

Nashoba Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC)

Business Meeting

Tues. Sept. 28, 2021

7 p.m. (via Google Meet)

Present: Charlene Cabral, Jenny Blounts, Michele Powell, Jackie Spataro, Christine Collins, Frances Morgan, Maureen Mazzone, Marion King, Alicia Frigon, Elaine Carder, Heather Mahall, Jacquelyn Reinert, Joanna Miller, Kaitlyn Smith, Katherine Giannetti, Leslie Leslie (FCSN), Liz AlJammal, Kelly Richards, Michelle Contey, Natalie Martins, Nicole Tomas, Pamela Duggan, Sara Salamone, Theresa Hoberman, Courtney Stevens, Chris Hogan, Lisa Anderson, Kate Larrabee, Ms. Alano, Augusta Costa, Joseph Gleason

Meeting Minutes (taken by Jenny Blounts)

- I. WELCOME CALL TO ORDER
 - The Chair will not be monitoring or responding to the chat
 - Reminder that anyone who is interested is a member; there is no special recognition of membership. All are welcome at the meeting.
 - Roll Call

- II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES from 5/25
 - Pam Duggan moved to approve minutes; Jenny Blounts seconded
 - Minutes approved by 24 (majority) votes

- III. COMMUNICATIONS AND REQUESTS 10 mins
 - A) **Time Keeper:** Request has been made to have a volunteer from tonight's participation act as timekeeper for present meeting only.
 - Alicia Frigon will be time-keeping
 - We are expected to keep this meeting to 90 minutes
 - B) **Communication from Maynard SEPAC**
 - Maynard is interested in partnering with the Nashoba SEPAC in holding/funding events
 - Other local SEPACs are interested as well
 - C) **Resignation of Colleen Goldstein** dated September 23, 2021
 - Officially resigning as Social Media coordinator
 - D) **Request from Administration for SEPAC collaboration in Special Ed Survey and IEP Exit Survey**
 - This will help administrators to recognize what is and is not happening according to special ed procedures
 - There will be a SEPAC subcommittee to work on this

E) Communication from SEPAC Liaison to School Committee

Brett Collins

- Mr. Collins is in another meeting and will try to attend after his meeting
- One concern is that it is difficult to arrange schedules/meetings because of the different towns/schools
- The Chair has asked Mr. Collins to put forth to the SC and SI to have two calendars added to the District website: 1. A disability awareness calendar; 2. A district-wide calendar to unify the district and find out when events are happening
- Mr. Collins says the SI loved the idea and is planning to overhaul the entire website to make it more user-friendly; these two ideas will be worked into that

F) Communication from SEPAC members seeking to establish Meeting Norms or Protocols

- Reading of meeting norms (see below) [submitted by SEPAC members Jackie Spataro and Rachel Balian]
- Charlene is working with the individual schools to make sure that their websites lead to the same SEPAC information
- Point of Information from Pam Duggan: are these being voted on? Pam moves to vote to abide by these proposed meeting norms (only for tonight's meeting); Christine Collins seconded it. No one in disagreement—unanimously in favor of meeting protocols/norms.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Proposed for Business meeting of September 28, 2021

MEETING RULES, NORMS AND PROTOCOLS

1. NRSD Sepac operates under current By-laws and Robert's Rules of Order

B. Meeting attendants are expected to:

1) Abide by rules (above)

2) Respect everyone's time by abiding by time limits

3) One party speaks at a time within their time limit and balance participation with active listening.

4) Stick to agenda. Off agenda items may be "parked" until end of meeting if time allows. Any concerns, thoughts, ideas or requests for agenda items may be submitted by email to: nashobasepac@nrds.net. If you have concerns that you do not wish to put in writing, simply email the best way to communicate with you (ie: phone number) and someone from the SEPAC team will contact you.

IV. REPORTS

- A) **Report from the Rep from Stow** (Jenny Blounts)
- Communicating information about meetings and workshops to building principals at Center and Hale for inclusion in newsletters, etc.
 - Maureen Mazzone (Stow PTO fundraising chair) has expressed an interest in partnering with the SEPAC.
- B) **Report from the Rep from Lancaster** (Christine Collins)
- Communication with Building Principals at Elementary and Middle Schools (dates, events, meetings, etc.) to include on Bulletins, etc.
 - Table at 9/14 Open House at Luther Burbank to share information with parents
 - Lancaster PTO meeting tomorrow (9/29) at 6:30 via Zoom
- C) **Report from the Rep from Bolton** (Pam Duggan)
- Pam has been in frequent communication with principal at Florence Sawyer/Emerson—adding things to the newsletter
 - Two parent open houses
 - Early Rise program switched rooms, which impacted some special education students (a concern has been raised, but no specifics yet)
 - PAC meeting is the 2nd Tuesday of each month, which conflicts with SEPAC meetings
- D) **Report from the High School Rep** (Michele Powell)
- Introduced to new principal
 - Will attend Open House this Thursday and will spread information and meet people
- E) Report from SEPAC Liaison to School Committee Brett Collins
- Not in attendance; may give report later
- F) **Report from the Chair**
- 4th Week of the year; 4th SEPAC event
 - SEPAC is here to listen: setting up listening sessions and support groups—open to all SEPAC members, but particularly to parents of children on IEPs and 504s
 - If you aren't comfortable sharing in these settings, you can email Charlene; if you don't want to put concerns in writing, you can just send your name/number/time to reach you.
 - We will give more information for reaching town reps
 - Survey given pre-Covid shows that parents want support groups, socials, and information sessions

