



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

Wednesday, June 14, 2017, 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 March 8, April 12, and May 10, 2017, meeting minutes

III. Organization/Business Issues

- A. Presentation of Service Award
- B. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Special Education Director
- C. 2017 Spring Mini Survey Preliminary Results
- D. Office of Civil Rights Disability Access Complaint RE: District Web Sites
- E. Seek Nominations & Elect Officers for 2017-2018 School Year
- F. Goals & Priorities for 2017-2018 School Year
 - 1. Inclusion Practices, Including Extracurricular Activities & Community Ed
 - 2. Survey Follow Up: Increasing Special Education Team Communication, Extended School Year Programming
 - 3. MCAS Analysis
 - 4. Long-Form Survey, Web Site, and Special Education Handbook Revisions
 - 5. Presentations about Basic Rights, Mental Health & the Individualized Education Program (IEP), Transition, Autism, Extended School Year

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

V. Open Issues

- A. MCAS – 3rd & 4th grade ELA performance vulnerable for students with disabilities
- B. Concerns about the process for combining outside specialists’ recommendations with district evaluations/recommendations and appropriately incorporating those recommendations into the IEP
- C. Mandatory special education training/professional development for regular and special education staff – hiring dual-certified staff
- D. Enhanced Extended School Year, before-, and after-school programming
- E. Increased use of technology in IEP development, revision, & communication
- F. Out of District findings from 2015 parent/guardian survey counter overall positive trend
- G. Need for consistent K-12 executive functioning curriculum

VI. Adjournment

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VII. 2017-2018 Meeting Schedule TBA



Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Business Meeting
March 8, 2017

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Board member Chair Amanda Bailey, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Standing Committee Chair Blossom Davies, Secretary Ann Iandiorio, Special Education Director Pamela Smith, and seven other members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from November 16, 2017 and February 15, 2017 were approved with no one opposed and no abstentions.

III. Organizational/Business Issues

A. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Special Education Director

Response to questions about role of school principals in IEP meetings– reasons vary

1. Involved in issues of attendance/discipline
2. Attend at the request of parents/staff
3. Learn more about the students in their schools
4. Purpose of staff evaluation

The Special Education Director will send a memo to principals expressing parent concerns and have them added to the meeting invitations.

Updated procedures and forms from the Student Services office to date include the Team Meeting Summary Form, an expanded Autism form (Chapter 57), Age of Majority Paperwork (now requires two witnesses), the form to request observation by an outside agency, and written ESY procedures.

Translation services are readily available. They are subcontracted to the Language School International. The office is working on what documents need to be translated.

The Special Education Director is observing all district special education programs but given her direct oversight of two buildings this year and the CPR she has had limited time to see some programs.

There have been parent question about the use of a dyslexia diagnosis (does an MD need to diagnose?). If a student needs a Tier 1 intervention within MTSS and teachers need to screen is there an opportunity to add a formal assessment? The Special Education Director will contact outside resources to get information about training teachers to assess for dyslexia.

B. Parent Participation in Individualized Education Program Development

Issue of amount of time spent on updates from teachers and therapists discussed. This takes considerable time, leaving only time to discuss the service delivery grid with no parent involvement in discussion of goals, benchmarks, and accommodations. Parents have to wait for the new IEP to see and then respond to new goals and benchmarks. Student Services will look at sending reports to parents in advance in order to truncate the

update part of the meeting. The new Team Meeting Summary Form may help expedite by keeping the team on task.

C. Special Education Legal Updates

165,000 IEPs in Massachusetts; 10,800 rejected in full or in part; 778 mediations (85% agreements); 23 full decisions at hearing (4 in which parent prevailed); 135 facilitated meetings and 66 unmet requests for facilitated meetings.

It is important for families to understand what they are consenting to in a settlement. Note considerable weight is given to experts, but not from MDs from the hospitals as they have limited ability to make educational recommendations and/or to observe placements. Text messages are subject to discovery in disputes.

D. Sarah Ward Executive Functioning & Resilience Presentation Summary

She presented to a full auditorium and was well received. The slides from the presentation are available online.

