



## Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

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### Business Meeting March 9, 2016

- I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. PAC board member Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Bill Guthlein, Past Chair Nancy Sherburne, Secretary Kathy Luce, Standing Committee Chair Blossom Davies, Director of Special Education Mary Emmons, and six other members were present.
- II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from February 10, 2016, were reviewed. Two edits were suggested. Changes will be made and the revised minutes will be reviewed at the April 13 meeting.
- III. Organizational/Business Issues
  - A. Monthly Meeting with Student Services

The Director of Special Education noted that they are streamlining the process with building leaders to allow access to resource rooms to parents during daytime tours. It is on the agenda for the school leadership team to discuss. The PAC asked about internal guidelines for establishing primary disability categories, including Other Neurological, Autism, Emotional, and for students with ADHD. Mary said in the April 7 leadership meeting they will go over the Emotional classification with an emphasis at the secondary level and review what assessments are appropriate for the major categories. The Director of Special Education advised the group about issues with mail transit times locally. Acton mail used to be sorted locally and put out for delivery the next day. Now it seems that all mail, regardless of zip code, is going to Boston before coming back to Acton and is taking up to four days.
  - B. New Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

The search is complete and Dr. Dawn Bentley was offered the position. Dr. Bentley is currently in Michigan, but is from Boxborough and went to ABRHS.
  - C. Search for New Director of Special Education and Qualities Desired

Since current Director of Special Education Mary Emmons is taking a job in Lincoln, the PAC seeks parent feedback on qualities desired in a new Director.
  - D. Update from FCSN 2016 Visions of Community Conference

Amanda attended the recent FCSN annual conference and has handouts. She attended the dyslexia session, met Nancy Duggan, and has her handouts and some from Learning Ally if people are interested. She also attended a session by Dan Heffernan of Kotin Crabtree & Strong who talked about legal trends in special education. More resources are on the FCSN website or can be obtained from the PAC.
  - E. Obtaining Information about Certified Staff in Buildings (Orton-Gillingham, etc.)

The Director of Special Education said information gathering is ongoing since not everyone has responded to the K-6 Coordinator of Student Services yet. They are working on how this information will be made available.
  - F. Advisory to Families about Services Listed Under Additional Information on IEP

Parents had been advised at the state level that some districts are including services in IEPs under Additional Information and not in the Service Delivery Grid. The

PAC sought clarification from Student Services about what is typically found under Additional Information. Examples included a fifth year of high school, bullying provisions, documentation of attempts to contact parents, and further explanation of items found on the N1 form. Those with pullouts specified under Additional Information should request to have them included in the Service Delivery Grid.

#### G. Parenting Support Hour

The last meeting was held April 6 at 10:30 a.m. at the Acton Memorial Library. The group convenes again on May 11.

#### IV. NEW BUSINESS

A member expressed concerns about the schools understanding high functioning autism and said that Maynard had an executive functioning program with an ASPIRE consultant to that district. The Director of Special Education said that we have an ASPIRE consultant at the high school level, Scott McLeod, and we have previously had other consultants including Dot Lucci. Members reiterated the need for a focus on executive functioning at the elementary level and consistent programming K-12. The district 274 grant was written to focus on social and emotional needs so there are additional resources available.

Nancy suggested that some of the responsibilities for the PAC be distributed. For example, the chairs are providing refreshments for meetings, coordinating social functions, and other tasks. Since the chairs already have so many responsibilities, perhaps others can take on these jobs.

The PAC has five individuals who underwent parent peer support training through Mass Family TIES and can provide mentoring for families with children with new diagnoses.

A member shared that “Autistic Like Me” is showing in locally on April 9 and she will share details via email.

A member talked about Drumlin Farms and the fact that they have a grant-funded position who works on accessible programming. More information is on their website.

Nancy raised the issue of funding speakers. The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Learning has asked the PTOs and the PAC to co-sponsor speakers for the Family Learning Series next year. Since any PAC funds were specifically raised for special education, any speaker the PAC co-sponsors should focus on that. Members discussed possible speakers and topics, including executive functioning and Pamela Ely for social pragmatics.

#### V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

#### VI. NEXT MEETING – Wednesday, April 13, 2016, at the RJ Grey Library at 7:30 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Kathy Luce, Secretary`*