

Mansfield SEPAC Minutes
Tuesday, October 6, 2015
6:30 PM at Mansfield Public Library Meeting Room

Mansfield SEPAC's first general meeting of the 2015-2016 school year was held on October 6, 2015 at the Mansfield Public Library beginning at 6:30 pm. Mansfield SEPAC's board members: Joni Chasen, Loryn Cohen, Pam Guravage, Dawn Low, Cindy Quitzau, Nisha Sardella, Jenifer Sellon and Kerry Smith were all in attendance. Eliza Ings was unable to attend. Also present at the meeting was Nancy Beier, Assistant Special Education Director as well as other interested parents/individuals. Kerry Smith, co-chair of the SEPAC, kept minutes of the meeting and both Kerry Smith and Dawn Low, Co-chairs of Mansfield's SEPAC led the meeting.

- Discuss rebuilding the SEPAC

Kerry Smith discussed the SEPAC began to reform back in 2014 after the former SEPAC chair announced she would step down in June 2015 after many years of a solo effort of keeping the SEPAC together. A number of parent volunteers stepped forward, elections were held on June 16, 2015 and the planning began for a number of initiatives.

- Review the vision for SEPAC group

Kerry Smith reviewed Mansfield SEPAC's current vision including: develop a network of parents with special needs to share information; advise the School Committee on matters that pertain to the education, health and safety of students with special needs; promote communication among the Mansfield SEPAC members, local, State and National organizations, councils and groups; promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion and finally provide informational workshops for parents, educators, students and professionals. She reviewed a number of initiatives such as the improvement of the SEPAC webpage, an Information Packet to parents with children newly identified with special needs, the school's funding of membership for this school year to the state organization MassPAC which allows the SEPAC to become aware of and to provide additional information/workshops that the SEPAC can promote on Mansfield's email/listserv and to provide the Parents Rights Workshop.

- Review the calendar of future meetings including Parents Rights workshop

Dawn Low reviewed the calendar of future general meetings to include: December 7, 2015, February 1, 2016, April 4, 2016 and June 6, 2016. All general meetings will be held in the cafeteria of Jordan Jackson School beginning at 6:30 pm. She reviewed Mansfield's first Parents Rights workshop will be held on November 10, 2015 from 7-9 pm at Robinson school cafeteria.

- Discuss social events/social networking

Dawn Low introduced the members of the SEPAC board who were present at the meeting. She discussed the voluntary information sheet designed to assist the SEPAC in developing a network of parents that may be interested in playgroups, mentoring and participation in the SEPAC listserv. She announced a vacancy on the board for secretary and encouraged anyone interested to come forward. We had one interested parent interested in being appointed and elections will be held at the next general meeting on December 7, 2015.

- Discuss/Present the first page of the website and discuss the web content.

Jen Sellon presented the first page of the Mansfield SEPAC website. Those present discussed and suggested content and layout including but not limited to: adding the SEPAC board members contact info, listing the workshops and general meeting dates and linking the Mansfield SEPAC page on each school page.

Parents discussed the desire for a private “chat” group that would allow for parents to freely discuss issues, questions, etc with other parents. It was recommended this not be included within the SEPAC webpage rather a facebook private group would be created to allow access to Mansfield parents of children with special needs. Nisha Sardella, one of the board members, volunteered to set up this facebook page.

- Q&A

Members of the board and Nancy Beier, Asst. Special Ed Director, answered questions from those present at the meeting.

It was requested by a parent present at the meeting to have a speaker from the schools present at one of Mansfield’s SEPAC general meetings a presentation on transition, more specifically how to prepare their child for transition from one Mansfield school to another. The intent of the presentation is to be Mansfield specific so that Mansfield parents may gain a better understanding of how their child with special needs may be prepared to move from one Mansfield school to another. Nancy Beier agreed to speak with Jim Leonard and other administration members to have a discussion at the general meeting on February 1, 2016.

- Meet and Greet

At the end of the meeting, those present were invited for refreshments and light snacks and to meet one another.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.

A True Record:

/s/ Kerry Smith

Kerry Smith
Co-Chair Mansfield SEPAC