

Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Spring 2021 Update to the ABRSC

Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey, Abraham Gutierrez & Carrie Weaver

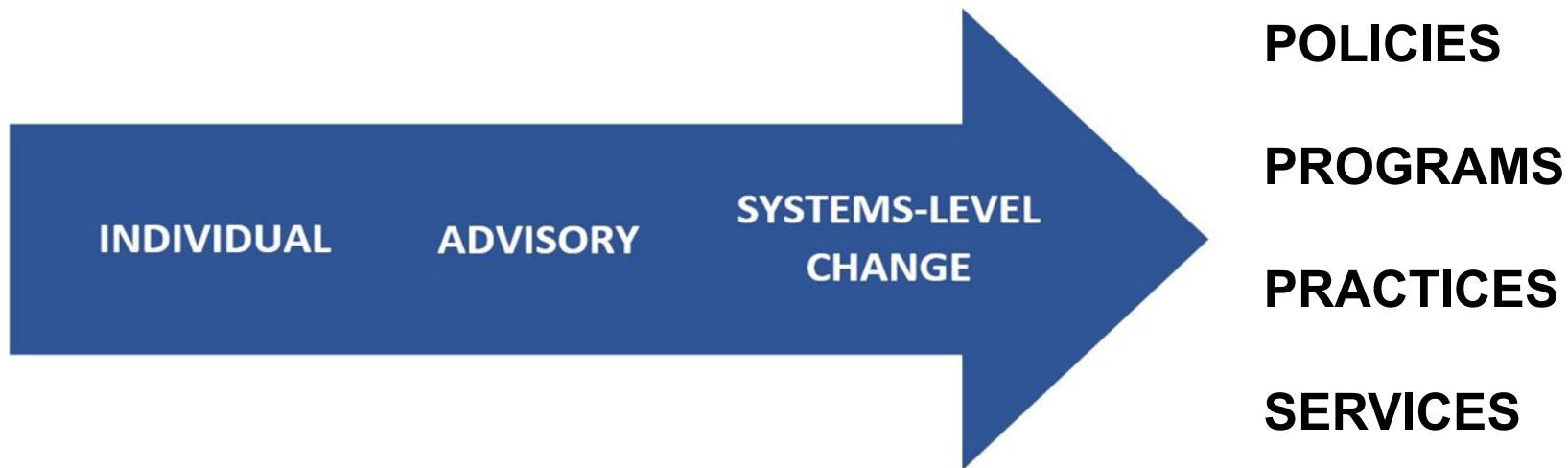
Our Mission

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

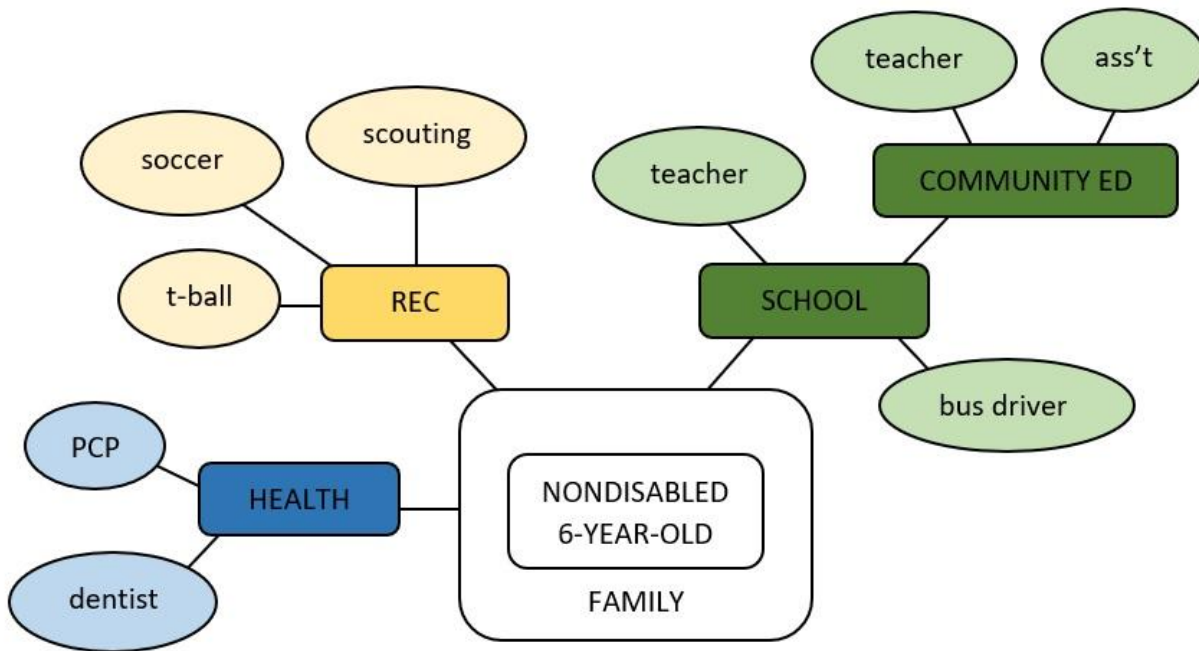
The Special Education Parent Advisory Council's
duties under state law include:

