



Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council (AB SpEd PAC)

Business Meeting

Wednesday, November 18th, 2015, at 8:45 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High library

*A free public presentation by Special Education Attorney Dan Perlman
will precede this meeting.*

Agenda

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

Review and approval of October 14, 2015, meeting minutes

III. Organization/Business Issues

- A. Expanding Extracurricular Opportunities and Access to Community Ed
- B. Department Guidelines or Policy RE: Timely Responses to Parent Communications
- C. Preliminary Budget Items
- D. Proposed Pupil Services Leadership and Structure Changes
- E. 2015 Population Trends Update Published
- F. Basic Rights Workshop Follow Up – An IEP for My Child Workshop in Spring '16
- G. Next Parenting Support Hour December 9th at Acton Memorial Library 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. (Formerly Parenting Challenging Children)

IV. New Business – Other topics on people's minds

V. Open Issues

- A. MCAS – 4th and 7th grade ELA performance for students with disabilities is weak
- B. Futures Education findings RE: student to assistant ratios high by peer standards
- C. Concerns about the process for combining outside specialists' recommendations with district evaluations/recommendations and appropriately incorporating those recommendations into the IEP
- D. Mandatory special education training/professional development for regular and special education staff – hiring dual-certified staff
- E. Enhanced summer school and after school/extracurricular programming
- F. Increased use of technology in IEP development/revision process

VI. Adjournment

All AB SpEd PAC meetings are open to the public. We encourage parents of children with special needs and others interested in special education to attend. Please check our website (www.abspedpac.org) for information regarding upcoming events.

VII. Next Meeting

Holiday party and business meeting Wednesday, December 16th, 2015, at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High library



Acton-Boxborough Special Education
Parent Advisory Council

Business Meeting

October 14, 2015

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. AB SpEd PAC Board members Amanda Bailey and Bill Guthlein were present as well as Director of Special Education Mary Emmons, School Committee liaisons to the PAC Diane Baum and Paul Murphy, and eleven other members.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from February 25, 2015, were reviewed. A motion was made to approve the minutes as written and was passed unanimously. The review of May and June 2015 PAC minutes were held until later in the meeting.

III. Organizational/Business Issues

A. Candidates for Secretary and Standing Committee Chair

Annual elections were held at the June 2015 meeting. Amanda Bailey and Bill Guthlein were elected Co-Chairs. Nancy Sherburne was elected Past PAC Chair. Remaining open positions include Secretary and Standing Committee Chairperson. Amanda Bailey reviewed the list of duties. Kathy Luce was nominated as Secretary. Her nomination was moved and seconded. Blossom Davies was nominated as Standing Committee Chair. Her nomination was moved and seconded. The slate of officers was moved, seconded and passed unanimously.

B. Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) Advancing Parent Professional Leadership in Education (APPLE) Institute Plan Follow-Up

Amanda reported that several members attended this three-day institute with Pupil Services last April. The team created a multi-point action plan for 2015-17.

- 1) Increase PAC diversity and outreach (both culturally and by disability). One specific goal is to provide broader translation of documents into other languages. Around 900 families/administrators are currently on the AB SpEd PAC e-mail list.
- 2) Update the PAC handbook (held over from last year due to ongoing changes from regionalization process).
- 3) Update resources on PAC website, to specifically address dead links and update provider recommendations from membership
- 4) Publish three reports—2015 Parent/Guardian Survey, Population Trends Update and MCAS Analysis. The PAC will be reporting on surveys and trends at the October 15 School Committee meeting. Bill noted that people were more satisfied with special education overall, but pockets of concern were present. Bill noted that partial responses were captured. Fourteen percent of students on IEPs were represented in the survey responses. Regarding population trends, although the overall student population is declining, those requiring special

education services is rising as well as the ELL and low-income populations. Amanda noted that the state recently redefined low income criteria so that makes multi-year comparisons challenging. School committee members noted that the data is very valuable and would like to see it on a regular basis. On MCAS, the 4th and 7th grade ELA scores for special education students have been below the state average for three years. In the latest test results, the 7th grade scores are up 18 points over last year and above the state average, but still an area of concern. 4th grade performance is still a major issue. The Director of Special Education noted that there is a new writing program, Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD), in 4th and 5th grades across most elementary schools with regular and special education staffing paired for trainings to help address this area.

C. Superintendent's FY16 Performance Goals

Amanda noted that the Superintendent reported on performance goals for FY16 at the September 17, 2015, School Committee meeting. The goals are detailed on pages 54-56 of the packet for that meeting (available online). They include Professional Practice, Student Learning, and District Improvement. The Student Learning goal is focused on student support services. The district will coordinate a review of student support service practices across each of the schools PreK-12, both regular and special education settings, using the framework of Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

IV. Upcoming Programs

- 1) November 2—the PAC will host a FCSN Basic Rights Workshop with AB Pupil Services, and the Maynard and Sudbury SEPACs on November 2, 2015 from 7-9 p.m. at the RJ Grey Library.
- 2) November 4—Blossom Davies reported that the Parenting Challenging Children support group from infant to high school (facilitated by parents of the AB SpEd PAC) will meet on November 4 at the Fowler Library in West Concord. The group generally meets the first Wednesday of each month. There was some discussion about changing the name of the group to promote greater attendance and places to advertise.
- 3) November 18—Dan Perlman, special education attorney, will be the guest speaker at the next PAC meeting. Amanda noted that there have been changes in bullying and restraint laws so please attend.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Amanda noted that the September meeting was a social gathering. A parent had some concerns about IEPs and permanent school records. Parents and Mary Emmons offered feedback.

VI. OPEN ISSUES

The group reviewed the list of open items on the agenda. Additionally Bill Guthlein noted that the budget process was gearing up. Paul Murphy noted that an Acton Finance Committee point of view document is out, but he hasn't seen it yet.

Approval of Minutes continued

The minutes from May 27, 2015, and June 10, 2015, were reviewed. A motion was made to approve the minutes as written which was seconded and passed unanimously.

- VII. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.
- VIII. Next Meeting – Dan Perlman to speak at 7:30 p.m. November 18, 2015, with PAC business meeting to follow in the R.J. Grey Library.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy Luce, Secretary

DRAFT