

SEPAC Board meeting: 7.2.2020

- Not a quorum at the beginning—but we can still discuss. Can't approve minutes.
- Attending: Jess O'Toole, Natasha Rivera, John Skogstrom, Karen Heath, Charles Gobron
 - Jennifer O'Leary joins at 7:25
- JOT reads remote meeting introduction. No community members attending.
- Roll call to call meeting to order.
- Second agenda item: approve meeting minutes, but can't do that at the moment w/o quorum.

Discussion items

1. **ESY:** updates and concerns
 - a. JOT: we are frustrated & concerned, and we're receiving so many questions from parents.
 - b. KLH: some haven't heard anything at all about the plan for their child.
 - c. NR: is that varying building by building?
 - d. JOT: seems to be inconsistency teacher by teacher as well. Why basic communication didn't happen is distressing.
 - e. KLH: for our family, asked questions of team chair & Carol; ultimately got reply from Carol
 - f. CG: what is the way to streamline communication so that this doesn't happen again?
 - g. NR: we had shared survey with Carol, and after that, no response. The email from Carol to SEPAC that noted who would receive in-person services—consultation with SEPAC would have meant that we could communicate with parents when they contacted us with confusion and concern.
 - h. JOT: the most pressing issue is transportation: her family received email that there would be no transportation to Fowler, and parents would be responsible. Law doesn't allow this to be the case. Some students may not be getting the transportation that we need. The guidance given does not absolve the district of this responsibility. Carol left this to teachers/staff to communicate to parents.
 - i. Charles: clarifying—the 10 students who are coming to Fowler are the ones we are talking about?
 - j. NR: was there an earlier conversation—ask parents if they would prefer to transport their own children.
 - k. KLH: it also seems that there are some children receiving individual services (such as the parent of the Green Meadow child explained) who aren't in that DTT Fowler group—transport would be an issue for them too.
 - l. JOT: students with remote services—need information about how that is being delivered.

- m. JOL: between the hours of 9 – 2: what if parents aren't available then?
- n. Charles: is emailing Carol & Brian to follow up. Transportation issue needs immediate solution.
- o. JOL: issues of FAPE.
- p. Charles: we need to work on the structure of how the info is communicated, how are decisions made. There have been conversations with Russell Johnston about what exceptions are allowable. But the communication has been a problem.
- q. NR: School Committee is taking up appointment of new interim on Monday. In that process, staff is looking forward to whole team departmental meetings. We want to be striving for high expectations, rather than bare minimum in meeting compliance.
- r. JOL: that feeling among parents that we don't matter is a side effect of this lack of planning/communication. Team chair is in the role of case manager; instead, as parent she has driven that process.
- s. JOT: because things are so weird this year, we needed more communication than ever.
- t. KLH: parents are even more anxious about this because so many kids have regressed during the months of school closure.
- u. JOT: if someone had been willing to receive SEPAC input, we wouldn't be in this position today.
- v. JS: his family received no information (OOD).
- w. NR: looking forward, it would be helpful for interim to think about a parent session before August.
- x. JOL: we would like to know how many students are doing ESY. How many students who were eligible are not being served?
- y. Charles: what have we done with the data of the surveys; what will we do?
- z. JOT: We still don't know the answers to the questions we sent Carol; we aren't confident that this info got to parents by another route.
- aa. KLH: the DESE recommendations suggest that students with multiple needs should also be getting in person services, but the district has chosen a much more limited group for the in person plan.
- bb. NR: from a public perspective, if appearance is that SEPAC doesn't have this info, what does this say about our district's commitment to special ed programs and kids
- cc. Charles: it's been a problem in district that we don't have the structure that other districts have in terms of relationship between district and SEPAC.
- dd. JOT: points out that we do have agenda, meetings, etc. as part of that structure.
- ee. JOT: we want to know if someone communicated to parents about what ESY would consist of?
- ff. NR: for remote learning, there were sections on the website where parents could go for info. Is IT working with Carol about putting that information up? Also a question: to Charles, is there anything that SEPAC could be doing differently or better, as we head into new leadership?

- gg. CG: believes that SEPAC really wants to be partners with admin. Wants to talk with interim about what we do well, what are our strengths. And where are our problems. He knows there has been disappointment in leadership.
- hh. NR: feels there hasn't been a partnership. Interim seems to have that approach.
- ii. JOT: asks if CG will also ask if parents have gotten info about what is expected of parents for remote ESY.

2. Discussion of return to school

- a. On Collaboration drive, in COVID folder—a letter from area SEPACS that put together recommendations.
- b. Maynard SEPAC supports the recommendations. Send it along to SC, superintendent, interim.
- c. NR makes motion that SEPAC distribute the letter with Maynard support. Any feedback should go to JOT before she sends the letter on.
- d. CG: the district needs to develop plans along three pathways. Full return; hybrid model; completely remote. If we go completely remote, we need to work on student engagement. With trust issues in the community, we have to work on that. (Some leading pediatricians expressing concern about students missing socialization.)
- e. NR: are there parents involved--on the reopening committee, but not others. Would be good to have them on the task force.
- f. CG: if we go back into the buildings, cleaning and other protocols are essential, and parents need to be able to trust them.
- g. JOT: there needs to be flexibility from the school.
- h. JOL: that issue of engagement is also relevant for kids with special needs.
- i. KLH: in the hybrid plan, is it possible to vary how that works student by student, paying attention to the kids who do not learn remotely.
- j. JOT: some of this discussion needs to happen team by team.
- k. KLH: also issue for ELLs.
- l. CG: balancing what's good for kids—socialization, etc.—with safety. If we have fewer kids remote, that may go better.
- m. NR: gratitude for what Charles is doing to move things forward.

3. Tabling the discussion of dyslexia—some Board members with expertise are not here.

4. Parent interaction with new administration—set up a parent meet & greet, start building relationships

- a. NR: ensuring the mechanisms are there.
- b. JOT: a SEPAC meet and greet, but also one open to families.

- c. NR: have a meeting with Brian first? She will mention it to him at SC meeting.
- 5. Approval of meeting minutes:
 - a. 10/22, 11/19, 2/25, 5/12: motion to approve meeting minutes. So voted.
- 6. Dyslexia item
 - a. NR: we have a subcommittee, and district also has committee; is there an opportunity to consolidate those? More efficiency.
- 7. Citizens comments – none.
- 8. Members comments
 - a. NR: now with Jessica Clark as SC member, it may be just NR & JC, because can't have a quorum.
 - b. NR: thanking everyone.
 - c. KLH: thanking Charles.
 - d. NR: appreciation to Charles for screening/search process