

What is SEPAC?

A Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or SEPAC (sea-pack) is a district-level, parent-driven group that provides input to the school committee on system-level challenges in special education and related services and is a requirement of MA Gen Law Chapter 71B: Section 3.

How can SEPAC help me?

A SEPAC can help direct parents to resources, information, processes, and laws that will help them to have informed conversations about their child's education.



Who should I contact?

When you have a specific concern, talk to an employee of the district starting with your child's teacher or therapists. If that does not resolve the issue, begin working your way up the chain of command.

The next step up is the principal, the school's special education liaison or team chair, the director of special education, the superintendent, and then the School Committee.

At any point in time, you can reach out to SEPAC for resources, support, or to voice concern with district policies, practices, and programs.

Contact Us!

Email: consolsepac@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/RCMHS.OES.PCS.SEPAC>

Additional Resources

Federation for Children with Special Needs

<https://fcsn.org/>

info@fcsn.org

The PTIC Call Center is one of the free services at FCSN. PTIC helps families and professionals with questions about supports, resources, and rights for those with special needs.

MA Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr28.html>

Laws and regulations related to special education are available on DESE's website.

Problem Resolution System Office MA DESE

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/prs/>

Phone: 781-338-3700

Email: compliance@doe.mass.edu

Problem Resolution System (PRS) handles complaints that allege a school or a district is not meeting legal requirements for education.

Bureau of Special Education Appeals

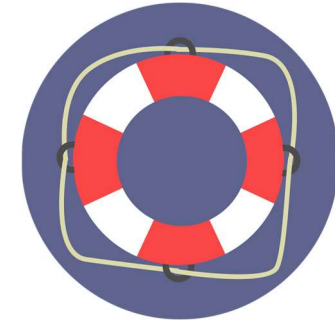
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/bureau-of-special-education-appeals>

Phone: 781-397-4750

BSEA conducts due process hearings and renders Rulings and Decisions concerning eligibility, evaluation, placement, individualized education programs (IEP), provision of special education and procedural protections for students with disabilities.

Orange Elementary, Petersham, and Mahar SEPAC

SEPAC



Supporting
Our
Special Needs Families

Are you looking for information on special education services?

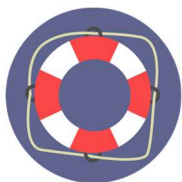
Seeking to increase your understanding of your child's basic rights as a student?

Looking for parent training on navigating the system or finding resources for your child?

SEPAC can help!



What do I need to know?



You are not alone.

SEPAC provides a network of parents with similar experience, interest, and need.

Support, information, and training is available in your local community.

Contact SEPAC for a schedule of parent workshops, meetings, and support groups.

School Districts' Contacts:

Orange Elementary School (OES): 978-544-0018

Petersham Center School (PCS): 978-724-3363

Ralph C Mahar (RCM): 978-544-2542

Abby Fairman, RCM Special Education Administrative Assistant: 978-544-2535, afairman@rcmahar.org

Sheri Whitcomb, OES PCS Special Education Administrative Assistant: 978-544-6980, swhitcomb@rcmahar.org

Dr. Phil Saisa, Interim Special Education Director: psaisa@rcmahar.org

Joey Kotright, Special Education Supervisor: jkotright@rcmahar.org

Where should I start?

The district shall conduct, in cooperation with the parent advisory council, at least one workshop



annually within the school district on the rights of students and their parents and guardians under state and federal special education laws. This workshop is often called "**Basic Rights in Special Education.**"

504 Plan Information

Section 504 is a federal civil rights law passed in 1973. It bans disability discrimination at public schools and covers students of all ages. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for enforcing section 504. Public K–12 schools must provide a 504 plan when a child's disability interferes with the ability to learn. This is part of a child's right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

504 plan supports may include:

- Accommodations, like extended time on tests, using a calculator, sensory breaks
- Modifications, like reduced workload
- Assistive technology, like audiobooks, recorders, FM systems
- Support from specialized staff, like nurses, counselors, or therapists

For more information:

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Ed.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links/sec504.html>

Attorney General's Civil Rights Division

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/civil-rights-protections-in-education-and-schools>

Civil Rights at (617) 963-2917

Disability Rights at (617) 963-2939

TTY at (617) 727-4765

IEP Information

An IEP is an Individualized Education Plan and is defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). An IEP is developed by a team composed of teachers, therapists, administrators, and parents. If your child is 14, they will also be involved. An IEP is developed if a student is found eligible. An IEP is needed when a student has goals that require specialized instruction in order to access curriculum.

Students eligible for special education are between ages 3-21, have a qualifying disability, lack progress as a result of disability, and need specially designed instruction or services to make effective progress.

Key words and phrases parents should know:

- Team Meeting
- Consent for Evaluation
- Annual Review
- Progress Report
- Independent Educational Evaluation
- Eligibility Determination
- IEP Timeline
- Child Find Mandate
- Service Grid
- Determination of Placement
- Stay Put Rights

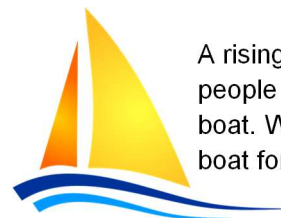
For more information:

Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/>

MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Ed.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iep/>



A rising tide doesn't raise people who don't have a boat. We have to build the boat for them. We have to