SEPAC
Brookline Special Education Parent Advisory Council

SPECIAL EDITION

April 2010 Volume 1, No. 8

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

News

Special Education Program Review Phase I Report and Power Point available online
Program Review documents can be accessed on the Public Schools of Brookline webpage under Teaching and Learning, Program Review. The direct link is http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/TEACHING+AND+LEARNING/Program+Review/Current+Programs+involved+in+Program+Review.htm. Scroll to the bottom of the page to select the document you wish to view. The Report includes an updated organizational chart of Special Education. Have questions about Program Review? Come to our Special Meeting with Program Review Co-Chairs Dr. Denise Rochlin and Amy Martin on April 15 (see below under Upcoming Events).

School budget vote and Landmark partnership on April 8 School Committee docket
The School Committee meeting of Thursday, April 8, 7:00-9:25 p.m., has scheduled a FY2011 budget update at 7:25 p.m. and vote at 8:05. A presentation by Lawrence School Principal Rick Rogers on the Landmark partnership at Lawrence is scheduled for 8:20 p.m. Times are approximate. The meeting takes place in the James F. Walsh School Committee Room, 5th floor Town Hall, and is open to the public. The budget proposal may be accessed via the indicated link on the Public Schools of Brookline home page at http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/.

Nominations open for 2010-11 and -12 SEPAC co-chairs
June will be here before you know it, and we will be holding elections for co-chairs for the coming year. Please send your nominations to brooklinesepac@gmail.com. You may nominate yourself! What's involved in being a co-chair? Please see the appendix at end of newsletter.

Openings for volunteers
Thank you to Polly Welch and Shar Kelly, who have volunteered to handle programming for the coming year. We still have openings for new volunteers to handle publicity, newsletter production and website management. Don't be shy—step forward! By dividing the work into smaller pieces many people can contribute and enjoy the reward of helping our families. A description of responsibilities is included in the appendix.

Upcoming Events

SEPAC Parent Meetings

SEPAC BEEP Liaison Kim Percival invites BEEP parents of children with special needs to a breakfast social on Friday, April 9, 8:15-9 a.m., in the 3rd floor conference room at the Lynch Center, 599 Brookline Ave. Meet other parents, get a chance to talk informally with BEEP administrators and find out the latest news and events in Brookline Special Education. Light breakfast will be served.

SEPAC Driscoll School Liaisons Jill Kalen and Laney Nielson will host a "Meet the Specialists" breakfast on Wed., May 5, 7:30-8:30 a.m., in the Driscoll School Library. Parents of students receiving special education services or who want to learn more about special education are invited. Team Facilitator Tara Kelly will lead a discussion of specialty services including Learning Center, Occupational and Physical Therapy, Speech and Language, Psychology and Guidance. Some of these specialists will be on hand to discuss their roles and answer questions. Children are welcome in the cafeteria while parents meet.

Next SEPAC-Special Education Administrators Meeting –
Friday, 4/16, 8:15-9:15 a.m., 5th floor Town Hall

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

SEPAC-Special Education Administrators Monthly Meetings

SEPAC leaders and Special Education administrators meet monthly on the third Friday from 8:15-9:15 a.m.. 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: April 16, May 21 and, tentatively, June 18. Meetings are held on the 5th floor of Town Hall or alternate site as posted.

SEPAC Special Meeting ~ Program Review Phase I Report – Thurs. April 15, 6:30-8 pm
School Committee Room, 5th Floor of Town Hall

Program Review Committee Co-Chairs Amy Martin and Denise Rochlin will present Phase I findings to parents and answer questions.

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.

COBAP/ QUEST Trivia Night -- Friday, May 14, 7 p.m.

The Coalition of Brookline Autism Parents and Quality Unique Enrichment for Special Needs Teens hold their annual fundraiser at the VineRipe Grill, Putterham Gold Course. Last year was a lot of fun—please join us! Must be over 21 to attend.

LBLD and ADHD: Is There a Connection and How Can We Help? --
Wed., May 26, 7-8:30 p.m., Heath School Auditorium

Dr. Michael Neessen of Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital Developmental Medicine Center will speak about the links between language-based learning disabilities and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. With a brief overview of

how to help students who have a single diagnosis, Dr. Neessen will focus on dual diagnosis and how to help at school and at home. This presentation is geared toward both parents and educators. Participants with professional licenses are eligible for PDPs if the content aligns with one of their IPDP goals.

Liaison Appreciation, Planning Meeting and Election of Officers –
Wed. evening, June 9, time and place to be announced

Come honor all our liaisons and recognize Liz Walpert, who will be retiring as one of our out-of-district liaisons, for her years of service. We will hold election for new co-chairs and discuss plans for next year. Join us for refreshments and an opportunity to socialize and share experiences.

Guest column

Melissa Battite, CPRP, Recreation Supervisor, Brookline Recreation

Brookline Recreation Department
2010 Summer Opportunities

The Recreation Department offers a wide variety of summer camp opportunities. Children ages 4 – 13 years old may attend one of the several programs featuring environmental education, athletics, swimming, arts & crafts, field trips and specialty activities. Campers will meet new friends and learn new games in safe, fun environments. Recreation Camps are held at several locations including the Environmental Education Center, Lawrence School, Devotion School and Eliot Recreation Center. Additionally, Early Childhood, Multi-sports, tennis & golf programs are held at the Soule Recreation Center, Waldstein Park and the RTL Golf Course.

