



Groton Dunstable Special Education Parents Advisory Council

BUSINESS MEETING Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 30, 2008
7:00pm, GD Regional High School Library

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: High School Library, Groton, MA

Melissa Sweeny, President, called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.

I. Welcome from Melissa Sweeny, President

Melissa Sweeny welcomed all officers and members to the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves. A few parents spoke about how pleased they are with the new R+ Program at Florence Roche Elementary School.

II. SpedPAC Account Update

Maryanne Squeglia reports that Sarah Campbell, SpedPAC's previous Vice President, recently found \$39.11 at her home that was labeled as belonging to SpedPAC. The money has been deposited into SpedPAC's account.

Ms. Squeglia reports that the account balance is currently: \$ 762.28.

Ms. Squeglia reports that the \$830.00 awarded by the Groton Dunstable Education Foundation (GDEF) for the Educational Resource Library was received. The Campbell Family had also donated \$170.07 to the Resource Library. Ms. Squeglia used these monies to pay for the books that were purchased.

Ms. Squeglia reported that we need to change the names and signatures authorized on the SpedPAC bank account. She will update the bank accounts accordingly.

Ms. Squeglia reports that she has yet to do the tax filings with the IRS and that we need to make sure that we keep a minimum of \$25 set aside for the fees.

III. Votes Required

Vote to Accept Minutes from June 17, 2008 Meeting

The minutes from the June 17, 2008 Business Meeting were reviewed. Nancy Bugbee made a motion to accept the minutes. That motion was seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved. The minutes will be posted on the website at <http://www.gdspedpac.org>.

Vote to allocate \$250.00 from the Groton Trust Fund lecture grant money for SpectrumK12 Facilitated IEP Parent Training on November 13, 2008

Ms. Sweeny explained the Facilitated IEP (FIEP) model to members and guests. She explained that SpedPAC would be splitting the cost (total cost is \$500.00) for the parent training with the District. Ms. Bugbee made a motion to allocate \$250.00 to pay for half of the cost of the lecture. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Vote to split cost of using Herbal Lyceum (one time only) for Florence Roche's Parent Roundtable on October 3, 2008 with Principal Goguen

SpedPAC tries to hold its meetings and lectures at locations that are free but due to a schedule conflict, the Flo Ro cafeteria isn't available for the scheduled Parent Roundtable that we are co-sponsoring with Principal Goguen on October 3, 2008. After speaking with Principal Goguen, SpedPAC has decided to split the cost of using the Herbal Lyceum at Gilson's for this particular meeting. The Lyceum charges \$25 per hour and the meeting is scheduled to run between 1.5 – 2 hours. The total shared cost is anticipated at being \$50.00 with the cost to SpedPAC being approximately \$25.00. It was decided that the amount of \$40.00, representing SpedPAC's share, would not be exceeded.

Ms. Bugbee made a motion to spend no more than \$40.00 to pay for half the cost of the meeting space. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Ms. Squeglia has requested that the receipt from the Herbal Lyceum be brought to the next SpedPAC meeting for her records.

Vote to reimburse fees acquired by three officers who attended the annual MASSPAC brunch on September 21, 2008

On September 21, 2008, officers Ms. Sweeny, Ms. Squeglia, and Cyndy Premru attended the annual MASSPAC brunch held in Mansfield, MA. To register for the brunch, officers paid a fee of \$25.00 from their personal accounts.

Ms. Sweeny discussed the brunch and pointed out that Groton Dunstable Regional School District has one of the most sophisticated and well-run SpedPACs in Massachusetts. She mentioned how we are fortunate to have such a collaborative relationship with the administrative staff and how we are very effective in our support of students with special needs in the district.

Ms. Bugbee made a motion to reimburse the officers and disperse \$25.00 to each of them (total of \$75.00). The motion was seconded and approved.

Vote to reimburse officers for supplies they purchased to create materials for school open houses (posters, printing supplies, and paper)

Ms. Sweeny presented copies of the new materials that were created for the open houses at the various schools. The materials include a Back To School letter from the President; a flyer inviting people to join the Yahoo! Group; a SpedPAC Fact Sheet; a flyer describing the

upcoming lectures for September and October; a Parent Questionnaire; an updated brochure; and two tri-fold posters.

Ms. Sweeny, Ms. Bugbee, and Ms. Premru requested reimbursement for supplies to produce the above materials. Ms. Bugbee made a motion to reimburse Ms. Sweeny, Ms. Bugbee, and Ms. Premru for the cost of supplies. The motion was seconded and approved. Ms. Sweeny, Ms. Bugbee, and Ms. Premru provided their receipts (Ms. Sweeny \$40.00, Ms. Bugbee \$12.00, and Ms. Premru \$24.00) to Ms. Squeglia and were reimbursed.

