



Shrewsbury SEPAC

**Special Education
Parent Advisory Council
June 5, 2019**



Acknowledgements

- o School Committee
- o Dr. Sawyer
- o Meg Belsito and Meghan Bartlett
- o Special Education Staff
- o Parents and Caregivers



Preview

- o About Shrewsbury SEPAC
- o SPS Investments in Mental Health
- o 2018-19 Highlights
- o 2018-19 Events
- o Looking Forward
- o Outreach to Pre-K Community
- o SEPAC Goals



Leadership Team

- o Colleen Corbett, President & Secretary
- o Jill DeBender, Outreach Chair & Treasurer
- o Blake Poggi, Membership Chair

"You can do
what I cannot
do. I can do
what you
cannot do.
Together we can
do great
things."

- Mother Teresa



Mission Statement

We believe in the power of parents working together to make an impact.

- o Shrewsbury Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a volunteer organization made up of parents and caregivers whose children receive special education services through Shrewsbury Public Schools.
- o We serve as a voice for parents by advising the Shrewsbury school administration and School Committee on matters related to the education of students with disabilities.
- o SEPAC provides a forum for parents and caregivers to share experiences and exchange information. Together, we work for understanding, respect, support and the appropriate education of all children with special needs in our community.



What we do

We strive to help families participate effectively in the special education process by:

- Hosting opportunities for families to connect through general meetings and social events, where they can find support and advice from other members.
- Providing educational workshops and presentations to inform families and help them advocate for their children.
- Informing families about their rights regarding Special Education laws and procedures.
- Maintaining a Facebook page offering community resources and services, news articles, and a forum for members to post questions and information.



Investments in Mental Health

We applaud the District for the many ways they support students with social, emotional, and/or mental health issues.

- o For making Enhanced Well-being for All a strategic priority.
- o Paying attention to 2017 Youth Health Survey data about the alarming rise in mental health concerns among middle and high school students.
- o Congratulations to Meg Belsito and her team for securing two state grants that will fund much needed mental and behavioral health counseling positions at elementary and middle school levels.
- o For making Superintendent's Update episode discussing the vital importance of Social and Emotional learning.



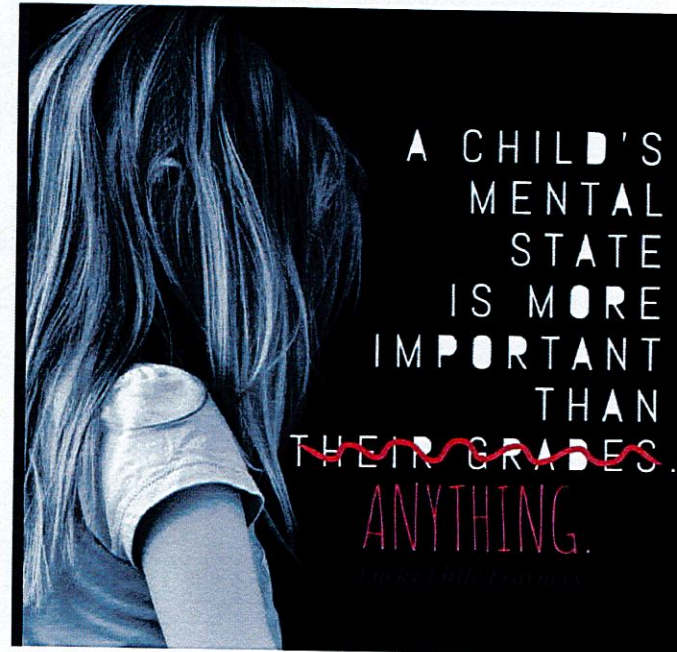
2017 Youth Health Survey

29% OMS Females

34% SHS Females

16% OMS & SHS Males

Reported feeling so sad or hopeless every day for 2 weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing usual activities in the past year.





Thank you to Dr. Lizotte and the District for inviting Lynn Lyons, social worker and psychologist, to present on Preventing Anxiety and Depression: Skills we can (and should!) teach our children.

Childhood fears and worries are normal, but excessive worrying and the cycle of behaviors that follow adversely influence a child's learning, social development, and family life. For some, the impact can be severe.

