



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

SEPAC Summer School Session 8 – Advising The District



INFORMING, EDUCATING, EMPOWERING FAMILIES

617-236-7210 | www.fcsn.org | fcsninfo@fcsn.org

Wise men don't need advice, fools won't take it.

Benjamin Franklin

The best way to succeed in life is to act on the advice we give to others.

Author Unknown

I always pass on good advice. It's the only thing to do with it. It is never any use to oneself.

Oscar Wilde

Good advice is always certain to be ignored, but that's no reason not to give it.

Agatha Christie



Workshop Objectives

- Understand advisory role under the law
- Develop a plan
- Build a relationship with your School Committee sources
- Weigh public versus private advice
- Create a Report/Presentation
- Communicate Effectively



SEPAC Advisory Role

The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to:

advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the **education and safety** of students with disabilities...

M.G.L. c.71B, Section 3

The advice may include recommendations:

- verbally and/or in writing
- to those in the district responsible for overseeing special education,(special education director, the superintendent, and the school committee). *DESE Guidance, p.3*

A SEPAC can raise questions, voice concerns, provide direct input, influence policy and program decisions...



Advisory Role, cont.

A SEPAC can:

- raise questions
- voice concerns
- provide direct input
- influence program decisions
- recommend action to be taken

recommendations,
no authority, opinions

* Address system-level challenges affecting students
with disabilities



Making a Plan

Focus the work of the SEPAC

Gather input

Listen to issues/concerns

Prioritize

Create draft/invite feedback

Present/Share

Reflect



Build a Relationship with the School Committee

Ask the School Committee to appoint a Liaison to the SEPAC

Follow the SC Agendas

DESE recommends that SEPACs develop procedures that result in at least an annual written status report to the School Committee.



Public versus Private Advice

A SEPAC should be meeting regularly with school officials

- Bring up issues and concerns in an informal setting
- Set a timeline for the District to respond
- Share any available data
- Notify District when moving to the SC setting



Creating a Report

Elements to include:

- SEPAC Mission Statement
- Executive Board (names and titles)
- Summary of Activities/Demonstrate Impact
- Examples of Collaboration with District
- Issues/Concerns/Recommendations

Concord/Concord-Carlisle:

<https://concordsepac.org/2020/06/12/sepacs-annual-report-to-the-school-committee/>



Creating a Presentation

Various Methods:

- PowerPoint
- Story Board/Video/Visuals!!
- Testimony by Parents/Educators/Students
- Written Handouts/Fact Sheets

Hatfield SEPAC –

<https://slideplayer.com/slide/9056176/>



Top Tips for Effective Presentations

1. Show your Passion and Connect with your Audience.
2. Focus on your Audience's Needs.
3. Keep it Simple: Concentrate on your Core Message.
4. Smile and Make Eye Contact with your Audience.
5. Start Strongly.
6. Remember the 10-20-30 Rule for Slideshows.
7. Tell Stories.
8. Use your Voice Effectively.



Resources

Google “SE PAC Annual Report”

Ask an established SE PAC to share their latest report

Watch School Committee recorded meetings



Session 9 – September 8 at 7PM

Workshops, Speakers and Events



INFORMING, EDUCATING, EMPOWERING FAMILIES

617-236-7210 | www.fcsn.org | fcsninfo@fcsn.org