



Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Business Meeting September 14, 2016

- I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. AB SpEd PAC Board Chair Amanda Bailey, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Standing Committee Chair Blossom Davies, Special Education Director Pam Smith, School Committee Liaison to the PAC Kathleen Neville, and fourteen other community members attended the meeting.
- II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes for June 8, 2016 were reviewed by those in attendance. A motion was made to approve the June meeting minutes as written. The motion was seconded and passed with one abstention from School Committee Liaison to the PAC Kathleen Neville.
- III. Organizational/Business Issues
 - A. Student Services Staffing & Organizational Changes

Amanda introduced Pam Smith, the new Special Education Director, and shared that Dawn Bentley is now the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services. Susan Bohmiller is the interim high school Educational Team Leader (ETL) for this year. All other open special education positions have now been filled by the district.
 - B. Updates from Summer Meeting with New Student Services Leadership

The district is still fact finding for the state's Coordinated Program Review (CPR) later this year. There is no early budget information to share due in part to the focus on CPR preparation. The 2016-2017 Superintendent's Student Learning Goal focuses on implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) in regular education over the next two years. The district hopes to intervene for struggling students earlier through this regular education initiative as well as through special education as appropriate.
 - C. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Special Education Director

The Special Education Director will continue monthly meetings with PAC leadership to regularly share information. This year the district is going to provide the lengthy Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards handout with all families electronically instead of in hard copy. The Director clarified that the time line for district staff to return phone calls or email responses back to parents should be within 24 hours.
 - D. Seeking Candidates for Secretary Position

Amanda asked if there were any nominees to fill the open PAC Secretary position. Seeing as there were no nominees at this meeting the topic was tabled until next month.
 - E. New Guidance from Federal Department of Education and State

There is new guidance from the federal and state governments on Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Behavioral Supports, and Transition. Dear Colleague letters are available from the DOE. There are many conferences and resources available.

E. Speaker and Support Group Schedule for the Year

The PAC is cosponsoring Sarah Ward's presentation on executive functioning on March 7, 2017 as part of the district's Family Learning Series. The Friends of AB SpEd PAC will discuss how much money to allocate toward this event. High school transition specialist Kate Sullivan will be attending the PAC's January meeting to discuss the district's transition resources for students 14-22. The first Parent Support Group meeting will be Saturday, September 13, from 1-3 p.m. at St. Matthew's United Methodist Church. This is a change in meeting place from last year. The Parent Support Group is a great place to connect with other parents in a more private setting, ask questions, and share resources.

IV. New Business

- Night gym is available at the high school from 6-7 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays this semester for students to free up space in their academic schedules.
- There is a junior high fitness club after school this year, a flexible and accommodating drop in opportunity. There are also many other clubs at RJ Grey.
- There is a Harvard forum on October 6th, "Life, Animated: Autism, Ableism & Educators," with Ron Suskind. The event will also live stream online.
- A parent asked the Special Education Director for preliminary thoughts about special education budget needs. They are looking at budget issues by department at this time. In her role as Special Education Director she is also the K-6 Coordinator for Merriam and McCarthy-Towne so she is meeting with educators, observing students, and establishing relationships there. Lynne Laramie is the K-6 Coordinator for the other four elementary schools. The Director also shared that she is redoing the district's Procedure Manual and that it will be published soon. She shared that the upcoming CPR will review 59 specific areas. She completed a CPR review in 2015 at her previous district so knows what the state is looking for. She said the district has some accessibility issues in bathrooms at Merriam as well as other accessibility issues in the Administration Building. Her number one goal is to establish a consistent process for special education between schools in grades K-12, such as the use of the same forms, etc. The PAC mentioned that in the last Parent/Guardian Survey communication was highlighted as a key issue. This area was also identified as a concern in the Superintendent's Entry Plan Survey findings. The Director shared that she has created live links to MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) documents to help people find information. In terms of staff budget needs she mentioned that related service providers wanted to make sure that they had all the protocols and tests that they need for the year. There are also furniture and material needs for recently established programs.

V. Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

VI. Next Meeting – October 19, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High library

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Sherburne