

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



***Because every student deserves an  
extraordinary education***

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

## Mission Statement



The mission of the Concord and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District Special Education Parent Advisory Council is to provide education and information to parents, caregivers, and the broader community on special education issues and services, to establish better understanding of, respect for, and support of special education, and to work with the Concord Public Schools and Concord-Carlisle Regional School District to ensure that students' needs under Massachusetts Special Education regulations 603 CMR 28.07(04)\* and other applicable laws are being met.

# 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

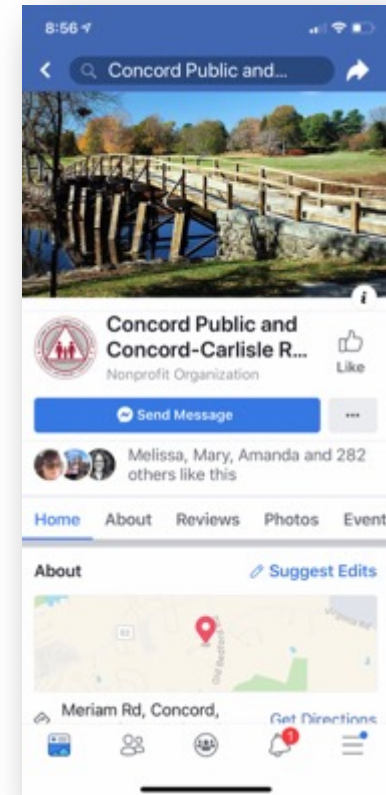
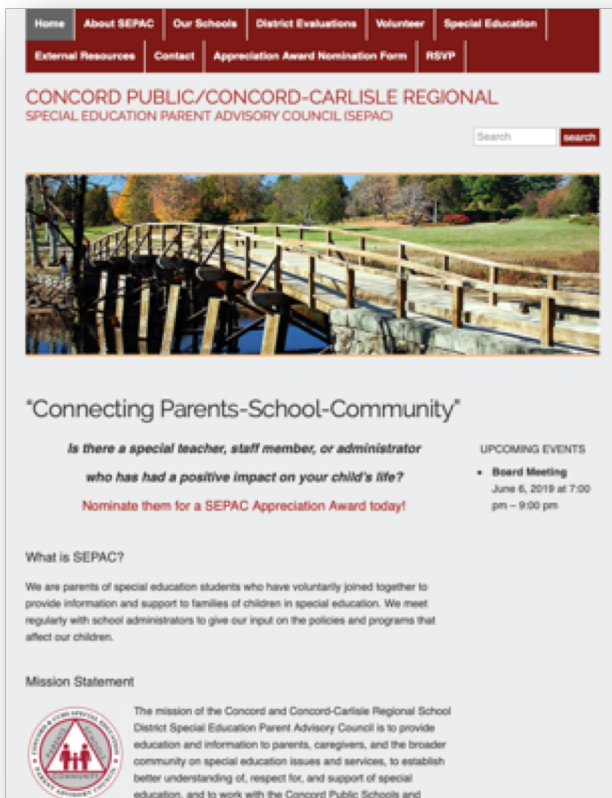
## *Publicity and Communication:*

- 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:*

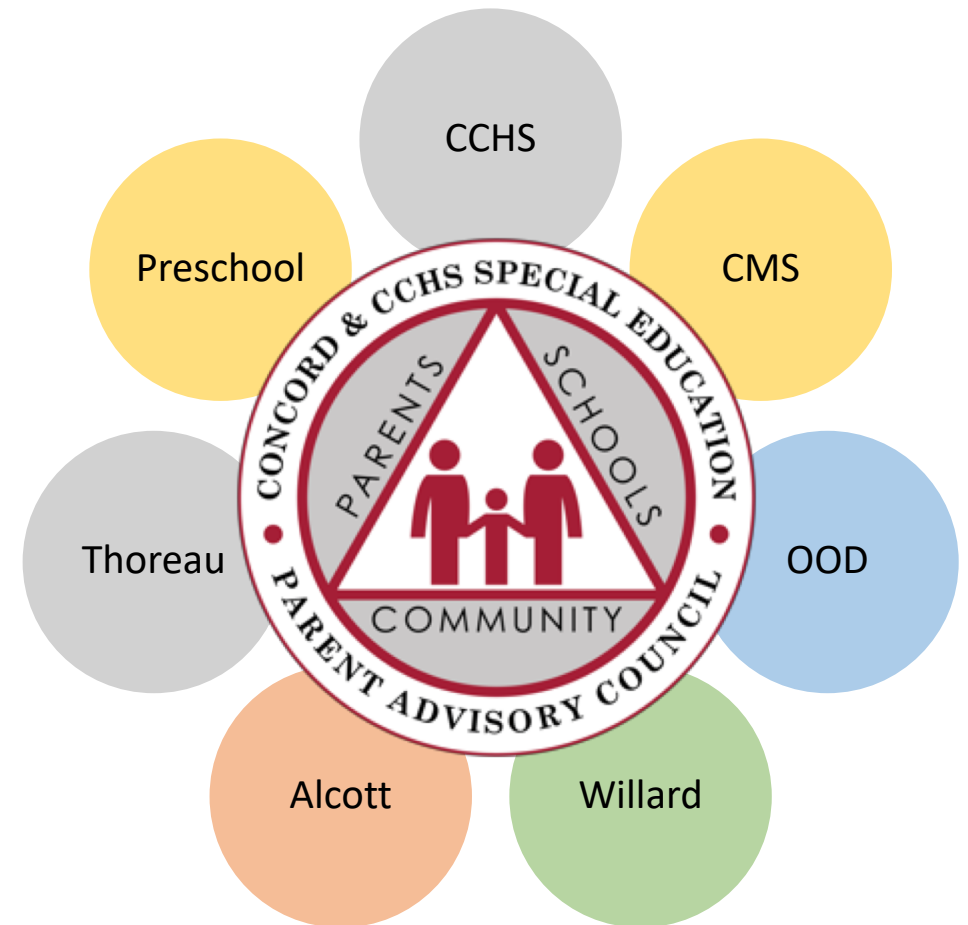
- High interest digital [newsletter](#) distributed monthly by SEPAC through the office of Special Education to caregivers of students in special education
  - 7 Issues this year each receiving ~300 views
  - Issues highlight a relevant special education topic with resources area events
  - Contact us ([concordsepac@gmail.com](mailto: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

