

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

Business Meeting Minutes March 6, 2019

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. AB SEPAC Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver, Secretary Melissa Brown, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Director of Special Education Pam Smith, School Committee liaison to the SEPAC Paul Murphy, and four other community members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from February 6, 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. Monthly Updates with Director of Special Education

The district is in the process of hiring two elementary Educational Team Leaders (ETLs) to cover Gates/Douglas and McCarthy Towne/Merriam.

The SEPAC recommends and requests the district align the reporting of test results in all evaluation reports to include scaled scores, standard scores, and percentiles. Given the range of scores falling within “average,” failing to report percentiles may mask significant ability gaps for interpretation by parents and school teams alike. Parents are advised to monitor student progress by ensuring data documenting Current Performance Level is included in IEPs and that benchmarks meet SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound) goal criteria.

The Director of Special Education shared about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education program monitoring going on in the district. Student Services is in the self-assessment phase of the Tiered Focus Monitoring for special education, English Language Education, and civil rights. Information about Child Find, the SEPAC, and assistive technology devices will be submitted. The district currently contracts with CASE for assistive technology and is developing procedures and a team for in-house evaluations for devices. Student Services is also conducting a special education program evaluation.

IEPs and progress reports should be available on PowerSchool for students placed in the district. 504 Plans are not yet included in PowerSchool. Progress reports for Out of District students are individually uploaded into PowerSchool once received from the placements.

B. District Updates

1. Early Childhood Program Classrooms in Elementary Building Project

The SEPAC requested people email support to the district for keeping the Early Childhood Program (ECP) within the plans for the building project. The School Building Committee voted to move forward with the current plan that includes the ECP and to

omit language from its submission to the state indicating that the ECP could be removed later.

2. Town Elections – 2 Acton, 1 Boxborough School Committee Seats Opening

The Acton town election is on March 26. There is a contested race for two Acton seats opening on the School Committee. The League of Women Voters has a candidate forum March 15.

C. Review Draft of Resource Card

The SEPAC shared a draft resource card to provide staff and administrators a way to easily help families navigating the special education process and/or a new diagnosis. Both the SEPAC and DESE websites offer additional resources.

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

The conversation from January was reviewed (see notes) and a discussion followed about the benefits and drawbacks of universal district-funded ADK. A-B remains one of the few districts in the state without universal ADK. If a child with a disability requires a shorter school day, that can be noted in the IEP. Universal ADK would make the full-day gen ed classroom the Least Restrictive Environment and increase inclusion opportunities for students. A motion was made to recommend, per the SEPAC's advisory role, universal and therefore district-funded ADK to the district. All voted in favor; zero abstained.

E. Updates on Selected 2018-2019 Goals & Priorities

1. Parent/Guardian Survey Live

The 2019 Parent/Guardian Survey went live on March 5 and has already logged 80 respondents. Student Services will send out an invitation next week. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate as survey feedback helps guide the SEPAC's efforts.

2. Parent/Guardian Education

A transition resource fair for families and students age 12+ will be held from 6-8:30 p.m. at Concord-Carlisle Regional High School on Thursday, April 4, and will include information about the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), recreation opportunities, and much more.

The Acton-Boxborough and Concord/Concord-Carlisle SEPACs are hosting a Federation for Children with Special Needs workshop on MCAS: Access and Achievement for Students with Disabilities on May 14.

IV. New Business

A member shared that the Special Olympics "Spread the Word to End the Word" campaign that began in 2009 is now "Spread the Word: Inclusion."

Early Childhood Program parents expressed concern about specialized transportation rides of over an hour. Per special education law, rides should be no more than an hour one-way. They were advised to document any issues resulting from the extended ride, continue

to contact CASE Transportation, and follow up with their team chairs. There is a driver shortage.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

VI. Next Meeting

Wednesday, April 10, 2019, 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 submitted by Melissa Brown, Secretary