



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

Business Meeting

Wednesday, January 9, 2019, at 7:30 p.m. in the Parker Damon Building Library

Agenda

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

Review and approval of December 19, 2018, meeting minutes

III. Organization/Business Issues

- A. Updates from Monthly Meeting with the Director of Special Education
- B. Discuss SEPAC Position Re: All-Day Kindergarten Funding
- C. Extended School Year Information
- D. Updates on Selected 2018-2019 Goals & Priorities
 - 1. When You Suspect Dyslexia & Best Practices Document
 - 2. Survey Release End of January
 - 3. Parent/Guardian Education
 - Schedule "Intelligent Lives" Screening
 - Parenting Support Hour 1/6, 2/3, 3/3, 4/7, 5/5, 6/2 from 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Acton Memorial Library

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

Wednesday, February 6, 2019, at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High Library

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

Business Meeting Draft Minutes December 19, 2018

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. AB SEPAC Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Secretary Melissa Brown, Director of Special Education Pam Smith, School Committee liaisons to the SEPAC Paul Murphy and Diane Baum, and five other community members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from November 14, 2018, were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Organizational/Business Issues

A. Monthly Meeting with Student Services

The transition to one-tier bussing for elementary school students has been challenging for some families of students with disabilities. Driveway stops are now considered specialized (with the exception of scheduled stops). Parents of children requiring bus accommodations are encouraged to have a conversation with their team and document them in the IEP. Parents should utilize the communication map in seeking a resolution to issues related to transportation.

Student Services will release Extended School Year (ESY) dates and times in January to help families to schedule summer activities.

A letter with a link to a survey accompanies newly-issued IEPs. Student Services and the SEPAC highly encourage parents and guardians to provide feedback about their experiences in working with their team to develop the IEP. Responses are anonymous.

The transition to electronic communication through PowerSchool Special Education (PS-SE) was discussed. Progress reports on IEP goals must be issued at least as often as general education report cards. The parent portal should have progress reports available for families “active” in PS-SE (those who have responded to an IEP within the past year). Progress reports for this year will be staggered and available as schools issue their general ed report cards. Families with children in Out of District (OOD) placements will receive progress reports in the mail as OOD schools do not all use PS-SE.

B. Proposed FY20 Budget Items

The following positions have been requested for the FY20 budget:

- 1.6 FTE Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) to be split among Pathways (0.4 FTE), RJ Grey (0.2 FTE), and TBD (1.0)
- FTE Psychologist at RJ Grey
- FTE Special Educator at RJ Grey
- FTE Elementary Team Chair
- 19-hour increase in counseling support (to a full FTE) at the high school

The SEPAC strongly supports the additional BCBA support as current caseloads are very high.

C. Updates on Selected Goals and Priorities

The mini-survey will now be released in January given that the district issued surveys related to the school building project and school schedules in the past month.

The Basic Rights workshop on December 10 was a success, with nearly 30 people in attendance. Handouts and more information are available from the SEPAC. A second workshop will also be offered in conjunction with the Concord/Concord-Carlisle SEPAC. Options include Effective Communication with IEP Teams, An IEP for My Child, and MCAS. Feedback on additional ideas is welcomed.

The rights to screen “Intelligent Lives” would cost \$145. We should consider finding a speaker to facilitate a community discussion following the movie. We could invite other local SEPACs to co-sponsor the event. A trailer of the film is available online.

Mass Advocates for Children will provide a workshop in late winter to discuss school-wide and individual approaches to mitigate bullying. A current concern is that the social-emotional curriculums taught in the schools do not address social media. Issues may be difficult to resolve as teachers and administrators may not be able to share specific information about other students with parents who have a child being bullied or carrying out the bullying.

IV. New Business

No new business was forthcoming.

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

VI. Next Meeting

Wednesday, January 9, 2019, at 7:30 p.m. in the Parker Damon Building Library

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Respectfully submitted by Melissa Brown, Secretary



Extended School Year Information

We often get asked:

Who makes the determination about whether or not a child is eligible for Extended School Year (ESY) services?

Does my child have to demonstrate regression to qualify for ESY?

What do ESY services look like?

What are ESY services based on?

What are my options if my child doesn't qualify for ESY?

This newsletter will attempt to answer these questions and provide resources for families to learn more about rights and advocacy around ESY.

What is Extended School Year (ESY)?

Per Wrightslaw, "Extended School Year (ESY) services are special education and/or related services provided beyond the usual school year, at times when school is not usually in session--typically during the summer. ESY services are different from summer school, summer remedial classes, and summer enrichment programs. ESY services are individualized, based on the child's needs as documented in the IEP, and are free of charge to parents."

"An extended year program may be identified if the student **has demonstrated or is likely to demonstrate** substantial regression in his or her learning skills and/or difficulty in relearning such skills if an extended program is not provided" [603 CMR 28.05(4)(d)1].

Terms to Know

recoup - "to get back to the level the child had achieved before a break in service"

regress - "lose progress, forget, revert to previous behavior"

The IEP team, including the parent(s), makes the determination for ESY eligibility at least annually. ESY services should be unique to each child. In addition to regression and recoupment, courts have set forth other ESY criteria to be applied by a team, as follows per MA DESE Program Quality Assurance Services:

- the degree of the child's impairment
- the parents' ability to provide structure at home
- the child's rate of progress
- the child's specific behavior and/or physical problems
- the availability of alternative resources
- the child's ability to interact with non-disabled children
- the specific curricular areas in which the child needs continuing attention
- the vocational and transition needs of the child
- whether the service requested is "extraordinary" rather than usual in consideration of the child's condition.

Tips

- 1) Obtain a copy of any ESY determination guidelines issued by the school district.
- 2) After a break in service like winter vacation, write a letter to your team documenting any regression, including anecdotal evidence, toward skills targeted in IEP goals and benchmarks.
- 3) Keep old IEP progress reports, work samples, etc., to compare performance over time.
- 4) Plan ahead! Many camps and private programs begin registration in January for the summer. If your child is *not* eligible for ESY, you will want to research your options and apply early. SPED Child & Teen (spedchildmass.com) keeps a list of all camp fairs to learn more about disability-specific and inclusive camp offerings.
- 5) Learn more! See the Extended School Year section on our site, absepac.org, for this information and links to additional resources.