

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

Business Meeting 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