

Shrewsbury SEPAC

Special Education Parent Advisory Council

May 24, 2023



SEPAC Board 2022-2023

- Laura Cronin
- Sharleen Doherty
- Ashley Falandys
- Katie Poirier

Thank you to Colleen Corbett, Jill DeBender and Blake Poggi for many years of SEPAC leadership and for helping facilitate a smooth transition!

What is a SEPAC?

Source: <https://www.fcsn.org/what-is-a-sepac>

- Every public school district in Massachusetts is required to establish a SEPAC. Massachusetts state law assigns both an advisory and participatory function to SEPACs. Membership is open to district parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties.
- Duties shall include, but not be limited to:
 - advising the School Committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities;
 - meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the district's special education programs; and
 - cooperating with the District on their annual workshop on the rights of students, parents and guardians under state and federal law.
- The SEPAC is a self-governing public body which creates its own by-laws and operational procedures. A SEPAC is different from other parent groups in a school district such as a PTA, PTO or School Council – a SEPAC does not represent families from one school, but represents all families of children with disabilities from the entire school district.

MassPAC Membership

Massachusetts Association of Special Education Parent Advisory Councils

- Thank you to the District for continuing to fund our membership in MassPAC, a program of the Federation for Children with Special Needs
- MassPAC membership gives us access to:
 - Support and training for board members through FCSN
 - MassPAC office hours
 - Three free registrations to the FCSN Visions of Community conference- one each for a parent/caregiver, student and District staff
 - Workshops and more

SEPAC Mission Statement

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

- Shrewsbury Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a volunteer organization made up of parents, caregivers and interested Shrewsbury residents
- Shrewsbury SEPAC is registered as a 501c3 nonprofit

2022-2023 Goals

- Connect with our existing membership through consistent meetings and events
- Outreach to potential new members
- Fundraising to enable us to offer high quality workshops and presentations
- Build collaborative relationships with the District and surrounding SEPACs

2022-2023 Event Summary

- 6 General Meetings- 5 held virtually on rotating weekday evenings, alternating between business (elections, planning, specific discussion topics) and support/sharing, 1 held in person with Meg Belsito and Lynsey Heffernan
- 7 “Coffee & Connect” meetings in person on rotating weekday mornings
- 4 workshops/presentations held virtually in the evening
- 1 Strategic Planning forum with Focused Schools
- 2 fundraisers

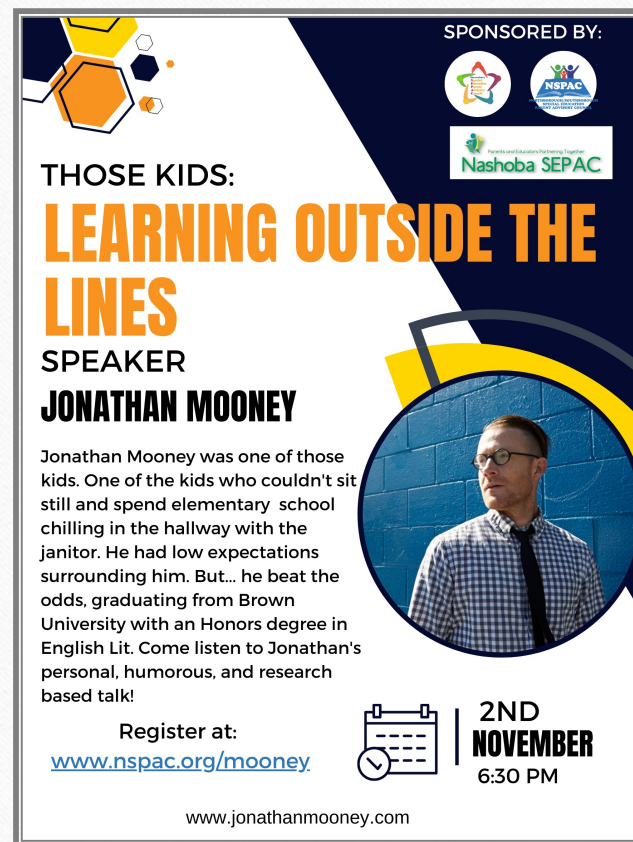
Textile Collection Fundraiser

- October 2022 in partnership with the Epilepsy Foundation
- Held at Sherwood Middle School
- Facilitated pickups of donations in the weeks leading up to the event
- Very successful, collected 2927 pounds which provided funding for two presentations that we offered later in the year




