Note to our readers: As Spring approaches, we are looking ahead to many exciting upcoming events sponsored by our SEPAC! We hope to see you there!

We will be sending out our biennial SEPAC survey to parents of children on an IEP or 504 Plan in late March. We are looking forward to gathering your responses and examining them in relation to results from two years ago. Though this confidential survey is affiliated with the SEPAC (not the school district), overall results will be presented at a future school committee meeting (date to be announced).

As always, please feel free to contact us with any comments or questions at concordsepac@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.
The words and symbols we use when speaking about those with differences are impactful. In relatively recent years, a greater understanding and acceptance of neurobiological differences has emerged, along with a broader understanding of neurodiversity and individual differences.

A recent study* examined whether a popular symbol of autism awareness – a puzzle piece – may have negative implications. In general, a puzzle piece represents something that is missing or incomplete. Despite this negative association, many organizations continue to employ this symbol to represent autism and people on the autism spectrum. This study examined people’s explicit (with conscious awareness) and implicit (without conscious awareness) associations with an autism logo puzzle piece as well as generic puzzle pieces and found that people associated puzzle pieces in general with “incompleteness, imperfection, and oddity.”

As we work towards inclusion and acceptance of all people, this research demonstrates that the words and symbols we use matter! The researchers call on organizations and people to modify how autism is represented. How can we move towards inclusion and acceptance while perpetuating negativity?


Did you know?

If your child experiences a substantial regression in skills during school breaks, he/she may be eligible for Extended School Year services.

Is there a special teacher, staff member or administrator who has made a positive impact on your child’s life?

We are delighted to announce the launch of the second annual SEPAC Appreciation Awards! The Appreciation Awards were introduced last year and we received positive feedback from the 28 recipients.

We are inviting parents and guardians with children on an IEP or 504 plan to nominate one special person in the public schools who has made a difference to your family this year. The Appreciation Award winners will be honored at a School Committee meeting in April (details to be announced).

Please visit concordsepac.org to nominate your special person! Nominations will open on Monday February 26th and close on Friday March 16th.
Special Education Transition: Guidance, Preparation, and Development

Please join us for a panel presentation hosted by Heather Mahoney, Concord-Carlisle Regional School District Transition Specialist in collaboration with the Concord Public Schools and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District Special Education Parent Advisory Council

- Would you like to learn about opportunities for your child to participate fully and meaningfully in the community?
- Do you know the types of skill training and resources available during and after High School?
- Need to know who can help provide access to services and supports to meet mental health needs?
- Do you want to learn about Social Security income and benefits for students in transition from school to adult life?

If you answer 'yes' to any of these questions, please join us for an evening of networking, learning and discussions about services available to help guide and prepare individuals for the transition to adulthood. The event is open to parents, guardians, students, educators and employers and is intended for ages 14-22 and beyond although all are welcome.

Come and hear from the following agencies and organizations:
- Boston Center for Independent Living
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
- Student Benefits Counselor
- Department of Developmental Services
- The Federation of Children with Special Needs
- The Department of Mental Health
- Concord-Carlisle High School Transition Specialist
- Concord and Concord-Carlisle SEPAC

**When:** Tuesday, March 27, 2018 from 6:00 - 8:30 pm (refreshments 5:30 pm)
**Where:** Concord-Carlisle High School Learning Commons (inside main entrance), 500 Walden Street, Concord MA

For planning purposes please RSVP via Eventbrite at our website concordsepac.org