

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

Business Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. Virtual Meeting Over Zoom

To attend: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84512204162>

To call in: +1 646 876 9923 Meeting ID: 845 1220 4162

This meeting will 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 22, 2021, meeting minutes

III. Organization/Business Issues

- A. Updates from the Director of Special Education
- B. AB SEPAC Fall Presentation to the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee (ABRSC) 10/21/21
- C. Feedback on 2021-2022 District Improvement Plan Goals - ABRSC Vote 10/21/21
- D. District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) & 504 Plans
 - 1. Supporting Students Presentation 11/15/21 from 7-8 p.m. over Zoom
- E. Relationship Building with New Administrators & Families
 - 1. Conversations with Early Childhood (10/26), Elementary (10/18 & 10/25), Junior High (11/1), High School (11/4), & Out of District Families (11/8) from 7-8 p.m. over Zoom
 - 2. Interview for "Acton in Focus"
 - 3. Friends of 501(c)(3) Pumpkin Decorating Social Event 10/27 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. at Jones Field in Acton

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

VII. Next Meeting

Wednesday, November 17, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. Virtual Meeting Over Zoom



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

Business Meeting

October 20, 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 22, 2021, meeting minutes (draft available in meeting packet at absepac.org)
- 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 the Director of Special Education
- B. AB SEPAC Fall Presentation to the ABRSC 10/21/21
- C. Feedback on 2021-2022 District Improvement Plan Goals
- D. District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) & 504 Plans
- E. Relationship Building with New Administrators & Families

NOTE: THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED



A. Updates from the Director of Special Education

Acton-Boxborough SEPAC
abrsdsepac@gmail.com

B. AB SEPAC Fall Presentation to the ABRSC

- Per district policy and procedure, the SEPAC is formally invited to present to the School Committee twice per year
- The SEPAC can request time on SC agendas at any point
- Fall 10/21/21 presentation focuses on goals and priorities for the year previously reviewed at SEPAC meetings in June and September (slides in ABRSC & SEPAC meeting packets)
- There is *usually* an educational element included to inform School Committee members and the community about special education
- This fall's focus is Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

C. Feedback on '21-'22 District Improvement Plan Goals

- Presented by the Superintendent to the ABRSC at the 10/7/21 meeting
- There are six proposed district goals this year; goals are tied to the ABRSD strategic plan
- Feedback provided during the meeting and afterward regarding
 - 1) lack of parent/guardian engagement and
 - 2) questions about the special education-related objectives
- Revision incorporates parent/guardian engagement, including the SEPAC
- Dyslexia screening is addressed
- ABRSC will review the revised draft goals tomorrow and vote

Inclusive Practice: Culture & Climate

Goal #1: Inclusive Practices (2.1): *(What area of student learning do we want to improve?)*

2.1: Strengthen school culture and climate by strengthening relationships between and among students and adults within the schools, with an emphasis on students from historically underrepresented groups.

Outcomes: *(What will be different when this goal is reached? What is the overarching data that will show improvement and what is the target for improvement?)*

1. We will have clearly articulated processes to gather information from our students and families about their feeling of connectedness and safety in our schools.
2. We will continue to solicit feedback from families through established communication channels such as the SEPAC, DEI Family Advisory, Joint PTSO, and Superintendent Coffees.
3. We will expand two-way communication and engagement with our multilingual families through regular engagement evenings with an EL Parent Advisory Council and expanded on-demand interpretation services for our most-frequently used languages.
4. We will develop a shared understanding with our community about how our schools will respond to and investigate incidents of bias and hate in our schools by publishing a protocol for responding to incidents of hate and bias.
5. We will develop and publish a website with information about our School Resource Officer Program based on feedback from the DEI Family Advisory.

- Revised language includes the SEPAC and other family leadership bodies
- ELPAC is a potential partner once established; SEPAC participates in Joint PTSO and has made connections with the DEI Family Advisory

Inclusive Practice: Curriculum & Instruction

Goal #3: Inclusive Practices (2.3): *(What area of student learning do we want to improve?)*

2.3: Ensure that educators in all schools and classrooms employ curricula, instructional practices and materials that are responsive to the diversity of our students and families.

