

Concord Public Schools
and
Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)
Wednesday June 3, 2020
7:00-9:00pm
Remote Meeting via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83094412835?pwd=SXpqU2pVNGpLQXNhUVcwWWVxWWN1Zz09>

Meeting ID: 830 9441 2835

Password: 251886

www.concordsepac.org concordsepac@gmail.com

1. Open Meeting at 7:01 p.m. with attendance (see below)

“In accordance with Governor Baker’s executive order permitting virtual meetings during the COVID pandemic, the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is conducting this meeting today, June 3, 2020 at 7:00pm eastern on the Zoom platform and in accordance with the Town’s Policy Directive and Guidelines issued on April 1, 2020 and amended on May 7. I ask that all SEPAC committee members, town staff, and presenters activate their video and mute their microphone unless they have something to say or are participating in committee dialogue. All committee votes will be taken via roll call. We will start with an attendance roll call. I will announce your name, please reply. For members of the public, please unmute yourself when I’ve opened the meeting to public comment.”

2. Approval of minutes from Board Meetings: 01/23/2020; 2/12/2020

Shaina moved to approve the minutes. Seconded. Unanimous approval.

3. Open Board positions beginning July 1, 2020

- Co-President-
- Events Chair -
- Technology Chair-
- Publicity Chair-
- Membership Chair, Sarah Bettencourt nominated by Shaina, seconded by Tali, unanimous vote by all.

4. Board positions for 2020-2021, vote to extend terms for uncontested positions of those able to stay on

- Shaina moved to extend terms for those who have completed serving 3 year terms per SEPAC bylaws.
- Confirmed with each individual for their positions.

- Shaina moved that each person stay on in their terms for one year , it was seconded and there was a unanimous vote.
 - The following individuals will stay on for one more year or until someone else takes over the role sooner: Carol Yelle-Co-President, Helen McKinlay- Publicity Chair, Becky Robichaud-Technology Chair
5. Request for the District to fund the Federation for Children with Special Needs MassPAC Plus membership-
- Carol will get the request to the district later this summer.
6. Phase 4 Task Force Update
- A Superintendent's Re-entry Task Group has been formed with invited participants. SEPAC invited and will be represented by Becky Robichaud
 - There are 4 volunteer working groups under the task force for Operations, Whole Child Support, Blended Learning, and Health and Safety
 - Special Education and High Need students are well represented in the Whole Child Support working group.
 - It is unclear whether the Superintendent's Task Force meetings are open to the public for viewing. Smaller groups are not.
 - Joanne's task force met today, Operations. They brainstormed strengths and weaknesses. The groups meet every other week. The discussion reflected that there will always be changes based on the evolving situation.
 - As far as budget was concerned, the Operations working group stated that the cost doesn't change with students doing remote learning.
 - In Sarah Bettencourt's meeting, she noticed that there was an openness to change education delivery within the culture of the meeting. There was an assumption about blended learning in the fall of 2021.
 - Another piece of the puzzle was hearing that teachers needed to be supported during these changes.
7. CMS New Building Committee Update
- The meetings and the project has been put on hold until August until we can get community input. Sarah and Rebecca will serve as liaisons to the Building committee and will participate in conversations with the committees conversations with the Institute for Human Centered Design.
8. Postponed Events Update (awards, speakers)
- Helen reviewed the Annual SEPAC Appreciation Awards. Only 2 nominations had come in before schools closed in March. She will send awards in the mail to those people.
 - Helen will update the review of the Appreciation Awards that she did last year to prepare information for the next person who is the Events chair.
 - Tali- She reviewed that one schedule event was cancelled and that she will reschedule events as circumstances change. There are some webinars, but having her here, would be more impactful.
 - There was discussion that it would be likely all our events for next year would be online.
 - Thanks to Andrea, who also isn't at the meeting, for her work as Events Co-Chair over the past year. She will be missed.

