



Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Business Meeting

October 22, 2014

- I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. The following AB SpEd PAC Board members attended the meeting: Amanda Bailey, Bill Guthlein, Nancy Sherburne, Paul Murphy, and Carolyn Sprague. Six other members, School Committee Chair Kristina Rychlik, and Early Childhood Coordinator Joe Gibowicz also attended the meeting.
- II. Approval of Minutes

Approval of the meeting minutes from Sept. 24, 2014 was postponed until our next meeting.
- III. Organizational/Business Issues
 - A. Population Trends Report & School Committee Presentation Follow-up

The AB SpEd PAC's *Special Education Population Trends 2004-2014 Report* was distributed to all of the Town Boards (Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee) in addition to the AB School Committee. Amanda shared that the AB SpEd PAC's presentation to the School Committee on the organization's 2014-15 Goals & the *Special Education Population Trends 2004-2014 Report* went well and seemed to be well received.
 - B. Meeting with Superintendent and School Committee Chair

Amanda shared that she, Bill Guthlein and Nancy Sherburne had met with our new superintendent Glenn Brand, Paul Murphy and the new School Committee Chair, Kristina Rychlik in regards to our request to update the SC policy and procedure related to the SpEd PAC. It was a pleasure to meet both Glenn Brand and Kristina Rychlik. We shared the history and development of our positive working relationship with Pupil Services over the last 8-9 years and our desire to have the SC policy and procedure reflect the evolution and current functioning of that relationship as well as fully implement our state mandate. Specifically, we'd like to see the procedure updated to reflect our monthly meeting schedule with Pupil Services not quarterly schedule as currently documented. And we'd like to have the procedure clarify that the subject of our presentations may be broader than just annual goals. Finally, we'd like the procedure to reflect that the timing of our presentations to the School Committee will be as needed not limited to just once in the fall and spring. In its current form the AB SpEd PAC doesn't believe the procedure fully implements the PAC's state mandate to advise the School Committee on issues pertaining to the education and safety of students with special needs – whenever they arise. In addition to the SC policy and procedure, we discussed the

perception issue the PAC has with some Administrators and School Committee members and ways to improve that perception.

C. Parent/Guardian Support Group Subcommittee Update

Blossom Davies shared that she, Jeanne Hobbie and Carolyn Sprague had met several times to discuss starting a new parent support group. She mentioned that they hoped to have it up and running in the new year – post holidays. They’ve decided the target population for this support group is parents of children with special needs and parents of children with other challenging issues. They wanted to broaden the support to include other families in our community also facing challenges. They’ve been discussing what to name the support group.

The subcommittee contacted the Sudbury SpEd PAC and Francesca Ricciardi to talk with each about how they had organized their support groups and to solicit any recommendations about what worked well for them and what didn’t. Francesca said when they brought in speakers from MGH on topics like anxiety and bullying they drew large crowds. When asked about why Francesca’s group stopped meeting, she shared that most of the people that attended the group were often in crisis. Once the crisis resolved attendance fell off. Blossom mentioned that they were also interested in talking with MA Family Ties to gain more information. It was suggested that she contact Bonnie Thompson as she used to work for Family Ties.

D. 2014 Parent & Guardian Survey

Amanda said she hoped to call a subcommittee meeting soon to kick off work on the AB SpEd PAC’s 2014 parent/guardian survey. She said Nancy Settle-Murphy, Carolyn Sprague, Bonnie Thompson and Nancy Sherburne had expressed interest in participating on the survey subcommittee. She hoped to get a kick-off meeting scheduled to discuss what questions to include and establish a timeline for the survey.

E. Seeking Additional Officers & PTO Liaisons

Amanda said the SpEd PAC is looking for volunteers to fill additional officer and PTO liaison positions. She’d like to find one more person to share the AB SpEd PAC Secretarial role. She’d also like to find volunteers to act as liaisons to the various school PTOs to help build bridges to the schools and inform parents about the SpEd PAC. In addition, she’d like to find someone interested in being a Standing Chair for an Outreach Committee.

F. Updates on Other Goals & Priorities for 2014-2015

- The SpEd PAC has talked with Mary Emmons and Glenn Brand regarding our interest in instituting a new practice requiring all teachers to sign off on student IEPs and 504s within 5 days of receiving a signed IEP/504.

- Nancy Sherburne shared that she is working on updating the *Special Education Parent Handbook* to reflect regionalization changes and updates since its original release.
- Amanda shared some good news regarding recent changes in teacher certification requirements. As of 2016 all MA teaching staff will be required to complete 15 hours of mandatory special education training in order to be recertified.

G. Basic Rights Workshop – November 3, 2014

Amanda reminded everyone that we will be co-hosting a Basic Rights Workshop with Sudbury and Maynard on November 3, 2014 at 7 pm at Sudbury's Curtis Middle School.

IV. New Business

Friends of AB SpEd PAC news – Nancy shared that Lisa Jensen-Fellows had responded to our request for volunteers to fill the Treasurer position, but was unable to attend the meeting tonight. She also said that she was looking for bake sale volunteers – folks who could provide baked goods as well as those who could man a sale table for an hour or so. She passed out sign up sheets for interested volunteers.

Update on Plans to Move the Preschool to Blanchard – Joe Gibowicz, Coordinator of Early Childhood Services, said that this topic is still under discussion. He said he has asked for a decision by the end of November regarding whether or not the Integrated Preschool will move for the start of the 2015-16 school year.

Book Group Update – Carolyn Sprague said she hopes to select a book by mid-November in hopes of starting the book group in January of 2015.

V. Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

VI. Next Meeting – November 19, 2014 at 7:30 pm in the R. J. Grey Library.

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Sherburne