



Berlin/Boylston Public Schools Special Education Parent Advisory Council

2013-2014 Year End Report

August 27, 2014

Dear School Committee Members,

The Berlin-Boylston SEPAC is proud to share our activities in this summary from this past school year with you. The 2013-14 school year was a very busy and successful one for our members.

Officers:

Boylston Co-President:	Christi Stille (2 yr. term expires 2015)
Vice-President:	Karen Groccia (1 yr. term expires 2014)
Secretary:	Rochelle Peret (1 yr. term expires 2014)
Treasurer:	Lori Michalak (2 yr. term expires 2015)

All-School Involvement:

SEPAC members continue to serve on various groups in the districts and attend School Committee Meetings. We have representatives involved in BMS LINK, BES PTO, Tahanto PTO, as well as School Councils at BES and Tahanto. We also have members involved in the Literacy Committee.

SEPAC sent representatives who presented information at Open Houses at the elementary schools, Kindergarten Orientations, and Preschool Info Night to introduce ourselves and to inform parents about our role in the district. We thank the school administrators for their continued support in inviting SEPAC to speak to parents and raise awareness of the group.

Community Involvement:

We attended Visions of the Community 2014 in Boston this past school year. This conference presented workshops on different subjects of interest within the special education community. It also aided in relationship building and program ideas.

Our Officers has been active in helping the West Boylston SEPAC get organized. We supported their events through attendance and marketing, as well as giving informal advice to their new Executive Board.

SEPAC Programs:

SEPAC once again hosted National Inclusive Schools week in December. The theme was "Giving Gifts-what gifts do you have to share?" this year at the elementary school level. This curriculum-based writing project was well-received at both BES and BMS. Every classroom at BES participated. More than 75% of BMS classrooms were involved as well. At Tahanto, student groups again drove the theme of inclusion into various events around the Middle and High School. The events received wonderful feedback from the student body.

We had several guest speakers throughout the year come and speak regarding various educational topics. Our guest speakers this year included:

1. October 2013: Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) presented Transition 101: High School to College.
2. December 2013: Realizing Children's Strengths Consulting presented: Incidental Teaching
3. January 2014: Karen Molnar, PPS Director, presented the Annual Parent's Rights and Responsibilities.
4. March 2014: ADHD Insights was well received when presented by Carol Gignoux, PhD
5. May 2014: Nadine Ekstrom was able to give parents insights and techniques into de-escalating challenging behaviors and situations.

Our membership continues to grow! We have grown from 88 to 93 members by the end of the year.

Excellent Educator Awards have become an annual event for SEPAC. We were so pleased to honor 10 teachers and staff who have significantly impacted the education of our children. 5 were nominated from Boylston Elementary, 5 from Tahanto. Educators received a certificate and the letter from the parent(s) who nominated them. All teachers names were published in a press release to local newspapers and honored in the presence of their colleagues at a staff meeting. A copy of the award was also given to the administration to place into their permanent records and a press release.

SEPAC conducted a Lyman Pie fundraiser in the Fall to increase our scholarship fund. We were so pleased to be able to award two \$300 scholarships in June to Alexandra Strzelewicz of Boylston and Nathan Laverdure, from Berlin.

Please check out our updated website at www.sepac-berlin-boylston.org! All of our minutes, end of year reports, and upcoming events are listed there. There is also a section of special education on-line resources and membership information.

SEPAC was successful in achieving many of our goals for the past school year, and continue to strive to increase our presence and awareness in the districts.

We will continue to:

- Maintain strong communication with Director of Pupil Personnel Services and the School Committees.
- Attend district school meetings and give input to programs and policies.
- Provide useful workshops for parents.
- Work with all three principals to increase their awareness of our mission and activities, as well as promote our group to teachers and staff.
- Provide an ongoing resource to parents on the special education process and laws.
- Continue to bring quality speakers to parents and the community.

Our goals for the 2013-2014 School Year include:

1. Maintain the SEPAC website, updating and enhancing its content.
2. Continue to maintain a strong presence during National Inclusive Schools Week.
3. Invite staff and administrators to our events and presentations that may be related specifically to their field.
4. Continue Excellent Educator Awards and Senior Scholarship recipients.
5. Hold a Lyman Pie fundraiser to raise funds to support our scholarship goals.
6. Work towards establishing a Parent-to-Parent Support Group in the district.

7. Institute "Skype" options for as many of our programs as possible.
8. Update and add to our Membership List.

SEPAC's board would like to sincerely thank the Berlin-Boylston School Committee and the school administration for their continued support of our activities. It is gratifying as a parent to know that your voice is listened to and your opinion is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Christina Stille
Karen Groccia
Rochelle Peret
Lori Michalak