



## Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

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### Business Meeting May 10, 2017

#### I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. Board Chair Amanda Bailey, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Standing Committee Chair Blossom Davies, Special Education Director Pam Smith, and two other members were present.

#### II. Approval of Minutes

Review and approval of minutes from March 8, 2017, and April 12, 2017, were postponed until our next scheduled meeting in June.

#### III. Organizational/Business Issues

##### A. Monthly Meeting with Special Education Director

The PAC asked a number of questions about Extended School Year (ESY), including how programs have changed year to year with regard to total hours, how many students have been identified as requiring ESY this year compared to last year, and whether or not students on the autism spectrum were being provided access to Community Ed's summer program for generalization and access to the Least Restrictive Environment as in the past. Student Services will follow up regarding year over year changes. ESY eligibility is still being determined by some teams and headcount information will be provided later. A cohort of students has been invited to participate in lunch with Community Ed students so data can be collected on social skills.

There are reports from multiple families in various schools that team meetings mostly consist of updates from the team and then revisions to the grid. The rest of the IEP—including goals and benchmarks—is not discussed and families do not have a chance for input until they receive the IEP in the mail. Subsequent meetings should be scheduled to develop the IEP and ensure parent participation as full team members. Educational Team Leaders running the meetings have been advised. Parent education as to rights and responsibilities is required.

The Special Education Director is not part of every IEP team and will defer to decisions made by the IEP teams. Families should follow the escalation and resolution procedures set by the law when disagreements take place (by partially rejecting proposed IEPs, etc.).

The Pathways program is slated to expand to fourteen students next year from ten (barring move ins). A question has been asked about whether or not and how program changes are being communicated to families and a request made to communicate broadly via newsletter rather than 1:1.

##### B. 2017 Mini Survey Live

The 2017 Mini Survey is now live. Student Services is helping distribute the link to families via electronic mail. The long-form survey is due to go out next year; revisions are slated to reduce content and length. Revisions should be conducted by a subcommittee.

### C. Brainstorming PAC Goals & Priorities for 2017-2018 School Year

This discussion was brief given low turnout. Progress reporting was considered as an emphasis; there have been issues in the past with progress reports being timed for release with regular report cards and discrepancies exist building to building as to whether or not report cards are issued at all. Consistent communication remains vital from the schools as well as from the PAC.

A review of the current year's goals and priorities was provided. The PAC leadership and Student Services agree the goal to build relationships with new administrators was met. This included those aspects of the Federation for Children with Special Needs Advancing Parent Professional Leadership in Education (FCSN APPLE) plan as they related to improving communication and partnership. This concludes the second year of APPLE plan implementation. The PAC met its goal of hosting joint workshops beyond Basic Rights, partnering on Jessica Minahan's and Sarah Ward's presentations. The handbook updates have been hampered by continued changes to special education programming and department structure. The PAC needs to explore the feasibility of providing hard copies versus editing the electronic version as necessary. The 2017 mini survey will assist with following up on communication and Out of District issues found in the 2015 long-form survey. MCAS analysis was conducted and data presented in the fall. The need for an IEP/504 signoff policy to ensure all staff are aware of IEPs/504s is being resolved through Student Services procedures and changes to how IEPs are shared internally.

### D. Description of PAC Officer Positions for Elections June 14

The PAC can elect up to three chairs and two secretaries. Descriptions of those positions are available in the bylaws on the site.

### E. Speaker and Support Group Schedule

1. Next parenting support group meeting Saturday, June 10, from 1-3 p.m. at St. Matthews United Methodist Church, Acton
2. Presentations about mental health and the IEP from the Parent/Professional Advocacy League, post-secondary transition, and autism are being planned for next year. The district Family Leadership Series will focus on resilience. Basic Rights is due to be hosted in Sudbury if we continue partnering with the Sudbury and Maynard Special Education Parent Advisory Councils.

## IV. NEW BUSINESS

No new business was discussed.

## V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

## VI. NEXT MEETING & ANNUAL ELECTIONS

Wednesday, June 14, 2017, at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High Library

*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](http://www.abspedpac.org)) for information regarding upcoming events.*

*Respectfully submitted by Amanda Bailey, Chair*