

Business Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 14, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. Virtual Meeting Over Zoom

To attend: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88265343433>

To call in: +1 646 876 9923

Meeting ID: 882 6534 3433

To be followed by a Friends of AB SEPAC 501(c)(3) meeting

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

Review and approval of September 16, 2020, meeting minutes

III. Organization/Business Issues

- A. Updates from Interim Special Education Director
- B. Department of Elementary & Secondary Education Updates
 - 1. Modified Competency Determinations
- C. New Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines
- D. Feedback & Questions Regarding Full Return to In-Person Learning
- E. New Acton School Committee Members & Boxborough Town Election Information
- F. Update on SEPAC Priorities for the Year

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 caregivers of children with disabilities and others interested in special education to attend. See absepac.org for information regarding upcoming events.

VII. Next Meeting

May 19, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. Virtual Meeting Over Zoom



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

Business Meeting

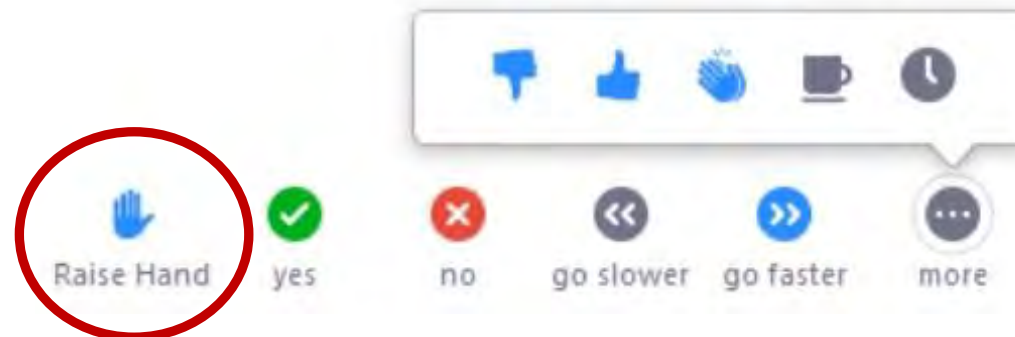
April 14, 2021

*To be followed by a
Friends of AB SEPAC 501(c)(3) meeting*

I. Call to Order

Virtual Meeting Participation

- SEPAC meetings are public and subject to Open Meeting Law
- Participation may not take place via the chat box
- Votes will be conducted by roll call
- To be recognized by the Chairs, please use the raise hand function in the Participants window



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.”

II. Approval of Minutes

- ~~• Review and approval of September 16, 2020, meeting minutes~~
- We will **vote to approve the minutes as written or amended** if necessary
- Voting will be by roll call
- If you are not a voting member (parent/guardian of a child with a disability residing or attending school in Acton or Boxborough), please ABSTAIN

III. Organization/Business Issues

- A. Updates from Interim Special Education Director
- B. Department of Elementary & Secondary Education Updates
 - 1. Modified Competency Determinations
- C. New Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines
- D. Feedback & Questions Regarding Full Return to In-Person Learning
- E. New Acton School Committee Members & Boxborough Town Election Information
- F. Update on SEPAC Priorities for the Year

