

SEPAC Meeting Minutes April 24, 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 - Not Present
School Committee Liaison: Dennis King - Not Present
Other Members: Approx 8 Present

SEPAC sign in sheet filed in Secretary SEPAC binder

Handout: Agenda, Meeting Minutes 3/27/18, SEPAC Presentation for School Committee Outline,
Subcommittee Meeting Records

*denotes amendments made to 3/27 minutes

**denotes amendments to be made

Meeting called to order by Ali Barnes
Time: 6:33 p.m.

Ali wants to wrap up (tonight's) meeting by 8:00p and noted that there are 3 Board Members present - Ali Barnes, Kristen Eriksen and Laurie McCarron (Bethany Rappoli present just as meeting started) no admin and no school committee members present. Some SEPAC school liaisons were not present.

Agenda item: listed in accordance to posted agenda sheet format

1. Approve minutes from March 27, 2018 Meeting

Suggestion made to amend two items from Ali included:

*add under other business - parent raised concerns about recess being taken away as a punishment.

Laurie made a request for info on how to make that an agenda item.

*add the motion made at 8:30 p.m. to end the meeting - by Kendra, motioned seconded by Cara.

Motion made to accept the 3/27 minutes from Shannon, motion seconded by Kristen. Minutes accepted.

2. May 2018 Elections

Noted from current By-Laws that elections need to be discussed - and hold elections for open positions in May. There will be two positions open - Secretary and Treasurer. Kristen and Ali recommend now through the May meeting any interested persons need to attend the meeting or self nominate with written permission - Kristen to oversee that process. Beth mentioned becoming more involved with Decoding Dyslexia, if someone wants to take on the Treasurer role, she will help with the transition.

Motion to Open Nominations through May 22 and hold a vote on May 22nd.

Motion made by Shannon, seconded by Beth.

A suggestion of what the expectations of the Treasurer role was made - along with explanation of level of commitment.

3. Liaison Update

Ali mentioned that South Row and McCarthy positions are still open. A Liaison update of expectations - discussion and questions "Are PTO meetings during the day?" Answer - most are at night.

CHIPS - Heather

Haven't had PTO meeting yet

Mary Ellen shared some nice news involving the Social-Emotional topic on the pre-school level - The new CHIPS director is very interested in this topic - a voluntary meeting with Para Professionals to talk about this, many gave up their lunch time to go.

Byam - Kendra

No news

Center - Laurie

PTO met on 4/4. Center will be having a "Race for Education" (June 12th). Center PTO is excited and willing to help coordinate a SEPAC "tent". Ali suggested reaching out to Amy Domow, as Byam is having something similar on May 5th (Byam Race).

Question "What is a "tent/zen-den"? Ali - it is if a child needs a tent to go somewhere to relax, a quiet corner etc... (It was mentioned that CHIPS has a field day - could possibly use a "SEPAC tent". Field day is some time in June for CHIPS). Community Outreach is listed further down on the agenda). ALICE training was part of the PTO Principal report - questions regarding students with disabilities was asked/ answered by Principal Fulreader, who attended the training in Chelmsford, along with quite a good amount of Chelmsford staff. Next PTO meeting is scheduled for May 9th.

Harrington - Jamie

Harrington has a new Principal - Robert Asselin. There were 3 candidates presented to Dr. Lang and search committee. PBIS and strong communication were key factors. Discussion about school playgrounds, funding toward playgrounds and shade protection from members. Nick Parlee attended the PTO meeting, will match funds raised. Grant writing and reaching out to companies discussed, also reaching out to physical therapists in town, as they may have knowledge/feedback and may need to work with them.

Byam and Parker working toward new playground.

Parker - Beth

Last PTO meeting there was no school committee member in attendance. Several parents are graduating out of positions there is little attendance at these meetings. Perspective from liaison position is that there hasn't been any parents reaching out. Beth asked how other liaisons from schools feeling and if these positions are needed. Discussion entailed the benefits of having school Liaisons, that next year a high focus will be Social Emotional, especially for middle schoolers and having a contact person from the SEPAC at school PTO meetings is relevant for sharing information, resources and promoting presentations. Building the SEPAC is a top focus as well as much needed and for the parents that are moving up from the elementary to the middle school who need info/support. Discussion was "tabled" by Ali to address at a later date. Parent/member comments: attendance regarding SEPAC meetings, time of meetings and the vote made at the beginning of the school year was "flimsy" and may not have represented the regular attendees/parents opinion for a schedule. It was noted that parents are having trouble getting "here" at 6:30p. Ali will put this on the next Agenda as - changing Day and Time of SEPAC.

High School -

No news

4. Old Business

"Lending A Hand" to SEPAC update: Sara Dempster, Chelmsford Public Library, who helped facilitate the event, will be hanging multiple art pieces over the SEPAC section at the library. Ali thanked Laurie for coordinating the event. Any parents interested in donating books (regarding special needs/disabilities etc) should contact Laurie or Sara at the Children's desk (CPL) or e-mail Sara with suggestions for future purchases. No questions.

By-Law Subcommittee Update: The subcommittee met on 4/19 after an Open Meeting Law Training conducted at the Reading Public Library. Minutes from the meeting include how the subcommittee went through each Article in the current By-Laws, added suggested changes to present at a future SEPAC meeting. One more follow up meeting to finalize the details before presenting the suggested amendments is to be scheduled (TBS). There were five district By-laws that were presented as suggested material to review during the meeting. If anyone has suggestions/questions to note before the final subcommittee meeting please do so now. No questions/suggestions. (Agenda/Minutes available in handout).

School Committee Subcommittee Update: See Outline on 2nd page of handout. It was noted that if anything needs to be added, reach out to a subcommittee member. Meeting Record also in handout.

These meetings are subject to Open Meeting Laws. No amendments made during this part of the meeting. Question - "Is this because 'we' are new or is this an annual expectation? Answer from Ali "This is an annual expectation, as SEPAC submits a yearly report that details everything and the presentation is based on 'our' SEPAC meetings.

Motion to accept both Subcommittee reports made by Shannon, seconded by Kristen.

School Safety - a Regional SEPAC Meeting held on April 3rd in Franklin, Ali attended to represent Chelmsford. List of questions involving protocol details from Police and arranging a guest speaker to come in and talk about this. Laurie contacted Officer Ubele previously. The Medford SEPAC's presentation was posted on the FB page, need to add to SEPAC website. Discussion of teams as part of the parent input/conversation/communication and ALEC training in town. Jennifer tried looking up Grant info, nothing after 2013. In order for her to have a meeting, updated paperwork is needed. ALICE training has changed since 2014. Member discussion on having a better plan for children with special needs/disabilities, Superintendent previous comments on ALICE and gathering info from the school level so parents can use/have the same "language". Language and Communication for parents with children that have disabilities and special needs - others in crises discussion. First professionals day in Sept. focuses on ALICE, then community input sessions; contracts don't start until Oct., rolling trainings, feedback to take into consideration if there is enough concern, be prepared with examples (including specifics to children with special needs). Discussion cont. - ALICE is new to the first responders in this community - Police and Fire trained for the first time ever - feedback was it went well. No further questions after parent discussion.

5. SEPAC Fundraising and Budgeting

Beth did research and prepared a budget report.

\$500 goes to MassPAC membership. \$750 is the total amount of funds given to the SEPAC. Discussion opened with Beth's research, questions about fundraising, establishing a "friends of", a 501 status and EIN. Motion was started about establishing an EIN, more info needed, Motion was retracted/suspended until more information is brought to the SEPAC.

Request to have a School Committee member/liaison at the next SEPAC meeting was made. Further inquiries include a more in-depth discussion with the SEPAC board members, when they can/cannot do fundraising as a SEPAC, SEPAC bank account has to be done by town. Discussion tabled until next meeting by Ali.

6. Community Outreach Planning

Open Houses - include Special Ed teachers, therapists etc... being at one location so parents are able to put a face to the name. Making things more accessible to people in the community and having a SEPAC presence at Open Houses, including flyers (on tables) available when school Principal presents as a means of "getting our name out there". Discussion about tables not being available at some schools - ex. McCarthy has their OH in their auditorium, South Row, also no tables; SEPAC possibly requesting a table at these schools, having SEPAC liaison overseeing a SEPAC table if scheduling allows. Open House for elementary schools are on same night. Bulletin Board set-up, Flyers, budget increase for printing costs and parent trainings. Printing costs fall under Special Ed budget, require getting more info from Amy Reese on how that works for SEPAC distribution. Also in discussion, CHIPS orientation day is where a lot of parents first start out. Need a SEPAC Liaison for CHIPS next year.

Summary: Pending administration is on board with SEPAC participation during Open House, the SEPAC Co-Chairs are responsible for finding out the details and printing of flyers. The Co-Chairs will make sure one parent from each school is "on board" at a resource table - elementary, middle and high school Open Houses as well as CHIPS orientation.

Further discussion included SEPAC flyers being available for special ed classrooms, or in one designated area...CHIPS students get evaluated, a great place to have a "Welcome to Special Ed". Suggestion to ask the Director of Student Services for a SEPAC flyer outside the Special Ed office (at the High School).

Two more items for discussion included a district wide "coloring contest" - how inclusion works, special needs etc... any student/child can participate. THEME "More Alike Than Different" as an example. Possibility of picking 12 "winners" each one highlighted on the SEPAC website - this would require coordination with the district, making copies - having an Activity Committee. Something for older kids - poetry, writing, creating a Public Service Announcement. Member discussion of ideas continued with encouraging creativity, displays in town.

Motion made to open up a search for an Activity Committee by Shannon. Motion seconded. (Did not get the name of the 2nd).

Discussion continued further including: Tent for events, sanitary changing room, quiet place for nursing moms, possible visits w/therapy dog/animals, allergies, checking with OT's for more ideas. (No Activity Committee was created as of yet, motion remains open for search).

7. Guest Speaker: Chelmsford Special Education Parent Support Group **** (note, Special Needs)**

A 15 min. presentation by Laurie McCarron and Jennifer Bellissimo, admins of the Chelmsford Special Needs Parent Support Group Facebook page.

(Kristen's notes here)

Laurie and Jennifer made an introduction to the SEPAC including a brief background about their individual lives, community involvements and previous history of how the Parent Support Group got started in Chelmsford. The presentation included how to join the closed Facebook group and the in-person monthly meetings "The Reserved Table" - offered to all parents, guardians and caregivers in Chelmsford that have a child/children with special needs. A suggestion box is offered at every in-person meeting, Topics of Interest and Topics of Concern will be addressed at SEPAC meetings as needed. Recent topics included: Recess taken away as a form of punishment and the new school day being extended, how that effects students with special needs and their families.

The Support Group will be hosting it's first Workshop on May 16th at the Chelmsford Public Library at 6:45p entitled, "Getting your Sheet Together" - an IEP Vision Statement by Kathy Healy Norton.

8. Other Business

Kristen brought up post from PAC-2-PAC on Social Emotional Training in Lexington. Laurie and Kristen

are planning to attend, any other interested parents can contact either board member. This Training includes "Promoting Effective SEL in Your Community", learning best practices and practical solutions for developing a comprehensive SEL plan, connecting with others in the region and share lessons learned, discovering strategies for successfully advocating for SEL in your school, district or community. The cost is \$125 single or \$99 for a group of 3 or more. Training to take place on May 30th from 8-3 (at Battin Hall, Cary Memorial Building - 1605 Mass Ave, Lexington).

An update from Ali included that Chelmsford SEPAC now has a new School Committee Liaison, Donna Newcomb. Dennis King will no longer be the liaison.

Questions regarding life threatening allergies (that qualify for a 504) and related concerns about bullying. All SEPAC related topics and parents are encouraged to reach out to the SEPAC and attend meetings. That is what SEPAC is for, to help support parents regarding these important topics.

9. New items to expected for the May meeting:

Plans to set a meeting schedule for next year and workshop planning. Invitation to Amy Reese to come to the next meeting encouraged and agreed.

Closing notes: The SEPAC School Committee Subcommittee is meeting directly after this meeting to read through the Presentation - all members are welcomed to join and offer feedback.

Motion to adjourn by Kristen. Motion seconded by Shannon.
Meeting adjourned: 8:25 p.m.