

SPECIAL EDITION

Mar. 2010

Volume 1, No. 7

Co-chairs Peggy Ueda and Patrick Gabridge			
Liaisons			
BEEP - Kimberly Percival	Driscoll -Jillian Kalen,	Lawrence - Patrick Gabridge	Runkle - Jemelle O'Neill
Baker - Hillary Pizer	Laney Nielson	Lincoln - Polly Welch	BHS - Lisa Guisbond,
Devotion - Pam Katz, Dawn Edell	Heath - Pam Palmucci	Pierce - Linda Strother	Karen Szeto
	PTO – Ben Norton	Out of district – Nancy Parker, Mary Ann McDonough, Liz Walpert	School Committee – Glenn Cunha

News

SPED changes in the 2011 Budget

The 2011 School Budget proposal includes several staffing changes in Special Education. Over all, special education teaching staff will increase by a total of 8.5 full-time equivalents (FTE)—6.5 in k-8 and 3 at the High School--while the number of paraprofessionals will decline. Baker, Heath and Lincoln will each see an increase in their special education staff of one full-time equivalent (FTE) and Lawrence 0.5 FTE. One FTE will also be added to the Adaptive Learning Center at Lincoln and in the Autism Spectrum classroom at Runkle, respectively. The number of aides over all will be reduced by 10 FTE's (12 positions). These changes have been proposed in response to the needs expressed by Special Ed teachers and are intended to provide more direct instruction by trained professionals while making more appropriate use of aides.

The Budget also proposes a restructuring at the High School that eliminates two social worker positions (leaving two still in place) while adding two new Deans' teams support staff whose responsibilities will include coordination of student services. Additionally, a teacher will be added to the Community-Based Classroom, and Winthrop House will be expanded to include 9th grade, with the addition of a teacher and a paraprofessional. The Team Facilitator model, introduced this year at the k-8 level, would be expanded to the High School with the aim of improving service to families and strengthening decision-making while reducing costs.

An additional feature of the proposed Budget is a partnership with the Wheelock College Dual Certification Internship Program, which would add pre-professional staff enrolled at Wheelock's dual licensing program (in special and elementary education) to every first grade classroom.

The Budget is on the docket for the March 11 School Committee meeting, to be held at the BATV Studio. The Budget is scheduled for presentation at 8:05 p.m.

Questions about the new School Budget?

Bill Lupini, Superintendent, and Peter Rowe, Deputy Superintendent, will be hosting a series of open forums to discuss the FY11 School Budget. All are welcome to attend.

Tuesday, March 16 – 6:00 p.m., Hunneman Hall, Main Library

Thursday, March 18 – 8:15 a.m., Devotion School Library

Tuesday, March 23 – 8:15 a.m., Baker School Library

SEPAC's Stellar Spellers

Come cheer our team at the Brookline Education Foundation Spelling Bee on Sunday, March 14, 2-6 p.m., in the Brookline High School auditorium. (You may also tune in on Brookline Access TV, on Access Channel - Comcast 3 / RCN 3 - and Municipal Channel - Comcast 23 / RCN 15.) The intrepid Lisa Guisbond, BHS SEPAC liaison, a stalwart team member for several years, is joined by veteran speller (winner of her 5th grade bee, now a physician and would-be writer) Amy Ship and author-editor and BHS parent Susan Meyers. The team welcomes your suggestions for costumes. Please send your ideas to brooklinesepac@gmail.com – the theme this year is “green”. Go team!

Special Education Program Review Phase I Report to the Brookline School Committee ***Change in date!***

Program Review Committee Co-Chairs Amy Martin and Denise Rochlin are scheduled to present the Phase I Report to the School Committee this month, and the School Committee meeting has just been moved up to **Tuesday, March 23**. The School Committee meets on the 5th floor of Town Hall starting at 7 p.m., and the meeting is open to the public. SEPAC parents are encouraged to attend! This is your opportunity to hear the results of Program Review firsthand and show your interest. The Phase I Report will be posted to the Public Schools of Brookline website after it is presented to the School Committee.

Transition materials posted on SEPAC website

If you missed the presentation on Transition Planning you can find valuable resources and links from the Disability Law Center on our website. Click on the Links tab.

