

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

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## Business Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, February 15, 2023, at 7 p.m. Virtual Meeting Over Zoom

*Followed by Friends of AB SEPAC 501(c)(3) Planning Meeting*

To attend: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88216396903>

To call in: +1 646 876 9923

Meeting ID: 882 1639 6903

### I. Call to Order

### II. Approval of Minutes

Review and approval of December 14, 2022, and January 11, 2023, meeting minutes

### III. Organization/Business Issues

#### A. Updates from the Director of Special Education

1. Staffing
2. Internal Special Education Program Review Findings
3. 2022-2023 State Tiered Focus Monitoring Report Findings

#### B. Pathways Program Status & Expansion to Junior High

#### C. District Mathematics Update at 1/26/23 School Committee Meeting

1. Subgroup MCAS & iReady Performance
2. General Ed Progress Monitoring
3. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Implementation

#### D. IEP/504 Accommodations & District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)

#### E. Transition Assessments for Students 14+

#### F. Other AB SEPAC Priorities for 2022-2023

1. Outreach & Community Building
  - a. SEPAC Introduction at 2/27/23 Early Childhood Program PTO Meeting
  - b. Brendan Mahan & ADHD Essentials 3/8/23 at 6:30 p.m.
  - c. Autism Listening Session March 2023 at Sargent Memorial Library

### 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 issues and subgroup trends identified via 2021-2022 parent/guardian survey
- G. Need for consistent K-12 executive functioning curriculum

### VI. Adjournment

### VII. Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 7 p.m. at RJ Grey Junior High Library



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

## **Business Meeting**

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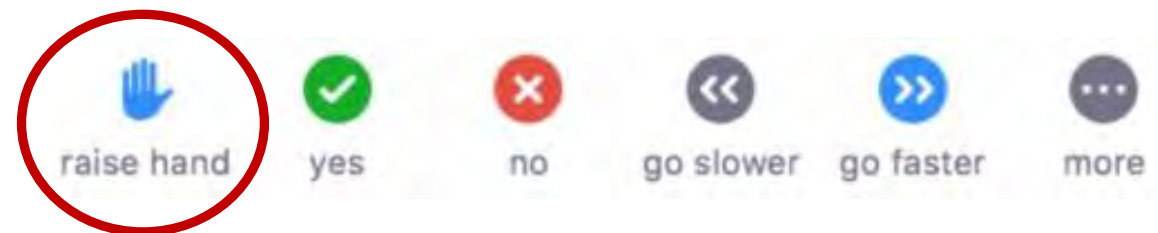
February 15, 2023

*Followed by a Friends of AB SEPAC  
501(c)(3) planning meeting*

# I. Call to Order

## Online Meeting Participation

- SEPAC meetings are public
- 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 December 14, 2022, and January 11, 2023, meeting minutes (draft available at [absepac.org](http://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. Pathways Program Status & Expansion to Junior High
- C. District Mathematics Update at 1/26/23 School Committee Meeting
- D. IEP/504 Accommodations & District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)
- E. Transition Assessments for Students 14+
- F. Other AB SEPAC Priorities for 2022-2023

# A. Updates from the Director of Special Education



- Staffing
  - Job listings at [abschools.org](https://abschools.org) include 1.0 BCBA, .6 SLP, special educators, ABA support, & paraprofessionals
- Internal Special Education Program Review Findings
  - Looked at use of paraprofessionals and administrative structure
- 2022-2023 State Tiered Focus Monitoring Review Findings

## B. Pathways Program Status & Expansion to Junior High

- Program created in 2016-2017 for cohort aging out of the Early Childhood ABA-based program for students who would have otherwise been headed Out of District
- Cohort now aging into the junior high, necessitating program expansion

### Pathways I, II (Blanchard Elementary)

Pathways I and II are self-contained resource programs with targeted opportunities for inclusion designed to support students who have delays in social interactions, activities of daily living (ADLs), and pragmatic language and cognitive skills. Children in our Pathways program also typically exhibit difficulty following large group directions and routines, and require a moderate to high level of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) support and discrete trial training in small group/individual settings to preview, review and reinforce academic and social skills. Speech and language services are integrated within the program, and we provide extensive support to families through daily communication and monthly clinics in order to generalize and carry over skills from school to the home environment.

