

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

Business Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, February 12, 2020, at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High Library

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

Review and approval of January 8, 2020, meeting minutes

III. Organization/Business Issues

- A. Updates from Interim Special Education Director
- B. Update on Permanent Special Education Director Search
- C. February 1, 2020, SEPAC Dyslexia Listening Session & Form Feedback
 - 1. Draft Recommendations
- D. Elementary Learning Center Populations from January 25, 2020, School Committee Budget Saturday Presentation
- E. Elementary School Improvement Plans & Coteaching
- F. Mental Health & Crisis Resources
 - 1. Mental Health & the IEP Workshop TBD; Webinar Available

IV. New Business – Other topics on people's minds

V. Open Issues

- A. MCAS performance vulnerable for students with disabilities
- B. Mandatory special education training/professional development for regular and special education staff – hiring dual-certified staff
- C. Increasing opportunities for meaningful inclusion across domains
- D. Enhanced Extended School Year, before-, and after-school programming
- E. Increased use of technology in IEP development, revision, & communication
- F. Following up on communication issues noted as barriers to overall satisfaction and subgroup trends for Out of District, Early Childhood, and Specific Learning Disabilities identified via 2015 and 2017 parent/guardian surveys
- G. Need for consistent K-12 executive functioning curriculum

VI. Adjournment

All AB SEPAC meetings are open to the public. We encourage parents of children with disabilities and others interested in special education to attend. Please check our website (www.absepac.org) for information regarding upcoming events.

VII. Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 18, 2020, at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High Library

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

Business Meeting Draft Minutes January 8, 2020

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, School Committee members Tessa McKinley and Paul Murphy, and ten other community members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from December 18, 2019, were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Organizational/Business Issues

A. Updates from Interim Special Education Director

The Interim Special Education Director was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

B. SEPACs and Student Opportunity Act

This legislation increases funding for many school districts (approximately \$30 per student) to address persistent disparities in achievement among certain sub-populations of students. More aide will result if A-B shifts to tuition-free all-day kindergarten. These monies can be targeted for special education. The bill requires superintendents, with their school committees, to create three-year improvement plans to specify how the funding will be spent. The superintendent "shall consider input and recommendations from parents and other relevant community stakeholders, including but not limited to special education and English learner parent advisory councils" The first plans will be submitted to the state by April 1, 2020.

C. Update Regarding Permanent Special Education Director Search

The state denied the district's request to allow the interim director to serve for another year. The job for the permanent position will be posted this week. As in the past, there will be SEPAC representation on the search committee.

D. Dyslexia Listening Session Objectives

The SEPAC is hosting a listening session on Saturday, February 1, at the Sargent Memorial Library in Boxborough from 10:30 a.m. to noon to gain insight from parents of students who have dyslexia or Specific Learning Disabilities. The SEPAC invites families to share their experiences about what is working well and what might help with earlier identification and appropriate service provision. The SEPAC will also provide an online form to get feedback from those unable to attend.

E. Feedback on Accessing & Using PowerSchool to View Individualized Education Program Progress Reports

1. Discuss Recommendations to District

The SEPAC appreciates the efforts of Student Services and special educators to provide PDF directions on how to access the portal. However, on-going issues remain. Parents

continue to have problems finding progress reports within the portal. The portal also is taken offline intermittently and is inaccessible for the entirety of summer. Special education advocates have suggested that the district is not meeting the benchmark for Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) if internet access is required to monitor student progress. Based on consensus, the SEPAC will draft a statement recommending the district use an alternative method to provide parents with IEP progress reports.

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

1. Basic Rights: Understanding the IEP Workshop February 11, 2020, 7-9 p.m. at Sudbury Senior Center; Decoding Dyslexia Presentation TBD
2. AB SEPAC Dyslexia & Specific Learning Disability Listening Session February 1, 2020, 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. at Sargent Memorial Library in Boxborough

Parents are strongly encouraged to attend Basic Rights as well as participate in and/or attend the listening session.

IV. New Business

A parent asked about the right to request red-line changes in IEP drafts. Even if those were granted as an accommodation, parents are encouraged to go through each proposed IEP line by line to ensure information has not been removed or added by accident or without their knowledge.

There will be school committee seats openings in both towns this spring, three in Acton and two in Boxborough. Parents are highly encouraged to run to provide important perspectives on the needs of students with disabilities. The state district attorney has found it is not a conflict of interest to serve on both a SEPAC board and a school committee.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

VI. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 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.

Respectfully submitted by Melissa Brown, Secretary

DRAFT Acton-Boxborough SEPAC Dyslexia Recommendations to the ABRSD 2/12/2020

Screening

Implement universal pre-K through grade two screening for dyslexia, *including for children already with IEPs*.

Notify all parents when screening occurs and inform them of results.

