



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