

SPECIAL EDITION

Jan. 2010

Volume 1, No. 5

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,	Heath - Pam Palmucci	Pierce - Linda Strother	Karen Szeto
Dawn Edell	Out of district - Nancy Parker, Mary Ann McDonough, Liz Walpert		
PTO - Ben Norton	School Committee - Glenn Cunha		

News

Brookline 2010 Community Climate Challenge; SEPAC eco-team(s) forming

The kick-off celebration for Brookline's major climate action initiative takes place Sunday, Jan. 10, 3-5 p.m., at the new Brookline Access TV studio on the BHS campus (top floor of the Unified Arts Building, 46 Tappan St.) with live interviews, screenings, household carbon emission calculations using BATV state-of-the art computers, hors d'oeuvres from The Fireplace and other restaurants; and a special raffle for guests who bring their electric bills. As a climate action partner, Brookline SEPAC will be forming its own eco-team(s), an easy and fun way for people to come together to help the community and the planet. You may sign up for an eco-team at the launch event or through brooklinesepac@gmail.com. For more information go to www.brookline2010.org and www.climatechangeactionbrookline.org.

Back on the Web

After being dormant for much of the past year, the Brookline SEPAC website, at www.brooklinesepac.org, is finally back up and running. Thanks very much to Robin Friedman of Visual Velocity, who generously donated her time for the rehab of the site. Please visit us soon!

Election scheduled for SEPAC co-chair

According to SEPAC by-laws a special election needs to be held to replace a co-chair who has resigned. Accordingly, at the Jan. 27 *Knowing Your Legal Rights & Responsibilities* we will have a brief meeting to hold an election for interim co-chair to complete Ben Norton's term. At present, Patrick Gabridge, SEPAC liaison at Lawrence School, has been volunteering in the position and is a candidate. Additional nominations may be made at the meeting or in advance through brooklinesepac@gmail.com.

Brookline Education Foundation Annual Spelling Bee

Calling all spellers!! The BEF Annual Spelling Bee is being held on March 14. Brookline SEPAC has the honor and pleasure of fielding a team each year. This is a fun, friendly-competitive event and a happy community-builder. If spelling is not your strength, you can go for the costume prize! For more information or to volunteer for our team, please write us at brooklinesepac@gmail.com.

Opening for newsletter positions

Do you like receiving news and upcoming events and other features of *Special Edition* each month? Do you enjoy reading a lengthy scroll down with little in the way of interesting formatting? Help us improve our newsletter! Brookline SEPAC seeks volunteers to prepare content and/or to edit and format our newsletter. Help us produce a better-looking and easier-to-read publication. Please write brooklinesepac@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

Knowing Your Legal Rights & Responsibilities – Wed., Jan. 27, 6:30-8:00 p.m., MLK Room at BHS

Dan Ahearn of Landmark School Outreach will present valuable information regarding children's educational rights. This meeting will cover basic legal rights and responsibilities, more complicated aspects of the law such as how to get a good IEP, 504, or behavior plan, what to do if you feel your plan is not being implemented properly, and recent changes to Section 504 and their impact on your children. Whether you are new to special education or an experienced advocate for your child, this is a presentation not to be missed.

Dan Ahearn practices disability, special education, education, and children's law and provides consultation and training on legal issues for schools and parents. He is a senior attorney at the Disability Law Center and director of Landmark Outreach.

Light refreshments served; please bring your own cup.

A brief special meeting for the purpose of electing our interim co-chair will follow the presentation (see News, above).

Heath School parents' gathering

Heath School parents of children on IEPs and 504 plans will meet on Thursday, Jan 21, 8:00-9:00 a.m. in the cafeteria. Coffee provided. Parents may email any issues they'd like to put on the agenda to ppalmucci@rcn.com.

SEPAC-SPED Monthly Meetings

SEPAC chairs meet with SPED administrators monthly on the third Friday starting at 8:00 a.m. in Town Hall. Meetings are open to all. 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: January 15, February 26, March 28, April 16, May 21 and, tentatively, June 18. Meetings are held on the 5th floor or alternate site as posted.

From School to Work and Independence: Practical and Legal Information for Effective Transition Planning – Thurs., Feb. 11, 7-9 p.m., MLK Room, BHS

Attorneys Pamela Coveney and Jeanine Solomon, Disability Law Center

SEPAC General Meeting and Update on Program Review: Phase I Results – March 18, time and place tba

Special Education College and Gap Year Night – Mar. 24, 7-9 pm, MLK Room, BHS

SEPAC General Meeting – Tues. 4/13, 7-8 p.m., Driscoll School cafeteria

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

SPED Open Forum with Superintendent Lupini–May 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m.,Town Hall 103 Liaison Appreciation, Planning Meeting and Election of Officers–date TBA, May/June

Guest column

Amy Martin, Director of Program Review and Grants

Amy Martin is Director of Program Review and Grants, which is part of the Office of Teaching and Learning for the Brookline Public Schools. In her column she provides an update on Program Review of Special Education, which is coming to the completion of Phase I (data collection).

