



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

Business Meeting

Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 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 February 6, 2019, meeting minutes

III. Organization/Business Issues

A. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Director of Special Education

B. District Updates

1. Early Childhood Program Classrooms in Elementary Building Project
2. Town Elections – 2 Acton, 1 Boxborough School Committee Seats Opening

C. Review Draft of Resource Card

D. Vote on SEPAC Position Re: All-Day Kindergarten Funding

E. Updates on Selected 2018-2019 Goals & Priorities

1. Survey Released March 4
2. Parent/Guardian Education

- Transition Resource Fair Thursday, April 4, 6-8:30 p.m. at Concord-Carlisle High School

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, April 10, 2019, at 7:30 p.m. in the Parker Damon Building Library

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

Business Meeting Draft Minutes February 6, 2019

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. AB SEPAC Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver, Secretary Melissa Brown, Director of Special Education Pam Smith, three staff members from Blanchard, School Committee liaison to the SEPAC Paul Murphy, and five other community members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from January 9, 2019, were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes as written. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Organizational/Business Issues

A. District Updates

1. The Director of Special Education and SEPAC leadership attended the MA Family Engagement Framework stakeholder meeting in Worcester. The Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education are collaborating to establish family engagement indicators prenatally through the post-secondary transition.

2. FY '20 Budget Saturday

The number of students with IEPs is trending downward, while the number of students with 504s (who also fall under the SEPAC's purview per state regulation) is trending upward. Proposed staffing additions related to special education have been discussed at previous SEPAC meetings.

3. Superintendent's Entry Plan Findings

The Superintendent highlighted several areas relevant to special education in his entry plan findings, including working toward district-wide coherence across elementary schools and expanding the notion of equity of access to ensuring equitable outcomes, including for Students with Disabilities (SWD). Regarding inclusion, the resource room service model, access to content teachers, and access to peers were noted. Social emotional learning and mental health were also emphasized.

B. Elementary Staff Seeking Input Re: Supporting Families

Two special educators and the psychologist from Blanchard expressed interest in learning how to support families, especially those going through the special education process for the first time. Community members shared that it is easy to get overwhelmed. Peer parents are invaluable, as are special education resources and information on decoding acronyms. Paul Murphy noted the SEPAC as an established resource dedicated to providing information and assistance. Areas for improvement with the IEP process include sharing information with families before meetings (draft goals, work samples, etc.), ensuring parents feel heard, addressing disparities in the quality of IEPs among teams, and cultural competency when working with diverse families. The district provides interpreters to families and has purchased access to Lexikey to offer on-demand interpretation.

C. Numbers of Students with IEPs and 504s

The SEPAC asked about the transition of students from IEPs to 504s. The Director of Special Education noted that some students at the high school only need accommodations to access the curriculum, so they can transition to a 504 at that point. The SEPAC will consider how to learn about the experiences of students and families with 504s.

D. Vote on SEPAC Position Re: All-Day K Funding

Due to all school buildings closing early due to a storm, the SEPAC will hold a vote in March regarding the organization's position on All-Day Kindergarten.

E. Updates on Selected 2018-2019 Goals & Priorities

1. The SEPAC is drafting a best-practices document for parents/guardians who suspect their child may have dyslexia.
2. The parent/guardian survey is being drafted and will be released soon.
3. Upcoming opportunities for parent education include a screening of "Intelligent Lives," a workshop on bullying & the IEP, and a Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) presentation with the Concord/Concord-Carlisle SEPAC. The FCSN Visions of Community Conference is March 9 in Boston. A transition fair sponsored by Acton-Boxborough Student Services, the CASE Collaborative, and neighboring towns is scheduled for the first week in April.

IV. New Business

A community member reported that town boards and members of the School Building Committee have asked about removing the Early Childhood Program classrooms from the new building project.

Extended School Year (ESY) summer programming will run from July 8 through August 15, with specific programming determined by student need. An English language program will also be offered.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m. due to school buildings closing early.

VI. NEXT MEETING

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

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.

Respectfully submitted by Melissa Brown, Secretary

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

Special Education Resources

Acton-Boxborough SEPAC
abrsdsepac@gmail.com
absepac.org

Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)
call center (617) 236-7210
fcsn.org

Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC)
helpline (617) 357-8431 ext. 3224
massadvocates.org

DESE Program Quality Assurance Services
(781) 338-3700
www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/

Wrightslaw
wrightslaw.org

Disability-Specific Resources

Asperger/Autism Network (AANE)
aane.org

Autism Insurance Resource Center (AIRC)
(774) 455-4056
massairc.org

Children and Adults with AD/HD (CHADD)
chadd.org

Decoding Dyslexia – MA
decodingdyslexiama.org

Understood – For Learning & Attention Issues
understood.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Mass
namimass.org

NAMI Compass
(800) 370-9085
namimass.org/resources/compass

William James INTERFACE Referral Service
(888) 244-6843
interface.williamjames.edu

Other

Exceptional Lives Resource Directory
directory.exceptionallives.org

Mass Family Voices List Serv
massfv@fcsn.org
fcsn.org/mfv/listserv/

Massachusetts Sibling Support Network
masiblingsupport.org