Those Kids: Learning Outside the Lines


- November 2023 in partnership with Northborough/Southborough and Nashoba SEPACs
- 85 registrants, approximately 20-25 from Shrewsbury
- Engaging and insightful presentation by Jonathan Mooney about his lived experience
- Big takeaway: “Accommodation over Remediation”



SPONSORED BY:




THOSE KIDS:
LEARNING OUTSIDE THE LINES
SPEAKER
JONATHAN MOONEY



Jonathan Mooney was one of those kids. One of the kids who couldn't sit still and spend elementary school chilling in the hallway with the janitor. He had low expectations surrounding him. But... he beat the odds, graduating from Brown University with an Honors degree in English Lit. Come listen to Jonathan's personal, humorous, and research based talk!

Register at:
www.nspac.org/mooney



**2ND
NOVEMBER**
6:30 PM

www.jonathanmooney.com

Photo Shoot Fundraiser

- November 2023 in partnership with local photographer Tom Godfrey, who donated his time to complete seven mini sessions with SEPAC families
- Held in a board member's fenced backyard
- Very successful fundraiser which also helped make family photos accessible to our members
- Funded one of our presentations later in the year, and will cover at least one next year



**Basic Rights:
Understanding the IEP**
A Free Virtual Workshop
for Parents and Professionals

presentation will delve the Individual Education Program (IEP) document, its development, the breakdown of each section understanding how the document will support a student.

Workshop Topics:
 Why the IEP is Important
 Who is eligible for an IEP
 How the IEP is Developed
 Strengths and Concerns
 Vision Statements
 IEP Sections including PLEP A & B, Annual Goals and Service Delivery Grid
 Differences between Accommodations and Modifications
 Response, Placement and Consent
 Procedural Safeguards and more!



About Your Host:
 The Shrewsbury Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a volunteer organization made of parents and caregivers whose children receive special education services through the Shrewsbury Public Schools. The SEPAC advises the school district on matters related to the education of students with disabilities, and provides a forum for parents and caregivers to share experiences and exchange information. We are excited to offer this workshop and hope you will join us to learn more about this.

Date: Monday, December 5, 2022
Time: 6:30-8:30pm on Zoom
Registration Link:
<https://fcsn-org.zoom.us/j/84461212121>

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

Basic Rights: Understanding the IEP

- December 2022 in partnership with the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)
- This is a free workshop that meets the district requirement and provides families with information about their rights
- Well-attended and very informative

Collaborative Problem Solving Workshop

- February 2023 in partnership with Northborough/Southborough and Nashoba SEPACs and presented by Karen Kraut
- 81 registrants, approximately 20 from Shrewsbury
- What is Collaborative Problem Solving? (source: thinkkids.org)
 - “Kids with challenging behavior are tragically misunderstood and mistreated. Rewards and punishments don’t work and often make things worse. Thankfully, there’s another way. But it requires a big shift in mindset.
 - Helping kids with challenging behavior requires understanding why they struggle in the first place. Our Collaborative Problem Solving approach recognizes what research has pointed to for years – that kids with challenging behavior are already trying hard. They don’t lack the *will* to behave well. They lack the *skills* to behave well.”

The flyer features a dark blue background with a yellow and white circular graphic on the right containing a photo of Karen Kraut. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with icons for date, location, and time.

