



Groton Dunstable Special Education Parents Advisory Council

BUSINESS MEETING Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

1:15pm, Parent Resource Center, Prescott School

Officers Present: Melissa Sweeny, President
(sign-in sheet attached) Nancy Bugbee, Vice President
Maryanne Squeglia, Treasurer
Cyndy Premru, Secretary

Members Present: See attached sign-in sheet

Staff Present: See attached sign-in sheet

Meeting Location: Parent Resource Center, Prescott School Building, Groton, MA

Melissa Sweeny, President, called the meeting to order at 1:32pm.

I. Vote to Accept Minutes from January 13, 2009 Business Meeting

The minutes from the January 13, 2009 Business Meeting were reviewed. Melissa Sweeny made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved. The minutes will be posted on the website at <http://www.gdspedpac.org>.

II. Updates

Account Balance

Maryanne Squeglia reports that the account balance is currently: \$ 388.09. Cyndy Premru submitted receipts for reimbursement. Ms. Squeglia has already reimbursed \$100.00 in receipts for the Parent Resource Center Open House in February.

Grant Balance

Ms. Squeglia reports that \$300.00 was recently sent to Joan Axelrod for her lecture on Tests and Measurements. This brings the current grant balance to: \$ 803.00. Lisa Hamilton-Goscomb's lecture on Sensory Processing will cost \$190.00. This will bring the grant balance down to \$613.00. It was discussed that we try to come up with another lecture for sometime in April to put the remaining grant money towards. Ideas we discussed were, Social Smart Kids; a lecturer on the college search process for students with special support needs; and bringing in Jan Banik, a speech therapist at Florence Roche, to discuss speech therapy. Lisa McLaughlin will follow up with Jan Banik. Ms. Squeglia will contact Monica Andrews, the college lecturer to check on her availability.

Website

Ms. McLaughlin reported that she has had problems accessing the website for updates since February. She said that the problems have been between VISTA and the security updates that her computer has been running.

Lecture Series

Ms. Premru reported that the Joan Axelrod lecture on Tests and Measurements was very well attended. There were several staff members present as well as a lot of parents with children in both private and public schools within the community. The next lecture is on an overview of Sensory Processing with Lisa Hamilton-Goscomb on May 13, 2009. Ms. Premru will coordinate the use of the MS North Library with Nancy Bugbee. She will also draft up the flyers and promote the lecture locally.

Parent Roundtables

It was reported that Swallow Union's Parent Roundtable on "Reading Approaches" was well attended – approximately 8-10 parents and 8-10 staff members were present. It was held on March 11th.

The next High School Parent Roundtable is on March 12th with the topic being "Transitions." We discussed how the High School Parent Roundtables are difficult to promote because nothing is sent home in student backpacks, making it difficult to connect with parents.

Florence Roche's next Parent Roundtable is on March 25th with the topic being "Transitions."

Ms. Bugbee will contact Steve Silverman, principal of the Middle School, to find out what topic he would like to feature for the next Middle School Roundtable in April.

III. Outreach Activities Update

Parent Questionnaire

Ms. Sweeny has collected all of the information from the Fall Parent Questionnaire's that were returned. She is in the process of gathering the numbers and putting together an analysis of the responses. When it is completed, she will forward her report to the officers for review.

Spring Newsletter

We decided that the tentative deadline for distributing the Spring Newsletter would be the first week in May.

Topic ideas for articles in the Spring Newsletter are:

- An overview of Sensory Processing, helping to promote the lecture on May 13th.
- A recap of the Joan Axelrod lecture.
- A short article about the school budget and how it will affect Special Education. Maybe Dr. Genovese, Superintendent, or Cam Huston, Director of PPS, would write this.
- Information on the college search process for High School students with special support needs. If we hold a lecture on this in April, we will be able to recap the lecture in the newsletter.

Lending Library

Ms. Premru and Elizabeth Podsiadlo will investigate how to set up a lending library for the books that have been donated to the Parent Resource Center.

IV. Parent Resource Center at Prescott

Review Input from Open House

Ms. Bugbee will copy all of the notes and suggestions collected on the chalkboards during the Open House and put them into a document that can be distributed.

'Thank You' letter for the Groton Herald

Ms. Sweeny will write a 'Thank You' letter to publish in the Groton Herald, thanking everyone involved in the opening of the Parent Resource Center for their support in GDSpedPAC's efforts to make the open house so successful.

Miscellaneous

Lisa Hitsos expressed an interest in volunteering at the Parent Resource Center over the summer.

Ms. Premru will contact Jane Bouvier, host of 'Around Town,' about featuring GDSpedPAC on her show one night.

V. Grants

Groton Trust Fund Lecture Fund

Ms. Sweeny created a list of potential lectures and speakers for the 2009-2010 school year. It was distributed at this meeting. She will write the grant to the Groton Trust Fund Lecture Fund, due March 23rd.

Lecture ideas/speakers that we are interested in hosting are:

- "The Influence of Executive Function Skills on Written Expression and Reading Comprehension," presenter Bonnie Singer, Ph.D. President and CEO of Architects for Learning in Wellesley, MA.
- "Building the Skills that Build Social Capital: Putting Your Best Foot Forward in the Real World," presenter Teresa Bolick, Ph.D. licensed psychologist.
- "Anxiety, the Invisible Bully: Anxiety Disorders and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy," presenter Dr. Jeffrey Brown, faculty member at Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital.
- "Mathematics Strategies for Learning Disabilities," presenter Jane Bamford Lynch, educational consultant and National Faculty member of the School of Education at Lesley University.
- "Surviving and Thriving in Challenging Times," presenter Dr. Robert Evans, clinical and organizational psychologist.
- "Raising Resilient Children While Becoming Resilient Ourselves," presenter Bonnie Scott Jelinek, Weaver Center, Wayland, MA.

- “Executive Functioning in the Classroom: Middle School, High School, and Beyond,” presenter, Dr. Joe Moldover, Psy.D. of the Integrated Center for Child Development (ICCD)

We are also planning on hosting a “College Night” at the High School and we will also hold the IEP workshop with the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

Butler fund – Books for the High School

Ms. Squeglia and Ms. Bugbee are currently creating a list of books to include in this grant request.

VI. SpedPAC Officer Responsibilities

Reassignment of responsibilities

Ms. Sweeny is currently subbing as Administrative Secretary in the Superintendent’s office, which creates a conflict of interest with regards to advising families in the District. She has stopped advising families but will continue to act as President for the remainder of her term.

Ms. Sweeny proposed creating “Chair” positions for different responsibilities and tasks, in an effort to more evenly distribute the variety of work being done in our active SpedPAC.

It was unanimously decided that we would ask school principals to make ConnectEd calls for SpedPAC events that are related to their school.

VII. Bylaws

Ammendment/Creation of Policy RE: Fundraising

Ms. Bugbee has volunteered to create a draft document for the Fundraising Bylaw. She will forward it to the officers at a later date.

VIII. Administration

New Teacher Training

SpedPAC has been invited by Florence Roche teacher, Scott Middlemiss to represent the parent perspective at the next New Teacher Training for the school district. Ms. Squegila and Ms. Sweeny will attend on behalf of SpedPAC. The training will be held at Florence Roche on Monday, April 6th at 3:30pm.

Focus Group for Strategic Planning – SpedPAC participation

It was unanimously voted to move this item to a later date.

Next Date to meet with the Administration

It was unanimously voted to move this item to a later date.

The business meeting concluded at 2:45pm.