

**Business Meeting 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

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 compiled & submitted by Amanda Bailey, Co-Chair