



# Natick Special Education Parent Advisory Council

April 23, 2018 presentation to School Committee

# AGENDA AND PRESENTERS

## Topic

## Presenter

## Additional Participants

### **SEPAC: Intro and Overview**

Linda Tardif

2017–2018 SEPAC Board: Chair

Shai Fuxman

2017–2018 Brown School Liaison

2018–2019 Board Volunteer

MA Special Education Advisory

Council member

### **Collaboration Opportunities**

Cathy Corcoran

2017–2018 SEPAC Board:  
Communications Coordinator

Leah Parker-Moldover

Natick Parent Connections

2018–2019 Board Volunteer

### **District-Wide Priority Recommendations**

Dani Newland

2017–2018 Johnson School Liaison  
2018–2019 Board Volunteer



# SEPAC RESPONSIBILITIES

## Responsibilities (per MA law)

- **Advise the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities**
- Meet regularly with School Officials
- Establish Bylaws
- Receive assistance from School Committee (as needed)
- In cooperation with the district, provide an annual workshop on the rights of students and their parents and guardians under state and federal special education laws (Basic Rights Training)

MA law: [603 CMR 28.07\(4\)](#) and [603 CMR 28.03\(1\)\(a\)\(4\)](#)

## Additional Focus

- Build awareness of SEPAC with parents in the district
- Guide parents on the IEP process
- Answer questions and/or suggest where parents can get their questions answered
- Offer workshops and speakers
- Work to build a community for Special Education parents, caregivers, and families

## What we don't do

- Offer legal, medical, or professional advice
- Resolve specific IEP issues
- Attend IEP meetings with parents



## WHO WE ARE: Parent Volunteers

The Natick Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a volunteer organization of parents and caregivers dedicated to building a network for families whose children receive or are requesting support services through an IEP/504. **SEPAC provides a parent's perspective of information, support and recommendations.**

### Board Member Roles

- Chair
- Secretary
- Communications Coordinator
- Programs Coordinator

### School and Out of District Liaisons

- Act as liaison between school and SEPAC
- Connect with school's PTO and share SEPAC info
- Build awareness about SEPAC at his/her school
- Attend SEPAC meetings and provide parent feedback to SEPAC Board



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Speakers / Events (with Attendee #s)

- Sarah Ward/Executive Function (80 / 350)
- Making & Keeping Friends (60)
- Metrowest Resource Fair (450)
- Developing your child's self-determination skills (15)
- Strategies for Executive Function and Stress (85)
- Co-hosting monthly "Coffee with Student Services"
- Social/Family events

### Natick Parent Connections

- A parent network navigating special education

### Communications/Awareness

- Website: [sepacnatick.org](http://sepacnatick.org)
- 500 member email list
- Natick SEPAC Facebook page
- SEPAC Flyer

### Basic Rights Training (27)

- Explains the process and laws to request support services/evaluation



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Natick Parent Connections:  
A Parent Network  
Navigating Special  
Education**

**May 15, 7 pm**

Morse Library Community Rm

**Increasing Your Child's  
Self-Determination and  
Positive Outcomes**

**May 22, 7 pm**

Natick High School Lecture Hall

**Annual SEPAC Elections,  
Recap and RTI Overview**

Guest speakers: Interim Supt  
Anna Nolin and Asst. Supt Tim Luff

**May 30, 7 pm**

Natick Town Hall - 3rd flr

**More info at: [sepacnatick.org](http://sepacnatick.org)**

# COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

Special Education Experience



## COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

### Based on Parent Feedback

Feedback collected via:

- Email/Phone calls to SEPAC
- School Liaisons feedback
- Natick Parent Connections
- Facebook postings
- Student Services Coffees

Following slides highlight opportunities:

- SEPAC and School Committee
- SEPAC and Student Services
  - ▷ Enhance/Expand Survey
  - ▷ Demystify the Intervention process
  - ▷ Effective Social/Emotional progress
  - ▷ Collect Data to understand IEP Trends





