



Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council (AB SEPAC)

Business Meeting

Wednesday, November 14, 2018, at 7:30 p.m. in the Parker Damon Building Library

This meeting will be followed by a Friends of AB SEPAC meeting

Agenda

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

Review and approval of October 3, 2018, meeting minutes

III. Organization/Business Issues

- A. Updates from Monthly Meeting with the Director of Special Education
- B. General District Updates
 - 1. Building Project
 - 2. District Curriculum Accommodation Plan Language RE: IEPs & 504 Plans
 - 3. SEPAC Stakeholder Meeting with Superintendent
- C. 2018 MCAS Results for Acton-Boxborough & Statewide Long-Term Trend
- D. Updates on Selected 2018-2019 Goals & Priorities
 - 1. Mini Survey Status (Communication, Extended School Year Experiences)
 - 2. Resources from Dyslexia & Literacy Conference
 - 3. Parent/Guardian Education
 - Basic Rights in Special Education Monday, December 10, from 7-9 p.m. in RJ Grey Junior High Library
 - "Intelligent Lives" Screening Request
 - Additional Facilitators Sought for Parenting Support Hour

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

V. Open Issues

- A. MCAS performance vulnerable for students with disabilities
- B. Mandatory special education training/professional development for regular and special education staff – hiring dual-certified staff
- C. Increasing opportunities for meaningful inclusion across domains
- D. Enhanced Extended School Year, before-, and after-school programming
- E. Increased use of technology in IEP development, revision, & communication
- F. Following up on communication issues noted as barriers to overall satisfaction and subgroup trends for Out of District, Early Childhood, and Specific Learning Disabilities identified via 2015 and 2017 parent/guardian surveys
- G. Need for consistent K-12 executive functioning curriculum

VI. Adjournment

All AB SEPAC 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.absepac.org) for information regarding upcoming events.

VII. Next Meeting & Annual Winter Potluck

Wednesday, December 19, 2018, at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High Library

**Business Meeting Draft Minutes
October 3, 2018**

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Director of Special Education Pam Smith, and three other community members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from September 5, 2018, were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes with changes to correct the section headings. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Organizational/Business Issues

A. Feedback Sought for Elementary School Building Project Visioning Process

The district is in the middle of visioning sessions for Douglas, Gates, Conant, and the Early Childhood Program (ECP) as part of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process. Douglas has been approved by the state for the building project. The district hopes to build a twin elementary school and move the entire ECP to the new building. The goal of the sessions is to define the individual schools/program and the educational environment stakeholders want to see in the future. District participants include Central Office administrators, building-level leaders, teachers, special education staff, parents, students.

Specific to special education, the conversation included how classroom spaces should be broken down (e.g., by grade), interest in co-teaching, how the ECP should be integrated into the building, number of entrances, the need for observation spaces with two-way mirrors, appropriately-sized resource classrooms, and a commitment to distributing special education space throughout the school(s) with potentially shared OT/PT space. The ECP currently has ~180 students across two sites. There are eight classrooms including an intensive ABA-based classroom lead by a BCBA. Potential impacts to open enrollment were considered. The SEPAC challenged the need for “SpEd behavior space” (de-escalation rooms) during the process. Special education staff and the SEPAC advocated for sensory break and quiet space throughout the building ahead of the need for de-escalation. The architect will factor ADA compliance and considerations for those with hearing loss, sensory sensitivities, etc. There is universal commitment to inclusive, accessible spaces inside and out. The Director of Special Education shared that the visioning session will inform the Educational Plan for the MSBA.

B. Feedback Sought for Stakeholder Meeting with New Superintendent

The SEPAC chairs will be meeting with the new Superintendent as part of his entry plan. Feedback is sought on district strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth. A parent relayed that there can be assumptions that people know things (e.g., staff titles or roles), particularly when changing schools.

C. Fall Presentation to the School Committee on 9/20/18

The fall presentation to the school committee focused on our goals for the year, highlighting increased outreach and engagement, the new survey, and the need for feedback from families

of children with Specific Learning Disabilities given the projected elementary program buildout. The presentation will be available on the SEPAC site.

D. Updates on Selected 2018-2019 Goals & Priorities

1. Outreach via Back to School Nights, English Language Education Night, Joint PTO Meeting, Social Media

The Assistant Superintendent of Student Services has extended an invitation for the SEPAC to distribute information at the upcoming English Language Education night.