“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



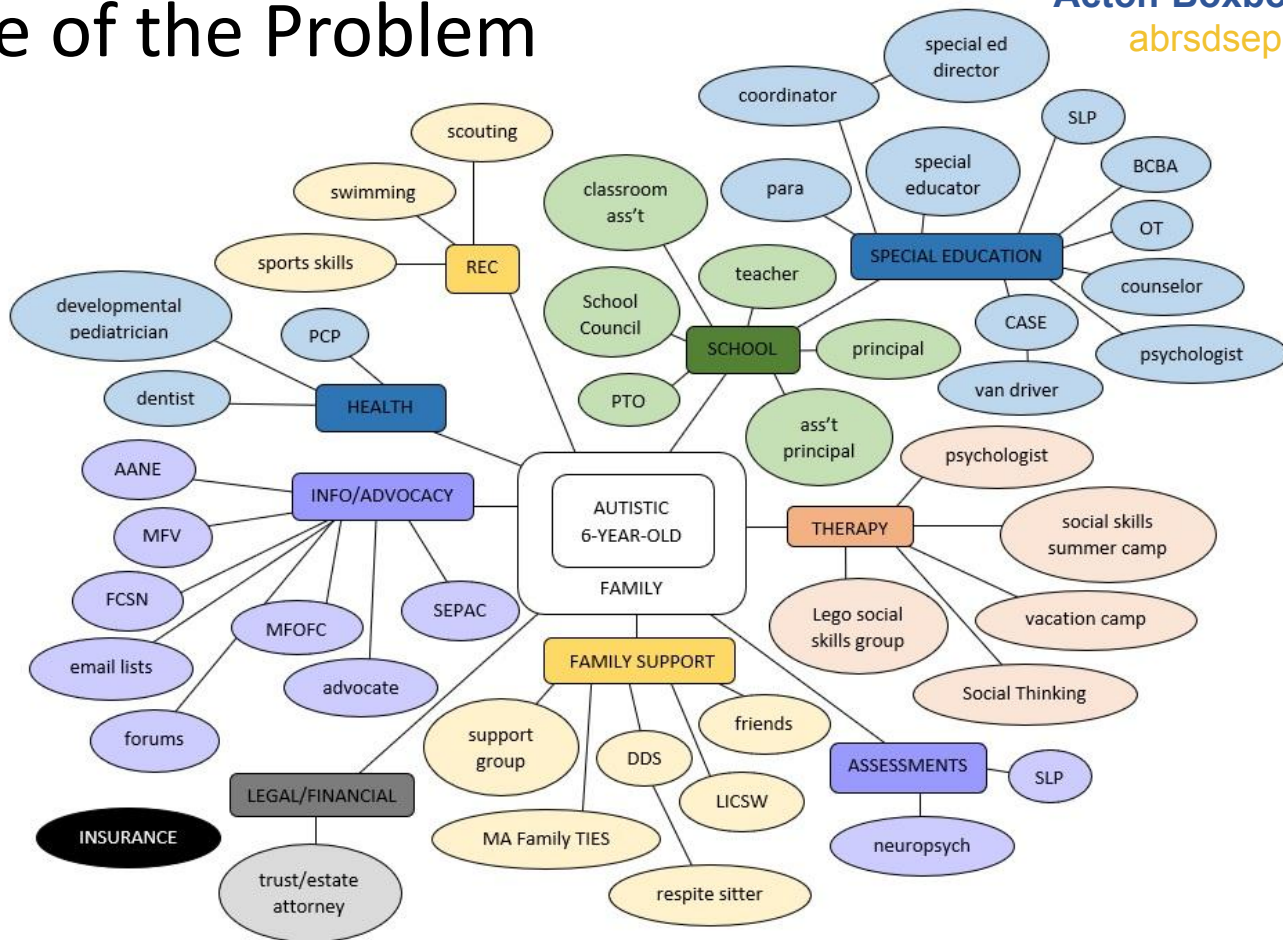
Care Map *Pre-COVID



The Size of the Problem

Acton-Boxborough SEPAC


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Listening to Families

“Parental input is always valuable but is particularly critical during this time when parents/guardians may have unique insight into their child’s remote learning experience. Input from parents/guardians on their child’s primary areas of need, including ... engagement, attention, behavior, progress, skills, home experiences, and other observations about their emotional and social well-being, are critical to determining how to meet students’ needs.”