9. Review of Annual Report to the Regional School Committee

- Carol will send it to the School Committee and will ask Eva to recognize it during the School Committee meeting.
- No changes were suggested to the draft report

10. 2020-2021 Board Meeting Schedule

- 8/27/2020
- 9/24/2020
- 11/19/2020
- 1/28/2021
- 2/25/2021
- 3/25/2021
- 4/29/2021
- 6/10/2021
- All meetings will take place at 7pm

11. Public comments

- Amy, a parent from Carlisle, joined to find out what is happening in SEPAC meetings as she is new to the Concord-Carlisle RSD.
- Will there be support for families during the summer? That is uncertain.
- Information on the DESE website shows that parents should not be asked to waive their rights for timelines due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

12. Close Meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Attendance:

Carol Yelle

Shaina Brito

Rebecca Robichaud

Helen McKinlay

Sarah Bettencourt

Joanne Jensen

Tali Ditman-Brunye

Sarah Nichol

Amy, parent

Zoom Administrator, from Concord Town, Chris

Text of Attached SEPAC Annual Report below:

Concord Public
Schools &
Concord-Carlisle
Regional School
District
Special Education
Parent Advisory
Council



***Because every student
deserves an extraordinary
education***

Visit our website at
www.concordsepac.org

Concord Public Schools & Concord-Carlisle Regional
School District SEPAC

Annual Report

July 2019-June 2020

DRAFT 06/01/2020

The Concord Public Schools and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) respectfully submits this report to the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Joint School Committee.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District Special Education Parent Advisory Council is to provide education and information to parents/guardians and the broader community on special education issues and services, to establish better understanding of, respect for, and support of special education, and to work with the Concord Public Schools and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District to ensure that students needs are met under Massachusetts Special Education Regulations 603 CMR 28.07(4)* and other applicable laws are being met.

SEPAC Board

Shaina Brito, Co-President

Carol Yelle, Co-President

Sarah Nichol, Secretary

Andrea Smith, Events Co-Chair

Tali Ditman-Brunye, Events Co-Chair Becky Robichaud,
Technology Chair Helen McKinlay, Publicity Chair

SEPAC Liaisons

Casey Atkins, Concord Integrated Preschool Megan
Carroll, Alcott School

Betsy Olsson-Mackowski, Thoreau School Carolyn Seery
Blackham, Thoreau School, ILP Sarah Bettencourt,
Willard School

Tali Ditman-Brunye, Willard School

Fatima Mezdad, Concord Middle School (Sanborn) Eva
Mostou_i, Concord-Carlisle High School

Michi Keefe, Concord-Carlisle High School, Pathways
Joanne Jensen, Out of District

School Committee Liaisons

Eva Mostou_i (Joint) Cynthia Rainey (Concord)

It has been a productive academic year for SEPAC and its
volunteer Board. Through inclusive programming,
collaboration with the District, and outreach to the
Community, SEPAC strives to extend its mission. We're

delighted to share an overview of our activities for the 2019-2020 school year. We gratefully acknowledge the goodwill, energy, and positive reciprocity of our parents, caregivers, administrator, and educator communities. Together we've created something great. We are providing you with a brief history highlighting SEPAC milestones since it was reestablished in 2014.

[SEPAC Organization Timeline](#)

Community Engagement and Impact

Under the leadership of Andrea Smith and Tali Ditman-Brunye, Events Co-Chairs, SEPAC organized a number of well-attended workshops and focus groups. The objective of these events is to build community among SEPAC members and bring awareness and information to the greater community.

Workshops that were held:

- Parent focus group with Superintendent Dr. Laurie Hunter and Ruth Grube, Director of Student Services. This focus group was designed for collaboration on a vision for special education in the districts. In addition to parents and guardians it included members of the School Committee and a representative from each of the buildings.
- Information and sharing session with the new Director of Student Services, Ruth Grube and Superintendent Dr. Laurie Hunter. This forum

provided an opportunity for the community to meet Ruth Grube and share questions and answers.

- Through the Federation for Children with Special Needs MassPAC Plus membership we co-hosted Basic Rights in Special Education: A Workshop for Parents and Professionals with 3

other Districts. This allowed us to offer more sessions to all of our families.

- Elise Wulff, from Aspire at MGH provided an overview of core principles guiding inclusion practices and empower parents to engage these concepts in building their child's success.

- Myrto Flessas from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals presented a workshop on the mediation process.

- A Special Education Information session with Superintendent Dr. Laurie Hunter and Director of Student Support Services, Ruth Grube was held to provide families with information and an opportunity to ask questions regarding remote learning.

- A special board meeting was convened to provide input to the new Middle School Building. SMMA, the architects and project managers presented an overview of the project and Superintendent Dr. Laurie Hunter and Ruth Grube, Director of Student

Services were present to hear from the SEPAC community and answer questions.

- Bi-monthly board meetings were held with detailed minutes recorded and published by the SEPAC Secretary, Sarah Nichol. SEPAC follows Open Meeting Laws.