## C. District Mathematics Update at 1/26/23 School Committee Meeting

- Call for better, consistent general education progress reporting
- Discrepancies about notification regarding Instructional Support Team involvement, MTSS tiers, specialist interventions
- School Committee policies IK and IKAB address progress reporting; no procedures in place
- iReady and other assessment results are to be provided upon request
  - Diagnostic & Family reports available

# Policy File: IK (Reporting Student Progress)

## **IK states:**

*A sharing of information among parent, teacher, and student is essential. ...*

*The Committee supports staff efforts to find better ways to measure and report student progress. It will require that:*

- 1. Parents/guardians are informed regularly of the progress their children are making in school.*
- 2. Parents/guardians will be alerted and conferred with on a timely basis when a child's performance ... becomes unsatisfactory or shows marked or sudden deterioration.*

*...*

- 4. When no grades are given but the student is evaluated informally in terms of his/her own progress, the school staff will also provide a realistic appraisal of the student's progress.*

# IKAB (Student Progress Reports to Parents/Guardians)

## **IKAB states:**

*The School Committee recognizes the school's obligation to give regular reports of a student's progress. The School Committee further recognizes that these reports are a vital form of communication between the schools and parents. The School Committee also believes that all progress reports must be based upon full information, accurately and honestly reported ... .*

*Verbal or written reports depicting the student's progress will be issued regularly following an evaluation [not a screening--] by the appropriate teacher, teachers, or other professional personnel.*

*In addition to the regular reports, parents will be notified when a student's performance requires special attention.*

# MTSS & Family Engagement



From the MTSS Blueprint for MA:

*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.*

## Fall 2022 iReady Assessment: Mathematics

### Number of Students Assessed: 2,769

Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Two Grade Levels Below	#	11	45	24	15	21	25	10	15	166
	%	.4%	1.6%	.9%	.5	.8%	.9%	.4%	.5%	6%
Three or More Grade Levels Below	#			19	28	18	33	21	42	161
	%			.7%	1.0%	.7%	1.2%	.8%	1.5%	5.9%

**Students**  
**N= 327**  
**~11.9%**

# 2-3+ Years Behind in Math By Subgroup

Of 327 students assessed that were 2,3 or more grades below	#	%		Of the total student group population assessed	#	%
Multilingual	84	26%		Multilingual	165	51%
Special Education	166	51%		Special Education	407	41%
Economically Disadvantaged	125	38%		Economically Disadvantaged	299	42%
Asian	38	12%		Asian	896	3.6%
Black	40	12%		Black	125	32%
Two or More Races	23	7%		Two or More Races	170	14%
White	225	69%		White	1,572	14%
Hispanic	100	31%		Hispanic	220	45%

## D. IEP/504 Accommodations & DCAP

- The [District Curriculum Accommodation Plan](#) (DCAP) lists general accommodations available to all students; an ICAP is an Individual Curriculum Accommodation Plan based on the DCAP
- Some families with new diagnoses report being offered an ICAP instead of a 504 Plan for disability-related accommodations
- Others have shared teachers are limiting IEP and 504 accommodations to those in the DCAP
- Individual needs determine what's in the 504/IEP, not the form or format
- Concerns about how information is being conveyed to counseling staff overseeing the 504s, teachers, and families; protecting students' rights

# Document Everything



Lisa Lightner  
@dontiepalone



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



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."*

## E. Transition Assessments for Students 14+

- Transition assessments need to be part of the IEP process for all students 14+ regardless of disability type
- This should happen as early as possible; DO NOT WAIT UNTIL 11<sup>th</sup> GRADE
- Should be a team-driven, individualized process, including the student
- Results inform transition goals, planning, and services
- Transition assessments may include formal and informal assessments to look at daily living skills, vocational skills/employability, interests ...

# F. Other AB SEPAC Priorities for 2022-2023

1. Outreach & Community Building
  - a. SEPAC introduction at 2/27/23  
Carol Huebner Early Childhood  
Program PTO meeting
  - b. Free online workshop with Brendan  
Mahan & ADHD Essentials 3/8/23  
at 6:30 p.m.
  - c. Autism listening session March 2023  
at Sargent Memorial Library in  
Boxborough; online feedback form  
to be published



## IV. New Business

Other topics on  
people's minds



# Town Elections for School Committee Members

## ACTON

- Three 3-year terms up for election
- Seats currently held by Amy Krishnamurthy, Kyra Wilson Cook, and Yebin Wang
- Last date to obtain papers is **March 3** with a filing deadline of **March 7**; Acton town election is April 25

## BOXBOROUGH

- Two 3-year terms up for election
- Seats held by Evelyn Abayaah-Issah and Tessa McKinley
- Last date to obtain papers is **March 24** with a filing deadline of **March 28**; Boxborough town election is May 16

*Per our bylaws, the AB SEPAC does not campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office*