– Lynn Lyons

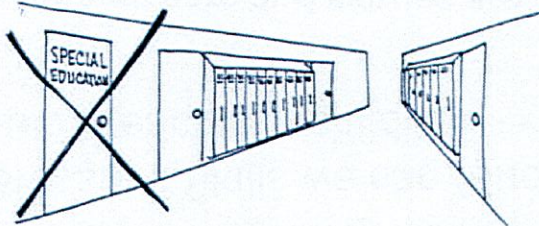
Anxiety presents itself in many different ways...





Inclusive Educational Practices

SPECIAL EDUCATION
IS NOT A PLACE



IT IS SUPPORTS & SERVICES
BROUGHT TO STUDENTS
THROUGH AN IEP



© PEAK PARENT CENTER, INC.
PARENTS...
...
...

- o Acknowledging the importance of inclusive practices by making it a strategic priority: Learning environments where everyone's success matters.
- o Inclusion, by definition, involves carefully assessing a child's needs and then implementing a strategic plan to support that child within the general classroom setting.
- o For committing to inclusion by providing training for teachers and staff and promoting inclusive practices like the co-teaching model.
- o Understanding that inclusion is the best practice for disabled and non-disabled students alike. Studies show that when inclusion is done well, the whole class benefits.



2018-19 Highlights

- o Hosted three General Meetings in October, February and May.
- o Hosted information tables at two community events.
- o Held two fundraisers by partnering with community and school groups.
- o Hosted six educational workshops.
- o Transitioned to a closed group on Facebook.
- o Began development of our website.
- o Recruited a new school liaison to connect with the pre-K community at Parker Rd.



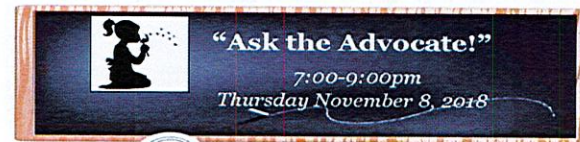
In late August, we hosted an information table at Picnic in the Park – Promoting Love and Acceptance, organized by the Kindness Coalition of Massachusetts.





Ask the Advocate

- o 11/8/18 evening event at Shrewsbury Public Library
- o Co-hosted workshop with Westborough SEPAC
- o 25 attendees
- o Discussed topics related to IEP development, meetings, stay put status, local resources, accommodations, and teacher communications.



* This Advocacy Q&A session is a chance for families to ask questions regarding the special education process, regulations, IEP's, evaluations, meetings, rejections, etc.

* Any special education question or concern is open for discussion!



Presented by:
Melissa Carriveau, M.S.Ed.
Bay State Advocacy
www.facebook.com/BayStateAdvocacy
BayStateAdvocacy@gmail.com
774-214-0608

WESTBOROUGH and SHREWSBURY SEPAC's are co-hosting this free event for parents!

WORKSHOP LOCATION:
Shrewsbury Public Library
Meeting Room B
609 Main Street
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

RSVP Information:
To ensure that we can get to as many questions as possible, please RSVP to this event. Reserve your spot by emailing: Shrewsbury.Sepac@gmail.com by 11/5.



Textile Recycling Drive

Partnered with Sherwood Middle School PTO

Filled the truck and earned \$1,200 total (\$600 each)

Fill a bag and
make a difference!



Items collected help fund:



Sherwood PTO
and Shrewsbury
SEPAAC

Help us raise funds by cleaning out your closet!
Bring your items to our fundraising event.
Saturday, 11/17
11 am - 2 pm
Sherwood Middle School
(side door)
28 Sherwood Ave., Shrewsbury
For questions contact ccorbett59@gmail.com

We are collecting:

- ☑ Clothing
- ☑ Jewelry
- ☑ Accessories
- ☑ Handbags
- ☑ Shoes
- ☑ Linens





Special Education Mediation and IEP Facilitation

- o 1/10/19 daytime event at Shrewsbury Public Library.
- o Presented by the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA).
- o Overview and introduction of the mediation process.
- o Mediation provides an opportunity for parties to start over and work toward achieving the best outcome possible that day.

Bureau of Special Education Appeals

- Due Process for Special Education
 - Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
 - Access to Education for All Students Despite Disability
- Individualized Education Program (IEP)





Getting Prepared for your Next IEP Meeting

- 3/14/19 daytime event at Shrewsbury Public Library
- Co-hosted with Westborough SEPAC



Advocate Tip of the Day..



THE SPECIAL ORGANIZER..

