

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

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## Business Meeting Minutes November 14, 2018

### I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Secretary Melissa Brown, Director of Special Education Pam Smith, School Committee liaisons Tessa McKinley and Diane Baum, and six other community members were present.

### II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from October 3, 2018, were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes as revised. The motion passed unanimously.

### III. Organizational/Business Issues

#### A. Monthly Meeting with Student Services

The 11/15/18 School Committee packet includes a report detailing a growing number of students with IEPs matriculating to the junior high. The administration is working to ensure students will have necessary supports. There is also a growing number of students being referred to the general education Academic Support Center in grade 7. The SEPAC asked if patterns of sending schools and underlying learning issues can be identified.

Parents/guardians of students with IEPs (except for those whose teams have not met since December 2017) should be able to access any signed IEP in the parent portal regardless of whether it was accepted, partially rejected, or rejected in full. Progress reports dating to 2015-2016 should also be available (some are pending). The SEPAC encourages people to log in and follow up with their team chairs if documents are missing.

Student Services has an electronic survey for feedback following IEP meetings. The link to the anonymous survey (<https://tinyurl.com/IEPMeetingFeedback>) is provided in the cover letter with copies of proposed IEPs. Participation is strongly encouraged.

Student Services will consider any IEP not signed after 30 days as rejected. A rejected IEP means that current services remain unchanged (“stay put”). Proposed services will not begin for initial IEPs. The SEPAC is available to help people respond to proposed IEPs.

#### B. General District Updates

Progress continues with the Massachusetts School Building Authority process. Interested parties should review the Educational Program document to learn more about programming at Douglas, Gates, Conant, and the Early Childhood Program and anticipated needs that will inform building design. Information sessions about potential sites for the new building will be held November 27 and 29 at the junior high.

The district revised its District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), general education accommodations available to all students regardless of disability status. The Acton-Boxborough DCAP states that IEP and 504 accommodations will continue to be documented in IEPs and 504s regardless of overlap or redundancy with the DCAP.

The SEPAC co-chairs will meet with the new superintendent on November 26 to discuss strengths, challenges, and opportunities regarding special education in the district. The list of topics was shared with the group. Additional feedback is welcome.

#### C. 2018 MCAS Results for A-B and Statewide Long-Term Trend

The SEPAC continues to closely examine MCAS scores. MCAS results are the only public source of information about the achievement of Students with Disabilities (SwD) as a population and as compared to typically-developing peers. MCAS is administered in grades 3 through 8 and again in grade 10, providing an achievement metric and a Student Growth Percentile (SGP). SGP compares academic growth in a given subject, as compared to a cohort of similarly-performing peers across the state. A-B continues to perform at a high level compared to state averages, both in terms of achievement and SGPs. An added feature this year, achievement and growth by school, can provide an opportunity to identify areas of success for extrapolation to other schools. Overall achievement and SGPs for SwD can highlight areas for potential action. Notably, grade 4 math scores for SwD continue to be a relative area of weakness, with performance below the state average for the past two years.

#### D. Updates on Selected 2018-2019 Goals and Priorities

The SEPAC mini-survey is being finalized. The survey findings will provide information to help inform recommendations to the district and shape organizational goals.

SEPAC leadership, School Committee members, and staff attended a recent dyslexia conference. Information is available about assessments, early education and screening, oral disorders and reading, and technological supports. New state legislation mandates early screening, though guidelines and funding have not yet been defined. All students entering kindergarten in A-B are screened using the DIAL to determine likelihood of requiring supports and services. This instrument does not specifically screen for dyslexia. More discussion indicated students with this diagnosis are not always given appropriate and timely remediation, and that partnerships between parents and teachers are critical to supporting student growth as readers. The district will continue to address gaps related to identifying and providing appropriate supports for students with dyslexia.

Basic Rights in Special Education will be held Monday, December 10, from 7-9 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High library. A parent requested a community screening of “Intelligent Lives.” Those in attendance viewed the trailer and expressed interest. Additional facilitators are needed for Parenting Support Hour. Interested parties can contact the SEPAC.

#### **IV. New Business**

No new business was brought forth.

#### **V. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

#### **VI. Next Meeting & Winter Social**

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

*All AB SEPAC meetings are open to the public. We encourage parents/guardians of children with disabilities and others interested in special education to attend. Please see [www.absepac.org](http://www.absepac.org) for information regarding upcoming events.*

*Respectfully submitted by Melissa Brown, Secretary*