member - a parent should always be involved. Further discussion.

Ali mentioned that there are Lots of Questions with this and will look into a future round table discussion.

Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (same as RTI). Tier 1 everyone should get. Tier 2 ?

Donna. we talk about Tiers - look at PBIS - lot of similarities and differences. Continue this later. Donna: talk to Dennis or Dr. Lang - good topic for Parent Forum.

Donna - Public Forum: Tuesday night 7:00 (aired? yes) At police Station. SC forum. Topics. - On Town Calendar.

(Co-Chair has details for this Public Forum meeting). Discussion continued...Ali noted time was getting past schedule and asked if any of the remaining Agenda items needed to be brought up tonight. Laurie noted that the Parent Support Group Update was needed. Ali asked Amy Reese for any further Student Services Report... it was noted that it was previously discussed and there was nothing additional to add/ongoing discussion.

8. **Student Services Report:** Discussion throughout the meeting. "Nothing additional to add" due to time.

9. **Parent Support Group Update:** Laurie McCarron - Newsletter read and given to SEPAC. Topics of Interest including: New parents entering the district. What programs are available. What are some Autism and ADHD supports available for parents. ABA services regarding a long wait-list and insurance issues. ASL as a language program option. Transition from Elementary to Middle School, does a parent have to request this? Ongoing Dyslexia Screenings: What does that mean during and

IEP or Re-Eval? Does the district actually test for Dyslexia? BSEA Complaints and parents who have been through this process. High School and Elementary School swapping times. Topics of Concern including: Detention and students with a 504 plan in Middle School. Punished for forgetting to sign out of class in an emergency bathroom situation. Indoor recess in middle school, do students have an actual 'recess' time to be free, is the gym available? How do (all) 5th graders get to exercise their social time during indoor recess? Social-Emotional Learning - How to help support the students in elementary and middle school. How to help support their teachers. (Update on Social-Emotional opportunities for district. To be discussed at another meeting due to time). Monthly Parent Support Group Meetings offered mornings and evenings and posted in the support group. Visions of Community (Conference) details and quote from Martin Luther King Jr. *"If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk then crawl, but by all means, keep moving."*

## **10. Old Business**

### **a. CSEPAC email - Ali Barnes**

Feedback and concerns regarding trust issues and having a collaborative relationship with the district along with supporting SEPAC members.

(Discussion with Board: Emails on 3rd party services. Create a G account for SEPAC - set-up an automatic response on current email account. Set a date. Kristen Motioned to: Open discussion - 2nd by Jamie. Q. Is Bill going to help? A. Ali - will need help closing it out. Donna - Bill may have offered to help. Voting changes email account. Q. What is the reason for this change? A. Ali - our email is subject to OML, SEPAC e-mail was set up during Interim phase - in Nov. changes were made to SEPAC email w/out notice to SEPAC Board. All e-mail would automatically be forwarded to the Director of Special Education (Amy Reese). SEPAC email is Public info. Switching to private account, means that Amy does not have access. Switching to a private account means there will not be changes made without the SEPAC Board knowing. SEPAC is not an employee(s) of the school district. - SEPAC wants to protect parent privacy. SEPAC wants to collaborate - and trust goes both ways. SEPAC member discussion. Noted that not a lot of districts that use K.12. (if any, SEPAC has no knowledge of other SEPACs in MA using school email address) Some have google. Amy mentioned that school districts are doing away with the "K12" email system. Donna Q. - are you voting to change or explore the change?

Ali asked for a Vote in favor of changing the previous SEPAC email ([sepac@chelmsford.k12.ma.us](mailto:sepac@chelmsford.k12.ma.us)) to a SEPAC created email - Voting was Unanimous. The SEPAC will now have an e-mail established by the elected members of the SEPAC Board.

Ali Barnes asks for a 5 minute recess - any members needing to go home or take a break can do so before the next presentation.

## **RECESS**

Note for Minutes: The Secretary left meeting before recess concluded and will submit the minutes taken to the Co-Chairs. Any additional minutes for the meeting will be provided by the Co-Chairs of the SEPAC for the remaining of the evening. The rest of the Agenda Items are listed as follows:

(Note: Secretary is unable to provide a close time for this meeting)

### **b. Needs Assessment Survey Subcommittee: Results and Discussion** - not addressed (time related)

### **c. School Committee Presentation Subcommittee: Preview and Public Input**

## **11. New Business**

- a. Visions of Community - 1 (SEPAC) member admitted for free with MassPAC membership. 3/9/19 Ali gave information. Attachments in handouts. FCSN offering a free spot Ali doing this again. Get word out end of next week Feb. 1st let Ali know if people Parents have a chance to go for free. Early Bird Rate gives time for interested parents. New business - Feb. 5th. Short Recess. (Ali wrapping up agenda due to time). Meeting on Saturday at 10:00a.
- b. Teacher Awards Program: Laurie McCarron - Discussion  
not addressed (due to time)

## **12. New Items Expected for February**

- a. ALEC Coordinator Update
- b. School Committee Presentation Follow-Up
  - not addressed (due to time)
  - "Group discussion and made edits to presentation"
- c. Guest Speakers: Health & Guidance Counselors on the subject of Mental Health Supports at School

## **13. School Committee Presentation Subcommittee - Discussion and Planning**