

# Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Feedback Form Trends & 2020-2021 Priorities  
Fall 2020 Presentation to the ABRSC

# Our Mission

**To ensure understanding, respect, support,  
and the appropriate education of all children  
in our community.**

The Special Education Parent Advisory Council's  
duties under state law include:

*“advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities and meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the school district’s special education programs.”*

# The SEPAC's Role

Acton-Boxborough SEPAC  
abrsdsepac@gmail.com



Content inspired by Family Voices, "Assessing Family Engagement in Systems-Level Initiatives"

# 2020-2021 Goals & Priorities

- Monitor state guidance and families' experiences regarding reopening schools
- Conduct parent/guardian survey(s)
- Address and remove barriers to SEPAC participation and SEPAC leadership for BIPOC parents/guardians of children with disabilities
- Participate in the search process for new special education director
- Community education on Basic Rights and other topics



# School Reopening Feedback Form

- Form published in March asked about experiences with emergency closure; revised over the summer to also ask about reopening
- 136 responses from parents/guardians of children with IEPs or 504s
- Sharing information with the district on a rolling basis
- SEPAC developing survey(s) to follow up on issues
- Key organization takeaways:
  1. *People don't all know what the SEPAC does*
  2. *Caregivers are seeking resources and connection*

# Feedback Trends

## Common challenges:

- Need for 1:1 or small group support
- Caregiver bandwidth
- Executive functioning demands
- Isolation & anxiety
- Screen time
- Regression



## What helped:

- Regular, clear communication
- Consistent staffing\*
- Gen ed & special ed collaboration
- Low staff-to-student ratios
- Individualized support
- Structure & schedules

# Survey Objectives

**Goal 1:** Solicit information from our entire parent/guardian community to facilitate participation and ensure all children with disabilities are represented through our efforts

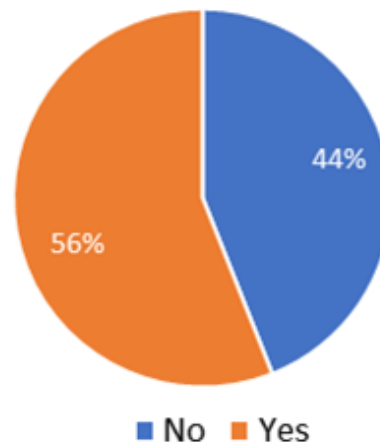
**Goal 2:** Monitor families' experiences with special education programming to provide feedback and guidance to the district

**Goal 3:** Follow up on issues previously identified through surveys, feedback forms, and anecdotal reporting

# Preliminary Survey Topics

- Communication & engagement
- Special education learning plans
- Service delivery
- Remote learning (preschool through high school)
- Evaluations
- How the SEPAC can help
- Additional demographic questions about race & ethnicity

Do you know who from the district to contact with questions or input about your child's return to school in the fall? N=134





# Addressing & Removing Barriers to SEPAC Participation

- Broadcast or hold online meetings and make recordings available
- Provide mentorship (if desired) as BIPOC parents of children with disabilities volunteer for leadership positions
- Expand outreach to better engage BIPOC families of children with disabilities
- Establish a listening session or online feedback form to gather information about how to best support BIPOC families of children with disabilities in Acton and Boxborough
- Include additional demographic questions in surveys beyond disability category and school

# Addressing & Removing Barriers to SEPAC Participation

- Continue to promote events with no cost or those with available scholarships
- Continue to share information regarding pro bono advocacy training and assistance such as through the Federation for Children with Special Needs and Mass Advocates for Children
- Host speakers on topics and provide resources emphasizing intersectionality regarding the BIPOC/disability experience
- Have officers participate in SEED-based training and offer the same to SEPAC general membership

# Outreach & Family Support

- The SEPAC is a member of the joint PTO/PTF/PTSO round table
- Invited last year to present to two elementary school communities about continuum of supports and basic rights
- Reached out to all special ed coordinators to (re)introduce organization and extend partnership opportunities
- Communicating with surrounding SEPACs regarding workshops
- Reestablished monthly drop-in caregiver support hour
- Share resources and information via newsletter (1400+ subscribed) and Facebook page (440+ followers)

# Meeting Dates & Resources

October 14

November 18

December 2

January 6

February 10

March 17

April 14

May 19

June 9

(Annual Meeting & Officer Elections)

## **DESE Info to Special Education Directors**

[doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html](https://doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html)

## **Mass Advocates for Children (MAC)**

[massadvocates.org/covid19](https://massadvocates.org/covid19)

## **Special Needs Advocacy Network (SPaN)**

[spanmass.org/covid-19.html](https://spanmass.org/covid-19.html)

## **Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)**

[fcsn.org](https://fcsn.org)

# Thanks & Contact Information

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