

**WCSD Special Education Parent Advisory Council  
1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report to Board of Education  
July, 2004**

**Council Seats**

Ray Healey, WCSD

Chairperson: Karen Lynch

Co-Chair: Steve Boffoli

Secretary: Gina Andress

Report prepared by SEPAC secretary Gina Andress

**Purpose of Report**

The main purpose of this report is to chronicle the decisions and actions of the Wappingers Central School District Special Education Parent Advisory Council for the school year 2003-04. In 2004 SEPAC adopted By-laws that model the nationally recognized Massachusetts SEPAC. In conjunction with the by-laws an annual report will be submitted to the board of education.

## **History of SEPAC**

In 2000 Dr. Ray Healey organized a study to gather recommendations on the establishment of a system-wide Special Education Parent Advisory Committee. The recommendations were submitted to Wayne Gersen in a letter dated June 19, 2000. As a result SEPAC was begun.

SEPAC members consist of parents and WCSD staff. The Council seats that exist are: chair, co-chair, secretary. Meetings take place the third Tuesday of each month at Hollowbrook.

## **Accomplishments**

The Council has accomplished:

- ✓ A SEPAC open house at Hollowbrook
- ✓ Workshops with guest speakers
- ✓ Created a PRC/SEPAC brochure for distribution internally and externally
- ✓ Created a SEPAC Web site
- ✓ Created survey (on Web site)
- ✓ Created sub-committees: Autism, By-laws
- ✓ Research and implement best practices
- ✓ Continually reported to Ray Healey on improvements needed in meeting the needs of children with learning disabilities.

## **2004-05 Outlook**

In November, 2003 the chairperson, Roger Leisenring, stepped down and Karen Lynch, co-chair took the helm. SEPAC decided it was a good time to do a self-assessment and as a result decided to restructure. Members decided to model the nationally recognized and proven successful Massachusetts SEPAC. In doing so, WCSD SEPAC created its By-laws. The By-laws and meeting notes are available on the Web site (link through the WCSD homepage).

In the next year SEPAC will aim to educate and provide added support/resources:

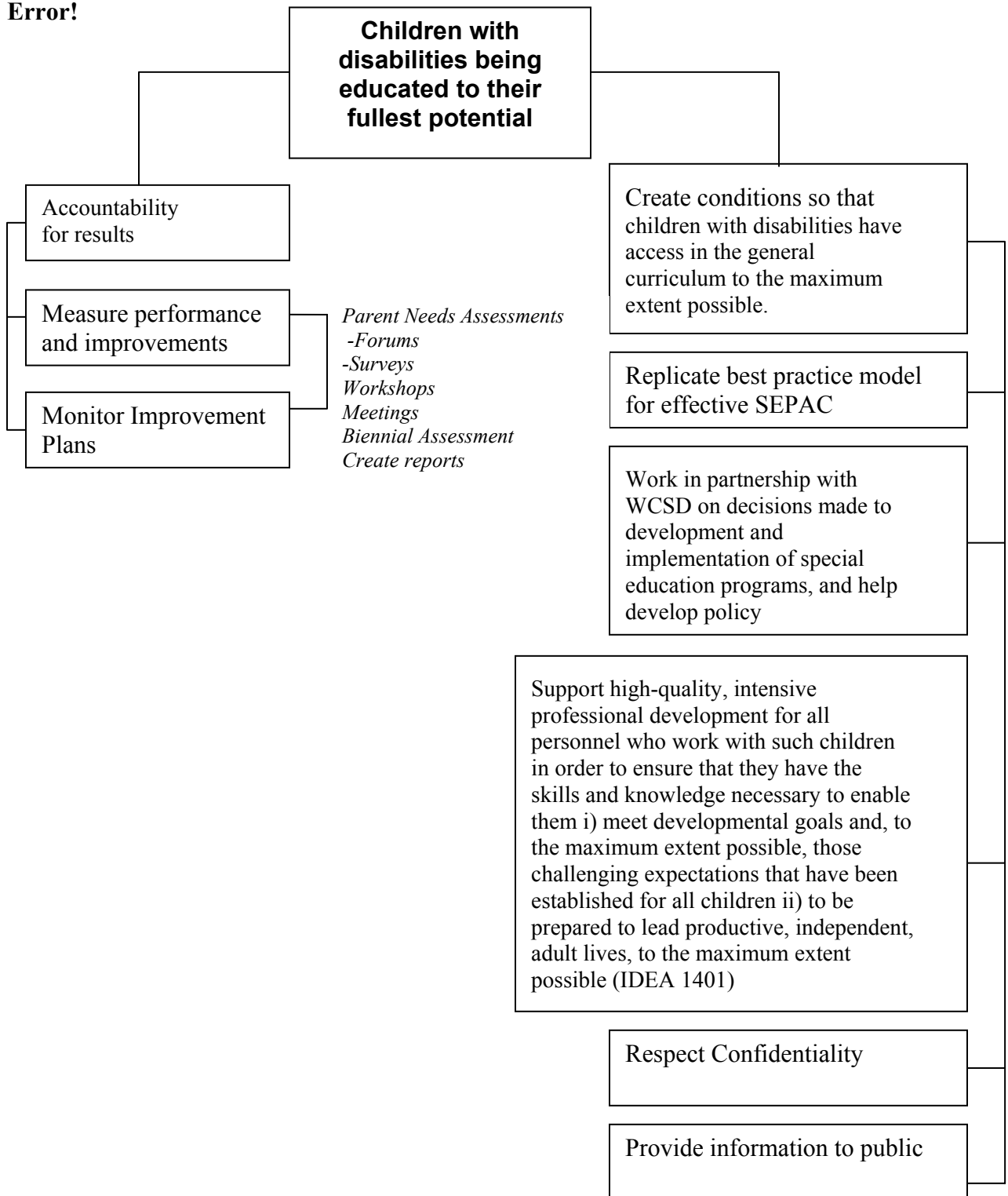
- Hold forums specific to a disability
- Complete a parent needs assessment
- Parent survey
- Open house
- An awareness campaign
- Basic rights workshop
- Create Liaisons with other WCSD organizations.
- Create sub-committees as needed
- Provide reports to WCSD