## SCHOOL COMMITTEE/SEPAC PARTNERSHIP

Opportunity	SEPAC Recommendations
<b>Build Awareness:</b> With ~ 20% of the school budget allocated for special education, deepen School Committee's knowledge and understanding of Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Commit to collaborate to ensure effective progress and accountability on SEPAC recommendations</li><li>■ Work with School Committee SEPAC liaison to identify specific ways to improve understanding and consideration of Special Education community</li><li>■ Include a SEPAC member or Special Education parent on Superintendent Search Committee</li><li>■ School Committee elections: SEPAC to continue to request candidates to respond to Special Education questions</li></ul>



## STUDENT SERVICES/SEPAC COLLABORATION

### Student Services Survey

#### **Enhance and Expand Student Services Survey to:**

- Capture more feedback on the Special Education experience
- Support anonymous feedback
- Continue to increase survey participation
- Develop routines with SEPAC to review results to help create action plans/priorities with Student Services



## STUDENT SERVICES/SEPAC COLLABORATION



Aligns with District  
Recommendation

Mr. Tim Luff and Dr. Anna Nolin  
will provide a RTI Overview at  
the May 30 SEPAC meeting

### Demystify the Intervention/Evaluation Process

- **Provide clear information:** Examine ways to provide parents clarity/transparency on the Response to Intervention (RTI)/Evaluation process
- **Minimize delays:** Clarify when a principal responds vs. the Evaluation Team Lead and be transparent to parent on their options
- **Support teachers:** Ensure teachers are comfortable with their role in the RTI/Evaluation process



## STUDENT SERVICES/SEPAC COLLABORATION



Aligns with District  
Recommendation

### Social/Emotional Progress

**Effective Social/Emotional progress:** Work with Student Services to highlight the importance of social/emotional development in the evaluation process even when academic benchmarks are being met

- This is critical for children with a diagnosis where mastering these skills is more challenging and the gap widens as they get older (e.g., Autism)
- This need to be addressed in both initial and ongoing evaluations



## STUDENT SERVICES/SEPAC COLLABORATION

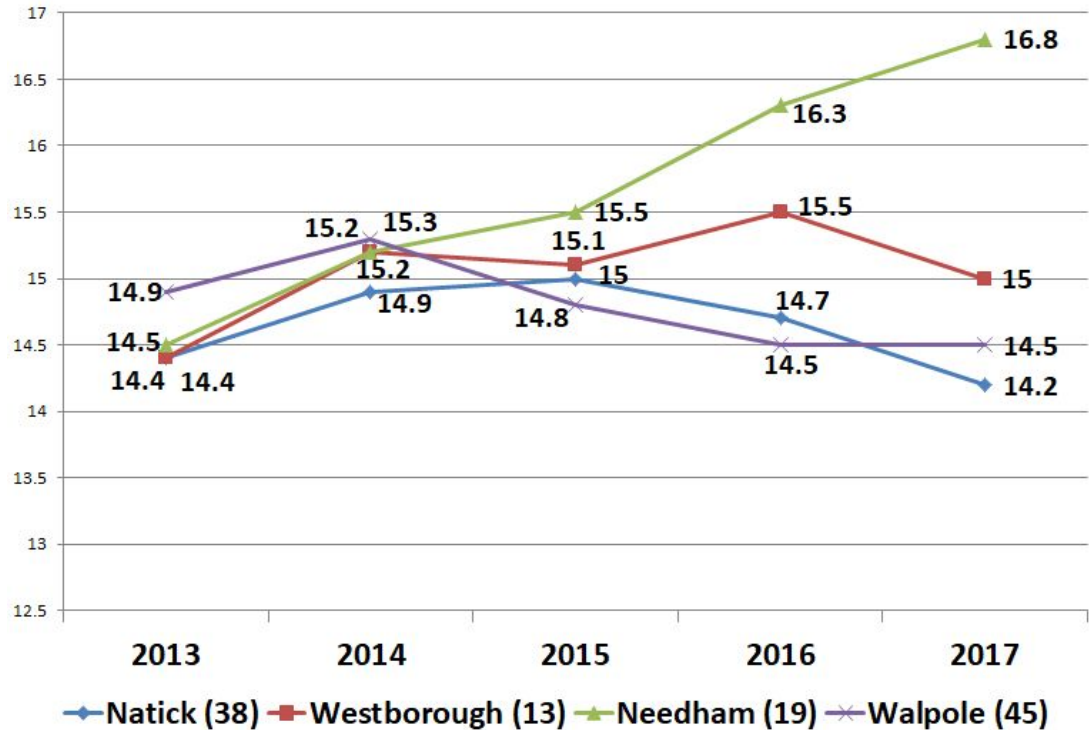
Data Source: [MA DOE District and School profiles](#)  
(% Students with Disability = % Students with IEPs)

