

## Sepac/Admin Nov 10 2009 meeting

### Attending:

D. Dunham, V. Flynn, M. Lammi, M. Maas, Administration  
T. Stock, M. Callahan, K. Rogers, S. Cisternelli, D. Springer (recording) Sepac Board  
C. Aikman, S. Taylor, Sepac Social Skills Committee and  
Parent Liaisons from Newman, Needham Preschool, Mitchell, Hillside, Eliot,  
Broadmeadow Elementary Schools, High Rock Center and Pollard Middle School.

Maureen Callahan initiated the meeting at 12:39 pm and all persons present introduced themselves.

### Announcements:

V. Flynn reports C. Heller, Director of Special Education at the H.S. was unable to attend the meeting. A special education teacher at the H.S. took a leave of absence and C. Heller was handling matters attendant.

T. Stock made known the documentary "Children Left Behind" with current info about the impact of MCAS, also includes some information regarding Sped students. See [www.childrenleftbehind.com](http://www.childrenleftbehind.com) and [http://www.childrenleftbehind.com/resources/mcas\\_reform\\_hbill\\_3660.pdf](http://www.childrenleftbehind.com/resources/mcas_reform_hbill_3660.pdf)

### Liaison Compliments/Issues/Concerns:

A Hillside parent complimented the staff there for responding to the need that her child receive more social pragmatic opportunities and facilitation during recess and lunch. A second Hillside parent complimented the Sidewalk Safety Program at Hillside. T. Stock passed along praise from 2 new parents transitioning into the SLC program at Broadmeadow. Another liaison praised High Rock and the assistance her child is receiving there.

The Mitchell School Liaison raised the question about the maternity leave their SLP is taking and a 3 week gap in services for the children there. M.Lammi responded that compensatory services shall and will be in play with the temporary replacement. There will be make-up and comp services and some may double up in a week. A letter will be going out no later than next week with a level of detail that shall provide clarity and options for families to have their children receive the compensatory services. The Mitchell Liaison was concerned about the logistics for make-ups for the social pragmatics groups. She understands the negative reaction to this unforeseen 3 week absence and was unaware of it herself. M.Lammi urges the families affected by this gap in service to contact her to discuss. ML and the replacement SLP (coming from Hillside where she covered another SLP on maternity leave there) are working to repair the situation.

T. Stock raised the concern for some Hillside ELC parents re: the move of the ELC II program from Newman to Hillside. A Hillside liaison reported at curriculum night the regular ed parents in the inclusion classroom(s) that the ELC students participate in did not know what the ELC is, nor that there were ELC children in the class. Another new

Hillside parent adds that a practice at Hillside is the Morning Mingle – an opportunity for children to socialize with their other friends and peers from other classes and grades within the school before school begins. Students transferring over from the Newman ELC program not only do not have relationships with their new classmates, but also have no connections with other students at the school. For children with social challenges the Morning Mingle can be an isolating experience rather than an inclusive one. M. Lammi responded that in the short term she would follow up with the Hillside principal and K. Connelly and E. Kelly ELC II Head Teachers re: these concerns. In the long term – the location would need to be looked at.

M. Callahan suggested that the PTC could introduce the ELC and staff during the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade curriculum night. Is the ELC described in the Hillside Handbook? Newsletters?

T. Stock made reference to the Connections Link strategy inviting peers to play at recess and thereby earning a link – as one way to connect the kids, or a service club.

The Newman liaison mentioned a parent who felt the initial IEP invitation letter with a date already given for the meeting problematic. The parent did not feel part of the team in deciding the date. M. Lammi stated that the letter is standard with instructions on how to reschedule the date of a meeting if it is inconvenient for the family. M. Lammi continued that with the enormous logistics of scheduling these meetings, this procedure has worked generally well for the majority. Several other parents agreed and have found the school accommodating to alternate dates and modes of communication. The Mitchell Liaison suggested that the Newman parent call and offer some dates/times in advance of the letter.

The Pollard liaison complimented the buddy system at the middle school, but that this year 6-8 of the activities conflicted with Fine Arts. V. Flynn acknowledged the scheduling challenge. They responded to parents' previous concerns that these activities were scheduled back to back on consecutive days and so this year they tried to alternate the days. It unfortunately doesn't work for everybody all the time.

A preschool parent shared a story about their child not being included in the reg ed class portrait. D. Dunham noted that there were problems with this particular photo shoot/photographer. She was aware of this problem, but states that all children are included in school program/ PTC enrichment activities.