Lost and Found

A pair of gloves was mistakenly taken from the Transition Planning event in the BHS MLK Room on Feb.11 and has been returned to SEPAC. Please write brooklinesepac@gmail.com if you think it is yours.

Upcoming Events

SEPAC General Meeting – March 18, 7-8:30 p.m., Runkle Library

Melissa Battite of Brookline Recreation will describe new and ongoing recreation department programs for children with special needs, including summer programs, and invite your suggestions for programs. We'll share our experiences in the schools and discuss SEPAC's future plans. Your participation and involvement is what makes SEPAC possible. Enjoy some refreshments, network with other parents and help shape the course of our organization. **Note date change from April 13.**

Next SEPAC-SPED Meeting 3/19, 8:15-9:15 a.m., 5th floor Town Hall [note date correction and time change]

Please send any items you wish to include on the agenda to brooklinesepac@gmail.com and come share your thoughts in person.

SEPAC-SPED Monthly Meetings – change in time

SEPAC-SPED administrators monthly meeting on the third Friday will now go from 8:15-9:15 a.m., the later start time intended better to accommodate school drop-off. All are welcome! If you have an issue you wish to address, please come, or you may submit it to brooklinesepac@gmail.com. We like to submit an agenda in advance to the administrators. The schedule for the remainder of the school year is as follows: March 19 [note date correction], April 16, May 21 and, tentatively, June 18. Meetings are held on the 5th floor of Town Hall or alternate site as posted.

College and Gap Year Night for Students with IEPs and 504s and Their Parents – Mar. 24, 7-9 pm, MLK Room, BHS

Representatives from New England area colleges will speak about their support services for students with disabilities, and a representative from Dynamy will provide information about gap year programs. A panel presentation will include representatives from Disability Services at Boston University, Northeastern University, Curry College, Mitchell College and Landmark College, along with the Director of Dynamy. This event is co-sponsored by the BHS Career Center and SEPAC and is open to students of all grades. RSVP requested but not required; contact Janet Gottesman at 617-713-5019 or janet_gottesman@brookline.k12.ma.us or sign up in the BHS Career Center office.

SEPAC Special Meeting ~ Program Review Phase I Report – Wed. evening, April 14, Program Review Committee Co-Chairs Amy Martin and Denise Rochlin will present Phase I findings to parents and answer questions at this special meeting. Watch for our April *Special Edition* for time and location.

SPED Open Forum with Superintendent Lupini–May 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m.,Town Hall 103
Dr. Lupini will provide an update on special education in Brookline and entertain questions and comments.

LBLD and ADHD: Is There a Connection and How Can We Help? Wed., May 26, 7-8:30 p.m., Heath School Auditorium Dr. Ronald Neessen, Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital Developmental Medicine Center

Liaison Appreciation, Planning Meeting and Election of Officers–date TBA, May/June

Guest column

Dr. Bob Weintraub, Headmaster, Brookline High School

Change is the Rule in BHS Special Education World

The recommendations of the 2000/2001 BHS Special Education Study Group dramatically changed Special Education at The High School – increasing resources for special education, providing school-based leadership, professionalizing the Learning Centers, creating liaisons for every student, and addressing compliance issues. Since that time, change has been a constant. And 2009/2010 is no exception. This school year, we moved toward a more inclusive co-teaching model for many of our PREP students, with regular English, Social Studies, and Science teachers working with their colleagues in the Special Education Department. The EXCEL Program has an official leader -- Fran Kuehn -- and a new curricular format based on the model in our Opportunity for Change Program. Students take fewer courses in two-week cycles, diminishing the number of courses they have to manage at one time, while receiving bi-weekly report cards.

The initial assessment of these changes is very positive; we are continuing to evaluate these programs as we plan for 2010/2011. We already have changes planned for next year. Winthrop House will expand to include ninth graders; a new teacher and a new aide will be hired. The Community Based Classroom will become the Community Based Classrooms, as the program accommodates six additional students. A new teacher and a new aide will be hired. And we are considering the introduction of Team Facilitators at The High School, based on the model now in place at the Brookline elementary schools.

