

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

Business Meeting 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.

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) for information regarding upcoming events.

Respectfully submitted by Lynette Cassel, Secretary