NOTE: THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED

A. Updates from Interim Special Education Director

Acton-Boxborough SEPAC
abrsdsepac@gmail.com

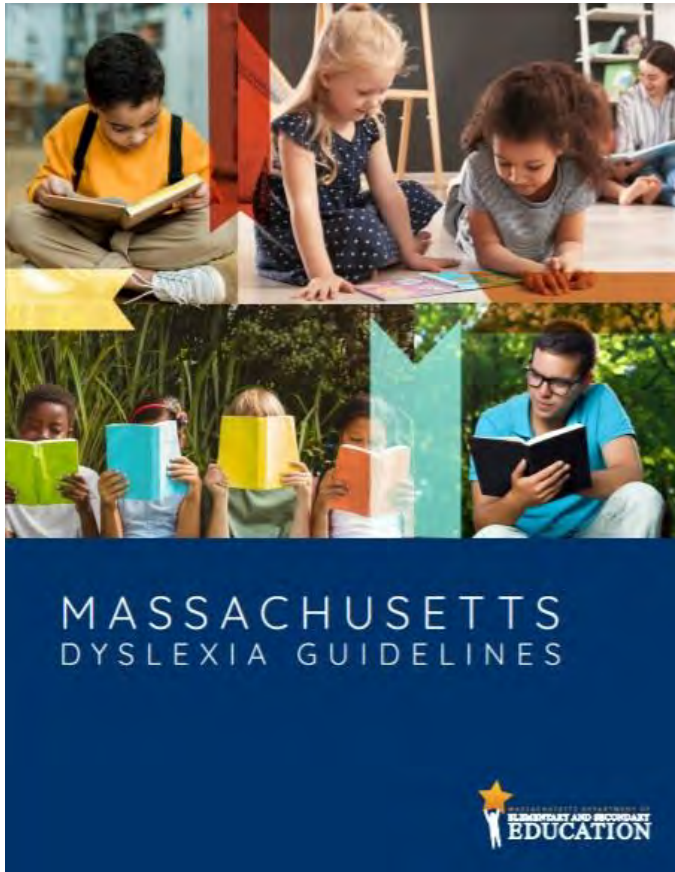


B. Department of Elementary & Secondary Education Updates

1. Modified Competency Determinations

- All guidance can be found at doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html
- Pertains to graduating classes of 2021-2023 and interruption to MCAS
- *“Certain students with IEPs are eligible for the modified CD if they meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the FAQ. Districts may graduate students with IEPs if those students: 1) have received a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), (2) have completed all local graduation requirements, and (3) have earned their CD”*

C. New Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines



- Released by DESE on April 13 and available at doe.mass.edu/sped/dyslexia-guidelines.pdf
- Dr. Nadine Gaab, Decoding Dyslexia, and Acton-Boxborough parent among others participated in the development of the guidelines
- The SEPAC will review these in conjunction with our previous recommendations to the ABRSC

D. Feedback & Questions Regarding Full Return to In-Person Learning

- What has worked?
- What hasn't?
- Questions regarding pending junior high and high school returns?
- Thinking ahead to the fall ... what lessons can be applied?



State Guidance on In-Person Learning

- Family engagement is a critical component
- Parent input is “particularly critical during this time” regarding “engagement, attention, behavior, progress, skills, home experiences, and other observations about ... emotional and social well-being”
- Encourages partnerships for smooth transitions; e.g., social stories, video tours, meet and greets, etc.
- Disciplinary action should be a last resort for behavioral challenges
- Training regarding trauma-sensitive practices for all staff “may be needed”
- FAPE is in effect

E. New Acton School Committee Members & Boxborough Town Election Information

- Benjamin Bloomenthal and Andrew Schwartz were elected March 30 to 3-year terms in Acton
- Boxborough election is May 18; incumbent Adam Klein is only known candidate
- The AB SEPAC does not endorse candidates for public office
- The SEPAC leadership will engage in relationship building with new and sitting ABRSC members

F. Update on SEPAC Priorities for the Year

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

Area SEPAC Collaboration

- Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) presented Basic Rights workshops in March and April on transition and understanding the IEP to area SEPACs with support from our districts
- There is a longstanding partnership among Acton-Boxborough, Maynard, Sudbury, Lincoln-Sudbury, & Concord/Concord-Carlisle SEPACs
- Arranging local SEPAC coordination & networking meeting this spring

NOTE: THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED

IV. New Business

Other topics on
people's minds

Acton-Boxborough SEPAC
abrsdsepac@gmail.com



April 15 School Committee Meeting

Two major items on the agenda with ramifications for students with disabilities:

1. End PTO funding for general education assistants *and* gradual elimination of gen ed assistants in grades 4-6 in favor of coaching and specialist model
 - Note gen ed assistants are *not* the same as special education assistants/paraprofessionals listed in IEP delivery grids
 - District has moved to draw down special ed para support in favor of certified special educator instruction
2. Implementation of districtwide Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

