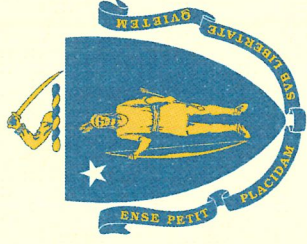


The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



A Proclamation

Whereas, The year 2020 marks the 334th anniversary of the Massachusetts Law requiring the establishment of a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAAC) by the school committee of each city, town, or school district; and

Whereas, During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education advised Special Education Directors that consultation with SEPAAC leadership is an essential element of developing and improving systems for the provision of remote services; and

Whereas, SEPAACs are charged with advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities, and regularly meeting with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs; and

Whereas, Membership in a SEPAAC shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties; and

Whereas, The SEPAACs are self-governing and parent-led; they shall establish bylaws regarding officers and operational procedures and govern itself pursuant to those bylaws, and shall be chaired by parents and other interested parties; and

Whereas, In the course of their duties, the SEPAACs shall receive assistance from the school committee, without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources; and

Whereas, The district shall conduct, in cooperation with the SEPAAC, 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; and

Whereas, Each SEPAAC shall establish their own Mission Statement, working toward greater understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in their community, promoting a network of parents, and providing a forum for sharing; and

Whereas, A collaborative working relationship between the SEPAAC and the district is essential to provide a fair and appropriate education for students with special needs; and

Whereas, SEPAACs shall ensure state law, guidance, and regulations are consistently applied for all Massachusetts special needs students; and

Whereas, SEPAACs shall promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance, and inclusion; and

Whereas, SEPAACs are made up of parents and other volunteers who give of their already limited time and resources to advocate for their children and all children in the community,

Now, Therefore, I, Charles D. Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim November, 2020, to be,

SEPAAC AWARENESS MONTH

And urge all the citizens of the Commonwealth to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance.

Given at the Executive Chamber in Boston, this first day of November, in the year two thousand and twenty, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and forty-fourth.

BY HIS EXCELLENCE

Handwritten signature of Charles D. Baker in blue ink.

CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Handwritten signature of Karyn E. Polito in blue ink.

KARYN E. POLITO
LT. GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Handwritten signature of William Francis Galvin in blue ink.

WILLIAM FRANCIS GALVIN
SECRETARY OF THE COMMONWEALTH

God Save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts