

Concord Public Schools
and
Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)
Minutes
Thursday, January 24, 2019
7:00-9:00pm
Location: Hunt Recenter, Conf. Room

www.concordsepac.org concordsepac@gmail.com

(Action items are highlighted in green.)

Attendance:

Carol Yelle, Co-president
Shaina Brito, Co-president
Helen McKinlay, Publicity
Sarah Nichol, Secretary
Courtney Whalen
Joanne Jensen, OoD coordinator
Casey Atkins, Membership

1. Open Meeting
2. Voting for Secretary Chair (5 min)
Sarah Nichol was nominated and voted in as Secretary
3. Public comments (10 min)
Courtney asked about SELP: questions Social Emotional Learning Program, which is brand new. Casey recommended that Courtney reach out to Angel Charles, principal at Thoreau.
4. Approval of minutes from November 29, 2018 Board Meeting
-Meeting minutes are approved.
-Joanne will send Becky info about an upcoming program: Special Ed attorney, Peter Haan March 4th, AANE meeting. We'll put it in the newsletter.
-We're looking for a writer for our team.
5. Items for discussion (20 min)
 - Report from Board Members that attended Joint SC Meetings
Carol: Concord Public school West Ed report. Posted. Laurie summarized this.
-Conversation about the new school building for Concord middle school. Feasibility study will be happening. They're still applying for MSBA (state funding) Will be reorganizing in Sept. Keep an eye on it. Space for CASE will be there. Helen and Shaina will go to a meeting and forward info about it to Becky.
-Envisioning MS Education meeting 1/29 announced in Elementary Schools. This needs to be added to the CCHS newsletter.
-Budgets coming up. Casey pointed out that the CPS budget and FINCOM budget gap .3% hasn't been reconciled.
-Carol said that will be addressed in the next meeting.
 - CPS West Ed report

- Updates/Changes to By-Laws
 - Change any by-laws before the next meeting for approval.
 - Propose changes and put them in redline for the March meeting. **Shaina will create a Google doc and we will track our changes**

6. Chair reports/updates

- Co-Presidents: (30 min)
 - i. Review of meeting with Laurie Hunter and Marielle Wintersteen:

Shaina and Carol met with them in the beginning of January. They asked that the administration to please share an update about Jessica when it is available. There is no information to share at this point. Marielle is booked. People are concerned that needs aren't getting met. Who has the back of the SPED students? Jessica didn't attend every IEP meeting.

They talked about the Envisioning MS Event, WestEd report. Hopefully the report will be in our hands by June 2019. The preschool is slated to be finished this year.

Are theater programs and sports coaches trained? Erin Joncas was asked about this. It is incumbent upon the parents to approach these people to help the students. There is no training done to prepare these teachers for students with special needs. Sometimes a case manager is brought in to train that teacher.

Legislation passed about screening students for dyslexia. They're waiting for DESE to implement the guidelines before incorporating them into the district. We'll need to wait for the advisory to come out to the districts. We want to be advised about what kind of screenings will be done. Shaina sent info to the district about it before Jessica left. **(Keep this as a running item in our meetings.)**

Casey suggested that we flag SEPAC reps in each meeting.

Assistant principal and team chair will be hired at the MS.

Becky: will there be a CASE in each school? CASE was invited to come over to meet with Justin so they could see what spaces would be available, but they didn't identify which building would be used.

WestEd Report is an independent report of the Concord Public School Special Education Department. New programs at Thoreau are related to the WestEd report. Quotes are included with names; parent confidentiality was not protected in the report. When they do the preschool report, they'll take more care. Laurie Hunter, superintendent, will do a presentation for SEPAC.

How can we build on the programs that we have? Case managers need to be telling us which programs are appropriate for each child?

- ii. Review of PTG meeting (some of the above information might fit in this section)
- iii. Review of meeting with SEPAC School Committee Reps

Heather and Christine met with Heather Bout. Special Ed and Budget seem to always come up in the same sentence. They were very receptive to the messaging. They need to be more thoughtful about how they discuss special ed and budget. Lead with the needs of the students. No one on the School committee is familiar with SPed. All parents of students on IEPs could come together. Laurie wants to wait until the WestEd report is finished in the spring. We want parents to give input before the report is finished. Casey pointed out: If we wait until spring, it will be after the town meeting. She is trying to get \$1 million for a feasibility study. The majority of people who come to the meetings don't have kids in the schools. How about we do something with the league of women voters committee? Judy Zombrecher researches how to vote for everything in town meeting. Don't forget about the kids who are out of district for a reason. What does inclusion mean? Look at the League of women voters as an opportunity. We can advise them, too. A school committee member should be able to come to each of our SEPAC meetings.

Next meeting for Feb. 29th is a budget specific meeting. Let's move it to the day time: 12:30, so Laurie can come. Forum for envisioning MS just for special education.