If a child is found at risk, the child should be placed in reading support using a structured literacy approach with evidence-based programs targeting the weakness.

Reading Support

Inform parents when a child is receiving any support from a reading specialist, regardless of tier.

The curriculum in reading support needs to be aligned with evidence-based programs.

Conduct progress monitoring every three months for students in reading support and/or those with IEPs for language-based disabilities and share findings with parents.

Provide parents timely and consistent access to a child's records (DRAs/F&Ps, speech and language screens, spelling inventories, etc.) to track progress.

Foundations should not be done randomly, haphazardly, or used as a Tier 2 or 3 intervention.

Identification

Abandon the wait to fail model—Child Find requires the district to proactively seek out and identify children with disabilities.

If a child is in reading support for an extended period, it is important to figure out **why**; reading support is supposed to be a short-term intervention.

If a child is struggling and there are parent concerns and/or evidence of reading failure, do not delay the process by recommending more Child Study Team, RTI/MTSS, or “screenings” instead of testing.

Those conducting screenings and evaluations need to be trained to identify dyslexia, including deficits in phonemic awareness, rapid naming, or both.

Utilize the CTOPP-2 as part of evaluations for children suspected of having a language-based learning disability.

General Education Reading Instruction

Universally align the reading curriculum methodology to structured literacy.

Abandon predictable texts that foster memorization over decoding.

Teachers need professional development around dyslexia and structured literacy curriculum versus balanced literacy.

Remove anchor charts from classrooms and Learning Centers that promote three-cuing methods (“Does it make sense? Does that sound right? Does that look right?”) and those that promote guessing (e.g., Eagle Eye, Tryin’ Lion).

Intervention / Service Provision

Have special educators certified in Orton-Gillingham and Wilson across grade levels. Certification should be mandatory when recruiting new hires for reading support or special education.

Label the intervention in the IEP methodology with explicit progress monitoring and measures named. Use “dyslexia,” “Orton-Gillingham,” and “Wilson.”

Goals and benchmarks must include the Essential Components of Reading Instruction (ECORI) and be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timebound (SMART).

Baseline performance data must be provided for all goals and benchmarks.

Do not limit or cease intervention arbitrarily or because a child is caught up to grade level.

Utilize block schedules to avoid pulling students out from core content (science, social studies, math, etc.).

Group children together who have the same service needs.

Teach spelling in addition to accommodating with spell checkers.

Consider the social and emotional impact of the reading disability and provide related supports or counseling as needed.

Post Remediation

Dyslexics who no longer require IEPs should be found eligible under Section 504 in order to access standardized testing accommodations.

All staff, including school counselors, need to be informed of the limits of the general education District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). Students with identified disabilities requiring accommodations, related services, and/or specialized instruction need to have those documented in a 504 plan or IEP.

All teachers through grade 12 should be able to support dyslexic students and understand their needs and accommodations.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Work with the new MA Dyslexia Legislation

Learning	Implementing	Collaborating	Ongoing
<p>Dyslexia presentation, EDCO spring 2019</p> <p>4-day MIT symposium, Dr. Joanna Christodoulou & Dr. John Gabrieli, summer 2019</p> <p>2-day MGH symposium, Dr. Joanna Christodoulou & Dr. Tiffany Hogan, summer 2019</p> <p>ABRSD Special Education Coordinators, <i>The Cognitive Challenges of Learning to Read</i> for colleagues, Nov. 2019</p> <p>District-wide Grade Level Meetings: <i>Overview of Dyslexia</i> - PK (November) *K (October); Grades. *1, 5 (January); Grades. 2, 6 (February); Grades. 3, 4 (March) *Dr. Christodoulou presented</p> <p>Districtwide workshop, <i>Emergent Literacy Learners and Early Markers of Dyslexia</i>, Dr. Christodoulou, spring 2020</p> <p>ABRSD Elementary Literacy Coordinator, <i>Evidence-based Practices, Tools and Resources</i>, December 2019</p> <p>Webinars/Podcasts: January 16, 2020 - Dr. Louisa Moats; March 18, 2020 National Association of School Psychologists Dyslexia and Specific Learning Disabilities: <i>Focus on Effective RTI</i></p>	<p>Added question re: familial history of learning difficulties to DIAL-4 kindergarten screening (implemented spring 2019)</p> <p>Added RAN (Rapid Automatized Naming Task - (colors/objects) - to kindergarten literacy screening (fall 2019)</p> <p>Added Kindergarten Protocol Document to compile information to inform kindergarten teachers as students transition into the school district.</p> <p>Implement Beta screening tool developed by Dr. Nadine Gaab this spring</p>	<p>Nancy Duggan, Decoding Dyslexia Founder</p> <p>Dr. Nadine Gaab - early adoption of Dyslexia Screening App developed at Boston Children's Hospital for spring 2020</p> <p>Dr. Christodoulou will attend April 13, 2020, PK-6 Literacy (Reading) Vision Committee to consult with the entire committee</p> <p>Collaboration with Newton Public Schools for MTSS framework, March 2020</p>	<p>Pk-6 Literacy (Reading) Vision Committee with a variety of representation from the district with the goal to create an MTSS framework for Reading PK-6.</p> <p>Subcommittee work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create PK-6 reading vision statement • define the roles/responsibilities of educators, • identify screening tools/assessment, • investigate evidence-based instructional practices/resources, • determine professional learning and training for educators, and • identify key family engagement opportunities and strategies. <p>District leadership attendance at DESE MTSS Conference, February 2020</p> <p>ABRSD Elementary Literacy Coordinator participation in DESE statewide early literacy leadership</p> <p>District-wide PK-6 Collaboration across departments</p>

Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools Special Education

Budget Saturday
January 25, 2020

SIMS Data

School	Headcount Special Education/School Population October 2019	%age Special Education
Blanchard	75/472	15.9%
Merriam	74/475	15.6%
McCarthy-Towne	81/515	15.7%
Douglas	44/393	11.2%
Gates	48/371	12.9%
Conant	77/409	18.9%
R.J. Grey JHS	142/860	16.5%
ABRHS	198/1814	10.9%
CHECP	37	
TOTAL	776/5411	14.3%

Non-salary Budget Drivers

	FY20	FY21
Salaries, Miscellaneous	\$228,000	\$218,000
Instructional Supplies	\$53,950	\$80,250
Instructional Services	\$484,000	\$417,500
Special Transportation	\$1,685,000	\$1,869,463
Legal Expenses	\$65,000	\$65,000

Out of District Expenses

	FY20	FY21
Member Collaborative Tuitions	\$1,235,000	\$1,244,393
Non-Member Collaborative Tuitions	\$895,000	\$811,307
Private Day School Tuitions	\$4,120,000	\$4,357,123
Residential	\$1,405,000	\$1,701,374
Less Circuit Breaker Reimbursement	-\$2,800,000	-\$3,299,000
TOTAL OOD TUITIONS	\$4,855,000	\$4,815,197

TOTAL NON-SALARY SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPENSES

\$7,512,910

Out-of-district placement data suggests that the district is unable to provide a continuum of in-house services for students with emotional disabilities.

Acton-Boxborough Out-of-District Placements by Disability as of August 2019

Disability	Percent of Total OOD Placements
Autism	35%
Emotional Disability	27%
Intellectual	14%
Multiple Disabilities	8%
Specific Learning Disabilities	7%
Communication	2%
Neurological	2%
Sensory - Visual	2%
Developmental Delay	1%
Health	1%
Sensory - Hearing	1%
Total	100%

36% of all out-of-district students for emotional disabilities were first placed out-of-district in 8th grade.

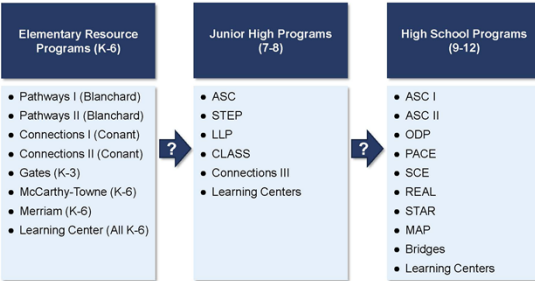
Note: total number of out-of-district students in August 2019 is 92

District Management Group

While each level has specialized programming, the continuum of services between each grade level is not always clear.

6 Grade Ranges of Specialized Programs

2 UNIFIED VISION



District Management Group

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Blanchard 20-21						
Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
		Related Svc	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
		Related Svc	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
			Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
			Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
Pathways	Pathways	Pathways	Learning Ctr	Pathways	Related Svc	Learning Ctr
Pathways	Pathways	Pathways	Pathways	Pathways	Related Svc	Learning Ctr
Pathways	Pathways		Pathways	Pathways		Learning Ctr
Pathways				Pathways		Learning Ctr
Pathways				Pathways		Learning Ctr
				Pathways		Related Svc
				Pathways		Pathways
				Pathways		Pathways

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Blanchard Staffing	FY20	FY21	Notes
Learning Center Teacher	3.0	3.0	
Pathways Teachers	2.0	3.0	+1.0
School Psychologist	1.0	1.0	
Speech Pathologist	2.3	2.3	
Occupational Therapist	.9	1.4	+.5
BCBA	1.0	1.0	
Special Education Assistant	14.76	9.0	-1.96
ABA Tutor	13.0	13.0	