- Comprehensive presentation from ABRSD with materials from DESE in the April 15 ABRSC meeting packet addendum
- Goals include:
 - Reducing disproportionate special ed referrals for certain subgroups (e.g., Black students, English learners, low socioeconomic status)
 - Reducing disproportionate representation in special ed for subgroups (see next slide)
 - Equitable representation in advanced coursework at secondary level
 - Consistently implementing Child Study & Student Support Process
 - Ensure schedules allow access to core instruction in gen ed setting

Disproportionate Representation in Special Education

ABRSD12

Disproportionate Representation at AB:

16% of all students have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- 33% of students who are Black have an IEP
- 23% of students who are Latinx have an IEP
- 20% of students who are White have an IEP
- 7.5% of students who are Asian have an IEP
- 30% of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds have an IEP

25% of English learners have an IEP

- Of these ELs, 23% are identified with a Communication Disability

WELLNESS • EQUITY • ENGAGEMENT

Defining Tiers



Defining Tiers



Family Engagement & MTSS

Student, Family, & Community Engagement

Collaboration between students, staff, families, and community partners is a key component in determining and providing appropriate supports for all students. Defined strategies for engagement are essential, such as the use of collaboration protocols, communication plans, feedback loops, stakeholder surveys, targeted outreach efforts, etc. (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017). Involving families in the development of an effective tiered system helps to ensure the development of culturally sustaining and linguistically appropriate models of support.

Below are samples of what this may look like in practice.

- ★ **Welcoming Environment & Relationships** - The district and schools create a welcoming culture and environment for all families/caregivers, students, school staff, and community members. Stakeholders are valued and connected to each other in support of high academic expectations, achievement, and healthy development and wellbeing.
- ★ **Effective Communication** - Families/caregivers, school/district staff, and administration engage in regular, meaningful dialogue about learning, high academic expectations, and the healthy development of students. Schools systematically share information using multiple communication pathways and solicit input about school goals and initiatives with students, families, and the broader community.
- ★ **Engagement in Student Support** - Families/Caregivers and students are actively engaged in student support processes/decisions and regularly informed about progress. Families/caregivers receive the information they need to advocate for their children and are informed of their rights to request a special education evaluation at any time during the tiered support process.

The AB SEPAC continues to stress parents/guardians must be informed and engaged participants when students are accessing Tier 2 & Tier 3 supports



More Information

DESE Info to Special Education Directors
doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html

Mass Advocates for Children (MAC)
massadvocates.org/covid19

Special Needs Advocacy Network (SPaN)
spanmass.org/covid-19.html

Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)
fcsn.org

Compensatory Services Information

Family Fact Sheet: COVID-19 Compensatory Services and Recovery Support for Students with IEPs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

On August 17, 2020, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) published guidance for schools and districts to help them work with families to together help students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) recover as much as possible from the school disruptions that occurred because of COVID-19. The guidance is called *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Special Education Technical Assistance Advisory 2021-1: COVID-19 Compensatory Services and Recovery Support for Students with IEPs*. You can find the guidance here:

www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2021-1-covid-comp-services.docx.

This Fact Sheet summarizes the main points in DESE's guidance for families. DESE encourages families to keep in touch with your child's educators and administrators, and to talk about what the new guidance means for you and your child. If you belong to your local [Special Education Parent Advisory Council](#) (SEPAC), you can also collaborate with your school and district to plan and put in place policies and practices that will help *all* students with IEPs, in addition to your own child.

- MA DESE has published guidance and a Family Fact Sheet
- Ask your coordinator or call the Federation for Children with Special Needs or Mass Advocates for Children

V. Open Issues

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- We will **vote to adjourn the meeting**
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Next Meeting May 19, 2021

Meeting Recordings Available @ absepac.org

Thanks & Contact Information

Our thanks to Interim Special Education Director Debbie Dixon
and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee for their
ongoing collaboration

absepac.org

 @absepac

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