Source: DESE *Guidance on In-Person Learning & Student Learning Time Requirements*, 27 April 2021

Assisting Students with Assignments: A Guide for Parents 			
Student: _____ Teacher(s): _____ Parent(s): _____ Week of: _____		A PROMPT IS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crossing out possible answer choices• Doing calculations for your child• Giving hints or answering question(s) to help your child find the correct answer• Hand-over-hand assistance A PROMPT IS NOT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answering general questions about how to do the assignment.• Reading a question to your child• Writing down an answer dictated by the student• Redirecting the student to the task or refocusing the student's attention	
DIRECTIONS TO THE PARENT: Record in the right-hand column below how often you gave your child a "prompt" on each assignment. Look at the BOX to the right for examples of "prompts."			
This information will let the child's teacher know when to reteach or clarify the task. If your child did not need your help with any items in the assignment, write "0" in the column "Number of Prompts Given."			
Assignments for the week	Number of Tasks (Teacher use)	Number Correct (Teacher use)	Number of prompts given (Parent use)
1. [insert assignment from page 2]			
2. Student will [insert assignment from page 2]			
3. [insert assignment from page 2]			
4. [insert assignment from page 2]			
5. [insert assignment from page 2]			
Notes _____			

... & Then Summer



Image Source: "Calvin and Hobbes," Bill Watterson, 28 April 1995

<https://www.gocomics.com/calvinandhobbes/1995/04/28>

Family Support

- Ongoing monitoring of state technical assistance advisories and caregiver education regarding guidance, COVID Compensatory Services, transition to in-person learning, etc.
- Shared concrete tools and strategies to support students
- Presented to Gates PTO on continuum of supports and the special education eligibility process
- Used social media and newsletter to disseminate low/no cost workshop and training opportunities in different languages
- Fielded dozens of support calls, emails, and referral requests

Inclusion Emphasis

1 in 20 children
have a
disability.

That gives ~~19~~ ²⁰
kids a daily
opportunity to
learn about
diversity,
collaboration,
inclusion and
friendship

I FEEL LIKE PEOPLE ARE
ALWAYS TELLING ME THE THINGS
I NEED TO DO TO FIT IN WITH
OTHER KIDS, BUT NO ONE TELLS
THE OTHER KIDS THE THINGS
THEY CAN DO TO MAKE ME FEEL
LIKE I BELONG.

I CAN MENTEE (AGE 13)



District-Level Advocacy

- Co-chairs participated in DESE Tiered Focus Monitoring process; encouraged and boosted caregiver survey participation
- Served on search committee for new Director of Special Education and solicited feedback from community
- Provided feedback and input on the district Student Opportunity Act Plan
- Advocacy regarding parent/guardian engagement throughout the development, implementation, and future use of the Multi-Tiered System of Supports

MTSS & Parent Engagement

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 SEPAC continues to stress parent/guardians be informed & engaged participants when students are accessing Tier 2 & Tier 3 supports



Regional Partnerships

- Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) presented Basic Rights workshops in March and April on post-secondary transition and understanding the IEP to area SEPACs with support from our districts
- Long-standing partnership among Acton-Boxborough, Maynard, Concord/Concord-Carlisle, Sudbury, and Lincoln-Sudbury SEPACs; forged connection with Littleton SEPAC this year
- Arranging local SEPAC coordination and leadership development meeting this summer
- Ongoing networking with SEPACs from around the state

State-Level Advocacy

- Stakeholder in the DESE IEP Improvement Project
- Ongoing feedback sessions as part of Regional Family Engagement Coalition regarding impact of the pandemic and implementation of the MA Family Engagement Framework
- SEPAC Chairs participated in DESE focus group to identify current gaps in and opportunities for resources and trainings related to family engagement and leadership
- ABRSD parent participation in development of new dyslexia guidelines

With Gratitude

The Acton-Boxborough SEPAC recognizes
Diane Baum

for years of dedication to our organization,
tireless advocacy around literacy instruction,
and on behalf of students with dyslexia

Thanks & Contact Information

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

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