DA Update:

M. Lammi is working on forming the goals for this program, how to get the info out to the stakeholders....school staff and parents and the process of how to bring the DA program to the other schools. On Oct 28, she met with the Co Chairs of the Eliot DA program and has learned that while Eliot and Hillside basically replicate each other -- share many of the same elements -- there are some differences. ML is clear that this program needs to evolve at the building level, responding to each school's own culture. This is a parent led effort through the PTC and requires many volunteers, most crucial are the Chairs or Co-chairs for the program. She will review with the current Eliot and

Hillside Chairs the time commitment. At the district wide PTC presidents meeting on Nov 12, Mary will introduce the program to the schools that do not offer it and gauge the interest of the PTC presidents from those schools (Broadmeadow, Mitchell, and Newman). She will also be giving an update to those principals and seeks to understand how they feel this program can fit at their schools. We need to find a way to call for volunteers. The Eliot liaison, who volunteers for the DA program there, states that the majority of parents volunteering are reg ed parents. M. Lammi mentioned the Sepac Jan meeting would be a place and time to recruit parents. District wide PTC Chairs, Elementary School principals, School Council representatives as well as the entire Needham community will be invited to this talk. T. Stock offered her school's website as one way to get the word out. D. Springer mentioned having the liaisons put a blurb in the school newsletters. Mary closed the update remarking that she is eyeing grants to support this initiative. The program is not a tremendous cost.

#### Extended School Year Services:

M. Lammi is meeting later today with Admin staff to discuss the Needham model of how we are providing the programs that prevent regression. The tutoring program seemed reactive and inconsistent and they are going to make improvements to this piece of ESY. They are also looking at facilities (meeting about this part of it on Thursday). Can we utilize 1 or 2 buildings? In what buildings are there integration opportunities?

D. Springer asked what was the criteria to be used to determine ESY svcs. M. Lammi answered that looking at the students goals and where their skills are; getting teachers to look at students coming back from breaks to target the kids at risk of regression. Empirical data, too, will be used.

#### Social Skills Committee Survey and Update:

C. Aikman representing a sub set of special education parents (15-16) from the Sepac reported that at the December meeting the survey results will be compiled and presented for Admin. 62 respondents out of about 240 people on the list serve participated in the survey, or roughly 25%. Respondents were from all the schools, but Newman, Pollard and Broadmeadow were the schools with the most respondents. S. Taylor, also a member of this committee, offered initial recommendations supported by the survey results. These recommendations are suggested in light of the difficult budgetary situation:

- A Disability Awareness Program in all the schools
- Training for TA's throughout the district providing a baseline skill level for supporting /facilitating social interactions
- Respectfully recommend that SEL/social pragmatics be part of the upcoming district review
- Create a playdate exchange at the preschool and elementary school level

M. Lammi clarified that the training parents are looking for are for TA's AND recess support staff? T. Stock affirmed.

V. Flynn advised that at the middle school in Dec. and Jan., George Maranakis and Elsa Abele will be coming in to do Professional Development trainings. Elsa Abele will be doing a training of Social Thinking at the developmental level appropriate for middle schoolers. This training will help TA's facilitate interactions.

Sepac Speaker Series:

T. Stock asked if we could arrange another date for T. Denton, C. Brumbach, or S. Bonuaito to address the Sepac on the results and recommendations of their SEL survey. M. Lammi questioned how we can bring all the separate work we have been doing on SEL and collaborate together.

V. Flynn suggested that T. Denton present first to the Sepac Board.

S. Cisternelli suggested we use our last meeting in June for this presentation. It would be a good wrap up for the year's work. T. Stock is concerned that waiting until June for the presentation would put off the implementation. M. Lammi said she has opportunities for Prof. Dev. in her schedule and can get some of this going before then. T. Stock additionally asked, "Can specialists also go out to recess, say 1 time per week?" V. Flynn agreed that this supports generalization of skills. T. continued, "Can the teachers also rotate their lunch time, so that they can also see the kids in those other settings?" D. Dunham said this may be a contractual issue. K. Rogers and T. Stock both stated that in other districts where they have worked, this practice (teachers rotating lunch enabling them to be out on the playground at times) occurs. T. promoted the idea of parent volunteers for recess, similar to lunch time volunteers. D. Dunham and M. Lammi state that they don't know what the staffing looks like at those times (recess and lunch), but they will look at it.

At 1:59 pm M. Callahan stated we must end the meeting and address the last items of the agenda (new growth model) and anti bullying law signed into effect by Obama at the December meeting.