



Berlin/Boylston Public Schools

Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

- Date:** September 21, 2016
- Meeting Place:** Tahanto Regional Middle/ High School Multipurpose Room
- In attendance:** Barb Zaleski, Christi Stille, Amy Gaspari, Jessica Meltzer, Angela Allred, Rochelle Peret, Kathy Derderian, Mary Fortier, Lauren Jasukonis, Kathy Follett, Wendy Shepard, Jannel Fitzpatrick, Jennifer Rickard, Kim Trainor, Matt Hager, Lisa O'Day, Karen Groccia, Kerry Lavalley, Nadine Ekstrom
- Meet and Greet:** Welcome given by Rochelle. Karen Groccia explained SKYPE process for anyone who could not attend the meeting. This service will be for all meetings. "Here comes the Bus" application will be up and running by Wednesday. Bob Conry will facilitate communications. Staff was asked if they had ideas for Professional Development that SEPAC could support. Nadine would like to coordinate opportunity for regular education and special education parents to communicate; Perhaps a 'parent panel'. Christi will launch a parent-to-parent support group. Karen reviewed schedule of seminars and pointed out "Brain Based Exercises" as a "save the date" event.
- PANDAS will be October's presentation. Jessica Meltzer briefly explained PANDAS and the link with autism. There will be a parent who has experienced PANDAS with her children presenting.
- Parent survey will be done through SEPAC and the results will be shared with SPED staff.
- Jen Rickard is considering Disability Awareness at the schools. She states it has benefits to other students and will help if she can. Faculty and Staff are interested in learning as well.

Karen Groccia recommended moving the “Ask the Experts” presentation to sometime later in the year. Staff agreed to the timeframe and are willing to do it informally.

Amy Gaspari addressed having a ‘mindfulness’ centered space/activity for students. Nadine suggested a social/emotional intervention by teachers and stated educators need resources. Maybe SEPAC can help.

Tahanto will have planned crisis drills where staff/educators assist kids with needs. There will be a series of unannounced drills then faculty and staff drills.

BES will also have these drills. Teachers have been recertified in ALICE program.

Staff Updates: Janet Ament’s position at Central Office is open.
Berlin needs a SPED teacher for 4th/5th grade.

Per Diane, Tahanto’s pick-up and drop off is going well so far.
Karen Molnar attested the school district website will be ready soon.

Christi Stille questioned and discussed the process of choosing electives for incoming 6th graders. Diane Tucceri and Nadine Ekstrom stated test scores that determine English or math labs don’t come out until summer, and those often take the place of electives. Suggestions were offered: Teacher + Team decision versus solely score-based. Possible meeting during the summer or prior to schedule release if scores indicate no electives. Nadine suggested 6th grade team and Mr. Piccarello discuss options.

-Break in Session-
- Reconvene 8:30pm-

June minutes approved.

Membership Report: 98 members, 54 YahooGroup! members. No changes.

Financial: Current balance is \$350.96. Possibility of Bed Sheet fundraiser. No Lyman Pies this year.

PR Report: SEPAC calendars sent out. September PR sent. Meeting flyers to be done.

Communication Report: A Thank-you note was received from Mary Kate O'Day, the 2016 scholarship winner. On file.
Per Karen Molnar, the Parent Survey will serve as the 'indicator' for the DOE.
Christi Stille went to the Tri-meeting. Cheryl Nelson requested SEPAC presence. SEPAC will be represented by Karen Molnar when needed.

Elections: Elected to the SEPAC Board unanimously:
Kerry Lavallo – Treasurer – 2-year term
Angela Allred – Secretary – 1-year term
Karen Groccia – Vice President – 1 year term
Rochelle Peret – Co-President, Boylston – 2-year term

Old business: An idea for next year presentation is Carol Gignoux, who has a book out this year. She was a well-received speaker in the past.

Parent input was received regarding the survey we will be distributing soon.

NEW Business: Regarding the STEM invite, suggested to put it out to the Yahoo! group to see if a member wants to participate.

For the Open Houses, could we have an unmanned table with our pamphlets on it? We don't need to have people onsite if we're not selling pies. Email the principals to see.

The Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser Lunch gave us a lot of ideas of easy fundraisers. There are the dine-out nights where we get 20% of the bill on designated evenings where we distribute flyers, and a gift card fundraiser where we would earn 20% of every gift card sold. If you hold the gift card fundraiser *before* the Dine-in, it's a double fundraiser in one. A few weeks before Christmas is a good time to hold a gift card fundraiser as that's when people are buying gift cards as gifts.

Jen Rickard and Jannel Fitzpatrick suggested a transition conference for 5th graders moving up to 6th grade. Identifying those students who may need a little help in the transition to middle school and guiding them through it.

Wendy Shepard suggested an 8th grade transition seminar.

School Meeting Reports:

BMS School Council: We requested that Karen M. or Nadine E. or someone from Administration send out a statement regarding allergies and sensitivities in the school and why accommodations need to be made. SEPAC posted a response on Facebook regarding this issue but we were hoping for something more official to quell the situation regarding the concerns on social media.

BES School Council: No SpEd issues to report
Regional School Committee: No SpEd issues to report
BMS School Committee: No SpEd issues to report
BES School Committee: No SpEd issues to report
Tahanto STAAGS PTO: No SpEd issues to report
Berlin LINK: No SpEd issues to report
Boylston PTO: No SpEd issues to report

m/s/p to adjourn
Meeting adjourned



Approved:

Electronic approvals on file.

_____ **Rochelle Peret, Co-President**

_____ **Jessica Meltzer, Co-President**

_____ **Karen Groccia, Vice President**

_____ **Kerry Lavallee, Treasurer**

_____ **Angela Allred, Secretary**