

Manchester –Essex Regional Special Education Parent Advisory Council

MEETING: MERSD SEPAC

DATE: November 14, 2016

LOCATION: Community Center in Manchester

ATTENDEES: Kari Faller, Jen Flanigan, Sara Polese Reineman, Tracey Quade, Allison Collins (Peter, Lolly?, Lauren, Jory, Bonnie)

RECORDED BY: Tracey Quade

SUBJECT/TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION/RECOMMENDATION
1. MOTION TO OPEN MEETING.	Motion to open meeting made by Kari- Seconded by Tracey	Meeting opened at 6:20.
2. Plan speaker for 12-14-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kari to confirm if Sophia can speak in December, as she had been previously postponed. Jen discussed having someone from Tufts to speak on a homework program • Overall, members agree to follow general outline of calendar of events that other SEPACS follow in regards to national exposure/awareness each month for specific topics when possible • Discussed idea of opening up speakers for everyone to attend, having a broader audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophia has since been confirmed on as speaker for 12-14-16
3. Review of MCAS scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jen presented partial breakdown of scores of 4th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students with disabilities. Expressed concerns of downward trend of scores • Allison reflects that MCAS is not the major focus, the focus is on whole child. Allison appreciates concerns stated. Purpose of SPED is not to attain MCAS scores but to increase skills targeted by the IEP. Allison shared MERSD strong state rankings in the number of students with disabilities scoring advanced and proficient in grades 5 and 8 for math, ELA, and science. • Jen reports DART analysis is a helpful tool to compare information between different towns that are similar. • Discussed importance of being transparent, and thinking of ways to give these students support through different homework clubs or a speaker on executive functioning • Kari asks whether MCAS scores are best gauge to tell how 	

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	<p>our children or other children are doing</p>	
<p>4. Following National Calendar of Events</p>	<p>Kari: We will follow guideline every other month as we are able (discussed earlier in meeting)</p>	
<p>5. Fostering Relationships Between Children in Special Services</p> <hr/> <p>6. Parent Comment and Input</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jen reports the Woburn SEPAC does well in this area• Sarah reports if we start this when kids are younger, more accepting of peers• Cheryl not here today, has expressed interest in expanding this <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bonnie has questions about how to help a student with lower MCAS scores• Discussion about accommodations• Lauren discusses challenges around expectation of 6th graders to become more independent out of elementary school.	

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<p>7. Sub- Committee Reports & Input</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jen states it would be good to have a point person • Kari wonders about presenting a child who is struggling as a "child in crisis" • Allison reports there is a building-based system in place in which teachers discuss concerns for specific children and develop support strategies (TAT) • All-we don't know about it • Jen wonders about peer mentoring • Lolly asks about available counseling for students • Kari reports Dr. Pennoyer is evaluating the whole school, is doing a good job • Lauren suggests drafting a summary of concerns, particularly the 5th-6th grade transitions, supports, and communication between teachers and parents of concerns • Kari suggests taking summary to school committee • Allison recommends bringing concerns to Ms. Maino first 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kari to receive info of speaker from Jory/Jen
<p>8. Website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed reading SEPAC "blurb" to school committee which meets on Tuesday nights • Jen Introduced Jory who discussed idea for a possible speaker regarding Spear 2.0, out of a Tufts research project looking at assisting parents and students in effectively managing homework • Kari and Jen feel this would be a great speaker • Jen reports this speaker would support a broader appeal, wonders about whether earlier in the year would be better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kari to give Jen contact info needed to work on website
<p>9. Newsletter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jen says she and Kari can work on website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kari to contact principal

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<p>10. Reporting to the School Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jen-better to have "3 quick things" per week rather than a big printed piece. Can reach out to Cindy about people being able to opt in. • Kari-can piggy -back on principal’s newsletter, our box weekly • Discussed need for collaboration, efficiency. • Kari says committee meetings are open to public • Sarah asks when are the meetings? 7-9? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah to follow up about attending next School Committee Meeting, see who else can come from SEPAC
<p>11. Update on MassPAC membership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kari reports membership is "all set". • Sarah explains as members we have access to free workshops, she attended annual event in March • Kari says you can sign up on school website under special services in order to be informed of available workshops 	
<p>12. Election for Additional Board Member</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kari- there is an empty seat-do we want to vote? • Jen-have to decide if we want to, then send out letter for people to self-nominate • Jen-need for parents of children of different ages. We are coming into mid-year, but it's ok • Kari-if anyone knows of someone who may be interested • We will have a return date of Dec. 5th so that ballots can be due back by Jan 2nd meeting. Results can be emailed to SEPAC members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board agrees to send out letter for self-nomination to fill empty seat • Allison to send out letter this week
<p>13. Parent Comment and Input</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed SEPAC meetings from 6-8, with "meat" of meeting from 630-800 in case people run late. Informal discussion can start at 600. • Allison reports there is a program evaluation at the elementary school level. EDCO is doing the evaluation, they have asked to meet with parents. Time has been set aside for SEPAC at the district office Wednesday December 7th from 830-930am. • This is for both elementary schools. They ask specific questions of the parents. • Kari asks how can we best keep informed about what's happening with the school committee • Sarah-A reminder about what is being discussed-could you give us a heads up about school committee topics? • Allison-they do post their topics on- line • Kari-Sign-up for Pam's weekly news-link 	

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8:00	Kari made a motion to close the meeting. Tracey seconded the motion.	
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