

# **Lexington SEPAC Transition Subcommittee Purpose Statement and Action Plan**

Presented to the Transition Subcommittee by: Holly Boker & Elaine Gabovitch

Date: January 16, 2012

## **Purpose:**

Transition planning for students with special education needs charts the route to adulthood and should begin early, at least by age 14, and possibly earlier. Transition should be a purposeful, organized and outcome-oriented process designed to help students move from school to employment or post secondary education, building the bridge to an independent enriching adult life.<sup>1</sup> This critically important time of life has been receiving increased attention in recent years in Massachusetts and nationally from grassroots advocacy groups, non-profit disability organizations and university centers of excellence, state and federal agencies, as well as across a wide array of key professions, such as legislators and policy makers.

Since 2005, public schools have been mandated to engage in transition planning for students in special education. In Lexington Public Schools (LPS), identification of students' transition-related needs and parents' satisfaction with the school's approach to the transition process have not yet been formally assessed. The Lexington Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), in its role of "advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; ...and [participating] in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs,"<sup>2</sup> is well suited to gather and report to LPS on local student needs and family satisfaction related to transition. Doing so would help set a baseline for measuring student and program success and for future planning purposes. Beyond Lexington, state and national legislation are currently being enacted to address gaps in services and supports for transition age youth and young adults on both sides of the bridge to transition. Both LPS and the Lexington SEPAC could benefit by learning the outcomes of such pending and existing legislation. Additionally, best practices in transition services are still in their infancy; nonetheless, promising new practices are emerging rapidly, making the time right to educate families, educators, government agencies, health care providers, and the whole range of transition professionals in these exciting new options for transition age youth and their families.

To address transition-related needs for Lexington students and their families, a new Lexington SEPAC Transition Subcommittee is being formed that will meet frequently on a short term basis in early 2012 to research and report to Lexington Public Schools on student/family needs and satisfaction with the transition process, current and existing transition legislation, and known best transition practices. Three small work groups of subcommittee members will split up the various activities to meet these goals. The subcommittee will meet every other week from January 16 through March 26 on dates to be determined by subcommittee members in the first meeting on January 16, 2012.

The subcommittee will prepare a concise report with its research findings and present it to LPS Director of Student Services Linda Chase and SEPAC officers, by the April 9, 2012. It will present highlights of its findings to the entire SEPAC at the monthly meeting on May 3, 2012.

## **Goals & Objectives:**

1. Conduct a needs assessment/satisfaction survey of Lexington parents of transition age youth ages 14-22 who receive special education services
2. Research current state and federal transition bills and recently-enacted legislation related to transition age issues
3. Research existing and emerging best practices for transition to adulthood locally and nationally
4. Produce a report for LPS's and Lexington SEPAC's planning purposes that will inform special and general education staff training needs, school and district policy needs, and ongoing transition programming needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Autism, Transition Subcommittee, August 4, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 71 B (Section 3) – Massachusetts special education law, also known as Chapter 766.

## Transition Subcommittee Action Plan:

<i>Project Phase</i>	<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Start</i>	<i>End</i>
Initiate	Have SEPAC vote on transition subcommittee	PAC Chairs	12/1/11	Complete
	Meet with L. Chase & SEPAC leadership to outline subcommittee goals & action plans	H. Boker E. Gabovitch	1/5/12	Complete
	Invite parents to join subcommittee via discussion group posting	H. Boker	1/6/12	Complete
Plan	Hold first meeting of interested PAC members to: split into 3 workgroups, give assignments, set goals for each assignment	H. Boker E. Gabovitch	1/16/12	Complete
Research	Goal 1: Develop needs/satisfaction survey: Research existing survey tools & questionnaires, write questions, circulate draft for edits, set up survey online	E. Gabovitch & Survey Workgroup	1/16/12	3/1/12
	Goal 1: Survey: Lexington parents fill out survey	E. Gabovitch & Survey Workgroup	3/1/12	3/9/12
	Goal 2: Identify & amass current and recently passed (5 years) MA and federal transition laws	TBD & Legal Workgroup	1/16/12	TBD
	Goal 3: Research best transition practices: Request LPS district policy on transition practice, locate model practices & programs in and outside of MA	H. Boker & Best Practice Workgroup	1/16/12	TBD
Analyze	Goal 1: Survey: Review results and analyze findings	E. Gabovitch & Survey Workgroup	3/9/12	3/12/12
	Goal 2: Legal: Write an annotated reference of bills and laws	TBD & Legal Workgroup	TBD	TBD
	Goal 3: Best Practices: Write up annotated reference of best practices and related programs	H. Boker & Best Practice Workgroup	TBD	TBD
Compile	Write and edit all findings into one report with executive summary and full report on findings	E. Gabovitch H. Boker Subcommittee members TBD	3/12/12	3/26/12
	Edit report	E. Gabovitch H. Boker Subcommittee members TBD	3/26/12	4/6/12
Report	Distribute report to LPS & LexSEPAC	E. Gabovitch H. Boker Subcommittee members TBD	4/9/12	4/9/12
	Present findings to LexSEPAC	E. Gabovitch H. Boker Subcommittee members TBD	5/3/12	5/3/12