Brookline High remains committed to the academic, social, and civic development of each of its students in the least restrictive educational setting. While the above programs serve some of our neediest students well, the largest academic support programs -- in both special and regular education -- remain the tutorial models. The Special Education Learning Centers effectively support 170 students with mild learning disabilities, with daily teaching and tutoring by special educators; and the BHS Tutorial Program serves over 200 students, whose academic profiles are quite similar to those served in the Learning Centers, with daily tutoring by regular educators. The BHS Tutorial Program responds to the state mandate that schools provide accommodations to students in regular education before they are referred to Special Education programs.

In Brookline, we are fortunate to have adequate resources to teach all the children well!

Bob Weintraub

In the Community

Special Needs Gymnastics Class and Special Olympics Team

Friends of Cambridge Athletics (FOCA) invites Brookline athletes to join its special needs gymnastics class held on Saturdays at MIT's DuPont Gymnasium running from March 13 to June 12, with an option to join its Special Olympics gymnastics team. Registration is requested before March 7. For an informational flyer, including registration information, to go <http://groups.google.com/group/foca-gymnastics>, scroll down to click on Soma-Gymnastics_Flyer-2010.pdf.

FCSN Conference for Families and Professionals – March 13, 7:30 am - 5 pm., Boston

The Federation for Children with Special Needs presents “Visions of Community 2010: A Conference for Families of Children with Special Needs and the Professionals Who Serve Them” at the Seaport World Trade Center. Visit www.fcsn.org.

Sensory Integration: Clinical Innovations and Research – Boston Symposium, 3/18-20

This workshop presented by Occupational Therapy Associates-Watertown, P.C., is intended for clinicians, educators, psychologists, researchers, parents, MDs and others interested in sensory processing disorder and sensory integration intervention. For information and registration go to <http://www.otawatertown.com/events.html>.

Matzah Bakery Workshop

Join the Friendship Circle for a special Matzah Bakery Workshop. Grind the wheat, mix the dough, and roll your very own Matzah in honor of Passover! The program will be held Sunday, March 21st from 3-4 pm at the Young Israel of Brookline, 62 Green Street. Cost is \$10 per person. RSVP or for more information: info@friendshipcircleboston.org. or 617-378-5765.

Creative Soul of Children speaker series

The 3rd Annual Speaker Series and Fundraising Event Fundraising Event For Parents, Teachers, Professionals, and Youth features the following:

- * Dr. Robert Brooks, Tuesday, March 16, 2010
- * Tere Bowen-Irish OTR/L, Wednesday, April 7, 2010
- * Dr. Ross Greene, Tuesday, April 13, 2010

All events 7-9 p.m. at the Winchester Unitarian Church, 478 Main St. Winchester, MA.

Youth Leadership Forum

Initiated in 1992, the YLF identifies high school students with disabilities who have demonstrated leadership potential, academic success, involvement in their schools and community and provides them with training and experiences, role models, and mentors to assist them in becoming tomorrow's leaders. A three-day YLF event is planned for July 7-9. For information contact Stacy Hart, Youth Transition Specialist, Boston Center for Independent Living, 617-338-6665 x 232 or SRogers@bostoncil.org

Legal Corner

Do you want to be an advocate?

What do you need to know to become an advocate? Are there classes? Certification? What does an advocate do? The Feb. 16 issue of Wrightslaw's online newsletter, *Special Ed Advocate*, explains how to become an advocate and provides resources and links. Go to <http://www.wrightslaw.com/nltr/10/nl.0216.htm>.

Special Section, Part 2: Summer Programs, cont.

Brookline Special Ed Extended School Year

Brookline Public Schools provides summer programs ("extended school year") where need is determined "to prevent substantial regression". Participation is determined as part of the IEP process and needs to be written into the IEP. The programs are as follows:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder – ASD Extended Year is integrated with Brookline Recreation summer camps, with programs at each Recreation summer camp site
- Adaptive Learning Program – located at Devotion
- Therapeutic Learning Center and Intensive Learning Center – located at Lawrence
- Academic Support (reading, writing, math) – plans in progress

Summer LBLD Programs

The Carroll School in Lincoln and the Landmark School in Beverly offer intensive summer programs for students with language-based learning difficulties. Individual and/or small group classes are provided in the morning with camp activities in the afternoon. For more information visit the Schools' websites, www.carrollschool.org and www.Landmarkschool.org.

Federation for Children with Special Needs

The FCSN's summer camp guide is available as a download or to order through its website, www.fcsn.org. In addition to over 50 pages of A-Z listings of camps, the guide includes special sections on looking for a camp, evaluating a camp for your child, financial support, and helping to make your child's summer camp experience a success.