Collaborative Problem Solving Workshop
From Conflict to Collaboration: A Parenting Framework That Brings Out the Best in You and Your Child/Teen
with **Karen Kraut**
Parenting Coach, specializing in Collaborative Problem Solving

FEB 15
Virtual (on Zoom)
7PM TO 8:30PM

Sponsored By Shrewsbury, Northboro/Southboro and Nashoba SEPACs

Register at shrewsburysepac.org/cps

Logos for Shrewsbury SEPAC, Northboro/Southboro SEPAC, and Nashoba SEPAC are at the bottom.

ADHD Essentials Presentation

- March 2023 in partnership with Northborough/Southborough and Nashoba SEPACs, presented by Brendan Mahan
- 210 registrants, approximately 25 from Shrewsbury
- Very popular and well-received presentation which included information about the role of executive function, the emotional impact of ADHD and practical strategies for home and school



The flyer is for the 'ADHD Essentials' presentation. It features a dark blue background with a white and yellow geometric design. At the top left, there are icons of a hexagon and a circle. The title 'ADHD ESSENTIALS' is prominently displayed in large, bold, white and red letters. Below the title, the speaker's name 'Brendan Mahan' is listed. A circular portrait of Brendan Mahan, a man with glasses and a beard, is shown on the right side. The flyer lists the topics to be covered, including 'Why the Name ADHD Stinks', 'How the Name Affects People's Perception of the Disorder', 'Look-A-Likes & Comorbidities', 'The Role of Executive Function', 'Brendan's "Wall of Awful" Model: The Emotional Impact of ADHD', 'Lifestyle Strategies for Managing ADHD', and 'Practical Tips for Managing ADHD at Home and school'. It also provides registration information, including the website www.nspac.org/adhd and the date and time: 22ND MARCH 6:30 PM. The flyer is sponsored by Nashoba SEPAC, as indicated by the logo and text at the top right.

SPONSORED BY:
Nashoba SEPAC

ADHD ESSENTIALS

SPEAKER
BRENDAN MAHAN

Brendan Mahan, M.Ed., MS., host of the "ADHD Essentials" podcast, is an internationally known ADHD/Executive Function consultant/coach, and a highly engaging speaker.

TOPICS THAT WILL BE COVERED INCLUDE:

- Why the Name ADHD Stinks
- How the Name Affects People's Perception of the Disorder
- Look-A-Likes & Comorbidities
- The Role of Executive Function
- Brendan's "Wall of Awful" Model: The Emotional Impact of ADHD
- Lifestyle Strategies for Managing ADHD
- Practical Tips for Managing ADHD at Home and school

Register at:
www.nspac.org/adhd
<https://www.adhdessentials.com/>

22ND MARCH
6:30 PM



Coffee & Connect

- Our Coffee & Connect events were popular this year, and a great way to connect in person and support one another
- Average attendance was approximately 6 people
- Many supportive and productive conversations were had, relationships formed and there is continued interest in offering these
- Holding similar events in the evenings is a consideration for next year

Frequently
Discussed
Topics-

Positives

SPS Teachers and Staff

Transportation and
Staffing

RISE Program

Frequently
Discussed
Topics-
Opportunities

Referrals for initial
eligibility evaluations

Accessibility and inclusivity of
school playgrounds and
facilities

Supporting students and
teachers/staff around
disability-related behaviors

Looking Ahead

- Continue offering high quality presentations and workshops on areas of interest to our members, and continue fundraising to support these
- Meet regularly with the District to talk about frequently discussed topics
- Continue to provide opportunities for in person connection while maintaining the accessibility that comes with virtual meetings and events
- Survey our membership to identify areas of need and to gather feedback
- Improve our communications (website, newsletters, brochures etc.), with a particular focus on reaching a wider range of families



Connect with SEPAC

- <http://www.shrewsburysepac.org>
- shrewsbury.sepac@gmail.com
- Facebook: Shrewsbury SEPAC (private group)

The image features a light-colored wood-grain background. In the center, there is a white rectangular box with a thin green border. Inside this box, the words "Thank You!" are written in a black, serif font. A thin green horizontal line is positioned below the text. On either side of the white box, there is a thick, solid black horizontal bar that overlaps the box's edge.

Thank You!