



Acton-Boxborough Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 13, 2010

MEETING MINUTES

- I. Call to Order – Nancy Sherburne called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm. The following Board members attended the meeting: Bill Guthlein, Nancy Sherburne, Heather Stouch, and Valerie Ryan. Also in attendance were School Committee members Mike Coppolino, Xuan Kong and Pupil Services representative Matt Kidder.
- II. Approval of Minutes
The September 21, 2010 minutes were reviewed and a motion was made to approve the minutes as written. That motion was seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved with the exception of one abstention.
- III. Organizational/Business Issues
 - A. Open Meeting Law Certification – Nancy let us know that she needs a signed certification form back from each officer at their earliest convenience.
 - B. Successful 1st Movie Night – Domino’s generously donated pizzas; enough donations were collected to cover the cost of the room rental fee; the space was well suited for the event and families enjoyed themselves.
 - C. Treasurer’s Report - Nancy read the Treasurer’s report provided by Sasha Stavsky. Recent account activity included withdrawing money to cover the Movie Night room rental fee, depositing money from family donations collected that evening and depositing a donation from Intel to match Karl Brace’s volunteer hours as the PAC web master. The AB SpEd PAC’s account balance is currently \$2017.78. Mike recommended that the PAC check with the new finance director, Don Aicardi, prior to closing the PAC account and moving existing PAC funds into the new Friends of AB SpEd PAC account at Middlesex Savings Bank.
 - D. School Committee/Pupil Services Updates:
 - i. The School Committee Budget Outlook appears challenging – the schools do not anticipate new federal funds via ARRA in the coming year; state funding is unpredictable; the upcoming elections are uncertain and a ballot question that could cut taxes 3% would result in a significant reduction in state funds; also it is projected that there will be a 10% cut in Chapter 70 funds to districts next year.
 - ii. MCAS – Nancy and Bill shared Bill’s preliminary MCAS analysis for R.J. Grey Jr. High and McCarthy-Towne schools with the

- School Committee at the last meeting; district staff also made presentations – Deb Bookis gave an MCAS presentation and Liza Huber gave a Special Education MCAS presentation; R.J. Grey is in corrective action status; Merriam did not make AYP; When asked who was responsible for ensuring that R. J. Grey makes AYP for the special education subgroup this year, Dr. Mills said he and Craig Hardimon would take responsibility; Mike noted that Bill’s report was outstanding; Bill asked how the School Committee and district were planning to use SGP scores and a brief discussion regarding the possible uses of SGP ensued. The following points were made: SGP data could be useful in assessing individual teacher performance over time, comparing teacher performance with peers, and looking at special educator effectiveness. It was noted that using SGP in this fashion would probably require contract negotiation with the teachers unions.
- iii. CPR Review of APS and AB Districts – the DESE review, which is held every 6 years to audit districts’ adherence to state and federal regulations is currently being conducted at Acton-Boxborough and Acton Public Schools. Bill and Nancy were invited to interview with the DESE review team for APS and AB as current PAC Chairs.
 - iv. Bullying Policy Status – Liza gave an update at the School Committee meeting - the legal deadline for the district to have a policy on the books is December 31st; the stated goal was to bring a proposed policy to the November School Committee meeting for a first read, followed by a planned second/final reading in December.
- E. Parent Handbook Status – Heather Stouch is now chairing a new sub-committee to bring the project to completion; 5 people are currently working on different sections of the handbook; a draft version of the handbook is targeted for the end of the year; Matt suggested that Pupil Services take a look at the document before it was released and it was agreed that this was a good idea; when complete, the initial release of the handbook will be distributed to families in hard copy with future updates to be made electronically on the AB SpEd PAC’s website and hopefully the District’s website as well.
- F. MCAS Analysis Topic – Bill gave an update; he’s creating an extensive MCAS database for all district schools as well as certain peer school districts; he plans to complete this and create a Power Point presentation by December 1st; R.J. Grey and McCarthy-Towne have issues with both regular and special education students – At R. J. Grey in 2009 students experienced a significant drop in math SGP scores, in 2010 there was a 20 point drop in English SGP; while all students experienced this growth slump the drop in special education student performance was much more dramatic; this is unusual since the state SGP average in 6th and 8th grade is trending upwards; for example comparable districts such as Lexington and

Westford show SpEd students growing in terms of SGP from 6th to 8th grade; Bill will do a parent MCAS presentation for AB SpEd PAC on December 1st.

- G. PAC Follow-up Survey – the PAC will be creating a follow-up to our 2008 PAC Parent survey; we’re planning on sending out a subset of the questions included in our 2008 survey; the first Survey sub-committee meeting is scheduled for next week.
 - H. Extended Year Summer Programming – Nancy recommended that one of the Board members be a point person for this issue; results from the autism focus groups showed that families strongly desire an integrated extended year program; Liza is working with Erin Betez of Community Education to enhance the summer offerings; Liza’s proposed model would include morning academic programming and afternoon integrated social activities to meet students’ academic as well as social needs.
 - I. Upcoming Events – October 20th Basic Rights presentation by the Federation for Children with Special Needs; October 29th PAC-Pupil Services Parent Workshop; December 1st Bill’s MCAS presentation.
 - J. Other – Xuan asked about technology and IEP meetings – Nancy shared that Liza is piloting a program with special educators over the first half of the 2010 school year in which some percentage of each educator’s IEP generation will be accomplished using draft IEPs; Liza has met with and educated staff regarding this new approach and the special educators will gather to provide feedback on their experiences in January. Nancy inquired about having a more visible link for the PAC on the district’s website, Mike suggested she contact the new technology director to request a link.
- IV. New Business - Bill mentioned a not for profit project at NECC. NECC is developing a software product for school districts that will facilitate ABA data management that is potentially compatible with district resources; it will allow for trainers/aides to implement data without needing extra training; it was suggested that the idea be brought to Liza.
- V. Adjournment – A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Next Meeting – AB SpEd PAC Board Meeting December 15 at 7:00 pm in the Junior High Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Ryan, Secretary.