V. Propose Change to Business Meeting Schedule

Ms. Sweeny raised the concern that since two of the officers, Ms. Bugbee and Ms. Squeglia, now have jobs during the school day, our scheduled time for the next Business Meeting (and all Business Meetings that take place during the day) will need to be rescheduled. She suggested that we reschedule all of the daytime Business Meetings to 1:15pm – 2:45pm (from the original time of 10:00am – 11:30am). All officers agreed upon the new time. The next Business Meeting is now scheduled for November 12, 2008 from 1:15pm – 2:45pm.

The Business Meeting schedule will be updated on the Fact Sheet and the posters. It will also be updated on the website.

Ms. Sweeny mentioned the possibility of starting an evening outreach program, perhaps holding it once a month or once every two months. Each meeting would focus on a different theme or topic (for approximately 15 – 20 minutes) and then open up the rest of the time to discussion.

VI. Parent Input Questionnaire

Ms. Sweeny presented a Parent Questionnaire that she drafted. Its purpose is to gather information on how SpedPAC can best support the parents of children with special needs in the District. The information collected will help us evaluate the outreach programs we currently offer and determine what additional programs, materials and resources we should consider offering. The questionnaire will be available at all lectures, roundtables, business meetings, and open houses. We will also look into finding a way to distribute it to all families of students on IEP's, perhaps through a mailing of some kind.

IV. Outreach Programs

Ms. Bugbee spoke about SpedPAC's impressive efforts in expanding our outreach programs at all school levels in the District. See below for specifics.

Back to School Curriculum Nights

SpedPAC has been invited to attend all school Open Houses this year. As of this meeting, we have attended Open Houses at the Middle School, Swallow Union, Florence Roche, and the High School. On Thursday, October 17th, Florence Roche is holding a Specialist Open House that Ms. Premru will attend.

For each Open House, between 1 and 2 officers were present to set up an information table where we offered a variety of handouts and answered questions for families. We were also invited to give an introductory speech about SpedPAC following each of the principals opening remarks.

Principle Coffees & PTA/PTO Meetings

SpedPAC officers and School Parent Liaisons have been attending as many Principle Coffees and PTA/PTO meetings as they can. Some schools are still in the process of setting up Principle Coffee's.

Parent Roundtables

SpedPAC likes to co-sponsor Parent Roundtables with each of the school principals. These roundtables are informal discussion groups where parents, school administrators, and special education staff are invited to openly discuss the support services offered to students at the individual schools.

Currently, Florence Roche has a Parent Roundtable scheduled for October 3, 2008 and the Middle School has one scheduled for October 22, 2008. Ms. Sweeny and Ms. Squeglia are working on scheduling one with the High School for late October. They are also working on scheduling one with Swallow Union.

Website and Yahoo! Group

SpedPAC has a very resourceful website, www.gdspedpac.org, and a very informative listserve on Yahoo! Groups that we are trying to get parents, district staff, and community members to utilize and join.

The website is updated frequently and reflects the latest SpedPAC news and information. It posts our calendar of meetings and lectures; useful links on disabilities and special education; lecture and speaker handouts; an archive of SpedPAC Newsletters; meeting minutes from Business Meetings; and a link to join our Yahoo! Group Listserve.

The Yahoo! Group posts the most up-to-date information about lectures both in the district and in other towns; articles relevant to special needs issues; and other information applicable to special needs.

October Newsletter

SpedPAC publishes a newsletter, *Of Cabbages and Kings*, three times per year. The next one is due to be published sometime in October. Ms. Sweeny and Ms. Bugbee discussed some of the possible articles – a recap of the lectures *An Evening With Dr. Genovese* and Joan Celebi's, *Overwhelmed No More!*; and new special education initiatives at the Middle School.

Acknowledge School Parent Liaisons

SpedPAC is fortunate to have parent liaisons at each of the schools. The liaisons for 2008-2009 are:

Boutwell School:	TBA	Middle School:	Nancy Bugbee
Florence Roche:	Cyndy Premru	High School:	Maryanne Squeglia
Swallow Union:	Mary Slattery	Out-of-District:	Nancy Beshansky

Website Link On All School Websites

SpedPAC is working with each of the individual schools to offer a link to SpedPAC's website from each of the school websites. Currently, the Middle School has a link set up. The links from the remaining school websites are forthcoming.

The business portion of the meeting concluded at 7:35pm. Ms. Sweeny then introduced Dr. Alan Genovese, Superintendent of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District, and Ms. Cam Huston, Director of Pupil Personnel Services (Director of Special Education) in the District, for our annual lecture, "An Evening With Dr. Genovese." Dr. Genovese presented an overview of the Groton-Dunstable school system – sharing its strengths, its areas of needed improvement, and 'what's in store' for the future. Afterwards, Dr. Genovese opened up the floor to parents and staff to share their thoughts, exchange ideas, and to ask questions.