February 12, 2016
SEPAC Business Meeting

Attendees:
- Mary Tambor, Co-president
- Rebecca Robichaud, Co-president
- Aiyana Currie, Treasurer/Fundraising
- Heather Tunnicliffe, Events Coordinator
- Jessica Hsu, Technology Coordinator – currently serving 1st year
- Donna Roman, Publicity Coordinator – currently serving 1st year
- Kathi Snook, school committee representative
- Anne Kilroy, parent & community representative
- Casey Atkins, parent & community representative

1. Open Meeting
2. Approval of Minutes from January meeting
3. Correspondence to Share
   - Emails regarding the preschool changes
   - Requests to be added to the resources page of the website
   - Request from Janet Friedman, who is putting together the school performance report, Presidents shared a short write-up about the SEPAC that will be included in the performance report
4. Guest comments
   - Kathi Snook, from school committee to act as a liaison to the SEPAC board
5. Preschool model change
   - SEPAC received two letters from Jessica Murphy, Concord Director of Special Education. The initial letter was regarding the change in preschool model for the 2017-2018 school year
   - After receipt of this letter, the SEPAC presidents met with a preschool group & Minuteman Arc to hear community feedback.
   - This feedback as well as questions about the process was subsequently shared with Diana Rigby (superintendent), Kathi Snook, Jessica Murphy during a meeting.
   - Following this meeting with school district representatives, a follow-up meeting was held with the parents that included sincere apologies from Diana & Jessica
   - Subsequent to this, there was a school committee meeting that included discussion on a proposal to create a sub-committee that would specifically work on how to move forward with the preschool model. Comments included recommendations about inclusion of SEPAC and PTGs, although a decision was not made to form a sub-committee. The School Committee is very committed to an integrated preschool, although by law one is not required. Some work has been done to look for building options to house the growing population of children on IEPs together with their integrated peers. There is some concern that including children on IEPs as a first priority can make it difficult to calculate the ratios of integration.
• Discussion of this topic by board members and attendees of the SEPAC Business Meeting followed the updates on history of the issue.

Recommendation that it is critical that there is an open ongoing dialogue between SEPAC presidents and Special Ed director above and beyond the existing monthly meetings

Suggestion by the community to include all of the following representation on the to be defined and formed sub-committee: Minuteman Arc, SEPAC, Community Peers, Concord Integrated Preschool teachers, Alumni & present parents, and other preschools in Concord. Kathi Snook provided information about how current & past sub- and advisory committees of the School Committee have worked. These have typically been created for broader issues, for example: School Calendar & Busing.

Discussion on the definition of the “sub-committee” or “committee” or “advisory committee” and how/whether this would be affiliated with existing District Committees/Board/Organizations. The School Committee makes budget decisions & also overseas decisions being made by the Superintendent.

SEPAC is an official town committee, technically affiliated with the School Committee. If the SEPAC nominated a committee, this would be an “advisory committee” to the SEPAC and could make recommendations to the other committees that are affected, such as budgeting concerns.

A “working group” would be less formal and could also be formed.

Several options were reviewed and defined:
• Advisory Committee to the School Committee, nominated members would run this committee
• Advisory Committee to the SEPAC
• Working Group of the SEPAC
• District Committee to the District Administration, prior examples Math Committee, administrators would run this committee

The charge of this committee would be the same regardless of which type of committee is chosen, including directive & dates as well as list of types of constituents. A School Committee member could be a member or observer.

Request that a “formal charge be done” as well as a “formal presentation to the School Committee”. This would need to include specific recommendations. Voice from the community indicated a desire to have these recommendations include transparency on future decisions.

The Board tabled the discussion with the following recommendation to the community representatives:
• Define the problem and what we are trying to solve, e.g. we need to address the needs for the special needs students. Consider the problem of space constraints
• Define their charge, including short and long term solutions as well as whether and how they are part of this process.
• Revert to the SEPAC, School Committee and/or District on requested next steps by applicable existing committees

Vote from SEPAC for an “integrated model”, not defined by laws on public preschools nor constrained by the existing model: 6 in favor, 0 not in favor, 0 abstentions

6. Update on volunteer positions:
• Volunteer position for an Integrated Preschool liaison to the SEPAC: Casey Atkins
• Volunteer position for the Willard Elementary school liaison: Anne Kilroy

7. Fundraising/Treasurer Options
• Discussion/update on options for creating a 501(c)3, and/or Friends of SEPAC vs. going through the district for funding
  * Concerns of capacity constraints on creating additional functional roles: If a Friends of Organization is created, additional human capital would be required to set this up and run it
  * A Friends of organization can be formed as a 501 organization that is not a 501(c)3, reducing tax reporting requirements
  * Concerns that leveraging the existing School District as Treasurer inhibits the SEPAC of acting autonomous in funding decisions
  * Suggestion by a board member to allocate fundraising for a specific budget line item before fundraising so that the approval process through the District can occur one time
  * Recommendation by existing Treasurer/Fundraising chair to leverage existing District model for Treasury functions and review possible external sources, such as Friends of at a later date
• Vote: 6 in favor, 0 not in favor, 0 abstentions of going through the District for Treasury Function

8. Volunteer Page on the website
• Statement from the Presidents about request for stabilization of committee members into 2016-2017 school year was made as well as request for consideration of Vice-Chair for the 2016-2017 school year
• Action item for Jessica to refine based on feedback of the group:
  * Categorize Board and non-Board positions
  * Add definitions for each position

9. Basic Rights Workshop
• Concord Journal is happy to include an article on the SEPAC, which could include details on the workshop

10. Membership
• A survey is being created, with the purpose to gather information from parents of children on IEP from the District. A sub-committee has been formed to gather these details, inclusive of Tali & Mary.
• Action: Board members & meeting attendees to provide feedback on DRAFT survey no later than February 29, 2016, distributed to attendees with request to pay special attention to question 12.

11. Events
• Second “out of district” parent get together at La Provence, 6 attendees, including 4 board members and 3 community members was a success last week
• Next event February 25th
• Sub-committee met last week to discuss:
  * What is our recommendation for a “big social” & build off of the January Basic Rights well attended event?
  * Sub committee is forming opinions and ideas, rather than making decisions at this time
  * Discussion on casual events, inclusive of post-Business meeting drinks invitation to the community
  * Suggestion on evening events that everyone can attend

12. Heather Mahoney date for Transition to be determined
13. Meeting adjourned