

SEPAC Collaboration Meeting

Minutes 9.1.2020

Attending: Jennifer O'Leary, Natasha Rivera, Heather Nickle, Karen Heath, Brian Haas, Jeff Ferranti, Jessica Clark, Charles Gobron, John Skogstrom, Mike Barth, Charles Caragianes

JOL reads announcement about Open Meeting Law & meeting on Zoom

Attendance, Roll Call for Board Members

1. approve meeting minutes

2. Introductions

3. Administrative update on fall re-opening plans

a. BH: reopening in remote model; about 20 kids per building to bring in, and then watch the data. Transition into hybrid after that. High school orientation activities laid out, socially-distant. Starting cautiously and intentionally.

b. JF: team chairs are identifying initial students. Some families chose to stay remote. Putting together schedules; service providers looking at what can be offered. Team chairs have been working hard at these plans for a while. High needs kids are starting off in a hybrid model.

c. JOL: grateful for establishing the routine for the high needs kids.

d. KLH asks about timing when we'll learn about teachers etc. – JF says reach out to team chairs for further info. MBarth says Chris Kitchell should know re: Fowler.

e. HN: how will 3 year evals will happen? Will they be delayed, stay on timetable?

f. JF: we need to be in compliance. Remote re-evals are not the way to go; have student come in to participate. Annual meetings remotely, unless parents prefer in person. Tricky to figure out the balance of when teachers need to be in IEP meeting, how to cover that class. Some had been put off from the spring—so go after those first. Parents can choose to delay; if it's simply to continue eligibility, we may have the data we need.

g. NR: at special ed parent session, there had been an idea to survey parents about what the remote experience had been like, how is student entering the fall. Is gathering that information a way to help facilitate what the child needs?

h. JF: would like to have team chairs reach out to parents directly—even the best survey can't get at the richer stuff like that. We can do a survey, but would rather have the more in-person back and forth. Special ed teachers and counselors have a good sense of what went on in the spring.

- JOL: survey info helps SEPAC be informed, advocate for what's needed, know what's been going on beyond our realm.
- JF: would work on putting survey together with any of us.
- JC: prior to survey—send out to all special ed parents/caregivers. An overview of what remote learning will look like if child is on an IEP. Who the special educators are.

JF: Added a new webpage to student services webpage—about **re-opening**.

- HN: Supports what Jessica Clark just said. This is the info that's been lacking in the past. Supports putting team chairs are on the website.
- NR: could we also put that on our SEPAC page.
- JF: it's on the main student services page & on the reopening page as well.
- HN: letting people know what they can look ahead to, giving them options.
- NR: we might be able to link to new page on SEPAC page. As for survey: capture how the parent views the child's current state. Separately, survey experience with remote learning program.
- KLH: helpful for families to hear what the new vision & approach will be
- JF: a very motivated group of school counselors. How to reach out now (remotely, to support them). Notes how beneficial it is to have all the other personnel (ELL, nurses, etc.) as well.
- MB: Dan Costello creating an opportunity to have a step-up day for 4th graders
- NR: notes the videos from Jeff & Brian, intros from new staff; great way to change the narrative, look forward to a positive year. (Some districts are creating hashtags) (i.e. #maynardanywhere)
- JC: what are the co-taught classrooms going to look like remotely
- JF: most likely some of the classrooms can break out (not necessarily special ed/general ed)
- MBarth: talking with teachers about how they taught pre-pandemic, translate those things to remote environment. Google feature of breakout rooms, mixed groups.
- NR: some concern in other SEPACs—would defeat inclusion, by inadvertently creating sub-separate.
- JC: asking about last spring's concern about confidentiality re: small-groups for Wilson work. JF wants to find out more about what the concern was last spring
- Ms. Muldoon is officially coming to Green Meadow.
- KLH: social skills goals—question about how these will be met for these students.
- JF discussing with counselors about how to do small group work. Virtual social groups? Office hours for the counselors. JF – some kids will pop up who never were concern before. Para? School counselors observe classroom? Regular meetings every two weeks. How flexible & responsive are we? Communication has been tremendous.
- JOL: appreciating the positive approach.

3. Discussing collaborative goals for current academic year

JOL: last year the group came up with goals, then were affected by COVID.

NR: One of the critical things is that we want to be on the same page, trust in each other's efforts. What has been frustrating through the years: we have parents with various expertise, but there wasn't always a collaborative approach to messaging. In the past, for example, certain events that weren't inclusive; could events & planning engage sensitivity to special ed concerns. The partnership—how we can build towards that.

JF: send examples along to JF. For someone who has not looked through the special ed lens, how do we bring them along.

NR: notes the form that was created a year or so ago.

MB: nurse and special ed director have to sign off (or team chair).

HN: notes the order of getting permission—nurse and special ed director need to see it early. HN also finds it hopeful that team chairs will be given autonomy.

JOL: the form was created after a number of years of accessibility issues. (ex: Halloween social)

NR: some parents were asked to come and accompany their own child to the event, b/c unable to get staff support? Resource component of what is needed for support.

HN: the big thing lacking in a lot of events—the ableism is concerning.

Chuck C: when we started using the newer form, the first few times it was clunky b/c it was new; now it starts with the nurse, then to team chair to note accommodations necessary. It progresses down that path. Only comes to principal after it's been through everyone.

CGobron: back to collaborative goals—heightened awareness that all events need to be open to all students.

JOL: goal of wanting all staff to be trained in basic rights of special education. (Federation changed format.) Training for parents, but it needs to be for all school personnel as well. Important for teachers to feel they are doing their job when they are reporting what they are actually seeing. We are not in the practice of denying services.

JF: as we strengthen general ed, that might result in fewer requests for assessments—if we are doing our job there, screening, etc. Coming up with a very cohesive plan to address those early needs.

NR: Leslie Leslie did one for staff at Nashoba.

CGobron: goal is to continue to improve the channels of communication. How to escalate concerns; how to help settle them at lower levels. How to make clear what the reasonable response times are. (NR: are there expectations of follow-up.)

JClark: some sort of template for teacher responses.

JOL: another goal—survey could be a collaborative goal. NR: was on that subcommittee. A reset could be useful. Timing of when it happens. Who should be surveyed.

Charles G: the best thing about a survey—how do we use those results to improve services to students.

4. Discuss future collaboration meetings, schedule. Third Tuesday of the month. We can schedule the next one: October 20th at 7pm.

NR: possibly a parent session for SEPAC, and then a board meeting?

NR: subcommittees – literacy, maybe combine with district. Survey—maybe quarterly? Safety—CG it would be good to have special ed participation in district safety committee. PD – work with Jennifer G (suggestion from Charles G). CG – communication subcommittee. (OOD families & the info they get). CG – Adam Steiner’s help has been great so far.

So continue with survey, PD, communication – those three subcommittees.

Safety, policy, and literacy being addressed in other channels.

JClark: that literacy committee wasn’t focused on dyslexia screening.

JF: big on early literacy screening. Presentation by Gaab lab—need a battery of screening.

NR: looking at how Title 1 was being over-utilized.

CG: JClark’s concern addressed—have updates at SEPAC meeting.

JF: if we haven’t done all that screening, could we do that in the afternoons when we don’t have kids in. (Needs more info) Maybe Kindergarten happened, but maybe not Pre-K?

NR: could JF give an update at the next meeting? Sounds good.

JOL: any other member comments?

NR: notes the excitement among SEPAC to have such a productive and collaborative start to the year.

BH: helpful to have reps from each building here at the meeting.

Adjourning.