

**Business Meeting Draft Minutes  
September 21, 2022**

**I. Call to Order**

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. AB SEPAC Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey and Kara Lafferty; Secretaries A. Cohen and Lynette Cassel; Director of Special Education Jennifer Truslow; Coordinators Rebecca Comiskey (Merriam & Conant), Rachael Fusco (ABRHS), Maureen Lin (RJ Grey), and Tammy Kucharski (Motor Chair); School Committee Liaison to the SEPAC Adam Klein; and eleven community members were in attendance.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Reading and approval of the June 15, 2022, meeting minutes was tabled.

**III. Organizational/Business Issues**

**A. Welcome & Introduce Special Education Coordinators**

The coordinators in attendance introduced themselves and their roles in the district.

**B. Updates from Monthly Meeting with Director of Special Education**

**1. SEPAC Outreach**

The SEPAC has a presence at all the back to school nights. Coordinators and principals were invited to join the mailing list. The SEPAC is reestablished as part of the joint PTO meetings. There is a meeting scheduled with the new Director of DEI to talk about 504 plans and other disability-related topics.

**2. Staffing & Transportation**

The district is meeting services despite being short staffed in some areas. There are still open positions. CASE continues to have a driver shortage.

**3. Access to IEP Progress Reports in PowerSchool**

Findings from the most recent parent/guardian feedback form indicated 50% of respondents did not know how to access IEP progress reports and other documents in PowerSchool. The number has decreased. Parents report difficulty using the system. The SEPAC Co-Chairs walked the Director through the process from the parent end. She will put in a "ticket" to see what can be done to make the process more intuitive. The SEPAC encourages parents who are experiencing barriers to request a PDF of their child's progress report instead.

PowerSchool's compatibility with the pending new Massachusetts IEP form is to be determined. There are some good elements in the new form and other changes school districts and advocates did not like. The state is taking feedback seriously. There will be professional development when the new document is released. The district is working with a consultant to help prepare.

The Director also shared information about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE's) Tiered Focus Monitoring (TFM) process. The district

provided a great deal of data last year to DESE. There will be on-site interviews this December to tour buildings and review more documents. There will be a parent survey with an invitation for families to be interviewed. The SEPAC officers are interviewed as part of the process. DESE is tracking special education compliance. All previous TFM (and older Coordinated Program Review–CPR) findings are published online.

C. Friends of AB SEPAC 501(c)(3) Status & Officer Recruitment

The Friends of organization is the financial arm of the SEPAC. The group raises funds to pay for social events, speakers, and workshops. The district would otherwise hold the SEPAC's funds and expenses would need to be approved by the School Committee. The 501(c)(3) cannot exist without an Executive Director, a President, and a Secretary. These roles must be filled ASAP. The Treasurer position is held by Erica Abbruzzese. Anyone interested should reach out to the SEPAC. The group meets quarterly or as need arises.

D. School Resource Office 2022 DESE Memorandum of Understanding - Discussion

The School Committee must vote each year on the School Resource Officer (SRO) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Acton Police Department. School Committee members wanted more data about the program before voting. The previous MOU is in place until they do so. No language can be taken out of the proposed MOU, but the document can be strengthened. The SEPAC shared the new MOU template from the state. There is information in the document that pertains to students with disabilities, particularly parents being asked if they would like SROs to have access to IEPs/504s. Behavior plans are notably not included in IEPs but may be attached to them. Members expressed concerns about sharing IEP information because SROs may not have training and know how to respond appropriately. They may not know how to honor student privacy or may treat students differently if they are known to have a disability. The SEPAC would like to know who administers training to the SROs and what is included. The ABRSD DEI Family Advisory had done substantial work around SROs and made a number of recommendations. These include a web site to explain the SRO role to families. A question was asked about the SRO program budget. District staff would be better to deal with deescalation. The Director clarified that the SROs are not involved in classroom crisis team calls. Students have safety and emergency plans as needed. People should email additional feedback to the SEPAC to bring to the School Committee policy subcommittee. The SEPAC's advisory role to the School Committee makes this our purview.

E. 2021-2022 SEPAC Parent/Guardian Survey Update

1. Respondent Summary

The survey was translated into French, Portuguese, and Chinese. There were 209 overall responses representing students with IEPs and 504s combined.

2. Social Emotional Findings - Discussion

Select findings were shared with the SEPAC regarding bullying fears, students having the appropriate social groupings, etc. The SEPAC is writing a detailed report to help establish recommendations to the School Committee pertaining to policy, procedure, and budget. There is a presentation on October 6th.

The Director shared some items on the 9/22 School Committee agenda. Jessica Minahan is consulting with the district around the pre-referral process. A member

asked how training is implemented and tracked. How are methods consistently applied after professional development? Sometimes practices are watered down or misused. Staff turnover has also made this difficult. Methods and approaches can be written into IEPs, but new staff may not have training.

#### **IV. New Business/Questions**

A parent new to the district wondered how to connect with other SEPAC families. They also wanted to know more about how students' needs are met at different schools. Several people offered their experiences and brainstormed ways to connect. Another member suggested more attention on how to find peer parents. The SEPAC may be able to designate a time for socializing during a meeting or have separate time. Someone suggested concrete plans, like a parents' night out. The Friends of 501(c)(3) can do more social events.

#### **V. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

#### **VI. Next Meeting**

Wednesday October 19, 2022, 7 p.m. Virtual Meeting Over Zoom

All AB SEPAC meetings are open to the public. We encourage parents of children with disabilities and others interested in special education to attend. Please check our website ([www.absepac.org](http://www.absepac.org)) for information regarding upcoming events.

*Respectfully submitted by Lynette Cassel, Secretary*