School Committee needs a rep with a kid who has an IEP. This represents a huge swath of the budget. These reps can educate the group. Some families want to be anonymous, so they come through SEPAC. Sometimes we just hear concerns in passing, not in meetings. Dyslexia reports are pulled from independent researchers.

When the report was finished, there wasn't time for questions from the audience. Casey: Anyone who is running for school committee should be invited to SEPAC meetings. Maybe we go to the League of Women voters meeting. They could come to SEPAC, too. Diane Proctor is the head of the committee. **Let's invite her, and Eidy, too. Board meeting will be at 12:30 p.m. on the 28th. We'll change the meeting time. We'll publish the meeting. Send the details to Helen: mostly about the budget and CMS feasibility schedule.** Will promoting their visit at our meeting change anything? It will inform them.

iv. Federation of Children With Special Needs Annual Conference -

Nominate Board member to attend March 9th, Sat. Seaport World Trade center which has 3 sessions and a keynote speaker. If you volunteer for 2 hours and you get in for free. Wendy wants to go. Becky is interested, but will defer to Wendy. **Carol will work with Wendy to get her the ticket.** We can send one parent to this conference free of charge.

v. SEPAC Annual Awards -- Nominate Board member to coordinate

Shaina: find out who wants to be on the committee. Award will be presented in April or May at a joint school committee meeting. **Casey, Helen and Becky volunteer to be a part of it. We're approved for \$40, but bring a number and they'll ask Laurie. Look at the dates online and give Carol their choice.** Make a nice pen- 36 awards. Some people bring flowers. It is really

special. Get a group picture at the end. The committee members will solicit names, print awards and present them at the meeting.

- vi. SEPAC Annual Report to the Joint School Committee - Form a sub-committee

May 28th. Casey and Becky are interested in working with the school committee. Becky will help with technology.

- vii. Board positions next year

Shaina: think about your interest in the board for next year. Invite friends, or let us know if you want to change your role. We'll do an update on this, then we'll vote in May.

- viii. Correspondence

We're getting emails from people wanting to move to Concord District. Shaina and Carol handle the correspondence in turns. A lot of the information from parents is not sharable.

Carol: I ask first if you are in Concord School District before getting into a long story.

- Membership: (10 min) Casey

- i. Update: I'm trying to get parents from the preschool involved. There are different points of view depending on where they are in the process. The age of the student really changes the perspective. I invite people anywhere I see. I want to do a low-key hook up. Casey will talk with Wendy about planning something to do together. Some parents don't want to identify with SEPAC. Some parents want to protect their child's identity. Some parents are just too busy. The Thoreau PRG president reported at the PTG meeting that they are working with the Concord Rec department to run the pre and after school programs. There has been some parent push back but it will be a plus for special education. Alcott is looking at it as well. Casey would like to have a social. Casual get together
- ii. Liaison Update
Meghan Carroll is serving on the Alcott MS principal search.
Joanne, OOD coordinator is bringing all our publicity to OOD coffees.
Helen can send out OOD specific items separate

- Events: (10 min)

- i. Update on past and future events
Conversation around safety meeting will be held on Jan 30. Not great advertising.

Joanne spoke with Laurie about rumors around gun safety. Wanted to understand what is going on. Joanne suggested a parent forum. She is happy to see that one has been scheduled.
Discussion about Center for Parents & Teachers with Sally Quinn Reed for an upcoming function she is working on. Will be great to

co-host with SEPAC. Casey suggested Jennifer Clark CPT board may be a good link.

Joanne, suggested a meeting topic about wellness/self care for the caregiver. Suggestion for Wendy. Shaina suggested the INSPIRE program. Currently for kids 0-9. Is there one for older kids. Casey mentioned that at this time there is no grant for that class.

○ Technology: (10 min)

i. Update on website and social media

Becky has been slower about posting on the website.

FB is good and easy, copy and paste. Message is getting out there is especially with the NL.

It was suggested and asked if PTGs could link to our NL. Carol and Shaina (and Casey as pre-school rep) will bring this to the next PTG Presidents meeting.

Casey added that at PTG meeting she talked about a pre-school-elementary transition meeting. Have Elementary Principals do a presentation to the preschool families.

○ Communications: (10 min)

i. Update: Open Position

○ Publicity: (10 min)

i. Update

Dyslexia event publicity is out. 32 responses so far. Very popular event.

OOD survey is in Survey Monkey today and a few members will be asked to preview it. Joanne wants it due back after vacation. Team will look at dates. Survey is anonymous. Results will be publicized. Possibility to take the info and make a bigger distribution survey at a later date.

Everything that goes publicly will be distributed only by Helen. Ellen (spec ed secretary) agrees. Helen is basically our air traffic controller.

7. Next Meeting February 28th 12:30-2:30 p.m.

8. Close Meeting: Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.