Alignment: *(We chose this goal because... ; The stated goal is aligned with the District Strategic Objective/ Initiative to...)*

The District has taken several steps to ensure that schools and classrooms employ curricula, instructional practices and materials that are responsive to the diversity of our students and families. We will continue initiatives to expand the diversity of elementary classroom libraries, examine the new social studies curriculum frameworks to inform revisions to our curricula, and expand course offerings that allow students to examine history from a variety of perspectives.

Baseline: *(Description of Starting Point)*

Prior to the pandemic, the district began to implement a co-teaching model in order to increase students with IEPs access to high quality general education content. The work was paused during the pandemic but will resume this year.

Outcomes:

(What does this currently look like in your school (Baseline)? What will be different when this goal is reached? What is the overarching data that will show improvement and what is the target for improvement?)

1. We will continue to expand the diversity of books in the elementary classroom and school libraries
2. We will begin to revise our K-12 curricula to align with the Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Frameworks
3. We will expand course offerings at the high school that allow students to examine history from a variety of perspectives.
4. We will expand access to general education instruction for students with disabilities by continuing professional learning and increasing the number of co-taught classrooms
5. We will align and clarify descriptions of special education programs across the District.

Co-Teaching & Program Alignment

Strategy			
Action Step(s) <i>What will you do to improve student learning? Are the steps integrated? Complementary? High leverage?</i>	Measurement <i>How will you assess progress toward this goal? What qualitative and/or quantitative data will you use?</i>	Timeline <i>What are the dates for completion?</i>	Ownership & Enactment <i>Who is responsible for the ownership and enactment of the action steps?</i>
<p>Continue to align special education programming to provide a clearer continuum of services and expanded access to the general education environment.</p> <p>Continue the district initiative to expand access to general education environments through a co-teaching model by providing professional learning for educators.</p> <p>Define and clarify special education programs to ensure that they are focused and aligned with the needs of students and families.</p>	<p>Increase in number of classrooms employing a co-taught model from 2021-22 to 2022-23</p> <p>Professional learning for educators to support implementation</p> <p>Program descriptions for all special education programs including student profiles</p>	<p>March - May 2022</p> <p>March - May 2022</p> <p>May 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Special Education • Principals • Director of Special Education • Special Education Coordinators

Equitable Opportunities: Dyslexia, Literacy, & Social Emotional

Goal #4: Equitable Opportunities (3.2): *(What area of student learning do we want to improve?)*

3.2: Ensure effective evidence-based screening, instruction, and assessment in literacy, mathematics, social-emotional and behavioral learning in all general education classrooms PK-12.

Alignment: *(We chose this goal because... ; The stated goal is aligned with the District Strategic Objective/ Initiative to...)*

The focus of this initiative is to improve the consistency of evidence-based universal (Tier I) instruction in literacy and mathematics K-6 and to continue implementation of a district-wide screening tool (iReady) and early literacy assessments in order to support the District's broader goal of implementing an MTSS model.

Baseline: *(Description of Starting Point)*

The district spent the last three years investigating a single math curriculum for implementation across schools K-8 in order to provide more equitable outcomes across our schools. Additionally, the district has spent several years investigating and planning for improved evidence-based instruction in early literacy that is aligned with the new MA Dyslexia Regulations. The District also piloted a district-wide screening tool in literacy and mathematics for the first time in 2020-21 and will continue to use that screener three times per year.

Strategy			
Action Step(s) <i>What will you do to improve student learning? Are the steps integrated? Complementary? High leverage?</i>	Measurement <i>How will you assess progress toward this goal? What qualitative and/or quantitative data will you use?</i>	Timeline <i>What are the dates for completion?</i>	Ownership & Enactment <i>Who is responsible for the ownership and enactment of the action steps?</i>
<p>Support evidenced-based Tier 1 instruction in all classrooms PK-6 in the areas of literacy and mathematics.</p> <p><u>Literacy:</u></p> <p>Provide professional learning and job-embedded coaching for school leaders, coaches and specialists to support high quality, evidence-based early literacy practices.</p> <p>Provide job-embedded professional learning for educators in grades K-2 in the area of structured literacy instruction and dyslexia screening and assessment.</p>	<p>PL description and schedule including class visits</p> <p>School visit schedule for PL providers to work with school-based teams.</p> <p>Agendas and staff surveys</p>	<p>October 2021-June 2023 (2 years)</p> <p>October 2021-May 2022</p> <p>October 2021-May 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Curriculum coordinators and coaches Principals