2. Drafting Mini Survey for Fall Release

We are utilizing new question formats to move away from double-barreled questions.

There are concerns about being able to track changes over time. The survey will focus on communication and Extended School Year experiences.

3. Dyslexia Resources

The SEPAC currently does not have any dyslexia resources on the website and is seeking assistance compiling a list. The SEPAC has been invited to attend professional development about dyslexia and literacy with staff and school committee members.

4. MCAS Results Released 9/27/18

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has noted that this year's MCAS results should not be compared to any other year due to the new test. The SEPAC will still conduct an analysis of results for Students with Disabilities, to be presented at a future meeting. At a glance, there are wide disparities in performance among the elementary schools for students without IEPs.

5. Parent/Guardian Education

The Basic Rights workshop is being scheduled for December. We are still looking for dates for the anti-bullying strategies workshop. The SEPAC has been asked by staff to help develop a resource card for families dealing with new diagnoses. The Director of Special Education noted there are helpful guides and links on the DESE site.

IV. New Business

Parents have noted truncated service delivery with the number of Monday holidays at the beginning of the school year. Staff had late notice of their caseloads due to an issue with PowerSchool. The Director of Special Education confirmed missed services due to holidays do not have to be made up. Someone asked how many students are scheduled on Mondays and Fridays for special education services. Parents expressed desire for a schedule of when their children are having services, whether in or out of the classroom. Some special educators provide this as a matter of course.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

VI. Next Meeting

Wednesday, November 14, 2018, at 7:30 p.m. in the Parker Damon Building Library

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Respectfully compiled & submitted by Amanda Bailey, Co-Chair



Districtwide Curriculum Accommodation Plan

District Mission

The mission of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (ABRSD) is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative caring relationships. The community strongly supports excellence in public education and is truly dedicated to instilling a passion for learning in our students. The district prioritizes students' social and emotional well-being while supporting students to excel academically and through extensive and diverse extra-curricular opportunities.

District Vision

The vision of the ABRSD is to provide high-quality educational opportunities that inspire a community of learners.

District Values

The values of the ABRSD are:

- ***Wellness*** - We partner with families to prioritize social emotional wellness, which is necessary for learning and developing resilience
- ***Equity*** - We ensure all students have equitable access to programs and curricula to reach their potential
- ***Engagement*** - We provide engaging educational opportunities where students develop passion and joy for learning

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) Overview

What is the DCAP?

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District in compliance with the Massachusetts General Law has developed a District Curriculum Accommodations Plan (DCAP). The intent of this plan is to provide a guidance document for school staff to ensure that all students in general education classes are provided with the tools and strategies to be successful. The DCAP is aimed at assisting teachers and specialists in providing differentiated learning experiences to ensure that students can improve learning through the use of various teaching modalities. The DCAP guidance document describes accommodations, instructional supports, and interventions that are provided for students who are experiencing difficulty mastering content. According to Chapter 71 Massachusetts General Law: Section 38Q ½:

“A school district shall adopt and implement a curriculum accommodation plan to assist principals in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in regular education. The plan shall be designed to assist the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all children in the regular classroom and in providing appropriate services and support within the regular education program including, but not limited to, direct and systematic instruction in reading and provision of services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning, or who do not qualify for special education services under chapter 71B. The curriculum accommodation plan shall include provisions encouraging teacher mentoring and collaboration and parental involvement.”

How did this DCAP come about?

Over the course of the 2017-18 school year, a team of fourteen individuals (eight general educators, one special educator, one English language educator, two building administrators and two district administrators) representing each building met a number of times to review and update the DCAP. This group reviewed a variety of DCAPs from other districts across the State, the Massachusetts DCAP law, ABRSD's mission, vision and values, and our existing DCAP. Focusing on our core value of equity and ensuring students have access to programs and curricula to reach their potential, we used Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as the framework for our new DCAP.

What is the goal of the DCAP?

The goal of the DCAP is to describe the strategies and resources that classroom teachers and specialists are expected to use to address the diverse learning needs of all students. Our goal is to create a learning environment where students receive a variety of identified supports and accommodations in order to access instruction and assessment. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, adjustments in

curriculum, teaching strategies, teaching materials and the use of various assessments where students have an opportunity to demonstrate learning. Since we should utilize available general education supports and accommodations prior to referring a child for a special education evaluation, Child Study and Student Support Teams should monitor the effectiveness of these strategies over time.