Taking your IEP paperwork from mess to success!™

Present

Getting Prepared for your next IEP Meeting?

Is your child making progress? Does the IEP reflect your child's potential? Should you request more testing? The key to making a successful proposal for services, supports, goals/objectives, etc. is data. Don't go to another IEP meeting unprepared!

Come learn how to mine and use the data you need from your student's records. Bring a **copy** of a recent IEP/progress report to take notes on during the presentation.

Thursday, March 14, 2019

10 am - 12 noon

Shrewsbury Public Library

609 Main Street

Shrewsbury, MA

RSVP to specialorganizer@gmail.com

Courtesy of Westborough and Shrewsbury SEPACs

www.specialorganizer.com

www.advocatetipoftheday.com



Basic Rights in Special Education

- o 3/21/19 evening workshop at Floral Street School.
- o This workshop is for parents and professionals, provides a basic understanding of complex special education laws and procedures.



Basic Rights In Special Education
A Free Workshop for Parents and Professionals

Basic Rights in Special Education provides an introduction of the complex special education laws and procedures.

Workshop Topics:

- *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Massachusetts Laws*
- *Evaluations and Referrals*
- *The Team Meeting*
- *Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 Plans*
- *Effective Progress*
- *Transition*
- *Review of Important Timelines*
- *Strategies for Success and more!*

About Your Host:

Please join Shrewsbury SEPAC for our Annual Basic Rights Workshop in Special Education.

Presenter: Johnathan Smith

When: Thursday, 3/21/19 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Where: Floral Street School Media Center
57 Floral Street
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

RSVP: Please RSVP by 3/19 to shrewsbury.sepac@gmail.com

For more information about the educational workshops available from The Federation for Children with Special Needs, please visit us at fcsn.org/ptc/workshops or email: workshops@fcsn.org



International Fair & Diversity Celebration

Co-hosted fair with WE CAN and earned \$450

2nd Annual International Fair & Diversity Celebration

Hosted by: WE CAN aka Shrewsbury Farmers Market &
Shrewsbury Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

Join us for this family friendly and unique opportunity to experience the world right in your own backyard as we celebrate the vast cultures and communities in our town through art, food, performances, and literature.

Free Admission

Date: April 6, 2019

Location: Sherwood Middle School

Time: 4 to 7 pm



*In diversity there is beauty
and there is strength
- Maya Angelou*

WE CAN



Contact: Neena Mohanka: neenakeda@gmail.com or 508-451-2590;
Melisa Hollenback: melisahollenback@hotmail.com or 508-284-7314

Hosted information and
children's activities table





Reading Goals Workshop

- o 4/13/19 daytime event at Northboro Free Library
- o Co-hosted with Northboro/Southboro and Westborough SEPACs
- o 40 attendees
- o In-depth workshop presented by Nancy Duggan on the science of reading.

READING GOALS WORKSHOP
A Clear and Structured Process for Effective Reading Goals



Saturday, April 13, 1-3 pm
Northborough Library, 34 Main St.

Presented by:

Nancy Duggan, M.A.
Executive Director of Decoding Dyslexia Massachusetts



Reading is complex. Effective instruction is urgent for those with a disability like dyslexia or other learning challenges.

- Bring your evaluations and IEP
- Learn what you need to know about the science of reading
- Understand how to apply the correct data for making IEP decisions
- Is the instruction your child is receiving targeting the needs of your child?
- Is your child's instruction meeting the standards of IDEA law?

Please RSVP no later than April 6 at nspac1@gmail.com or on the Facebook event page.

Event is co-sponsored by

SHREWSBURY SEPAC



WESTBOROUGH SEPAC



ADHD Workshop

- o 4/25/19 evening workshop at Floral Street School
- o 20 attendees
- o ADHD affects between 11-13% of 4-17 year olds in Mass.
- o Students with ADHD process dopamine differently.

ADHD WORKSHOP

With Brendan Mahan, M.Ed., M.S. of ADHD Essentials

Thursday, 4/25 from 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Floral Street School Media Center
57 Floral Street, Shrewsbury

All are welcome to attend this free workshop.

- Learn about the different types of ADHD
- Understand how dopamine and executive functioning affect the ADHD mind
- Explore the emotional impact of ADHD
- Discuss strategies & tactics for managing symptoms
- Q&A with presenter Brendan Mahan
- Go home with immediately applicable skills and ideas!

