

Concord Public and Concord-Carlisle Regional Open Meeting Minutes – January 7, 2015

Board Members in attendance:

Aiyana Currie, SEPAC Technology Coordinator

Tali Ditman, SEPAC Membership Coordinator

Rebecca Robichaud, SEPAC Co-President

Mary Tambor, SEPAC Co-President

- I. Open Meeting: Mary opened the meeting at 9:30AM and introduced the agenda. In addition to the board, one SEPAC member and one School Committee member were in attendance. It was decided that board members should contact Mary 1-2 weeks prior to the next meeting in order to incorporate new items into the agenda. Board unanimously agreed with this timeframe. Board briefly reviewed open meeting rules; all board members understand that any communication involving policy decisions remain open to the public.
- II. Board reviewed and approved December 1, 2014 minutes. Future minutes will be distributed to the board via google docs. Board will read and review the minutes prior to meeting but will only communicate about the minutes at the next meeting.
- III. Chair reports/updates:
 - a. Several board positions remain open. The SEPAC is currently looking for a Co-Secretary, a Publicity Coordinator, a Treasurer, and volunteers to help with Parent Networking groups. Mary volunteered to draft a letter advertising these open positions. This advertisement, as well as future advertisements, will be posted in/on the following sources: Concord Public and Concord-Carlisle Regional SEPAC Facebook page, Concord SEPAC website Acton Unlimited, Concord Journal, Carlisle Mosquito, Principal and PTG newsletters, and the high school newsletter. Announcements will also be sent to Jessica Murphy for distribution to all families with children on IEPs. The board agreed that the dissemination of future announcements will be the responsibility of the future Publicity Coordinator.
 - b. Bylaws, which are posted on the new Concord SEPAC website, were reviewed. Becky and Mary explained that previous bylaws to be similar to SEPAC bylaws in neighboring towns. The bylaws contain information about the board, voting, and membership.
 - c. Membership Coordinator updates: Tali provided an update about membership numbers. The SEPAC has approximately 70 members. The board discussed the creation of parent networking groups (previously referred to as parent support groups), which would involve having four groups: a group for parents of elementary school students, parents of middle school students, parents of high school students, and parents of out of district students. Each of these groups would have a parent volunteer, who would attend the groups. It was agreed that Tali would coordinate the volunteers. One parent who attended the meeting expressed interest in being a volunteer for the out of district parent group. The parent networking groups will meet in the Ripley Conference room, with the possibility of being hosted in a volunteer's house, if they would like. Concerns about childcare during the parent networking groups were raised by a parent in attendance. The option of looking into high school students who might be interested in watching children during these events was discussed and it was agreed that Becky would contact Martha Hammer to determine if CCHS students would be able to provide childcare. The idea of having a facilitator at these events

was discussed. Finally, the idea of planning a family social event was met with enthusiasm. This event will be planned by Joanne and Tali.

- d. Technology Coordinator updates: Aiyana unveiled the new SEPAC website (concordsepac.org). It was met with a lot of enthusiasm and praise for its organization, layout, and content. Becky agreed to inform other districts of the new website and Jessica Murphy would send an announcement to her list of parents to inform them of the new website. Several updates/edits were suggested: the new district bullying policy should be updated to the website; A disclaimer should be added to website pages that contain "parent-recommended" therapies, doctors, and other providers. The disclaimer should state that "The SEPAC does not endorse these providers..." A parent at the meeting stated that she will send more information to Aiyana regarding specific providers.
- e. Event Coordinator updates: Joanne was not present so Becky presented her updates. The following events are coming up:
 - i. Basic Rights Workshop presented by Marjorie Walsh from 7-9PM on January 12th in Conference Room 1 in the Ripley Building.
 - ii. SEPAC Coffee and PARCC Presentation presented by Kristin Herbert and Jessica Murphy at 9:30AM in Conference Room 1 in the Ripley Building. It was noted that Jessica Murphy does not oversee the administration of the PARCC and instead the Principals in each school are in charge of the implementation of PARCC accommodations. The equitability of the distribution of services across the different schools (particularly at the elementary school level) was discussed.
 - iii. Meeting with Peter Badalament, Principal of Concord-Carlisle High School, and Tom Keane, Special Education Department Chair and Head Teacher of Pathways Program, from 7-8:30PM on February 2nd.
 - iv. Social Thinking presentation by Nancy Clements from Social Thinking Boston from 7-9PM on March 2nd.
 - v. Presentation regarding Ripley Playscape presented by Jennifer Saxe from 9:30-11AM on May 6th in the Ripley Conference Room.

IV. Correspondence to share:

- a. Next SEPAC open meeting scheduled for 9:30-11AM on February 4th in the Concord Library Conference Room.
- b. Meetings between Jessica Murphy and the Co-Presidents are now scheduled once every other month rather than once a month.

V. New items for discussion:

- a. Joanne had several ideas for future SEPAC talks/events.
 - i. Invite a nutritionist to give a talk. Mary may have a nutritionist who would be willing to give a talk.
 - ii. Invite a Concord Police Office (e.g., Officer Scott) to discuss topics such as online safety and bullying as well as police relationships with children with special needs. All agreed that this would be a helpful and informative talk that parents would be interested in hearing.
 - iii. Invite Sarah Ward to discuss executive function. The challenge is that this talk will be expensive and the SEPAC does not have any funds. Alternatively, Mary suggested that we could invite a neuropsychologist in Concord to deliver this

talk. Tali said she would speak with an OT in the area who has expertise in executive function.

- b. Mary wondered whether the SEPAC should draft a letter to the FINCOM (Finance Committee) regarding the recently debated potential cuts of social workers in the schools. It was agreed that a letter should be drafted on behalf of the SEPAC by the Co-Presidents about this issue and also that SEPAC members address the committee at the next Town Meeting in April regarding this issue.

VI. Public Comments.

- a. Mental health in middle school children was discussed. Concerns were raised about substance abuse, risky behaviors, suicidal thoughts/depression in children. School Committee Member Wally Johnstin recommended that a SEPAC representative join the Substance Abuse Program, alongside Jennifer Clark and Chief O'Connor. Erin, a SEPAC member, expressed some interest in this role.
- b. Concern was raised about out of district children being invited to school events. It was noted that out of district students are allowed to attend any event held by their zoned school. In response to this, a family social SEPAC event was suggested (see IIIc above). Aiyana suggested discussing how to make school events accessible to all children with the PTG.

VII. No voting items were presented.

VIII. Meeting adjourned at 11AM.