- We will be providing these things this year; opportunities will be provided to address concerns, share resources, etc.
- We need to expand this network of parents helping parents; great opportunity to work together; parents who are determined and passionate
- Let's unify and work together/collaboratively.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A) **SE PAC Treasurer Position**

- We voted Michele Powell as Treasurer in the spring, but there isn't a Treasurer position in the by-laws
- (per the Chair) We have no money anyway, so there is no need to have a Treasurer
- Pam asked for "point of order"--can we resolve the Treasurer issue?
- Charlene replies that Leslie Leslie of FCSN recommends that we fix the by-laws before electing new officers
- Leslie is recognized to speak: she does not see a position for Treasurer in the by-laws.
- Pam asked for the floor, was not given the floor, and was interrupted by Leslie.

B) **Election of Vacant Offices**

- Request for interest in running for 2nd chair
- Michele Powell is interested in 2nd chair position
- Leslie requests to speak:
 - There is a conflict in the by-laws between Section 1 and the Section about elected positions
 - Current by-laws have conflicting provisions
 - Under "elected positions" there is an opening for 2nd Chair
 - Conflict cannot be resolved tonight
- Joseph Gleason asks to speak--conflicts are related to town reps/PAC reps; high school rep is excluded. Would it be appropriate to fill the co-chair position. Mr. Gleason motions to accept Michele as nominee for 2nd chair.
- Question from Frances Morgan--if Michele becomes co-chair, she vacates other seats; do we vote on those seats?
- Charlene clarifies that there is no Treasurer position. Asks for motion to rescind the position of treasurer.
- Mr. Gleason moves to rescind position of treasurer; Cristine Collins seconds.
- No discussion on the issue.
- 20 vote in favor to rescind Treasurer position--majority.
- Mr. Gleason moves to nominate Michele Powell for 2nd chair position; Christine Collins seconds the nomination.

- Powell is voted in as 2nd Chair (term of office is until the next annual election–spring meeting) by 21 votes (majority).
 - Marion King asks what other seats are unfilled.
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- Question as to whether there are open positions for Town reps (the by-laws are unclear on the issue; it says a representative from each of the 3 towns, but it also says that there would ideally be two from each town).
 - Pam's point of order: Chair is engaging in debate, which is not allowed.
 - Frances Morgan questions why we are debating by-laws now.
 - Charlene clarifies that there is not plan to change the by-laws today—we want a sub-group to work on creating new by-laws; suggestion that we clarify the by-laws
 - Leslie points out that the agenda for this meeting states that there will be an election of officers.
 - Point of order from Pam Duggan; not recognized by the Chair.
 - Charlene asks Ms. Leslie—do we move forward with the elections as they are in the agenda or vote to change the agenda?
 - Leslie clarifies again: we move forward with the agenda, unless there is a movement by the body
 - Nomination of Pam Duggan as Social Media Coordinator; nominated by Nicole Tomas; seconded by Michelle Contey
 - Jacquelyn Reinert volunteers to run for social media manager; nominated by Joseph Gleason; seconded by Courtney Stevens.
 - Pam Duggan: 15 votes
 - Jacquelyn Reinert: 10 votes
 - Pam voted in as Social Media Coordinator by a majority.
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- Alicia expresses interest in Stow PAC/PTO liaison; moved to nominate by Joanna Miller; seconded by Michele Powell.
 - Alicia is voted in as Stow PAC/PTO Liaison for Stow
 - Joseph Gleason—point of information; how will we address the issue that the by-laws call for various town reps/high school reps, but the Executive Committee is only 2 officers and one town rep (ie, who will serve on the Executive Committee?). Mr. Gleason recommends we stop voting to clarify by-laws before filling any more positions.
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- No nominees for PAC/PTO liaison for town of Bolton
 - Pam Duggan moves to change voting on PAC/PTO liaison for Bolton to the next business meeting; seconded by Michele P. Voted by majority to move voting on PAC/PTO liaison for Bolton to next meeting.
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- Christine Collins expresses interest in PAC/PTO rep for town of Lancaster; Joseph Gleason nominates Ms. Collins and Michele P. seconds; Christine Collins is voted as PAC/PTO liaison for Lancaster

C) Official SEPAC Facebook Page Vote

- Charlene reports a desire on the part of parents that the official SEPAC page not include sponsors and “other people”—it should only be for only voting members (ie, parents of children on IEPs and 504s). Because the by-laws indicate that “interested parties” can be part of general membership, which makes everyone a voting member.
- Misconception that the official SEPAC Facebook page would be only for parents.
- Pam asks for clarification—what are we voting on?
- Charlene asks if the membership wants to vote on tabling a vote on the Facebook page, but Facebook is changing some of their rules about groups/pages. Charlene does not have enough information about these changes.
- Pam moves to remove item C from tonight’s agenda; Michele seconds it. Majority approves removal of this item about Facebook from tonight’s agenda.