"The better we understand ADHD and the way it impacts our lives, the more effectively we can manage it. ADHD is driven by a lack of skills, but those skills can be taught and developed." – Brendan Mahan

ADHD
ESSENTIALS

www.adhdessentials.com



Please RSVP by 4/23 to shrewsbury.sepat@gmail.com



Looking Forward



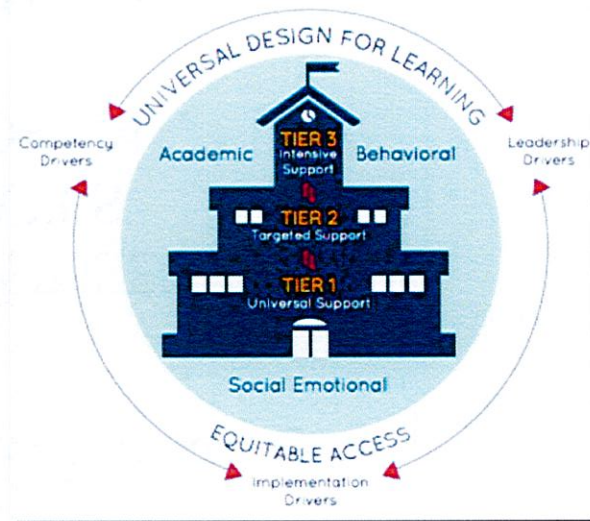
- o In October, Mass Advocates for Children will offer a presentation on Massachusetts Anti-bullying Law: IEP and Schoolwide Strategies to Prevent Bullying of Students with Disabilities.
- o The updated Mass Bullying Prevention and Intervention law (2014) will be reviewed.
- o Students with disabilities are 2-3 times more likely to be bullied.



Fall 2019

We plan to host Meg Belsito and her team to discuss the work the District is doing in the areas of:


- Social and Emotional Learning
- Mass Tiered Support Model
- SPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan





Outreach to Pre-K Community

- o We are excited to announce that we've recruited a volunteer to serve as our liaison to Parker Road Preschool.
- o Through this position, we hope to build relationships with parents and caregivers of young children and provide support and information as they start their special education journey,
- o We also hope to engage and collaborate with teachers and administrators at Parker Road Preschool, as well as agencies and professionals in the early intervention community.
- o We plan to offer the Turning Three Essentials Workshop in early 2020, for those families transitioning from early intervention to pre-K.



FEDERATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS


Turning Three Essentials

A Free Workshop for Parents and Professionals

Turning Three Essentials provides information about the procedures for transitioning a child from early intervention (EI) to special education.

Workshop Topics:

- Differences between EI and Special Education
- Eligibility
- Transition Planning Process
- Special Education Process
- Consent and Evaluations
- The Team Meeting
- Review of Important Timeline and more!



About Your Host:
Faith M. Morgan-Gaines, B.S. Ed., MPP has been advocating for children and families for over 25 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in Education and a Master's in Family and Child Policy. Faith is a former teacher and administrator of Integrated Classrooms.

When: January 17, 2019 7:00-9:00 PM

Where: Westborough Early Childhood Center at 111 East Main Street Westborough, MA

RSVP: Email to: westboroughsepac@gmail.com

For more information about the educational workshops available from The Federation for Children with Special Needs, please visit us at fcan.org/ptic/workshops or email: workshops@fcan.org



Growing Relationships

- Our outreach efforts this past year have further established SEPAC in the school and greater community, deepened our connections and relationships, and allowed us opportunities to successfully fundraise.
- We will continue to collaborate with Special Education Director, Meg Belsito, and Assistant Director, Meghan Bartlett through frequent meetings and communications.
- We were thankful this year for quarterly meetings with School Committee member, Erin Canzano, and Dr. Sawyer, as well as the opportunity to attend the PTO Presidents meetings.



SEPAC Goals

- o Continue growing our membership and pursuing efforts to recruit members to serve in school liaison and other board positions.
- o Visit PTOs in the fall to introduce SEPAC and the work we do, as well as explore opportunities to collaborate.
- o Complete our website to serve as a repository for SEPAC documents and provide links to useful resources.
- o Join an email server to enhance communication with members.
- o Solicit our members' opinions and concerns about their special education experience through an online survey this fall.