### Data to understand IEP Trends

Collect and share additional data to monitor IEP trends such as:

- RTI results
- Referral data
  - ▷ From Parent vs. RTI/Teacher
  - ▷ Referrals vs. Eligibility
- Academic performance

**2013–2017: % of Students on IEPs Natick/Westborough/Needham/Walpole**  
(District ranking by Boston Magazine 2017)



# DISTRICT-WIDE PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

To benefit our entire School Community



## DISTRICT WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

### **SEPAC's 3 priorities to benefit the entire school community:**

- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Inclusion
- Social/Emotional Learning (SEL)



## AWARENESS: RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

### Expand upon the existing RTI District goal:

- Develop an online parent resource guide and proactively educate families on RTI including:
  - ▷ What is Response to Intervention (RTI)?
  - ▷ How is it implemented and monitored?
  - ▷ When/How are parents notified? How can they track their child's progress?
- Leverage RTI data to proactively address common trends (Exec. Function) and share efforts with parent community





# INCLUSION

## Expand on this District-Wide priority:

- Develop more inclusion opportunities at all levels
  - ▷ Create regularly scheduled reverse inclusion
  - ▷ Establish better access to after school activities
  - ▷ Develop more relationship building activities
  - ▷ Design more inclusion in content areas
  - ▷ Create more co-taught classrooms
- Ensure balance between inclusion, academic progress and self-confidence
- Better leverage assistive technology to support inclusion
- Educate parents/staff on and expand implementation of [Universal Design](#)



# SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

## Recommend as a 2018–2019 District Goal:

- Dedicated support staff:
  - ▷ Appoint a Social/Emotional Learning Director
  - ▷ Social “Coaches” to support kids at recess/unstructured time
- Implement training/curriculum including:
  - ▷ SEL professional development for staff and evening parent sessions
    - ▷ Partner with Spark Kindness to align school/community efforts
  - ▷ Provide robust online resources for both staff and parents
  - ▷ Offer SEL afterschool activities for students (Middle school: 2:15–3pm)



### SEL includes:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making

### Reference Links:

- ▷ [North Andover Public Schools](#)
- ▷ [CASEL](#)
- ▷ [Social Emotional Alliance for MA](#)



## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### Parent Awareness/ Communication:

- Expand existing RTI District goal to include parent communications/information on RTI
- Commit to proactively provide parents with consistent and clear information on the Intervention/Evaluation process from all sources: principals, teachers, and student services staff
- Enhance/expand Student Services survey
- Collect and share data to monitor IEP trends

### Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) and Inclusion:

- Set SEL as 2018-2019 District Goal focusing on staff/curriculum/training to implement
- Ensure Social/Emotional development is receiving full consideration as part of the IEP process and that children with diagnoses that make them vulnerable to widening gaps receive appropriate support
- Expand Inclusion opportunities



# Get Involved!

[www.sepacnatick.org](http://www.sepacnatick.org)

[naticksepac@gmail.com](mailto:naticksepac@gmail.com)

Facebook: Natick SEPAC



## RESOURCES

- [Parent's Guide to Special Education](#)
- [Natick Parent Connections](#)
- [Natick SEPAC Resources](#)
- [Federation for Children with Special Needs \(FCSN\) Advice Hotline](#)
- [Basic Rights Training Schedule](#) (free) offered by FCSN

More resources posted at [www.sepacnatick.org](http://www.sepacnatick.org)