For students with existing 504 plans or IEPs, the team should ensure that any accommodations that are required due to the student's specific disability should still be listed in the IEP or 504 plan, regardless of whether or not they are listed in the DCAP and available to all students. This ensures that if students leave us to move to another district or graduate, the receiving school has the information necessary to develop an appropriate plan for that student.

"The instructional support system should consist of ongoing systematic efforts to accommodate any student's learning needs within the general education classroom. Instructional support must be viewed as a viable intervention strategy; one that is expected to occur for any student encountering difficulties in learning." (MA Department of Education, *"Is Special Education the Right Service? A Technical Assistance Guide,"* pp. 5-6 3/01.) The foundation of ABRSD's DCAP is based on Universal Design for Learning, or UDL.

Direct and Systematic Reading Instruction

Systematic reading instruction refers to a carefully-planned sequence for instruction. Systematic instruction is clearly linked within, as well as across, the five major areas of reading instruction:

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

For systematic instruction, lessons are scaffolded on previously taught information, from simple to complex, with clear, concise student objectives that are driven by ongoing assessment. Students are provided appropriate practice opportunities which directly reflect instruction.

Direct instruction is an instructional approach that utilizes explicit and structured teaching routines. A teacher using direct instruction models, explains, and guides students through extended practice of a skill or concept until mastery is achieved. Direct, explicit instruction is appropriate for all learners, in all five components of reading, and across all settings, including whole group, small group, and one-on-one. (Adapted from Florida Center for Reading Research)

What is Universal Design for Learning and how can it facilitate student success?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-based, concrete educational framework that helps guide the design of learning environments in order to make them accessible and effective for all. Through UDL, educators provide multiple means of representation (the “what” of learning), action/expression (the “how” of learning), and engagement (the “why” of learning). UDL can be applied to any discipline or domain and ensures that all learners have access and the ability to participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities. The [National Center on Universal Design for Learning](#) describes the three UDL frames as follows:

Multiple Means of Representation: Learners differ in the ways that they perceive and comprehend information that is presented to them. For example, those with sensory disabilities (e.g., blindness or deafness); learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia); language or cultural differences, and so forth may all require different ways of approaching content. Others may simply grasp information quicker or more efficiently through visual or auditory means rather than printed text. Also learning, and transfer of learning, occurs when multiple representations are used, because they allow students to make connections within, as well as between, concepts. In short, there is not one means of representation that will be optimal for all learners; providing options for representation is essential.

Multiple Means of Action/Expression: Learners differ in the ways that they can navigate a learning environment and express what they know. For example, individuals with significant movement impairments (e.g., cerebral palsy), those who struggle with strategic and organizational abilities (executive function disorders), those who have language barriers, and so forth approach learning tasks very differently. Some may be able to express themselves well in written text but not speech, and vice versa. It should also be recognized that action and expression require a great deal of strategy, practice, and organization, and this is another area in which learners can differ. In reality, there is not one means of action and expression that will be optimal for all learners; providing options for action and expression is essential.

Multiple Means of Engagement: Affect represents a crucial element to learning, and learners differ markedly in the ways in which they can be engaged or motivated to learn. There are a variety of sources that can influence individual variation in affect including neurology, culture, personal relevance, subjectivity, and background knowledge, along with a variety of other factors. Some learners are highly engaged by spontaneity and novelty, while others are disengaged, even frightened, by those aspects, preferring strict routine. Some learners might like to work alone, while others prefer to work with their peers. In reality, there is not one means of engagement that will be optimal for all learners in all contexts; providing multiple options for engagement is essential.

ACADEMIC/INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS			
Assessment Accommodations	Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
Use data analysis to inform instruction and modify instruction based on student needs	X	X	
Allow extended time			X
Provide alternate forms of assessments, e.g., oral, project-based, performance-based		X	
Provide varied assignments	X		
Teach test-taking strategies		X	
Use alternative setting for assessments			X
Provide timely and specific feedback about student performance	X		
Communicate frequently with parents			X
Clarify directions			X
Provide rubrics to clarify expectations		X	
Include a portfolio system for collecting student work samples and assessing progress over time		X	
Instructional Accommodations	Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
Identify essential questions students should be able to answer at end of lesson/unit of study			X
Build a context for learning			X
Preview new concepts			X
Clearly articulate learning goals for students			X
Identify key vocabulary and provide a word bank with vocabulary words and visuals when appropriate			X
Provide multimodal presentations	X		
Emphasize points within written text/material	X		
Point to visuals while speaking, use hands to clearly indicate the image that corresponds to words			X
Scaffold complex concepts and provide leveled problems for multiple entry points			X
Vary grouping in the classroom for different purposes (homogeneous and heterogeneous)			X
Explicitly teach reading strategies	X		
Clearly model steps, procedures, and questions to ask when solving problems	X		
Provide models or examples of end products	X		
Frequently check for understanding			X
Clarify directions or questions			X
Use “think alouds” and other metacognitive strategies	X		
Help students access subjects in varied ways		X	X
Provide access to technology/assistive technology	X		X
Provide access to leveled libraries and varied reading materials	X		

