

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

Business Meeting 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 Lexikeet 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