D) Creation of Subcommittees

- Marion King moves to remove section D from the agenda due to the meeting ending in 8 minutes and to delay it until next meeting; Frances Morgan seconds it.
- Discussion:
 - Mr. Gleason wants to know why we would delay creating the subcommittees.
 - Frances Morgan points out that the meeting is almost over.
 - Charlene says we are not out of time.
 - 10 vote to table until next meeting.
 - 11 vote not to table until next meeting.
 - Motion to delay does not pass.
- Mr. Gleason moves to create all of the subcommittees; seconded by Christine.
- Majority (21) votes to create the subcommittees.
- Pam Duggan moves to change the wording of ii from “Services” to “Planning”—no opposition
 - Creation of Ad hoc Subcommittee to compile questions for two surveys and Data requests from the District
 - Creation of Standing Subcommittee to work on Transition Services [changed to “Planning”]
 - Creation of Standing Subcommittee to work on evidence based remediation for specific learning challenges with first focus to be: Dyslexia/Reading & Literacy Instruction in the District
 - Creation of Standing Subcommittee on Unified Sports and Activities
 - Creation of Standing Subcommittee on Disability Awareness
 - Creation of Ad hoc Subcommittee to review bylaws

VI.

ANNOUNCEMENTS 6 mins

1. NRSD SEPAC Website

- i) SEPAC ALLSTARS Cert.--print and give to your special educator.
- ii) Greater Mass Special Needs Events
- iii) New Resource materials and additional SEPAC documents have been posted (and will continue to be posted)

2. Upcoming Presentations

- i) Transitions Presentation by the Federation of Children with Special Needs--October 5, 2021 at 7; Please register online
- ii) Cognitive Connections: Executive Function virtual presentation by Sarah Ward March 28, 2022 at 7pm--Save the Date
- iii) Five other events are being scheduled -- dates are pending:
 - Anxiety Presentation by Dr. Cutillo of the Few Center
 - 2 Part Focus on Reading/Literacy Series: Neurology of Reading by Nancy Duggan of Decoding Dyslexia; Reading comprehension strategies by Kate Kerrigan Wang
 - NRSD Transitions Program by Cheryl Gallagher
 - Question and Answer Virtual Meet with Superintendent Kirk Downing

- Point of order from Pam Duggan--Charlene did not ask if there was any New Business.
- Charlene asks if there is any new business.
- Pam asks if Frances would like to move to add her referendum; the SC supports having it in the agenda for the next business meeting. The Chair states that this would be out of order.
- Next agenda will include Frances Morgan's referendum, per the by-laws.
- Charlene says Robert's Rules determine when the referendum will be voted on
- Leslie Leslie points out that the by-laws have a conflict--look to the AG's office for clarification. The referendum should be put formally on the agenda.
- Charlene points out that the response has been given that the referendum will be at the next meeting; it will be no later than the next business meeting.

3. COMMENTS, CONCERNS, IDEAS email: nashobasepac@nrzd.net

VII. ESTABLISH MEETING DATES: 5 mins (The following are Proposed dates)

- Jackie Spataro asks if website will be updated; Charlene says that is the district's job
- Jackie Spataro points out website says the SEPAC sends out a monthly newsletter, but we do not. Charlene points out we haven't done it in a while.
- Charlene will contact the district about updating websites, etc.
- Marion King asks if Mr. Gleason is here to represent anyone? Mr. Gleason responds that he is here as a parent of a child on an IEP in the NRSD.

- Michelle Contey comments on the hostility of the meeting and wonders how we can work with the district when the members of SEPAC cannot work together.
- Kate Larrabee points out the disdain she has observed in the meeting; disheartening. Feels it is an unfriendly group.
- Charlene points out that there are “groups” who do not want to work with the district, but Charlene is trying to include everyone and says she will work for everyone. People should remove agendas that are not aligned with the SEPAC; the SEPAC mission is to work collaboratively.
- Marion King asks about a letter that was written by parents to the Superintendent; will Charlene, as Chair, address those concerns with the SI/SC. Charlene responds that there will be a virtual listening session on the second Tuesday of October. She invites people to attend and express their concerns. Ms. King points out that the PRS complaints would include details. Charlene points out that she does not want to interfere with parents’ issues with the district, unless they explicitly ask her to.
- Marion King is the VP of SpedWatch and assists the group called Nashoba Parents for Special Education Change—SpedWatch’s purpose is “nonviolent direct action”; parents in the district came to her instead of to Charlene/the SEPAC. Charlene is offering the listening session to allow parents to express their concerns.

A) Next Business Meeting: 4th Tues of Oct 2021

B) Next Social =Virtual Listening/Support Session: 2nd Tues of Oct 2021

Pam requests to move the social to the 3rd Tuesday of October to keep it consistent.

VIII. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn by Michele P.; seconded by Jackie Spataro.