Instructional Accommodations (cont'd.)	Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
Provide scaffolding and supports			X
Provide books on CD/digital	X		
Utilize team and co-teaching			X
Provide copy of class notes, handouts	X		
Provide enlarged copies if needed	X		
Provide manipulatives/concrete models	X		
Provide learning aids (i.e. calculators, graphic organizers, etc.)	X		
Provide study guides		X	
Provide visual and transition cues	X		
Provide wait time		X	
Use small groups for instruction			X
Teach study skill strategies		X	
Provide a variety of ways to respond: orally, visually, physically, etc.	X		
Reteach concepts not yet mastered using a different approach	X		
Provide student conferencing time			X
Frequently communicate with families.		X	X
Offer Parent/Teacher conferences			X
Offer before/after school academic support		X	X
Translate materials/interpret meeting for families who require it		X	X
Use sentence frames to support oral or written responses	X		
Utilize district and school website	X		
Maintain a teacher website	X		
Organizational Accommodations	Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
Establish clear routines			X
Use time management tools (i.e. daily planner, assignment sheet, calendar, timers, agendas, etc.)		X	
Provide templates/graphic organizers when appropriate		X	
Ensure written assignments have enough workspace	X		
Post homework assignments in a consistent location (classroom and/or website)			X
Share helpful tablet/phone apps that help students/families stay organized		X	

BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS			
<i>Social/Emotional Accommodations</i>	Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
Utilize School-Wide Positive Behavior and Supports (PBIS) strategies			X
Implement a Behavior Intervention Plan			X
Cue student for change of behavior			X
Develop strategies for behavior modification, e.g., charts, contracts, checklists, behavior plans, etc.			X
Establish clear routines/expectations			X
Use transition cues prior to any changes			X
Use diverse classroom management strategies			X
Provide breaks as needed			X
Provide lunch groups			X
Utilize school counselor/psychologist			X
<i>Health/Medical Accommodations (for temporary health or medical issues- 504 not necessary)</i>	Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
Provide access to nurse's office and bathroom			X
Allow student to leave class 2-3 minutes early			X
Provide supportive seating	X		
Provide access to content materials (books, electronic version of books, etc.) from home			X
Allow snacks			X
Provide a scribe when needed	X		
<i>Physical/Structural Accommodations</i>	Representation	Action & Expression	Engagement
Allow alternate workspace, such as study carrel or dividers			X
Allow for movement and sensory break			X
Experiment with use of space			X
Limit distractions (auditory and visual)			X
Offer flexible seating choices/arrangement			X
Provide strategic seating			X
Use visual, auditory and transitional supports	X		
Use transition cues for space changes			X
Set clearly defined standards for behavior			X
Establish clear routines: behavioral, social, emotional			X
Allow alternative setting for testing		X	
Use data analysis to monitor positive behavior changes		X	
Communicate frequently with parents			X

STAFF SUPPORTS	
Human Resources:	
Elementary Curriculum Coordinators for Literacy, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Technology & Engineering	
Related services specialists (i.e. counselor, SLP, school psychologist, nurse, school leaders, etc.)	
Technology Integration Specialist	
Department Leaders/Coordinators (Special Education, SLP, Counseling, Nursing, Psychology, Counseling, OT/PT, EL)	
English Language Educators	
Elementary Reading Assistants/Specialists	
Elementary Mathematics Assistants	
Library/Media Assistants	
Special Educators	
Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)	
Child Study Team (CST)/Student Support Team (SST)	
Teacher Assistants	
Academic Support Center	
Other Resources:	
Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP)	
Schoolwide professional learning/curriculum meetings	
Teacher-selected professional learning	
District-wide professional learning	
Faculty meetings	
Curriculum maps	
Grade-level or department team meetings	
Common planning time	