



Special Education Parent Advisory Council Minutes

February 1, 2016 Meeting
Barnstable-West Barnstable Elementary School

Attendance Head Count: 12 including officers, parents, and district personnel; 4 children in Child Care.

SEPAC Business Meeting

Vice-President Kathy Bent called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m., welcomed everyone, and expressed appreciation to Principal Karen Cloutier for hosting the meeting. Introductions were made.

Kathy noted purpose of the meeting is to gather input for improving special education to submit to the district administration. She reminded everyone of that nominations for 2016-17 SEPAC officers would be accepted at the March 8 meeting and that four members-at-large were new positions (based on the ByLaws approved at the January meeting). Information about the nominations are on a handout on the information table and on the website. Nominations will be accepted from people who cannot attend the March meeting if emailed by March 8 (barnstablesepac@gmail.com). Voting will be at the April 7 meeting.

Meeting with Administration

President Jeannie Randall and Vice President Kathy Bent met with Dr. Jezard, School Committee Chair Margeaux Weber, and Interim Superintendent Bill Butler on January 19. Copies of the SEPAC minutes were shared as well as additional concerns that were brought to their attention from parents. Dr. Jezard commented that without more information there is not much that can be done to address the concerns since each case is individual. She encourages parents to bring their concerns directly to her if they cannot be addressed during Team meetings.

A request for information from the recently received report on special education programs was made. Dr. Jezard indicated that a consultant has been hired to assist her with providing this information and who will also help follow-up on specific items in the report. No timeframe for when this information will be provided was given.

Both Margeaux Weber and Bill Butler requested that we convey comments from parents regarding what is working with Special Education in the District so that these practices can be continued. We assured them that all comments we receive from parents are documented in the minutes if mentioned at a SEPAC meeting and are noted if received outside of the meetings.

SEPAC will continue to keep track of various concerns to see whether or not it appears to be an isolated situation or if it is presenting as a concern for more than one parent/guardian.

Parents were encouraged to check the website often for updates and event announcements.

Comments/Suggestions from Parents Included:

- Dr. Jezard reported that a consultant from the 3-21 Foundation was hired. Maureen Blazejewski, Education Director from the Mass Down Syndrome Congress was assigned to work with the District.

- A parent requested help with her 3rd-grade student who seems behind in reading – new to the District and the student was formerly in Title 1 reading – not exceptionally far behind but below grade level – Dr. Jezard suggested asking classroom teacher to determine what help he can be given. Jane explained the process if a classroom teacher felt additional testing might be necessary. MTSS initiative provides some additional support for reading.
- Kathleen Fulginiti, the webmaster for the SEPAC website, encouraged all to visit and *Like* the Facebook page – this is a public page which means you do not need to have a Facebook account to view it. A link is provided on the SEPAC website.
- A suggestion was made to have Principal newsletters and PTA newsletters communicate SEPAC meetings and website/Facebook information. Kathy Bent will reach out to PTAs to see if they can include meeting and website information.
- **Comment forms are available at each meeting and on the SEPAC website for those parents who cannot make meetings or who prefer to submit comments anonymously.**

REMINDERS → Child care is available at every meeting. Again this year SEPAC has a rotating schedule (both days of the week and building sites—remember to check the schedule carefully on the SEPAC website--www.barnstablesepac.com).

Exceptional Lives

Jay O'Brien, Hillary Dolinsky, and TJ Loughlin from *Exceptional Lives* gave a brief overview of *Exceptional Lives* organization and an introduction to the free online Guides available to lead parents step-by-step through complex processes, such as how to: create an effective IEP, optimize health insurance, apply for SSI, and understand guardianship. Parents and staff spent time reviewing a Guide of their choice.

Parents interested in reviewing one of the Guides and providing feedback to Exceptional Lives can receive a \$25 Amazon gift card for providing feedback when finished. Visit www.ExceptionalLives.org for more information.

Announcements

The next meeting is 5:45 on Tuesday, March 8 at Barnstable Intermediate School (895 Falmouth Road, [Route 28], Hyannis). **Nominations for 2016-17 SEPAC Officers will occur.** The presentation, *Navigating ADHD*, begins at 6:30.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Bent