

**Manchester –Essex Regional Special Education Parent Advisory Council**

**MINUTES OF: MERSD SEPAC**

**PRESENT:** Susan Beckmann, Allison Collins, Cynthia Beauregard, Kathy Quill, Kim Egan, Ashley Sartell, Mimi Locke, Bernadette Ruth, Jennifer Tolo

**DATE:** 01-12-15 Meeting opened at 6:30 PM. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

**LOCATION:** MERSD Special Ed. Conference Room

SUBJECT/TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION/RECOMMENDATION
1. Minutes of previous meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes were reviewed from 11/10/14</li> <li>• There were no minutes from 12/14 sub-committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mimi made a motion to approve minutes.</li> <li>• Cynthia seconded it.</li> <li>• Minutes approved.</li> </ul>
2. Discussion of speaker for SEPAC workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group discussed the radio interview between Jen Tolo and Dr. Lynn Lyons, one of the authors of “Anxious Kids Anxious Parents”</li> <li>• Jen Tolo discussed pros of this workshop speaker vs. panel discussion</li> <li>• Mimi Locke recommended accessing funds from MERSD Parent PTO Groups and also the MERSD Health Advisory Board.</li> <li>• Workshop costs estimated at \$1100</li> <li>• Emphasis on tools for parents and families</li> <li>• Dr. Collins indicated that another district (SPED Director of MASCO) used and was impressed by the speaker</li> <li>• “Anxiety and Stress: How to Stop the Worry Cycle” – topic title</li> <li>• Looking at date of Monday March 23rd</li> <li>• Cynthia discussed the benefits of having the mental health school personnel available during/after the workshop for parent and student follow-up</li> <li>• Susan emphasizes the importance of everyone hearing the same message</li> <li>• Dr. Collins said that personnel can be invited</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jen Tolo will try to schedule Dr. Lynn Lyons for Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> 6:30-8:30pm or another date in late March or early April (also include a SNOW DATE)</li> <li>• Jen Tolo will get information for the board to determine the best audience for the evening (parents, teachers, students, community)</li> <li>• Dr. Collins will speak with Avi about the process for setting up an account for SEPAC and other funding sources – discussion with the Principals</li> <li>• Local fundraising requests to PTO will be done by Mimi Locke (middle school) and Jen Tolo (Essex and Manchester elementary)</li> <li>• Ashley will take the lead with Marketing (flyers, local paper, school newspaper; emails to neighboring towns) will include cost \$10 per ticket</li> </ul>
3. Social-Emotional Needs of students in the district	<p>* Dr. Collins discussed number of students in the district who are at risk for social-emotional-behavioral challenges. Dr. Collins is examining the need to use the “Youth Risk Behavior Survey” to better address their social-emotional needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• . None at this time</li> </ul>
4. Parent Survey on Support Groups	<p>* Dr. Collins reported that there is only 1 data point on Survey Monkey online site – problem with the link</p> <p>* Susan suggested that the survey be completed at the spring event workshop</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey will be made available at the spring event</li> </ul>

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<p>5. Disability Awareness Starts Here (DASH)</p>	<p>* Bernadette Ruth spoke about DASH – a program of disability awareness for grades 2-6 – parents volunteer to assist with implementation – one example, 5<sup>th</sup> graders experienced various AAC devices and watched a video about a student with physical disabilities – parents take a short course to learn about DASH and work with a DASH coordinator through Tri-Town Regional School District</p> <p>* Note: February 5<sup>th</sup> Kids on the Block Puppet Program will be done for Pre-K to grade 5 at Memorial School</p> <p>* The DASH program is a large time commitment for SEPAC and may be of interest to the MERSD administrative council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bernadette Ruth will speak to the MERSD Administrative Council about DASH to determine (a) interest and (b) identify how to embed into the elementary schools curriculum</li></ul>
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