<p><u>Early Literacy:</u></p> <p>Articulate and align required assessment practices and screening for early literacy (Early Bird, DIBELS, RAN); Outline an assessment calendar for the universal mathematics and literacy screening tools, and the dyslexia assessments for grades K-6</p>	<p>Assessment calendar to include all required district-wide early literacy screening tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement DIBELS in grade 1-3 classrooms 3X during the 2021-22 school year; Implement EarlyBird in grade K classrooms 3X during the 2021-22 school year <p>Staff surveys - before and after on the understanding and usage of different assessment tools</p>	<p>Fall 2021</p> <p>Fall, winter spring</p> <p>Fall 2021-Spring 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Assistant Superintendent for Equity and Inclusion Director of Special Education Principals Literacy Taskforce Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
<p><u>Social Emotional Learning:</u></p> <p>Engage staff to study and identify and pilot a social emotional screening tool to be used with the district's MTSS process</p>	<p>Social Emotional Screening Tool Identified</p> <p>Pilot Social Emotional Screening Tool</p>	<p>Spring 2022</p> <p>Fall 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Superintendent for Equity and Inclusion Director of Special Projects Principals

Equitable Opportunities: Multi-Tiered System of Supports

NOTE: THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED

Goal #5: Equitable Opportunities (3.1): *(What area of student learning do we want to improve?)*

3.1: Develop and implement an aligned, districtwide PK-12 multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for students in literacy, mathematics, social-emotional and behavioral learning.

Outcomes: *(What will be different when this goal is reached? What is the overarching data that will show improvement and what is the target for improvement?)*

1. Staff across elementary schools will have a shared understanding of the MTSS model including major components and the various roles educators play in supporting students.
2. We will have a district-wide data dashboard to support the analysis of student assessment data at the classroom, grade-level, school and District level.
3. A District-wide planning team will develop and publish districtwide MTSS guidance that includes non-negotiable, consistent elements, as well as opportunities for personalization at the school level.
4. Schools will develop MTSS action plans for each school based on a self assessment completed by staff and a school-based leadership team. The action steps will be incorporated into future school improvement plan goals.
5. Schools *may* undertake and complete 1-2 high-yield initiatives articulated in school improvement plans.

- DESE MTSS *Blueprint for MA* document underscores the need to involve families in MTSS development

Strategy			
Action Step(s) <i>What will you do to improve student learning? Are the steps integrated? Complementary? High leverage?</i>	Measurement <i>How will you assess progress toward this goal? What qualitative and/or quantitative data will you use?</i>	Timeline <i>What are the dates for completion?</i>	Ownership & Enactment <i>Who is responsible for the ownership and enactment of the action steps?</i>
Develop a shared understanding of the MTSS model within the district: Provide professional learning for school and district leaders focused on creating effective Multi-Tiered Systems of Support. Initiate a district-wide steering committee with representative staff from all K-6 schools to develop district-wide guidance for MTSS that includes non-negotiables for schools as well as opportunities for personalization.	PL Agenda District DESE MTSS self-assessment District-wide MTSS blueprint developed and shared	August 2021 October 2021-June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning • Assistant Superintendent for Equity and inclusion • Director of Special Education • Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning • Director of Special Education
Begin to define and align the roles and responsibilities of general educators, coaches, specialists, counselors and psychologists to provide a clear continuum of services in K-12.	DRAFT document that details the roles and responsibilities of educators within the district in supporting an MTSS model	April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning • Assistant Superintendent for Equity and inclusion • Director of Special Education