E. Speakers and Support Group Schedule

1. Next Support Group Meeting Saturday, April 8, from 1-3 p.m. at St. Matthews United Methodist Church, Acton – Reported that attendance is variable with new people joining. Some people are from out of district. Many families are dealing with a new diagnosis. The meetings would benefit from more publicity.
2. Basic Rights in Education Workshop Wednesday, May 3, from 7-8:45 p.m. in the Fowler School Library, Maynard –we are cosponsoring with Maynard and Sudbury.
3. Presentations about Mental Health & the IEP
 - PPAL (Parent Professional Advocacy League) resource for children’s mental health
 - Family Education Program next year to focus on resilience
 - Speaker suggestions include “Paper Tigers” screening and discussion (trauma-informed approaches to education)

IV. New Business

MTSS discussion – more services to be pushed-in based on student needs. Principals will be meeting with consultants about this process. It is easier to push-in OT than it is to push-in speech therapy. Concerns were raised about more transparency when repeated Tier II or Tier III interventions are required. Questions were raised about when parents are notified when students are being observed/evaluated/referred for different tiers or special education evaluation. Principals should be involved in the notification. Question about tiers for social/emotional and behavioral issues.

V. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

VI. Next Meeting

Wednesday April 12, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. in the Parker Damon Library

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Respectfully submitted by Ann Iandiorio, Secretary



Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Business Meeting
April 12, 2017

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Board member Chair Amanda Bailey, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Standing Committee Chair Blossom Davies, Secretary Ann Iandiorio, ABRHS Educational Team Leader Susan Bohmiller, and six other members were present. Note the meeting was moved to the Parker Damon Library due to a scheduling conflict with the RJ Grey Library space.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from March 8, 2017 were not available.

III. Organizational/Business Issues

- A. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Special Education Director
Meeting was with Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Dawn Bentley.
- B. Andrew F. v Douglas County School Feedback Sought Ruling
Massachusetts surpasses the federal regulations in a number of areas and local impact from the ruling is likely to be limited.
- C. District School Building Plan Feedback Sought
There is still time to offer feedback. There is now an online option to look at all the building options. To date there has been no official feedback from the PAC.
Issues being considered include:
 - Advantages to having all preschool, K, and 1st graders in one location, such as creating staffing specifically for that building.
 - 6th grade in elementary schools vs. moving 6th grade to a middle school.
 - Given current 6th grade in elementary model working on better preparing 6th graders for 7th grade.
 - Consider having students with special education needs have a more complete orientation before starting in the junior high. The junior high is still offering a two-day transition program favorably reviewed by parents.
- D. April Release for Survey Highlighting Extended School Year
Qualifying is based not on just documented regression over vacations during the year. Student can qualify based on regression, risk of regression, or recoupment issues. The PAC will issue a survey to parents after the April break to follow up on how the ESY eligibility process has gone. Some parents expressed concern that they were told that the student had to show documented regression to qualify for ESY. Two current issues are as follows 1) qualifying requirements and 2) timely distribution of information about dates, staff, and services.

E. Volunteer Opportunities: Site Updates, Outreach, Event Planning

There are many opportunities to volunteer in a variety of areas. For site updates, volunteers can check particular areas of interest/knowledge on the PAC website, highlight issues, and send feedback to the officers. For outreach, volunteers can help with the fall open houses at the schools, attend PTO meetings, attend district subcommittee meetings, or attend joint PTO meetings. The PAC is looking for a member to serve as a liaison to the Acton Commission on Disabilities.

F. Speakers and Support Group Schedule

1. Basic Rights in Education Workshop Wednesday, May 3, from 7:00-8:45 p.m. in the Fowler School Library, Maynard
2. Next Support Group Meeting – Saturday May 6, from 1-3pm at St. Matthews United Methodist Church, Acton. The group is going well, looking to do more publicity of the meetings.
3. Presentations on Mental Health & the IEP, Transition, Resilience
The Arc will have a transition conference in November. Next year the district's family education series theme will be resilience. They are compiling speakers now and looking for more ideas. Please pass on suggestions for what type of information would be helpful.
4. There was a suggestion for a PAC presentation on Assistive Technology.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

The group would like to put together a list of concerns to include when considering the needs of students with special education needs in the new school building plan.

Concerns were raised about using the loss of recess as a punishment for students. Can it be put in an IEP that movement is necessary? Also movement is developmentally appropriate for all students.

Tuesday April 25 the high school is hosting a transition meeting for 8th to 9th grade. It will be 6:30-8:00 p.m. in room 184 West at ABRHS.

Considering plans for a PAC-sponsored ice cream social at the Ripley Playscape in Concord on a weekend in late May or early June.

V. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

VI. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday May 10, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High Library

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Respectfully submitted by Ann Iandiorio, Secretary