



ARPS SEPAC Newsletter

Message from SEPAC Co-Presidents

Greetings to you and your family,

We hope that the summer vacation was meaningful to you and your families. Welcome back to the new school year. SEPAC was re-activated in April of 2010. We would like to thank the previous SEPAC Board members for their time and service to the community as well as their support to the new Board. We also want to thank our SEPAC Board for all of their energy and efforts in getting us up and going.

The newly elected Board has been working very hard to move SEPAC forward as well as being proactive in maintaining our autonomy. We will continue to seek out ways to collaborate with the administration on issues of common interests to SEPAC in the upcoming year. We are excited to bring awareness of special education issues to the School Committee and to the Administration through ongoing communication and would like to thank Rick Hood, Catherine Sanderson and Irv Rhodes from the School Committee that have attended our meetings and extended their support and interest. We would also like to extend thanks to the interim Student Services Director Ms JoAnn Smith for her professionalism and Mr. David Slovin and Ms. Jeannie White for their input and support.

All parents and guardians who have children on an IEP or 504 Plan are automatically members of SEPAC, and we encourage you to get involved in any capacity you can. There is strength in numbers and the more parents involved in SEPAC, the better the outcome in terms of our collective advocacy on behalf of our children. We value your input and we would like to hear from you to better understand the priorities for the Amherst Regional Special Education Community.

The SEPAC general meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7 PM in the ARMS library - except for November which conflicts with the Thanksgiving holiday, we will meet the third Thursday for November. We will take a break in December, January, February and June. We hope to see many of you at the upcoming meetings and events and wish you a great school year.

All the Best, Pat Ononibaku and Melissa Paciulli SEPAC Co-Presidents

Message from the Student Services Director

Greetings,

It is with renewed energy and excitement that we begin this new school year. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the SEPAC Officers and Representatives for their dedication and commitment towards improving special education services in our school for all children. I would like to encourage your involvement with this vital group because your input and contributions are important. As many of you know, the District completed an independent special education program evaluation last year. Over the next few months we will be developing an action plan in response to areas identified in need of improvement. As part of this process, we will be working with SEPAC to ensure parental perspective experiences and suggestions are carefully considered in the action plan development. I look forward to working collaboratively with SEPAC to affect positive change over the course of the year. *Sincerely, Jo Ann Smith – Student Services Interim Director*

SEPAC Fall Activities



SEPAC Meet and Greet

SEPTEMBER 23, 2010

ARMS LIBRARY 7:00PM

- ☺ Come meet the SEPAC Board and Special Education Teachers and Administrators
- ☺ Tell us what we can do for you
- ☺ Meet other Special Education parents
- ☺ Volunteer!!
- ☺ Child care and refreshments will be provided
- ☺ Please let Mary Kiely know if you will need childcare.



Basic Rights Workshop

October 28, 2010

ARMS LIBRARY 7 - 8:30 PM

- ☺ The Federation of Special Needs will present a workshop on your basic rights in navigating the IEP and 504 process within Special Education
- ☺ This workshop is open to all parents and others from the community
- ☺ Child care and refreshments will be provided
- ☺ Please let Mary Kiely know if you will need childcare.

ARPS SEPAC Accomplishments April 2010 to date

1. Reactivated SEPAC in April of 2010
2. Created Interim Board and then a month later elected our current SEPAC Board
3. Collaborated with the Special Education administration to sponsor Basic Rights workshop presented by Julie Sinclair of The Federation of Children with Special Needs
4. Revised and adopted the SEPAC BY-LAWS including a new mission statement
5. Launched a new website with an independent domain name maintained by the SEPAC Board
7. Obtained a Post Office Box for SEPAC mailing address
8. SEPAC Board participated in a focus group session for the ARPS Special Education evaluation performed by PCG
9. Presented and read multiple statements in June and July of 2010 at the Regional School Committee meetings in response to Special Education review report
10. Held two productive business meetings between the Special Education Administrators and the SEPAC Board
11. Held a successful "Shoes for Africa" fundraising effort which benefitted SEPAC
12. ARPS SEPAC Board joined MASS PAC membership for 2010/2011 year
13. Created a brochure for SEPAC families about SEPAC
14. Launched the SEPAC newsletter
15. Provide publicity for the Parent Support Group at Crocker Farm School.
16. ARPS SEPAC Co-presidents joined a coalition of Western Mass SEPAC Board leaders.
17. Rick Hood is SEPAC Liaison to Regional School Commit-

Five ways to get involved with SEPAC

1. Join our mailing list !!
2. Attend meetings
3. Volunteer with SEPAC
4. Stay informed about special education issues
5. Contribute information and skills



**We need
volunteers!!**

Please check out our
upcoming events and
activity at

www.arps-sepac.org

MARK YOUR CALENDAR 2010–2011



All of these meetings take place at
the ARMS Library from 7-8:30 pm

NOVEMBER 18, 2010

MARCH 24, 2011

APRIL 28, 2011

MAY 26, 2011

Please look for information on workshops and events as we continue to develop our schedule. Let us know if you have a topic for our upcoming workshops.

ARPS SEPAC Board 2010-2011

SEPAC EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Out of District

Members needed