

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

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## Business Meeting Minutes June 5, 2019

### I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:35 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 Chair and liaison to the SEPAC Diane Baum, and five other community members were present.

### II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from May 15, 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 Meeting with Student Services

Following a staff request, the SEPAC compiled a resource card for special education staff to distribute to parents during meetings. The resource card has been well received.

Student Services and the SEPAC attended a stakeholder meeting to provide feedback on the Family Engagement Frameworks being established by the Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Early Education and Care (EEC); another session will be held on June 10 in Marlborough.

Student Services will share the findings of the mandated program evaluation portion of the state tiered-focus monitoring. The district evaluated the Learning Centers.

The SEPAC will present to the School Committee on June 12 on the year's activities.

#### 1. Elementary Building Project Resource Rooms & De-Escalation Spaces

The new building project includes plans for four substantially-separate elementary resource rooms as well as "self regulation" spaces. The SEPAC recommends those with children who need supports for self-regulation review the district policy on seclusion and restraint and have conversations with their IEP teams. Currently, all schools except the high school, Conant, and Douglas have designated "take a break" spaces. The Director of Special Education noted that the district utilizes proactive strategies to support students before they escalate, including removing other students from the classroom and having calming spaces throughout some of the buildings, such as in nurses' or counselors' offices. While some view removing other students as disruptive to the rest of the class, the SEPAC noted that this practice is less likely to result in trauma to the student struggling with regulation. The Director concurred.

#### B. Seek Nominations & Elect Officers for 2019-2020 School Year

The following slate was approved, seconded, and elected unanimously:

Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver, Co-Chairs

Melissa Brown, Secretary

### C. Review & Revise Open Issues

All open issues were reviewed and retained, including:

1. *MCAS performance vulnerable for students with disabilities*
2. *Mandatory special education training/professional development for regular and special education staff – hiring dual-certified staff*
3. *Increasing opportunities for meaningful inclusion across domains*
4. *Enhanced Extended School Year, before-, and after-school programming*
5. *Increased use of technology in IEP development, revision, & communication*

The junior high is piloting a process wherein the Team would develop the IEP together as part of the meeting. PowerSchool communication continues to be an issue as many families have not accessed documents, do not know how to access documents, or are not alerted when documents like progress reports become available.

6. *Subgroup trends for Out of District, Early Childhood, and Specific Learning Disabilities identified via 2015 and 2017 parent/guardian surveys*

We will review survey findings to identify what to emphasize in the 2019-2020 year.

7. *Need for consistent K-12 executive functioning curriculum*

This remains a critical issue, particularly as elementary schools move away from assigning homework, which provides opportunities for time and material management. Educators currently use different approaches toward executive functioning supports and instruction. Families with concerns about their child's executive functioning should work with their team to craft goals and strategies to facilitate skill development.

### D. Review & Finalize Goals & Priorities for the 2019-2020 School Year

Items from last meeting as well as additional items were discussed and finalized:

1. *Continue to Improve SEPAC Outreach & Engagement*

The SEPAC will focus on building relationships with the Interim Director of Special Education and new special education staff, including IEP team chairs. We will also attend Back to School Nights and reach out to school PTOs.

2. *Participate in Search Process for New Special Education Director*

3. *Districtwide Use of Percentiles with Standard/Scaled Scores in Evaluation Reports*

4. *Monitor Early Reading Assessments & Interventions*

New state law requires early screening for dyslexia. Districts are awaiting process recommendations from DESE. Early identification and reading interventions vary among the A-B schools.

5. *Monitor PowerSchool Access and Extended School Year Programming*

6. *MCAS Analysis*

7. *Screen "Intelligent Lives"; Presentations on Basic Rights, Universal Design for Learning, Bullying & the Individualized Education Program*

### IV. New Business

The SEPAC thanked Pam Smith for her service by gifting her a plaque and a plant.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

**VI. NEXT MEETING**

Meetings for 2019-2020 TBD

*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](http://www.absepac.org)) for information regarding upcoming events.*

*Respectfully submitted by Melissa Brown, Secretary*