Camp Starfish

Camp Starfish, operating a summer camp in Rindge, NH, has a 1:1 camper-to-counselor ratio and was created with the mission of "fostering the success and growth of children with emotional, behavioral and learning problems by providing individualized attention as part of structured, nurturing and fun group programs." Winter office is located at 440 Totten Pond Rd., 781-890-7827. Find out more at www.campstarfish.org.

Spedchildmass summer listings

See http://www.spedchildmass.com/camp_2010 for a comprehensive listing of summer programs for children with special needs.

Studies

Are ADHD and reading difficulties related?

The Gaab Lab at Children's Hospital Boston is investigating the suggested link between ADHD and dyslexia. We want to extend our knowledge the behavioral evidence of similarities and differences between these groups to direct examination of functional MRI, which uses magnetism to image the brain. If you and your child are interested in participating, please visit the Gaab Lab website where you can find full details of what the studies involve: www.childrenshospital.org/research/gaablab or contact the Gaab lab at GaabLab.email@gmail.com (857-218-4629).

Teens' Recreation and Activity Choices (TRAC) Study

The Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Waltham, MA is looking for adolescents ages 13-18 with and without intellectual disabilities to participate in a research study to learn more about what teens do in their free time. A better understanding of how teens spend their free time is an important first step toward designing effective health promotion programs. Parents and teens will be compensated for their time. For more information or to enroll, contact ShriverHealth@umassmed.edu or Melissa Maslin at (781) 642-0292.

Project Adventure Inclusive Recreation Program

"Opening Doors: Project Adventure" is a research study sponsored by Childrens Hospital Boston designed to create a model for an inclusive recreation program for kids with disabilities and special health care needs. The study matches kids ages 6-15 with adult volunteers to act as their mentors. Most of the volunteers are college students interested in pursuing a career in health care. All of the adult volunteers are fully screened, interviewed and trained. The mentor and the child meet at a local YMCA (participating YMCA closest to Brookline is in Brighton) for 2 hours once a week for 6 months.

For more information or to inquire about enrollment, contact Kelly Horan, MPH, Project Coordinator, 857-218-4319 or Kelly.Horan2childrens.harvard.edu. Visit the website at <http://www.childrenshospital.org/clinicalservices/Site1924/mainpageS1924P8.html>.

Networking

Cerebral Palsy contacts sought

A Brookline family with a lower elementary child with cerebral palsy (hemiparesis) wishes to connect with other families to build friendships and help their son meet other children in similar situations. Interested families may write brooklinesepac@gmail.com.

Friendship Circle

Friendship Circle is a Jewish organization that provides programming for children with special needs. FC partners with teenagers and college students for weekly visits with children as well as special monthly events. In addition, the organization provides a special bi-monthly program for teenagers and young adults at Harvard University. For more information visit www.friendshipcircleboston.org, email info@friendshipcircleboston.org, or call 617.378.5765

Coalition of Brookline Autism Parents (COBAP)

COBAP is a group of Brookline parents who meet bi-monthly to discuss issues related to helping their children diagnosed with PDD-NOS, Asperger's or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Membership is open to any person who is the parent or guardian of a child who lives in Brookline and has an autism spectrum disorder, or who lives elsewhere but attends school in Brookline and has an autism spectrum disorder.

To join COBAP or for more information, please contact Beth Kaufman at bkpubservices@yahoo.com. We welcome Brookline ASD parents join our Yahoo group by visiting www.yahogroups.com, enter "COBAP" in the box that says "Find a Group".

Brookline QUEST (Quality Unique Enrichment for Special Needs Teens)

Brookline QUEST supports traditional and innovative recreational, leisure and cultural activities for Brookline teens with special needs. Visit their website at www.brooklinequest.org to learn about their extensive schedule of activities.

ADD/ADHD Support Group

Periodic meetings of parents and guardians of children with a suspected or confirmed ADD/ADHD diagnosis. For more information contact Valerie at 857-272-2164 or valerie_ball_98@yahoo.com



Brookline SEPAC

visit us at brooklinesepac.org

contact us at brooklinesepac@gmail.com

Brookline SEPAC is a Brookline 2010 Climate Action Partner

