Concord and CCHS SEPAC Business Meeting

November 6, 2015
9:30-11:00
Concord Library, Main Conference Room
www.concordsepac.org
concordsepac@gmail.com

Attendees:
Mary Tambor
Becky Robichaud
Aiyana Currie
Heather Tunnicliffe

Action items:
1. Future board meetings to be taken in line with agenda
2. Mary to resend board meeting schedule so that we can better align schedules with openings
3. Becky to check with Attorney General on whether we can take the online certification for open meeting law before we are officially sworn in
4. Becky to include new document on google site that outlines communication framework
5. Add a volunteer page to our website – Jessica
6. Put together a survey to review offline or at next Board meeting – Tali/networking committee

1. Open meeting
   Meeting opened at 9:33

2. Review and approval of previous minutes
   Done, inclusive of Becky’s edits

3. Correspondence to share
   • Regarding Open Meeting laws with Town, School Committee last appointed a SEPAC in 2003, confirmed SEPAC needs to be part of Open Meeting law. Unclear whether we need to each be certified on the online open meeting law & whether we need to be sworn in. Next steps School Committee will meet to discuss in their November or December meeting.
   • Going forward Donna will be sending agendas to Town Clerk, along with other organizations to notify

4. New items for discussion
   • Open Meeting Law update, see above under correspondence
• Board position nominations (Publicity), add emails to: concordsepac google group email, still in need of Secretary
  o Wait to nominate/vote in Donna for Publicity when she’s able to attend
  o Look to modify board meeting dates/times to include Shaina, potentially allow her to be secretary

• Suggestions/Feedback on upcoming meeting with elementary principals on November 20th (site based management of special needs services, how do they explain to parents the team teaching model, communication with SEPAC/reviving liaison role, how can principals help with awareness of SEPAC and recruitment of volunteers, as well as mission for parents to see that what benefits kids on IEPs benefits all kids?)
  o Frame the meeting w goals & questions
  o Discuss Disability day
  o Send topics to Jessica in advance, to supply to principals in advance

• SEPAC presence on new superintendent search - update from Becky
  o Discussion with Johanna Boynton (School Committee) via email, plan to include SEPAC as their search committee plan forward

• Process for reviewing all postings to “public” (publicity), focus on compliance with Open Meeting Law
  o Mary to discuss with Donna to be sure that we are compliant
  o Becky provided framework of communication with parents vs administration

• Take a look at Acton/Boxborough SEPAC volunteer page
  o www.abspedpac.org/about-us/volunteer, as an example
  o Add a line item in the May/June newsletter as well as potential item for the PTG documents sent home to parents

• Chair reports/updates
  • Events follow-up – transition (Heather Mahoney will present a proposed 3-part workshop series), Parent Social in May, other locations such as CCHS, co-sponsoring events with PTG, Center for Parents and Teachers workshop series
    o Heather will run the workshops, co-sponsored w the districts, first offered in March 2016, to include introduction to the law, etc.
    o Second meeting to include redacted IEPs for education, workshop, including aging out of the school support
    o Heather will write a description for us to circulate
    o Gap to have someone spearhead possible future resource fair
    o Basic Rights meeting still needs a location
Sally Quinn Reed at last PTG meeting to email information about workshop for parents recently diagnosed

- Networking: survey, OOD outreach to parents
  - Heather received 8 interested people for the OOD parent support group, meeting dates to be determined as next steps
  - Networking update – see addendum
    - Board voted to move forward in creating a survey inclusive of the first 5 areas on listed on the addendum
    - Question for networking committee: whether different surveys need to be created for each group grade levels (Elem/Middle/HS)

- Budget proposal draft
  - Reviewed/edited budget proposal
  - Next steps to review w Jessica Murphy

- Fundraising ideas, including possible grants, Friends of the PAC
  - Tabled for next meeting

- Becky’s updates
  - After school activities run in combination by the middle school & PTG, Becky will research how OOD parents get involved with after school sports (school)
  - School Committee to begin a study: CASE, LABB, & EDCO to study whether they can pool resources
  - Support group at church
  - Disability Awareness Day at schools, Becky sent additional information, done to create empathy, spread awareness, need to determine Principal buy-in and therefore PTG assistance & scope, next steps to get Principal buy-in