The Special Education Program Review has been underway since November of 2008. The eighteen Program Review committee members form a group that is representative of preK-12+, different schools, roles, and perspectives. There are teachers (5), parents (4), building administrators (3), special education administrators (3), and system level administrators (3) on the committee. The committee has worked diligently for the past year, gathering and reviewing information about the program. This September, Dr. Denise Rochlin, new Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, began working with the committee, taking on the role of committee co-chair, with Amy Martin, Director of Program Review and Grants.

As part of the review process, the committee has developed a vision for Special Education in Brookline that is based in research and best practice, and informed by all of our stakeholders. The information that has been reviewed by the committee includes the Special Education Coordinated Review findings (conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education), and extensive program information on policies and practices, staffing, professional development, etc. The committee has worked with Oscar Loureiro, Director of Data Management, to review student achievement data and demographic information about the program. The committee also worked with Dr. Donna Lehr and a team of graduate students from Boston University's School of Education to gather qualitative data from parents, teachers, and administrators through surveys and focus groups. Last winter, all parents in the district were invited to take the survey, with 330 parents responding. In addition, over thirty parents participated in focus groups led by Dr. Lehr.

While the committee reviews the array of data and information, they are also keeping in mind the many changes currently underway in the department that begin to address areas for improvement that have been identified through the review process. Findings and next steps will be summarized in a report to the School Committee. This report is scheduled to be presented at the March 11, 2010 School Committee meeting. Immediately after the presentation, the report and presentation slides will be available on the Public Schools of Brookline website, under Teaching and Learning/Program Review.

-Amy Martin

In the Community

Siblings Only event – Sunday, Jan. 10, 2-3:30 p.m., The Clayroom, 1408 Beacon St (Coolidge Corner), Brookline

The Friendship Circle invites kids who have siblings with special needs to a special SIBLINGS ONLY event. Come have fun painting ceramics, socializing, and more!

Cost is \$5. To RSVP email info@friendshipcircleboston.org or call 617.378.5765.

Planning a Life, Federation for Children with Special Needs Transition Conference – Fri-Sat Feb 5-6, 2010, Federation's Boston office, 1135 Tremont St. Suite 420, Boston

The Federation for Children with Special Needs presents this two-day conference, packed with transition planning information and resources for and about students in special education ages 14-22, to educate parents on what they need to know, when they need to ask, and whom to go to for answers. Transition planning needs to be on schedule to insure a systematic, purposeful, and individualized educational experience.

For more information or to register 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>.

From www.spedchildmass.com (go to this website for more information on the following programs):

- **Bullying and Teasing Asperger Kids** – Jan. 19, 7:30-9:00 p.m., Aspergers Association of New England office in Watertown
- **ADHD Parent Training** – Jan. 25 to Mar 29, Boston Children's Hospital Developmental Medicine Center
- **Winter fun of adapted sport programs** – free programs at state parks offered by the DCR, including instruction, adaptive equipment and assistance

Legal Corner

Do you have the right to observe your child in his or her special education program or proposed program or to designate an independent evaluator to observe?

Do you have the right to an independent educational evaluation if you are not satisfied with the one provided by your school district? Who pays for an independent evaluation?

Do you have the right to insist on the attendance of certain members of the IEP Team at your IEP Team Meeting?

Do you have the right to appeal decisions about your child's individual services that you do not agree with?

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES!

Read the "***Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards***", which the School District is required to provide to all parents at least once a year.

Come to "***Knowing Your Legal Rights and Responsibilities***" with Dan Ahearn on Wed., Jan. 27, 2010 (see Upcoming Events, above).

Studies

Supporting Physical Activity and Recreation in the Community (SPARC)

The UMMS-Shriver Center in Waltham, MA, is screening and enrolling participants for a new research study that is a physical activity and walking program for teens ages 12-17 who have a moderate level of autism. The program, called the "SPARC Walking Club" will take place 2 days/week at the Newton and Malden YMCAs and will run for 16 weeks, starting in February. For more information contact the SPARC study team at 781.642.0259 or shriver.study@umassmed.edu

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.

Thinking of summer camp already?

SPED Child and Teen provides an extensive list of camp programs for children with disabilities at http://www.spedchildmass.com/camp_2009.

JCC Maccabi Camp Kingswood's Zohar Program offers overnight camping in Bridgton, ME for Jewish adolescents aged 10-20 with special needs, including developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, neurological, and learning challenges, as well as family camp. Go to www.kingswood.org, scroll over "Facilities and Programs" and select Zohar and Zohar family camp

The Drama-Play Connection offers children and teens to learn social skills through the art of drama. Campers make a full hour-long movie over the course of the summer, along with engaging in traditional camp activities such as outdoor sports, swimming, arts and crafts, and weekly field trips. A Counselor-In-Training program is offered for older teens. The camp is located at Regis College in Weston. For more information visit www.dramaplayconnection.org.

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

join our e-distribution at <http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/psb/templates/lyris.aspx>

Brookline SEPAC is a Brookline 2010 climate action partner