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Conant 20-21						
Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
Learning Ctr	Related Svc	Connections	Related Svc	Connections	Connections	Connections
	Related Svc	Connections	Connections	Related Svc	Connections	Connections
Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections
Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections
Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections
Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections	Connections
	Connections					Connections
	Connections					
	Connections					
	Connections					

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Conant	FY20	FY21	Notes
Learning Center Teacher	3.0	2.0	-1.0
Connections Teacher	2.0	3.0	+1.0
School Psychologist	1.0	1.0	
Speech Pathologist	1.0	1.6	+.6
Occupational Therapist	.5	.6	+.1
BCBA	.5	.5	
Special Education Assistant	14.76	13.0	-1.76
ABA Tutor	5.0	5.0	

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Douglas 20-21						
Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Learning Ctr		Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
Learning Ctr		Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
Learning Ctr		Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
		Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
			Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
				Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
					Learning Ctr	Learning Ctr
						Learning Ctr
Related Svc		Related Svc	Related Svc			

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McCarthy-Towne	FY20	FY21	Notes
Learning Center Teacher	4.0*	4.0	*1.0 added FY20
Resource Room Teacher	2.0	2.0*	*New SEL program
School Psychologist	1.0	1.0	
Counselor/Coach (SEL)	0.0	1.0	+1.0
Speech Pathologist	1.6	2.0	+ .4
Occupational Therapist	.5	.6	+ .1
BCBA	.5	.5	
Special Education Assistant	11.72	9.72	-2.0

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RJ Grey Junior High School	
Program	Projected Students
Learning Center 1	27
Learning Center 2	27
Learning Center 3	25
Learning Center 4	25
STEP	4
LLP	14
CLASS (SEL)	24
Connections	12

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RJ Grey Junior High	FY20	FY21	Notes
Learning Center Teacher	4.0	4.0	
STEP Teacher	1.0	1.0	
CLASS Teacher (SEL)	2.0	2.0	
LLP Teacher	2.0	2.0	
Connections Teacher	2.0	2.0	
School Psychologist	1.6	1.8	+ .2
Counselor/Coach (SEL)	1.0	1.0	
Speech Pathologist	1.5	1.6	+ .1
Occupational Therapist	.1	.1	
BCBA	.5	.5	
Assistants	23.39	23.0	-.39

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ABRHS 20-21	
Program	Students
Learning Center 1	30
Learning Center 2	30
Learning Center 3	30
Learning Center 4	30
Learning Center 5	30
Supported Career Ed (SCE)	21
Occupational Development Program	9
MAP (Alt. Ed)	10
REAL (SEL)	24
PACE (18-22)	6
Bridges (ASD)	28

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ABRHS	FY20	FY21	Notes
Learning Center Teacher	5.0	6.0	+1.0
SCE Teacher	1.0	1.0	
Occupational Dev Program	1.0	1.0	
MAP Teacher	1.0	1.0	
REAL Teacher	1.0	2.0	+1.0
PACE Teacher	1.0	1.0	
Bridges Teacher	1.0	2.0	+1.0
School Psychologist	5.0	5.0	
Counselor/Coach (SEL)	0.0	1.0	+1.0
Speech Pathologist	1.2	1.4	+ .2
Occupational Therapist	.1	.1	
BCBA	.1	.1	
Special Education Assistant	20.22	20.0	-.22

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District-wide Reallocation			
	FY20	FY21	Notes
OT/PT Including Supervision	.2	.4	+ .2
Speech/Language Supervision	.5	.6	+ .1
SLPA	2.0	1.0	-1.0
COTA	1.0	1.0	

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Special Education New Staffing Summary

Location	New Position	+ FTE	- FTE	Cost	Funding Source
Blanchard	Pathways Teacher	1	-2	\$58,000	2 DW Special Ed Assistants (\$60K)
District	O.T/P.T	1	-2	\$58,000	2 DW Special Ed Assistants (\$60K)
District	SLP (Speech Language Pathologist)	1	-2	\$58,000	1 DW Special Ed Assistant (\$60K); 1 DW SLPA (\$32K)
ABRHS	Learning Center Teacher	1	0	\$58,000	Circuit Breaker
ABRHS	REAL Adjustment Counselor (SEL/ Behavior)	1	0	\$65,000	ODP Revolving (\$30K); Special Ed DW PL Conferences, Phones (\$8,500); HS Landscaping (\$7K); HS Furniture (\$5K)
ABRHS	REAL Teacher	1	0	\$58,000	Circuit Breaker
ABRHS	BRIDGES Teacher	1	0	\$58,000	Circuit Breaker
McT	Adjustment Counselor for SEL program (SEL/ Behavior)	1	-2	\$65,000	2 Spec. Ed. DW Assistants (\$60K)
R.J. Grey	Increase Psych from 8 to 9	0.2	0	\$15,000	Dragonfly Budget Offset (\$15K)

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Questions?

Thank you for your support!