SEPAC will continue to develop practices and policy within WCSD that promote WCSD SEPAC's ability to communicate and work with parents, teachers and students, and promote its existence.

The Council looks forward to working with WCSD and the Board of Education on meeting the needs of children with disabilities.

## Goals & Strategies

**Error!**



## **Measure performance and improvements**

**Parent Needs Assessment:** In the 2004-05 school year SEPAC will be conducting parent needs assessment through forums, parent surveys, meetings and Web site. The topics will include but limited to: Autism, ADD/ADHD, how to understand evaluations and measurements, regulation changes, IEP, transition, aging-in, how to prepare for annual review, preparing for Summer (camps/tutoring), professional development.

### **Open House/Workshops/Campaign**

- In working with WCSD Parent Resource Center for the 2004-05 school year, workshops will be added to the PRC catalog and teacher page for parents of children with learning disabilities.
- An Open house will be scheduled in conjunction with either School open houses or school parent orientations.
- An awareness campaign will be organized for the 2004-05 school year.

**Sub-committee creation** – In an attempt to partner with Lloyd Yaeger's dept. SEPAC will be creating a sub-committee on Curriculum Instruction to be in place by Sept. 2004.

**Liaisons** – Gina Andress is the liaison to PTA Council. Sue Carr is the liaison and member of the character building effort headed through Tom Stella office.

**Web site update.** Educator Robin Rose is working on updating the district web site special education page for parents and educators. There will be two entries on the home page, one for parents and one for teachers. The parent section is to provide direction to parents on SE process within the district. SEPAC's Web site is the parent support site. Parent Bonnie Marshall is the Web master.

**Autism Sub-Committee.** Parent Steve Boffoli chairs the subcommittee and has updated SEPAC at its monthly meeting on sub-committee initiatives.

**Other** - Try to increase the CSE parent representative membership via building lists and communication link and training.

## **Monitoring Improvement Plans**

**Reports** – Collect and analyze data from parent needs assessments, forums, surveys, meetings and organize report to submit to Ray Healey.

- SEPAC, through its monthly meeting, will monitor the follow-up items. SEPAC submitted its first report to Dr. Healey in April 2004. Dr. Healey has provided a response. Some items have been closed out and some remain open.
- Follow-up and monitor the progress via continued parent assessments, surveys, meetings and forums.
- Will complete a biennial self-assessment to assure it is meeting its mission, goals and objectives.
- Track success of communication via existing e-mail id, Web site responses, surveys, meetings. We started out with less than 200 hits on the SEPAC Web site. We are nearing 800 hits and that is with minimal advertising of the Web site.
- Post decisions and actions on the SEPAC Web site
- Supply Annual Report to BOE.