D. District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) & 504 Plans

- The DCAP lists gen ed accommodations available to all; an ICAP is an Individual Curriculum Accommodation Plan based on the DCAP
- Some families with new diagnoses like ADHD report being offered an ICAP instead of a 504 Plan for disability-related accommodations
- Others have shared teachers are limiting accommodations to those in the DCAP or are unfamiliar with individual 504 implementation
- Concerns about how information is being conveyed to counseling staff overseeing the 504s, teachers, and families; protecting students' rights
- Will be covered in 11/15 SEPAC workshop on supporting students

504 Plans and IEPs

	IEP	504 Plan
Basic Description	A blueprint or plan for a child's <u>special education</u> experience at school.	A blueprint or plan for how the school will provide support and remove barriers for a student with a disability.
What It Does	<p>Provides individualized special education and <u>related services</u> to meet a child's unique needs.</p> <p>These services are provided at no cost to families.</p>	<p>Provides services and changes to the learning environment to enable students to learn alongside their peers.</p> <p>As with an IEP, a 504 plan is provided at no cost to families.</p>
What Law Applies	<p>The <u>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</u> (IDEA)</p> <p>This is a federal special education law for children with disabilities.</p>	<p><u>Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act</u> of 1973</p> <p>This is a federal civil rights law to stop discrimination against people with disabilities.</p>

DCAP & IEP/504 Accommodations

The ABRSD DCAP states: “For students with **existing** 504 plans or IEPs, the team should ensure that any accommodations that are required due to the student’s specific disability should still be listed in the IEP or 504 plan, regardless of whether or not they are listed in the DCAP and available to all students. This ensures that if students leave us to move to another district or graduate, the receiving school has the information necessary to develop an appropriate plan for that student.”



Lisa Lightner
@dontiepalone

...

"It's in our District Wide Accommodations Plan so we don't have to put it in the IEP"

6:40 AM - Oct 18, 2021 - Semrush Social Media Tool

A 504 Plan is Not ...

- ... a “consolation prize” for not being found eligible for special education
- ... “better” than an IEP
- ... what a student “graduates” to from an IEP
- ... limited to a pre-determined list or menu of accommodations like the DCAP
- ... solely for academics
- ... something you must accept instead of an IEP to access advanced coursework or honors classes
- ... transferable to college
- ... sufficient if a student needs specialized instruction in order to access their education, including academics and the life of the school

E. Relationship Building with New Administrators & Families



1. Director of Special Education & SEPAC Leader Conversations with Parents/Guardians
2. Interview for “Acton in Focus”
3. Friends of 501(c)(3) Pumpkin Decorating Social Event 10/27 at Jones Field in Acton

Upcoming Listening Sessions

- The Director of Special Education and AB SEPAC leaders are hosting informal listening sessions for parents/guardians via Zoom from 7-8 p.m. on these dates
- Participants are welcome to attend any session
- Topics from first elementary discussion on 10/18 included social emotional support, team meetings, draft IEPs, home/school logs, communication, and programming in the new building

10/25 Elementary #2

10/26 Early Childhood

11/1 RJ Grey JHS

11/4 ABRHS

11/8 Out of District

Friends of Acton Boxborough
Special Education Parent Advisory Council
501c3

Pumpkin Decorating

APPLE
CIDER

PUMPKIN
DECORATING

COSTUME
OPTIONAL

CIDER
DOUGHNUTS



October 27

Jones Field
54 Martin Street Acton

330 - 530pm

Rain Date October 28

Free event, all welcome. Please contact
abrsdsepac@gmail.com with any accommodation requests.

NOTE: THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED

Outreach & Community Building



ACTONTV.ORG

Interview with the AB Special Education Parents Advisory
Council

Acton-Boxborough SEPAC
abrsdsepac@gmail.com

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IV. New Business

Other topics on
people's minds

Acton-Boxborough SEPAC
abrsdsepac@gmail.com



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

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

- We will **vote to adjourn the meeting**
- 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

Next Meeting November 17, 2021, 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Recordings Available @ absepac.org

Thanks & Contact Information

Our thanks to Director of Special Education Jen Truslow
and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee for their
ongoing collaboration

absepac.org

 @absepac

abrsdsepac@gmail.com