

# **SEPTA Meeting Minutes for October 2, 2023**

## **Minutes written by Recording Secretary Holly Kennedy**

- Meeting called to order at 7:04pm by Lauren Kircher
- Quorum present 21 participants

### **Introductions**

Lauren Kircher & Jennifer Messina: Co-Presidents  
Allison Tierney: First VP (membership)  
Lisa Glynn: Second VP (Speakers)  
Cheryl Denecke: Third VP (Fundraising)  
Justine Bruno: Treasurer  
Holly Kennedy: Secretary

### **Director of Special Education Report**

Dawn Wang, assistant director of special education speaks in Dr. Farber's absence.

- Welcome back. Services are up and running. We welcomed in over 100 kindergarten special education students this year.
- Staffing changes at central office: Lisa Lombardo- new chairperson of special education, which is housed within the central office unit. She will be chairing some CSE initials as well as supporting the CPSE. Due to the amount of students, more support was needed. Assistant director of special education, Dr. Matthew Jurgens, has moved on and accepted a position in Nassau BOCES. The process of hiring a new assistant director is wrapping up and we plan to have a candidate on the board agenda for the October 11th board meeting.

### **Minutes**

- Cheryl states the minutes from our last meeting need to be obtained from the former secretary. Once they are received they will be emailed to our members for approval.

### **First VP Report (Membership) - Allison Tierney**

- We are at 229 members. Starting out at 40-45 more members than where we were last year at this time. Membership is ongoing.
- Question from a member Can we send the membership links out again?
- Question from member. Do we have membership goal? Alli responds: Last year we had 273 members. We would love to hit 300. We have such a large district 500 or 600 is not unreasonable.
- Jenn mentioned that we are looking to increase student membership as well and increase awareness of everyone's different learning styles and remove stigma.
- Cheryl mentions that the reps for local buildings, when reporting back to their schools, should encourage membership and emphasize that you do not need to have a special education student to be a member of SEPTA. We support all the students.
- Jenn reminds our members that one of our biggest expenditures is the scholarships we provide to our students. The more members we can get the more money we have to go back to the students who are graduating.

### **Third VP Report (Fundraising) - Cheryl Denecke**

- Cheryl states that our coffee fundraiser just ended yesterday. We had 14 orders which amounted to \$1300 and we make 40% of that. First time with this fundraiser. She asks our members to let us know how the products are so we will know whether or not to use the company in the future.
- The next fundraiser which began today is the Halloween Boo Bag Fundraiser. Boo bags have three crafts in a reusable bag, with toys, pens and erasers. To be delivered the week of the 23rd. QR code and link is available to order. Limit of 108 bags.

### **Delegate Report**

- No meetings or reports

### **Audit**

- Kristin states that the books were in order when they last met in July.

### **Treasurer Report**

- Cheryl asks if the members had a chance to look over the budget and if anyone has any questions.
- Scholarship line has been raised. Fundraising was so successful last year that scholarships were increased from 5 to 10.

### **Second VP Report (Speakers & Events) - Lisa Glynn**

- Lisa speaks about our Family Fun Night that is scheduled for November 20th. We will have a magician, snacks and a take home craft. Any SEPTA member is invited to bring their family. There will be an RSVP.
- Lauren mentions we are looking for input from our members for future speakers.

\*\*\*Cheryl circles back to the budget to ask for approval. Members approve the budget. Cheryl states the budget has been approved.

- Question from a member regarding apparel. Cheryl states apparel will come out in November.
- Member suggests SEPTA promotion at back to school night. Jenn and Cheryl speak of the importance of administration and building principals in helping us to spread the word. Principals are the only ones allowed to share for SEPTA on parent square. Discussion among the members and board on best ways to communicate SEPTA information within the district. Discussion of the role of the CSE chair for each building and how they can help us communicate. Cheryl mentions with lots of events returning to our buildings there are opportunities to spread the word about SEPTA membership as well.
- Lauren asks if any members have topics of interest for our future meetings.
  - Member suggests mental health for general education as well as special education.
  - Another member suggests the Epilepsy Foundation.
  - Another member (Nicole) suggests a speaker for Bullying awareness. Lauren mentions Red Ribbon Week will address bullying as well. Holly mentions the buildings will address similar topics for LEAAD week in October.

- Jenn asks how our members year is going so far and points out the importance of communication with teachers. Developing relationships with the teacher through communication is vital. For parents and students. Parents are the expert on their kids. Lauren suggests the same communication with service providers and best methods of communication.
- Member asks question about class placements in various schools when your home school does not have the appropriate placement for your child. Ms. Wang responds with the various placements at our elementary schools and how they can change from year to year. She states that a building change will rarely occur unless the child's placement changes. The member asks about alternate assessment and Jenn responds with information regarding assessments.
- Member suggests education session for parents on CSE and IEP and special education laws and language. Jenn talks about progress monitoring and goals. A discussion ensues about what happens when a parent does not agree with the outcome of a CSE meeting. It is suggested that you can table the meeting if you are in disagreement. Ms. Wang clarifies that every CSE has to end with a recommendation from the CSE. The parents do not need to be in agreement and have their rights, but as the Chair a recommendation still needs to be made. Another CSE can be scheduled to further discuss. Ms. Wang emphasizes the importance of working with your building's team.
- Member asks about whether meetings will return to in person. Ms. Wang states meetings are still being scheduled for zoom; the feedback has been that parents appreciate the flexibility of having the option for zoom, but if you want your meeting in person just reach out and they will accommodate you.
- Jenn encourages everyone to join us for our next meeting November 20th at 6pm.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm