

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

Business Meeting Minutes June 13, 2018

I. Call to Order

Amanda Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. AB SEPAC Chair Amanda Bailey, Past PAC Chair Bill Guthlein, Secretary Melissa Brown, Director of Special Education Pam Smith, Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee members Tessa McKinley and Angie Tso, and eight other community members were present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from May 16, 2018, were reviewed. A clarification regarding the role of reading specialists and a typo were highlighted for revision. A motion was made and seconded to approve the meeting minutes as revised. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Organizational/Business Issues

A. Monthly Meeting with Student Services

The district will continue to support Plus-level membership with MassPAC for the SEPAC, which allows for a Basic Rights workshop presented by someone from the Federation for Children with Special Needs and an additional workshop at no cost. Student Services will follow up regarding which languages besides English would be most beneficial for any potential additional Basic Rights workshops.

Progress reports will be available online via PowerSchool for those with accepted IEPs. Those without accepted IEPs will receive progress reports via mail. Parents/guardians are encouraged to check the portal by June 27 to ensure their student's report has been posted. Progress reports will remain available on PowerSchool for future reference. Families are again encouraged to ensure IEPs typed into and issued via the new PowerSchool Special Education software retain all the information from the original IEPs.

Professional development opportunities for staff were discussed. The SEPAC continues to emphasize the need for instruction on teaching executive functioning skills. Currently, there is consistent districtwide curriculum for executive functioning. The SEPAC notes students need to be taught executive functioning skills, not just provided accommodations. Individuals offered success with specific approaches ("get ready/do/done") that have proven beneficial to students without IEPs as well. Sarah Ward's materials remain available on the district website. Processing speed also needs emphasis, with the book My Bright Kid Can't Keep Up offered as a resource.

Parents are advised that they can ask for a meeting with the principal and/or special educator to address any concerns they have regarding the implementation of an IEP, which is a binding legal document. Parents are additionally advised that Grid A can be utilized for consultations with parents, educators, specialists, and outside providers.

B. Seek Nominations & Elect Officers for 2018-2019 School Year

The duties of the open positions were reviewed (see by-laws for details). The Chair noted that officers represent all students in the district and have previously been asked to step

down if they enter litigation with the district. The following slate of officers and Executive Board members were nominated: Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver for Co-Chair, Melissa Brown for Secretary, Bill Guthlein for Past PAC Chair, and Blossom Davies for Standing Committee Chair for Parent Support. A motion was made and seconded to approve and elect the slate. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Review & Revise Open Issues

Open issues on meeting agendas were reviewed to gauge continued relevance. Tracking MCAS results for students with disabilities, increasing opportunities for meaningful inclusion across multiple domains, ensuring students are taught executive functioning skills, and monitoring ESY programming were deemed ongoing needs. Community members were also interested in helping staff understand the role of outside consultants as well as ensuring general educators are reviewing IEPs and receiving professional development in special education. Educators are required to review IEPs of students in their classrooms; PowerSchool Special Education has an electronic timestamp to ensure this is happening. Parents are encouraged to follow the communication map if they have concerns that an IEP is not being implemented as written. The SEPAC will follow up with families to track improvement with communication issues.

The SEPAC will also follow up on the transition to PowerSchool and whether drafting portions of IEPs prior to team meetings is allowing parents/guardians the opportunity for input in IEP development at team meetings. Parents/guardians are full team members and should have input into the development of goals and benchmarks.

D. Goals and Priorities

The SEPAC goals and priorities for next year were finalized, including:

1. Continuing to improve SEPAC family outreach & engagement with emphasis on reaching culturally diverse families
2. Specific Learning Disabilities including dyslexia – focus group, workshop(s)
3. Methods for improving team communication for families – mini survey
4. MCAS analysis for Students with Disabilities
5. Website and Special Education Handbook revisions
6. Presentations about Basic Rights, inclusion & friendships, bullying & the IEP

Community members committed to bringing refreshments to future meetings.

IV. New Business

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

VI. NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, September 5, 2018, at 7:30 p.m. in the RJ Grey Junior High Library

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

Respectfully submitted by Melissa Brown, Secretary