

# Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpEdPAC)



Presentation to Boston School Committee and  
Superintendent Dr. Brenda Cassellius

May 26, 2021



# Role of Boston SpEdPAC

## SpEdPAC | MA General Law Title XII, Chapter 71B, Section 3

- Advising the District on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities
- Meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the district's special education programs
  - Weekly with Assistant Superintendent Ethan d'Ablemont Burnes
  - Quarterly with Superintendent Cassellius
- Connecting families with external resources

# Boston SpEdPAC Represent

- 10,441 students on Individualized Education Programs(IEP)\*
  - 3,473 special education students who are also English Language Learners (ELL)\*
- 1,313 students on 504 plans\*
- 268 service only students^
- 139 students with Education Surrogates\*\*

\*Source: MA DESE, October 2020. Includes students in out of district placements and excludes students enrolled in Horace Mann Charter Schools.

^Source: Aspen, October 2020. Includes early childhood students and students enrolled at private/parochial schools with IEPs

\*\* Source: EdPlan May 2021. Includes any student with IEP eligibility who has a parent contact defined as "Educational Surrogate Parent" or "Special Education Surrogate Parent"

# 2020-2021 SpEdPAC Goals for OSE

- Parent Choice, Options, Parent Voice
- Expand Inclusion & Inclusionary opportunities
- Increase Coordinators of Special Education (COSE) training
- Broaden the mindset and culture of SpEd in BPS
- Regular BPS SpEd bulletins to all families
- SpEdPAC, CPC & DELAC contact information shared at IEP meetings
- Program descriptions for families & COSE publicly available online
- BPS OSE Policy Handbook publicly available online

# 2020-2021 OSE Progress Report: Goals Achieved

- Building rapport with SpEdPAC Executive Board
- Return, Recover, Reimage, Joint Special Education Task Force
- Joint BPS/BTU/Parent Task Force for reopening schools for high in person priority students (HIPP)
- Initiated SpEd specific communication to families
- English Learner Student w/ Disabilities (ELSWD) IEP checklist for access to heritage language for academics

# 2020-2021 OSE Progress Report: Unmet Goals

- Publishing SpEd Family Handbook
- Publishing SpEd Policies Handbook
- Fix communication gaps to service only students, out of district parents, education surrogates | Aspen, EdPlan
- Covid Compensatory Services meetings | 30% complete
- Student Assessments completed within 45 days
- Expansion of SpEd seats for 3 year old early learners

# Areas for Improvement and Growth

- Accountability
- Communication & Transparency
- Follow-through
- Family Voice at Initiation
- SpEd culture in BPS

# SpEdPAC Balance and Lessons Learned

- Amicus Curiae for SpEd and HIPP Families (BTU v BPS)
- Reopening Task Force (BTU, BPS)
- English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force
- SC Goals and Guardrails/Value





# SpEdPAC's Platforms for Outreach



bostonspedpac411@gmail.com (1,000 on email listserv)



[www.bostonspedpac.org](http://www.bostonspedpac.org)



617.297.7335



@BostonSPEDPAC (1,132 followers; 300% monthly Post Reach growth)



**YouTube** @BostonSpedPac  
(98 Subscribers)



Instagram

@boston\_spedpac  
(141 followers)



@BostonSpedPac  
(914 followers)

# SpEdPAC's Outreach to Families

- Pre-Pandemic in-person meetings ~50 attendees, 1 interpreter
- Zoom opened access and advocacy
  - Average 207 participants, with 300+ participants
  - 11 languages + American Sign Language (ASL)
  - SpEdPAC volunteers run Zoom | no tech support

# 2022-2027 SpEdPAC Goals for OSE

- Continued Growth and Outreach with OSE support
- Clear Definitions and Policy Roadmap for:
  - “Needs Based” vs Weighted Student Funding
  - Inclusion and Inclusive programming
  - Day School designation as strength vs stigma
- ESSR funding accountability to SpEd
- School Committee Sponsored Special Education Task Force
- OSE as an Executive Cabinet Position