



Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

(AB SpEd PAC)

Business Meeting

Wednesday, April 13, 2016, at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High library

Agenda

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

Review and approval of February 10, 2016, and March 9, 2016, meeting minutes

III. Organization/Business Issues

- A. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Director of Special Education
- B. Update on Progress toward PAC Goals for the Year
- C. Executive Summary of 2015 Parent/Guardian Survey
- D. Increasing Understanding of Disabilities Among General Education Staff
- E. Obtaining Information about Certified Staff in Buildings (Orton-Gillingham, Etc.)
- F. Next Parenting Support Hour 10:30 a.m. May 11 at the Acton Memorial Library

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

V. Open Issues

- A. MCAS – 4th 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

Business meeting Wednesday, May 11, 2016, at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High library



Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Business Meeting February 10, 2016

- I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. PAC Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Bill Guthlein, Secretary Kathy Luce, and Standing Committee Chair Blossom Davies were present, as well as Out-of-District Coordinator Matt Kidder, School Committee liaison to the PAC Paul Murphy, and two other members.
- II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from January 13, 2016, were reviewed. A motion was made to approve the minutes and was passed unanimously.
- III. Organizational/Business Issues
 - A. Monthly Meeting Update

The PAC chairs did not meet with the Director of Special Education yet this month; they will meet after February vacation week. Mary Emmons is the sole finalist for the Lincoln Public Schools Administrator for Student Services position.
 - B. Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Search Update

The three finalists spoke last night in a public forum. Please watch the broadcast on Acton TV by February 12 and send comments to the district. The PAC doesn't support any one candidate as the organization is committed to working with whomever is hired for the position. Finalist site visits are continuing this week and a decision is expected by the end of the month.
 - C. FY17 Budget Update

There was an eleventh-hour push by the Acton Finance Committee for a substantial cut of \$1.5-2.1M to the school budget. Paul Murphy said that School Committee Chairperson Kristina Rychlik pushed back on the demand and added that she, the Superintendent, and the district's Director of Finance met with the Acton Finance Committee last night. The result of that discussion is unknown. There is an Open Budget Hearing this Thursday, February 11, at 7 p.m.
 - D. Access to Resource Rooms During School Tours

Frustrations have been expressed by parents regarding their inability to view resource rooms during evening school tours, particularly at Merriam and McCarthy-Towne. The Director of Special Education spoke with the K-6 Coordinator and they will follow up with building leaders.
 - E. Obtaining Information about Certified Staff in Buildings (Orton-Gillingham, etc)

The PAC has the understanding that in the past every building had at least one staff person certified in each of the programs like Lindamood-Bell, Orton Gillingham, etc., for remediation of specific learning disabilities. As the Special Education Parent Handbook is updated, the PAC looks to confirm and identify resources by building.
 - F. Kids on the Block or Other Disability Awareness/Bullying Prevention Programs

The Acton Commission on Disabilities (COD) has approached the junior high principal regarding the Kids on the Block program. The PAC could partner with the

Acton COD on an anti-bullying seminar or disability-awareness education initiative for students.

G. Parenting Support Hour

The next meeting is scheduled for March 2 at 10:30 a.m. at the Acton Memorial Library.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Paul Murphy was asked about School Committee seats up for election. From Acton, Kristina Rychlik is running again and Mike Coppolino is not. Paul conveyed concern about the aggressive timeline for the MCAS 2.0 implementation. People shared concerns about the MCAS 2.0, notably the use of technology for students with fine motor challenges. There was a question about proposed efforts at the School Committee to compare our special education budget (and other budget elements) to other districts' anecdotally known for challenging relationships with families. A member expressed the sense that there was a focus on our special education student percentage rate. There was also discussion about RTI (Response to Intervention) and how helpful it can be to students when done well. Parents have worried that if students get "just enough" intervention to get by, it might delay identification as having specific learning disabilities requiring special education services.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

VI. NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, March 9, 2016, at the R.J. Grey Library at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Kathy Luce, Secretary