- Public Comments
  - None recorded

- Technology update
  - Website form checked
  - One year contract for website renewed

- Action Items (voting), tabled for the following meeting
  - Decision on posting our finalized goals on website
  - Next Meeting: Perception of Special Education in general, stigmas, privacy concerns – and how those affect SEPAC in terms of participation, attendance, etc., update on Principal Meeting

- Meeting adjourned at 11:06AM

Addendum: Networking sub-committee update

Networking Subcommittee – October 13, 2015
We met today to discuss two future initiatives: the creation of a survey to distribute to parents of children on an IEP and the creation of a new networking group to connect out-of-district families.

**Survey:** We discussed whether a comprehensive survey could be used in lieu of the proposed Advise-the-Advisor event. Using the AB-SPED PAC survey as a model (see: http://abspedpac.org/reports/parentguardian-surveys/), the survey could be used to collect information about key concerns in our district. In addition, if a similar survey is used in subsequent years, it can also allow the SEPAC to monitor and report on improvements or declines in parents’ perceptions. For example, the 2011 AB SpED PAC survey included questions that assessed opinions in the following 6 areas:

1. School and Parent Partnership – This section generally focused on communication between parents, the special education child’s Team and school Administrators.
2) Initial Assessment & the IEP – This section probed parents’ experiences with initial special education assessment and the IEP development process.
3) IEP Services & Progress Reporting – This section focused on the scheduling and delivery of special education services outside the classroom and the effectiveness of progress reporting.
4) Teachers and Administrators – This section asked questions about parents’ experiences with SpEd administration, principals, regular classroom teachers, SpEd assistants, communication with those persons, and parents’ access to the classroom.
5) Quality & Provision of Services – This section focused on communication with special education staff, the classroom environment, and the scheduling and delivery of special education services outside the classroom.
6) Bullying – This section asked questions about the schools’ bullying prevention programs.

Several of these areas were also assessed in a 2008 survey. Thus, the SpED PAC reported on how attitudes and services had changed or remained the same across these years.

**Pros of using this survey to assess current attitudes in our district relative to the Advise-the-Advisor evening:**

1. Likely to get more responses with an anonymous survey that people can complete on their own time. More responses = more representative sample. Also ensuring that all people can attend (rather than morning vs night events) also increases the likelihood that we will be able to assess attitudes across a wide range of parents in different schools and of different ages.
2. Gives us a way to quantify the attitudes in our district, highlight areas for the SEPAC and schools to work on, and measure progress in these areas.
3. We can assess a broader range of areas with direct questions as well as open-ended questions.

Cons of using this survey to assess current attitudes in our district relative to the Advise-the-Advisor evening:
1. Ensuring that parents know that survey responses will remain anonymous (though fear of lack of anonymity seems like it could be an even bigger problem with the Advise-the-Advisor event).
2. Finding a way for participants to submit the survey through a secure website.
3. Finding a way for participants to get the survey without it seeming as if it is coming from the schools/Jessica Murphy. Tali will contact the AB SpED PAC to determine how they distributed their survey.

As with the Advise-the-Advisor event, we would still need to convince parents to participate. We discussed the possibility of having an incentive for completing the survey. We also discussed the need to keep the survey not as lengthy as the AB SpED PAC survey (that survey included 46 questions, a number of open-ended questions, and demographic questions (eg, questions about diagnosis, school child attends, age of child, etc).

We are thinking we should assess 5 areas in our survey. Areas to be discussed and voted on in our next board meeting. The goal would be to distribute this survey in February/March. This should give sufficient time to analyze data before a presentation to the School Committee.

**Networking group:** We determined that we should draft an email for Jessica to distribute solely to out-of-district families to assess whether there is interest in a morning coffee or evening get-together, parents only (no kids). We will ask Heather if she is interested in leading this event, contingent upon responses.

Relatedly, we discussed whether we should have SEPAC representatives that liaise with each school (e.g., meet with principals, attend School Committee meetings) and, if so, how we would go about doing this. These liaisons would spearhead their respective networking group in the future.