Several other events were in planning stages but were postponed due to the COVID 19 pandemic. These events may be considered in the future and include:

- A follow-up to the parent/guardian focus group held in the fall to share the takeaways and plans developed.

- Susan Brennan was scheduled to provide a workshop on April 2nd about neurodiversity and inclusion. She is a Speech-Language Pathologist, who consults to the ASD Nest Support Project, The Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, and New York University. She developed the Social Development Intervention (SDI), a developmental and social cognitive language intervention, and designed the Subway Sleuths Program at NY Transit Museum to provide social opportunities around areas of interest for autistic train enthusiasts/train enthusiasts on the autism spectrum. She is also the Director of The Social Underground, which provides strengths-based social groups to in NYC and Western MA

Helen McKinlay oversees multi-channel marketing efforts through local newspaper advertising, and school based electronic distribution lists led promotion for events. Helen also maintains connection and idea sharing with the Center for Parents and Teachers and other local SEPACs to exchange information and help reach a broader audience.

Our social media presence, led by Technology Chair, Becky Robichaud, reinforces outreach with a well trafficked website, Gmail, Google Calendar, Facebook Page and Twitter. Information is shared regarding District happenings, area workshops and articles that are of interest to members of our community.

Additionally Becky Robichaud published six [newsletters](#) this year. The Newsletter is distributed to parents/caregivers with students receiving special education services in the Districts as well as the school bulletins and covers topics of interest to the community.

Our Membership Chair position was vacant this year. The Co-Presidents coordinated SEPAC Liaisons. Liaisons attend each School's Open House to provide parents/guardians with information about SEPAC and to act as a contact for each School. This is an important part of connecting parents/caregivers with their specific school.

District Collaboration

SEPAC met regularly with Ruth Grube, Director of Student Services to discuss matters pertaining to special education in both Concord-Carlisle and Concord-Carlisle Regional High School. Our conversations are engaging and provide the SEPAC and the District with valuable communication and updates both regularly and as needs arise.

The SEPAC has representation at the PTG meetings. Participation in this group helps SEPAC have a better understanding of current events in each School and allows for information sharing between parent groups.

We would like to thank the District for supporting our MassPAC Plus membership to the Federation for Children with Special Needs. This membership provides a trained speaker from the Federation for Children with Special Needs to deliver one of 3 Basic Rights in Special Education Workshops and allows us to collaborate with area SEPACs to jointly host the full series of workshops . Our membership this year also provided guidance, and important up-to-date information on school building closure and guidelines for SEPAC due to COVID-19.

Advisory Boards

On January 24, 2020 SEPAC submitted a position paper to the Administration and the Concord Middle School Building. We requested an expert in Inclusive Design to serve on the Middle School Building Committee. We met

with administration and various other stakeholders. Discussions continued and we appreciate that the Building Committee began conversation with consultants from the Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD). The Building Committee has placed a pause on the building process. Becky Robichaud and Sarah Bettencourt will serve as SEPAC liaisons to this committee and will participate in conversations with the IHCD.

The Phase 4 COVID-19 District Task Force remote advisory board was created to provide the District with community input for COVID-19 reentry. Becky Robichaud will be the liaison for SEPAC.

Joint School Committee Participation

Eva Mostoufi was appointed as the SEPAC School Committee Liaison and Cynthia Rainey serves as the liaison for matters pertaining specifically to CPS. We would like to thank Eva and Cynthia for their support over the year. We look forward to the School Committee's continued support in identifying a representative for the next school year.

One of our highlights of the year is the presentation of our SEPAC Appreciation Awards to members of the Concord and Concord-Carlisle School District for having made a positive impact on members of the special education community. This is a tradition that we hope to

continue for many years to come. However, this year's awards were not held due to the school building closures. We would like to extend our thanks to our administration and all of the educators and staff in the Concord and Concord-Carlisle School Districts.

Looking Ahead

The Tiered Focus Monitoring (TFM) for both the Concord Public Schools and the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District is being conducted. Delays have been experienced due to the school building closures. The SEPAC looks forward to having a pro-active involvement once the review is rescheduled.

The SEPAC will continue to be available to parents/caregivers and the community to provide support, act as a resource, and discuss issues pertaining to special education in both the Concord Public School District and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District.

SEPAC looks forward to continued regular meetings with the Director of Student Services, Ruth Grube either remotely or in person as guidelines permit.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the Institute for Human Centered Design and the new Concord Middle School building