Concord Public Schools & Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

Because every student deserves an extraordinary education

www.concordsepac.org
2018-2019 Annual Report Overview

*Presented by Co-Presidents Shaina Brito & Carol Yelle*

- Who We Are
- Community Engagement and Outreach
- District Administration and Joint School Committee Collaboration
- Looking Ahead
SEPAC Mission Statement and Goals

• Provide education, information and community to caregivers and the broader community on special education issues and services

• Establish better understanding of, respect for, and support of special education

• Work with the CPS and CCRSD to ensure student needs are met under applicable laws including Massachusetts Special Education Regulations 603 CMR 28.07(4)
SEPAC Volunteer Board 2018-2019

**Board Members**
- Carol Yelle, Co-President
- Shaina Brito, Co-President
- Sarah Nichol, Secretary
- Casey Atkins, Membership Chair
- Wendy Frohlich, Events Chair
- Helen McKinlay, Publicity Chair
- Becky Robichaud, Technology Chair

**School Liaisons**
- Casey Atkins, Concord Integrated Preschool
- Megan Carroll, Alcott School
- Betsy Olsson-Mackowski, Thoreau School
- Carolyn Seery Blackham, ILP (Thoreau School)
- Aimee Christian, Willard School
- Tressa Jordan, Concord Middle School
- Carol Yelle, Concord-Carlisle HS
- Jessica HSU, Pathways (CCHS)
- Joanne Jensen, Out of District
Community Engagement and Outreach

Events:

• Free events build community among SEPAC members and bring awareness and information to the greater community

• Bimonthly board meetings with detailed minutes recorded and published by SEPAC Secretary, Sarah Nichol

• Well attended workshops and talks under the leadership of events chair, Wendy Frohlich:
  • SEPAC Meet and Greet Session for Parents and Caregivers: September 2018
  • Opportunity to Meet the Special Education Director and Superintendent: October 2018
  • Information and Resources through AANE (Asperger / Autism Network) Presented by Debbie Curtiss: November 2018
  • Event for Parents with Special Education Director and Out of District Coordinator: November 2018
Community Engagement and Outreach

**Events Continued:**

- Basic Rights in Special Education presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs: December 2018
  - Co-Hosted with AB, Maynard and Sudbury SEPACs
- ADHD & Dyslexia: Understanding, identifying and supporting your children. Presented by Dr. Roberto Olivardia: February 2019
- SEPAC Parent Social: April 2019
- MCAS Access and Achievement presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs: May 14th 2019
  - Co-hosted with AB SEPAC
- Parent/Caregiver Meet-ups for Out of District (OOD) Families
  - Held quarterly throughout the year
Community Engagement and Outreach

*Publicity and Communication:*

• Event promotion & messaging led by Helen McKinlay
• Consistent SEPAC message & differentiated publicity
  • Grateful for assistance from Special Education Office and PTGs in distribution of communication
• Relationship building with building administrators, Center for Parents and Teachers (CPT) and the Parent Teacher Groups (PTGs) at all schools
  • Co-hosted event on anxiety with the CPT
• Improved outreach in the community and overall event attendance
  • Over 60 attendees at a talk on dyslexia and ADH
• Connection and exchange of ideas and support with other area SEPACs
  • Co-hosted Basic Rights Workshop and MCAS Workshop (upcoming) with local SEPACS
Community Engagement and Outreach

Technology and Social Media:

• Technology Chair, Rebecca Robichaud maintains SEPAC’s media presence across multiple platforms
  • Articles and resources of interest to SEPAC and the larger community in Concord and Carlisle and surrounding towns
  • SEPAC events and special education updates
  • 323 followers on SEPAC FB Page
Community Engagement and Outreach

Newsletter:

• High interest digital newsletter distributed monthly by SEPAC through the office of Special Education to caregivers of students in special education
  • 7 Issues this year each receiving ~300 views
  • Issues highlight a relevant special education topic with resources area events
  • Contact us (concordsepac@gmail.com) to be added to the distribution list
Community Engagement and Outreach

School Connection:

• SEPAC Liaisons for every school are organized by Membership Chair, Casey Atkins

• Liaisons attend Back to School Nights, provide information about SEPAC and act as a local contact

• We are grateful for the appointment of Megan Carroll, Alcott School liaison in the principal search committee and aim to continue this practice for liaisons in the future

• Joanne Jensen, Out of District (OOD) Liaison authored a survey of OOD families to determine how best to help them feel connected to SEPAC
District Administration Collaboration

• Bimonthly meetings with administration
  • Strong relationship, open dialogue and information sharing
  • Forum to relay caregiver commendations and commendations
  • Anticipate continued meetings with new Director of Student Services

• Events held in collaboration with administration
  • Annual SEPAC welcome event: Director of Special Education & Superintendent
  • Info session and Q&A for OOD Families: Jessica Murphy & Marielle Wintersteen

• District sponsorship of MassPAC Plus membership for SEPAC
  • Funds Basic Rights in Special Education Workshop
  • SEPAC Representative at Federation’s Visions of Community Conference
    • Education and networking with other SEPACs and local organizations for future event planning
District Administration Collaboration

*Committee Representation:*

- Grateful for the relationship that has allowed for and valued SEPAC representation on various committees
- Two SEPAC representatives serving on the search committee for the Director of Student Services
- SEPAC representative served on the Alcott Principal search committee
- SEPAC representation at the PTG meetings
  - Allows for collaboration and information sharing between parent groups
Joint School Committee (SC) Collaboration

• SEPAC subcommittee provided input on SC policies related to special education (Shaina Brito, Tali Ditman-Brunye & Rebecca Robichaud)

• Thank you Christine Lear for serving as SEPAC SC rep this year in conjunction with Heather Bout for matters pertaining to CPS

• Meetings for collaboration and information sharing when questions and concerns arise

• SEPAC Board followed budget discussions and CPS Warrant Article 14 writing a letter of support for the SC’s recommendations

• SEPAC Appreciation Awards presentation (Helen McKinlay, Rebecca Robichaud & Casey Atkins)
Looking Ahead

**Collaboration:**

• Continued collaboration with SC and the appointment of a representative for 2019-2020

• Regular meetings with the new Director of Student Services to continue our collaborative relationship

• Proactive role in the Coordinated Review scheduled for both school districts in the upcoming year

• Involvement in WestEd Program Reviews throughout the process
  • We urge the administration and school committee when funding & selecting new programs and curriculums to consider the needs of special education students
    • ELA curriculum review to consider students language based learning disabilities
    • CMS Reconfiguration to consider special education students
Looking Ahead

Supporting Families:

• Continuing to serve as a resource for caregivers
  • Answering questions, remaining aware of and advocating regarding areas of concern for caregivers, acknowledging success, disseminating information, and connecting caregivers with each other and appropriate district and community resources

• As stated in the District Mission, our priority is the students and collaborating with all stakeholders to ensure this vision is realized for families with students in special education
  • The mission of the Concord Public Schools and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District is to educate all students in becoming lifelong learners, creative thinkers, caring citizens, and responsible contributors in a global society