



Sharon Special Education Parent Advisory Council

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Minutes of Meeting, Tuesday, December 7, 2010

In Attendance: April Lomba, Marcy Kaplan, Katie Currul-Dykeman, Sue Linehan, Liz Dichiara, Rhonda Jansky, Mary Buzzell, Steve Kaplan, Mindi Altman

First Order: Introductions.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the November 19, 2010 meeting were passed. The June 2010 meeting minutes were tabled until next month.

Treasurers Report: The Treasurer's report was presented. There was no change in the report. There was a short discussion on the email account that set up the affiliates program on amazon.com. Mary will check and let Rhonda know.

A motion was passed to present a \$50 honorarium to Dr. Kruger.

PAC Regulations: There was discussion regarding the new PAC regulations regarding any funds that should be in the school district account. Our PAC is a 501(3)(c) tax exempt organization. Any donation to SSEPAC through deposits going into the school account will still get tax deduction. We could use the 501(3)(c) tax exempt entity to be set up as "Friends of PAC". Any funds raised are raised as private funds. Money from the "Friends of PAC" can be used to spend money on small expenditures such as refreshments without waiting two months to be reimbursed.

A question was asked as to whether there is a need then for two separate executive boards. There should first be a decision if we want to go with two separate entities and then investigate if it is worthwhile to do this. Currently the process will involve having to submit an invoice, and wait two months for reimbursement because at least two school committee members have to sign so that means waiting for a school committee meeting every other week.

Marcy read out loud the regulations regarding "Friends of PAC". This included mention of a good faith effort to help the PAC by the school district. There was a question regarding liability of insurance for officers.

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The question “Is there even a need for a 501(3)(c) if the funds are put in to the school district account. There was discussion of filing a tax return which encompasses a \$15 fee. Regulations to have PACs come in under the school district were to help the PACs to streamline and make things easier.

The questions regarding submitting an invoice and the turnaround with receipt of money from date of request need to be answered. Perhaps a meeting with the town accountant or town lawyer to answer these questions and the questions as to how accessible can the money be in a revolving account in the school district accounts. Steve K said don't worry about losing control the issue is the timing of payments.

Marcy not an emergency but we should start the process. We have four schools that donated \$200 each this school year. There was discussion as to whether this new money should go into a revolving account and the old money that was there for years and years should stay in the current account or whether all the money should be combined.

We need to be respectful of money from the PTO's. There were problems in the past, we need to use the money well. We want to bring in a top of the line speaker such as Sara Ward or purchase books and be able to report that to the PTO's.

Fundraising. Rhonda brought up the need to discuss budgets. This would be a project for end of the school year. In June we would need to set the budget for next year and propose ways to fund raise for these goals.

Bullying Task Force Update: The subcommittee on parent training met to better organize the three sub topics including notifications and communications. The High School students could do public service announcements about bullying. The Sharon Education Foundation is sponsoring the quarterly newsletter. On line will have all the information posted including definitions, links to forms, what to do in a potential bullying situation, what is and isn't bullying.

They will produce a video for all the school open houses. There will be school and home collaboration. The curriculum based varies by levels writing assignments, videos and role playing scenarios. This will vary by age and school as to what will be presented as homework.

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There is concern about the lack of consistency across schools. Katie mentioned that no matter what there are differences. The policy is the same but the interpretation will probably be different.

Community involvement includes the town fall kick off.

The anti bullying is on agenda for the school committee. Barb (superintendent) wants a smaller group to stay on for next year for changes, etc..

Experiencing Differences: The final assembly for this month is on Friday. Schedules for January and March classes are being set. There is a need to have a new special medical conditions teacher as the prior teacher is no longer able to teach. The teacher is willing to train in the asthma, epilepsy and diabetes topics. The Experiencing Differences curriculum was purchased from the town of Newton originally and then built upon. They are releasing a new revised version, the original cost of the program was somewhere about \$100, eight years ago.

SSEPAC Speaker Series:

MCAS, the Dr. Kruger documentary and discussion has been set up for January 25th. There was discussion regarding the proposed anxiety seminar for high school students. Mary mentioned that it was helpful to have an outside speaker and do it in partnership with the school and Sue mentioned that not all parents/kids have had good experiences.

The anxiety seminar could incorporate the school counselors. Steve K proposed having the school psychologists do the anxiety seminar and have guidance counselors involved instead of Virginia H. who presented to parents last year.

The proposed Nutrition panel for this spring could include a person knowledgeable about PANDAs, a speaker regarding sensory issues and an OT person as well as other things that may cause behavior problems.

School Committee Presentation: April L. has a scheduling conflict with the December 15th presentation date she was given to present to the school committee. This will have to wait until January. The vote on the presentation was tabled to next month.

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Superintendent Search Committee Update:

The committee search was quick but Tim Farmer is a good candidate. They recommended to the school committee to enter negotiations with Tim. Marcy had expressed there was public concern about the quick process. Index cards were handed out for any questions that someone wanted to ask yet keep their privacy for the school committee meeting. Tim Farmer was made available for a meet and greet with parents.

There was a 2 hour interview in each school by school personnel. Everyone was energized even seasoned teachers regarding the role he has taken on while assistant superintendent and feedback was very positive. The question was raised as to whether Tim was ready to take the leap from assistant to lead.

Redistricting Committee Update:

Tim Farmer heads up the Redistricting task force. Marcy is part of the subcommittee that is redrawing the lines. They will submit recommendations to the school committee for the 2012 school year. Some elementary schools can host all students but some schools have grades that are full. At the East school kindergarten through grade three, there are hardly any students. In addition, classroom space will be available with the early childhood program moving to the middle school.

Recreation Update: The Staars program has the volunteer coach Paul Linehan working with 6-7 children ages 12 to 22 plus plenty of volunteers. The younger children are being coached by Katie's husband and brother in law. There are 7 children with more than enough volunteers. Katie has proposed to have Stonehill College students possibly come in to a Staars practice in their college basketball uniforms.

General Discussions: There was general discussion regarding:

The Budget. Steve Kaplan talked about the budget. He recommended 1. To increase the intensive PDD program at the Children's Center, assistants would work an extra half hour a day to collect the data. 2. Increase the support in the DLP program adding five instructors to assist one half of the time in speech and language and 3. Increase the school psychological services at the Heights elementary school. Sara Kraus Lloyd was hired last week as the elementary school coordinator for all three elementary schools.

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The capital budget includes dedicated laptops and carts for academic labs in the middle school and high school. Steve K. is trying to purchase more iPads and looking to collect data on kids with iPads.

Steve discussed having three parents to volunteer for special education program evaluations. The parents would represent: one from the elementary schools, another from the middle school and another from the high school. The core group would interview people to set a focus on what special education programs should be evaluated. The deadline target is the end of March early April.

Parents would come in and organize and create a survey. This would involve coming in twice a month either day and/or nights – after school to complete the interviews.

In February there is a free Transitions seminar in Chinese. This is sponsored by the Disability Law Center on Saturday Feb 12th 9:30am – 3:30pm Boston. Afterwards is consultation time with lawyers.

The Don Johntson software. The word is still not getting out regarding this assistive technology reading and writing software. We need to remind teachers it is there. Per Steve, all coordinators met at a faculty meeting so the teachers should know it is there. Every school building has a copy of the software for parents to borrow and load on computers at home.

Parent support.

Next SSEPAC Meeting: Thursday January 13th starting at 7:00 pm at the Sharon High School library conference room.

Respectfully Submitted Mary E. Buzzell