



# 2017-2018 Updates

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SPRING PRESENTATION TO THE ABRSC

# Our Mission

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*To ensure understanding, respect, support,  
and the appropriate education of all children in our community.*

The Special Education Parent Advisory Council's duties under state law include:

*“advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities and meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the school district's special education programs.”*

- Provide a network for parents and a forum for sharing and discussing interests and concerns
- Maintain dialogue with the broader community
- Collaborate with the school community to improve student outcomes
- Promote and enhance communication between families and administrators

# Selected 2017-2018 Goals

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- Identify ways to improve inclusion practices in the schools and community
- Work with families and Student Services to explore issues found via 2017 parent/guardian mini survey, particularly around Extended School Year programming and communication
- Conduct MCAS analysis and promote stronger academic progress and improved and transparent measures of growth beyond Student Growth Percentile (SGP) for Students with Disabilities
- Community education and outreach regarding Basic Rights, mental health & the IEP, transition, autism, and Extended School Year programming

# Defining Terms

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**Accessibility** – 1) Being able to physically enter an environment and 2) how an environment or service allows for full, independent usage

**Inclusion** – Involving people with disabilities in everyday activities and encouraging them to have roles similar to their peers who do not have a disability

**Adaptation/Accommodation** – Changing an environment to enable participation

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth>

# Working Toward Access & Inclusion

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- Presented to the Acton-Boxborough Family Network board

*ABFN piloted sensory-friendly components to holiday parties and the kindergarten social*

- Provided information for families from Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists from Access Recreation Boston
- Continued to raise awareness around the lack of a fully-accessible playground with inclusive equipment in either town (compared to SMILE in Sudbury, Ripley Playscape in Concord, etc.), including at elementary schools, Acton Early Childhood Program site
- Advocated for the required feasibility study for the school building project to replace older facilities and spaces constructed prior to the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act

# Access & Inclusion Continued

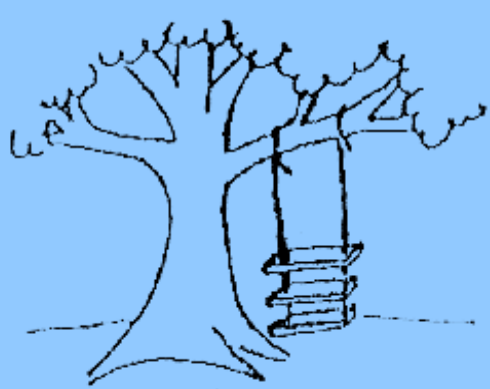
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- Shared information with families about the Massachusetts Inclusive Schools Initiative (MISI)
- Continue to work with Student Services around individual access and inclusion issues as well as trying to identify broader opportunities (e.g., kindergarten placements for students requiring resource room support, co-teaching at ABRHS)
- Sought clarity regarding extracurricular access at the secondary level; identified clear resolution chain
- Adding increasing and improving
  - 1) access and
  - 2) meaningful inclusion to Open Issues on our agendas



*"... a family-led group advocating for meaningful inclusion and authentic membership in classrooms, schools, and communities for our children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), including autism."*

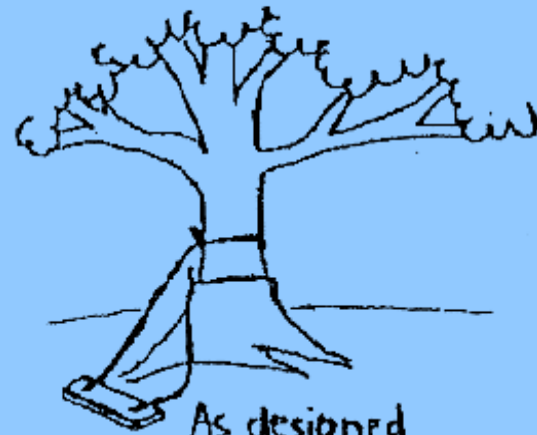
# WHY WE NEED TO LISTEN TO FAMILIES



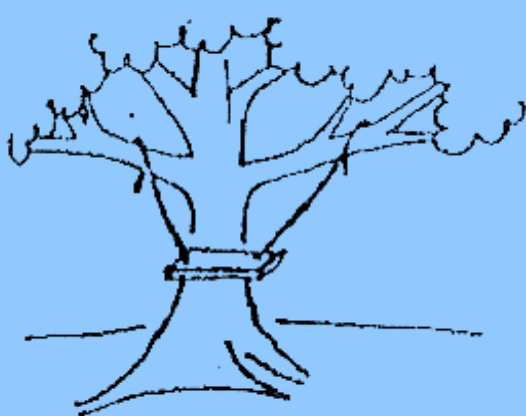
Proposed by the planner



As specified in the plan



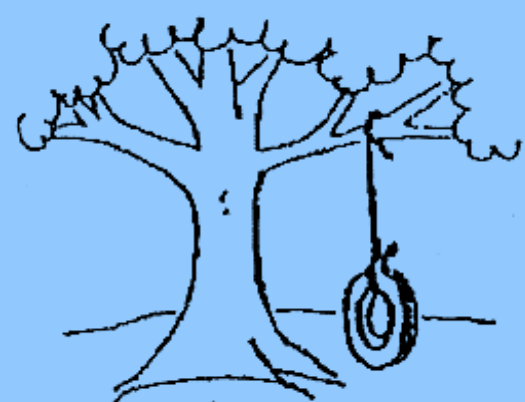
As designed



As funded



As implemented



What the recipient wanted

# Communication

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- Shared with families methods for tracking progress and ensuring accountability
- Sought resolution regarding IEP progress reports not being issued/received concurrently with general education report cards

*Progress reports to be sent through PowerSchool Special Education*

*Resolving timing for schools that do not issue report cards*

- Ongoing monitoring of transition to PowerSchool Special Education software
- Disseminated ESY eligibility information to families

*Student Services provided program information earlier in the year to help families plan*

The SEPAC will conduct a follow up survey in 2018-2019

# Other Accomplishments

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- Conducted MCAS 2.0 analysis for Students with Disabilities
  - Follow up conversations with district leaders and DESE about Student Growth Percentiles*
- Advocated for new district Section 504 Policy (File: IHBA)
- Worked with Student Services around equity across Early Childhood Program sites
- Served on Merriam Principal search
- Served on Superintendent Search Screening Committee
- Explored emergency situation preparation and planning for students with disabilities
- Hosted Director of Special Education and department administrators to provide a programming update
- Amended by-laws to update language, change organization name to AB SEPAC

# Parent Support & Education

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- Cohosted Basic Rights workshop with Student Services and Maynard and Sudbury SEPACs; disseminated Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) webinars on Basic Rights and An IEP for My Child
- Hosted ABRHS transition specialist and FCSN on resources, self-determination, and best practices
- Held monthly daytime parenting support group and coffee/tea hours
- Maintained parent-to-parent listserv and Facebook page
- Fielded dozens of parent information and support requests
- Attended regional workshops and state-level conferences to bring back resources, including:
  - Arc of Massachusetts Transition Conference*
  - Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change “A Full Life Ahead” Transition Series*
  - DDS Workshop - Providing Trauma-Informed Care for Families with Children and Adults with I/DD*
  - FCSN Visions of Community Conference*

# Acknowledgments

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Our thanks to Director of Special Education Pam Smith,  
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Dawn Bentley,  
and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

## **2018-2019 Officers**

Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey & Carrie Weaver  
Secretary Melissa Brown

Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein  
Standing Committee Chair for Parent Support Blossom Davies

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