# 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 issues identified via 2021-2022 parent/guardian survey
- 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 March 15, 2023, 7 p.m. RJ Grey Junior High Library**  
**Meeting Information Available @absepac.org**

# Thanks & Contact Information

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

absepac.org  
 @absepac  
abrsdsepac@gmail.com

# Friends of AB SEPAC 501(c)(3) Info & Planning

- [Interim] Executive Director, President, and Secretary positions need to be filled, new dues voted upon; procedures to follow per [bylaws](#)
  - Previous dues were set at \$10 to have voting membership
  - Pending expenses and reimbursements
  - Future planning ...
- \* If organization dissolves, assets are to be distributed to the ABRSD and School Committee will vote on future SEPAC financial requests and spending

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

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## Business Meeting Draft Minutes December 14, 2022

### I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. AB SEPAC Co-Chairs Amanda Bailey, Kara Lafferty, and Abe Gutierrez; Secretary Lynette Cassel; Director of Special Education Jennifer Truslow; and nine community members were present. Corey Steinman and Charles Agong from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Office of Public School Monitoring were also in attendance.

### II. Approval of Minutes

Reading and approval of the October 19, 2022, meeting minutes was tabled.

### III. Organizational/Business Issues

#### A. Department of Elementary & Secondary Education Office of Public School Monitoring Presentation RE: Tiered Focus Monitoring Process

Corey Steinman and Charles Agong from DESE showed a brief video about the Tiered Focus Monitoring process and answered questions. The state is looking for specific indicators to report. Parents/guardians of students with IEPs will be sent a survey. Anyone is welcome to schedule an interview. Information was also shared via the SEPAC newsletter and from the special education department.

#### B. Updates from Monthly Meeting With Director of Special Education

##### 1. Staffing

A special educator at Conant left and there is another on medical leave. The district is currently interviewing subs and teachers for Connections. Paraprofessionals have left across the district for other opportunities. The district is almost fully staffed.

##### 2. MCAS Performance for Students With Disabilities

The Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning will present to the School Committee next month about MCAS. There are questions about how subgroup data is being used in conjunction with iReady scores. Despite some growth, there is still a significant performance gap for Students With Disabilities.

The district has moved from the William James INTERFACE Referral service to Cartwheel. School counselors can make Cartwheel referrals. Students are matched within five days. There are questions about how to make support available to younger students and their caregivers. Cartwheel staff will be providing parent workshops. The United Way is surveying community mental health needs.

#### C. CASE Transportation Update

Co-Chair Abe Gutierrez shared about a meeting with the head of CASE transportation, Martin Finnegan, and the Director of Special Education. They discussed driver training, video monitoring, and GPS monitoring. Most drivers have been there for 7-15 years. There are ongoing shortages with four on-call drivers who may not be familiar with individual students. Parents/guardians should document and address grievances (ideally with specific date and time) in an email to [mfinnegan@casecollaborative.org](mailto:mfinnegan@casecollaborative.org).

#### D. Private Summer Program Documentation Requests

Private summer camp and therapeutic programs often request supporting documents. Schools receive these requests for students with and without disabilities. Parents asked about a possible change in practice that special ed staff would no longer provide anything more than IEPs and IEP progress reports in response to these requests. The Director of Special Education shared that some programs were sending requests for specific information that was so extensive it was not manageable. They are exploring how to meet this need. The SEPAC clarified that Extended School Year summer programming is to prevent regression, not to build additional skills.

#### E. AB SEPAC Priorities for 2022-2023

##### 1. Outreach & Community Building

The SEPAC has been asked for input regarding the Blanchard playground rebuild. There will be a SEPAC presentation to the McCarthy-Towne PTO on the continuum of support for students on January 10th. The first SEPAC Coffee & Conversation had five participants. More will be scheduled.

##### 2. Participate in State Tiered Focus Monitoring Process

The SEPAC officers will be interviewed in the coming weeks.

##### 3. Basic Rights: Transition Planning Workshop 6:30-8:30 p.m. January 9, 2023

#### IV. **New Business**

Co-Chair Kara Lafferty is representing the SEPAC in the working group developing the district's new welcome center. They are touring other districts to see their centers and outlining what it should look like. Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Jen Faber has been open to conversations with the SEPAC. She is developing one-pagers for staff to help learn about different topics. The SEPAC will partner on information about ableism. The Sargent Memorial Library is looking for resources to help make their space more accessible. Ideas are welcome.

#### V. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

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

Wednesday, January 11, 2023 at 7 p.m. via 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 visit our website ([www.absepac.org](http://www.absepac.org)) for information regarding upcoming events.

*Respectfully submitted by Lynette Cassel, Secretary*

DRAFT