

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

Business Meeting Minutes October 2, 2019

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. AB SEPAC Co-Chair Amanda Bailey, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Secretary Melissa Brown, Interim Director of Special Education Debbie Dixson, and fourteen other community members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from September 4, 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 Monthly Meeting with the Interim Director of Special Education

The open BCBA position has been filled, pending Superintendent approval. Additionally, the position for the Douglas learning center has been filled. Current vacancies remain for one special educator each at Merriam and McCarthy-Towne to alleviate caseloads.

IEP progress reports must be issued at least as often as general education report cards are issued. Parents should receive an email from their student's special education liaison (listed on the IEP) when IEP progress reports are available on PowerSchool. The liaison can assist with PowerSchool access as needed.

Part of the DESE district monitoring process required a self-evaluation. The district conducted an evaluation of the learning centers at the elementary schools last spring, utilizing interviews, observational data, district policies and schedules, and archival data. The findings have been requested by the SEPAC. The district will share them publicly after communicating them to all district staff. General themes include navigating schedules, consistent instruction, and meaningful inclusion through co-teaching models.

B. Districtwide Advisory Group for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

The district is forming an advisory group to inform district-wide efforts to address issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Parents are encouraged to apply to ensure representation from families of children with disabilities.

C. SEPAC Presentation to the School Committee on October 3

The SEPAC is presenting to the School Committee on October 3. The presentation will highlight our goals for the year and some of the findings from the spring 2019 survey. The SEPAC will also discuss the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) as part of its parent education efforts. All needed accommodations should be listed in IEPs and 504s regardless of overlap with the DCAP. The DCAP currently contains language that this is the case for *existing* IEPs and 504s, not new ones. Documenting all accommodations whether in the DCAP or not protects students' rights, ensuring consistency in IEP implementation across schools and accommodations for standardized testing. Presentation slides are available on the website.

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

1. Outreach & Engagement

Three logo options were presented at the meeting with logos from other SEPACs for comparison. The group voted to solicit more submissions. The request was forwarded to the art department at the high school. The SEPAC was represented at most back to school nights, including every elementary school at least once. Our presence is important for visibility and fighting stigma. SEPAC meetings are now listed on the district calendar.

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

The SEPAC continues to advocate for including all available information about a student's learning profile gathered through testing in the resulting reports, including percentiles alongside standard/scaled scores. Consistency will help parents and staff alike. The Interim Director is gathering information from staff about current practice.

3. "Intelligent Lives" Screening October 28 at 7 p.m. in the RJ Grey Auditorium;
Basic Rights Series TBD with Concord/Concord-Carlisle, Maynard, and
Sudbury SEPACs

The SEPAC shared "Intelligent Lives" ads to post in the community. The Federation for Children with Special Needs has divided the Basic Rights in Special Education workshop into sessions on topics such as Communication, An IEP for My Child, and Transition Planning. The SEPAC will partner with neighboring SEPACs and our respective districts to host a series of three of these workshops utilizing our MassPAC Plus membership paid for by ABRSD. Dates will be shared once scheduled.

IV. New Business

Parents requested greater district support in teaching skills for developing and maintaining friendships. The Interim Director noted a high school program designed to support friendships. Parents expressed this must happen much earlier. Parents are encouraged to join School Councils in order to ensure school improvement plans address meaningful inclusion.

The Past Chair shared MCAS findings. Overall, the district scores very well, though there are discrepancies among schools and for students with disabilities as compared to their non-disabled peers. Student growth percentiles are a helpful metric for evaluating performance for students. Data is publicly available, though aggregate findings are only reported for sub-samples of ten or more students.

The SEPAC recognizes the diversity of disability and seeks to ensure representation across disability groups. Those whose children have ADHD and executive functioning challenges have requested workshops and other resources.

V. ADJOURNMENT

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

VI. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, November 20, 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.