The Recreation Camps and the Public Schools of Brookline partner every summer in a unique and valuable collaboration. Summer camps & academic support programs held at Lawrence and Devotion Schools provide students with a seamless summer experience while participating in both the Recreation and School sponsored programs. Children enrolled in the Extended School Year programs join activities at the camps throughout the day. Staff working for both Recreation and PSB will collaborate during staff trainings, professional development and development of the daily scheduling.

In addition to the Extended School Year collaboration, Recreation camps also work closely with the PSB Early Education/LAUNCH program, and the Project Discovery & Project Achieve (summer literacy programs). With the addition of a full-time inclusion specialist this year, Project Discovery will be better able to meet the diverse educational, behavioral and emotional needs of students. This provides the children and families a summer option that engages each child in a fun, nurturing, safe summer camp experience.

Opportunities for students age 14 and older are also available. Both volunteer, training and compensated positions are available.

Please go to www.brooklinerec.com for more information or call 617.730.2069.

Melissa Battite, Recreation Supervisor

In the Community

Susan Senator book reading and signing

Lincoln and BHS parent and author Susan Senator will give readings and signings of her second book, *The Autism Mom's Survival Guide: Creating a Balanced andHappy Life While Raising a Child with Autism*

Tues. April 6, 7 p.m. – Brookline Booksmith, Coolidge Corner

Wed., April 7, 7 p.m. – Borders, Chestnut Hill

Creative Soul of Children speaker series

The final guest speaker in the Winchester Unitarian Church 3rd Annual Speaker Series and Fundraising Event for Parents, Teachers, Professionals, and Youth is Dr. Ross Greene, who appears on Tuesday, April 13, 2010, 7-9 pm,Winchester Unitarian Church, 478 Main St. Winchester. A previous Brookline SEPAC guest speaker, Dr. Ross Greene is well known as the author of *The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, "Chronically Inflexible" Children* and co-developer of a "Collaborative Problem-Solving" model.

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

What Is the MCAS Alternate Assessment?

The following is re-printed here from the Mass. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education website (www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/about.html)

Background

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is the Commonwealth's statewide assessment program developed in response to the Education Reform Act of 1993. MCAS, along with other components of education reform, is designed to strengthen public education in Massachusetts and ensure that all students participate in a challenging curriculum based on the Massachusetts *Curriculum Frameworks*.

All students educated with Massachusetts public funds, including students with disabilities, must participate in MCAS using one of the following formats:

- Routine (standard) MCAS testing
- MCAS testing using one or more test accommodation(s)
- MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)

The vast majority of students with disabilities take standard paper and pencil MCAS tests, either with or without accommodations, at the grade specified for assessment in that subject. A very small number of students with the most significant disabilities, about 1% statewide, take the MCAS Alternate Assessment.

Each student's IEP or 504 team decides how, not whether, the student will participate in MCAS in the coming year. Guidelines used by IEP Teams to make these decisions can be found in the Department publication, *Requirements for the Participation of Students with Disabilities in MCAS* which is updated annually.
The MCAS-Alt consists of a portfolio of materials collected annually by the teacher and student. Evidence for the student portfolio may include work samples, instructional data, videotapes, and other supporting information and materials based on the student's performance in the subject being assessed.

How to Get Help

Read frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the MCAS-Alt.
For further information on the MCAS Alternate Assessment, please contact:
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Student Assessment Services Unit

Dan Wiener or Nancy Hanson	Telephone: (781) 338-3625
75 Pleasant Street	Fax: (781) 338-3630
Malden, MA 02148	E-mail: mcas@doe.mass.edu

MCAS Service Center (800) 737-5103

Special Section, Part 3: Summer Programs, cont.

Summer program information from Wrightslaw

The Wrightslaw.com March 30 issue of Special Ed Advocate addresses many concerns about summer programs for children with special needs, including advice on finding the right camp and youth program and summer camp directories. For the March 30 issue, see http://www.wrightslaw.com/nltr/10/nl.0330.htm.

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 of the behavioral evidence of similarities and differences between these groups with 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

Sources sought to support purchase of audiological processing headset
A SEPAC parent seeks information about financial support for purchasing this very expensive piece of equipment for her son who has Sensory Integration Disorder. Anyone with information please 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.yahoogroups.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

SPECIAL EDITION

APPENDIX

BROOKLINE SEPAC
Leadership and other volunteer positions

Co-Chairs (1-3, ideally 2)- each serves 2 years, overlapping each other

- Represent SEPAC in all capacities (parents, admin, school committee, etc)
- Oversee general operations, assure liaisons in all schools, call & conduct mtgs
- Keep informed, and inform membership, of developments in special ed on a school, town, state and federal level
- Maintain the gmail account, help parents seeking information and advice
- Assure compliance with by-laws
- Provide news and other content for newsletter
- Appoint volunteers for programming and communications

Programming Volunteer(s)

Develops proposed series of presentations and other events

Schedules meetings and events, makes arrangements for speakers, reserves rooms, assures equipment, etc.

- **Refreshments coordinator** – assures refreshments and recycling

Publicity Volunteer(s)

Provides publicity (via SEPAC newsletter, TAB, school newsletters, posters) for SEPAC meetings and events

Interfaces with Programming Volunteer, Newsletter Editor and Website Manager

Newsletter Editor

Edits and formats content provided by Co-Chairs and Programming and Communications Volunteers

Develops special content such as guest columns, spotlights, legal corner, summer camp information, networking, research studies, etc.

Website Manager

Assures website is accurate and up-to-date

Updates website calendar and posts newsletters and materials from presentations

Brookline SEPAC

visit us at brooklinesepac.org ***contact us at brooklinesepac@gmail.com***

Brookline SEPAC is a Brookline 2010 Climate Action Partner