

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

---

## Business Meeting Minutes September 4, 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, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Secretary Melissa Brown, Interim Director of Special Education Debbie Dixson, and sixteen other community members were present.

### II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from June 5, 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. Updates from Interim Director of Special Education

The Interim Director of Special Education gave a slide presentation (see meeting packet). There have been a significant number of new hires. Three staff transfers were also made. One vacancy for a BCBA remains. The Interim Director will check on the status of the transition coordinator position at the high school. Education Team Leaders will now be called Special Education Coordinators.

The Interim Director of Special Education's priorities for the year include

1) reviewing current inclusion practices and data; 2) implementing the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP); 3) clarifying program definitions, entry and exit criteria, continuums, and staffing; 4) looking at practices, approaches, and interventions for consistency and continuity; and 5) updating processes and procedures, including adding DocuSign capabilities to PowerSchool.

The SEPAC advises IEPs/504s must contain all accommodations students' need, regardless of whether they are included in the DCAP. The DCAP has language explicitly stating existing IEPs and 504s should include all accommodations the child requires regardless of whether they are listed in the DCAP to protect the child should they graduate or move. Families are reminded to follow the communication map (see meeting packet or the Student Services site) to resolve issues on the local level as much as possible now that the Director of Special Education position reports directly to the Superintendent.

#### B. Extended School Year (ESY) Summer Program Feedback

The SEPAC reported parent feedback about ESY, including transportation issues, lack of communication about program logistics, and staff who seemed unfamiliar with their children's IEPs and accommodations. The Interim Director of Special Education noted that coordination for ESY changed weekly and staffing decisions were made late, which contributed to challenges in coordination and communication. This will be remedied moving forward and discussions about ESY services and staffing will begin earlier in the academic year (December/January). Families are reminded that ESY services are to be determined based on individual student need. ESY eligibility should be based on

documented regression, risk of regression, and/or issues with recoupment of skills following breaks.

### C. Building Project Update

The elementary school building project must pass at the ballot and at town meeting in both Acton and Boxborough (four votes total, two in each town) if it is to proceed. This new school building is critical for our most vulnerable students and will ensure students with mobility needs can access all aspects of their schools. The Building Committee is seeking parents from Gates, Douglas, and the Early Childhood Program who can speak to the need for a new building to provide students appropriate and inclusive spaces to learn and play. Please visit the [building project website](#) for more information.

### D. Concord Public & Concord-Carlisle Regional Parent Forum on Inclusion

Inclusion for students with disabilities is a major area of focus this academic year for Concord Public and Concord-Carlisle Regional as part of their districts' strategic plan. They are hosting a parent forum with their SEPAC on September 5 to hear about families' experiences with inclusion approaches that have been successful, where they think change is needed, and gains which could be made. The AB SEPAC invites this conversation within our district and may consider hosting a similar forum.

### E. Updates on SEPAC Goals & Priorities for the 2019-2020 School Year

#### 1. Continue to Improve Outreach and Engagement

The SEPAC is seeking a student or parent volunteer to help with designing a new logo. Volunteers are needed to staff back to school nights this fall. Our representation at these events is important, particularly for younger families. The SEPAC will be doing outreach to individual PTOs to encourage them to share information with families asking about resources/support. We will also use the joint PTO meeting to talk about improving access and inclusion during PTO-sponsored events.

#### 2. Districtwide Use of Percentiles with Standard/Scaled Scores in Reports

A second goal is to ensure consistency across the district by including relevant scores and percentiles in all evaluation reports. This is particularly useful for students with unique learning profiles who may have a wide range of sub-test scores falling within "average." This is a systemwide request, but it would cost nothing and would benefit staff and families alike when interpreting results.

#### 3. Follow Up on Issues Found in 2019 Survey—Summer PowerSchool Access & IEP Progress Reports; Extended School Year Information

Findings from the survey indicate that many parents/guardians are not accessing PowerSchool. Others anecdotally report not knowing when progress reports are available. The portal shutting down over the summer also makes it difficult to revisit IEP goals and progress notes through that means. The SEPAC requests that the district notify families when progress reports are available, remind families that the portal will close for the summer, and let them know that any documents needed are available through Student Services in the interim. Advocates have advised IEP progress reports should still be going out in paper form for all students. Families are encouraged to review June progress reports and current performance to track any regression, which should be documented in writing and shared with the IEP team.

The survey also indicated misinformation about ESY eligibility as some parents/guardians were told a student must demonstrate regression to qualify. Other respondents indicated ESY was never mentioned during team meetings. The SEPAC will continue to educate families about ESY eligibility.

4. The “Intelligent Lives” screening is October 28 at 7 p.m. in the RJ Grey Auditorium. We are working to secure a speaker for after the film. A joint Basic Rights series with Concord/Concord-Carlisle and neighboring SEPACs is TBD. Nancy Duggan, founder of Decoding Dyslexia, is available to present on best practices in creating reading goals and how to be good consumers of reading instruction.

**IV. New Business**

Discussions with Acton Recreation and the designer on renovating Jones Field playground are on-going; this is an opportunity to advocate for inclusive play spaces. A parent reports that an accessible bathroom is being constructed next to Miracle League Field at Nara Park.

A parent requested more focus on student outcomes as a district priority.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

**VI. NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, October 2, 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](http://www.absepac.org)) for information regarding upcoming events.*

*Respectfully submitted by Melissa Brown, Secretary*