

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

Business Meeting Minutes May 15, 2019

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:39 p.m. AB SEPAC Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Secretary Melissa Brown, Director of Special Education Pam Smith, School Committee liaison to the SEPAC Diane Baum, and four other community members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from April 10, 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. Staffing Updates–New Elementary Team Chairs & Interim Special Education Director Deborah Dixon has been hired as the Interim Director of Special Education for 2019-2020. She is currently the interim director in Dover-Sherborn. The SEPAC will participate in the search process for a permanent hire next year. Additional hires include Val Gransiewicz (currently a special educator at RJ Grey) as the IEP team chair for Douglas and Gates and Renee Limauro as the IEP team chair for Merriam and McCarthy-Towne. K-6 Coordinator Lynne Laramie is retiring but will work on a part-time basis as an Out of District coordinator for some preschool and elementary students. BCBA Jessica Byrne has been hired to work at Douglas, Gates, and ABRHS. This will reduce other BCBA caseloads and lay the groundwork for a possible program expansion at Gates for students with emotional and behavioral needs.

B. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Director of Special Education
Student Services will renew the SEPAC’s MassPAC Plus membership through the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) and will continue to send out brochures and newsletter sign up forms to families. It was clarified that there is coordination between schools when a student with a 504 plan transitions to a new school. The district completed the state-mandated tiered focus monitoring, including sections related to Students with Disabilities and civil rights. The district is considering contracting with Effective School Solutions to support students with social-emotional needs at the junior high level. Information is available in the School Committee packet from the May 9 meeting.

C. Statewide SEPAC Awareness Initiatives

Other SEPACs have developed a bill of rights to present to their legislators. Bill HD4172, “An Act to Ensure Representation Special Education Parent Advisory Councils on School Committees,” was also discussed. The bill would grant SEPACs a non-voting, ex-officio seat on their respective school committees. Potential unintended consequences include binding this ex-officio member to all rules and regulations of the school committee, including Open Meeting Law obligations. Individuals are free to contact their representatives to express their position on this proposed legislative measure.

D. Knowledge Share from May 14 MCAS Workshop

The SEPAC partnered with the Concord/Concord-Carlisle SEPACs for an FCSN presentation

on MCAS Access and Achievement for Students with Disabilities. Information included universal and individual accommodations, the MCAS-Alt, and graduation requirements. There is an option for students scoring “Partially Proficient” in grade 10 to undertake an Education Performance Plan in order to earn a diploma. Materials will be available on the SEPAC site.

E. Brainstorm Goals & Priorities for 2019-2020 School Year

The group suggested goals and priorities for the next academic year, including:

1. Full participation in the search committee process
2. Relationship building with new staff
3. Initiatives with Student Services
 - Improving parent/guardian PowerSchool access rates
 - Standardizing evaluation score reports to include standard scores, raw scores, and percentiles to benefit parents/guardians and district staff
 - Two-way information-sharing about upcoming events
4. Following up on issues found via the survey, including tracking Extended School Year participation and information
5. Monitoring early reading assessments and interventions; MCAS performance
6. Ongoing outreach and education
 - Connecting with diverse families
 - Continuing Parenting Support Hour
 - Screening “Intelligent Lives” in the fall
 - Highlighting website resources, including webinars and dyslexia information
 - Presentations on inclusion and Universal Design for Learning
 - Asking PTO chairs/district to include accessibility information for events
 - SEPAC events on district calendar and Basic Rights advertised to all families

More feedback and ideas for priorities are welcome at the June meeting.

F. Description of Officer Positions for June 5 Elections

Please see the SEPAC bylaws on absepac.org for descriptions of officer roles and responsibilities. The SEPAC can have up to three chairs and two secretaries.

G. Status of Friends of AB SEPAC 501(c)(3)

The Friends of organization is currently undergoing a change in leadership. They are in the process of completing documents to change the name to reflect the shift from “SpEd PAC” to SEPAC and acquiring insurance to protect against liability.

IV. New Business

No new business was forthcoming.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

VI. Annual Meeting & Officer Elections

Wednesday, June 5, at 7:30 p.m. 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