

## A Proclamation for SEPAC Awareness Month in Massachusetts:

Whereas, 2019 marks the 33rd anniversary of the Massachusetts Law requiring the establishment of a Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) by the school committee of each city, town, or school district;

Whereas, SEPACs 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 SEPAC shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties; and

Whereas, the SEPACs 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 SEPACs 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 SEPAC, 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 SEPAC shall establish their own Mission Statement, working towards 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 SEPAC and the district is essential to provide a fair and appropriate education for students with special needs; and

Whereas, SEPACs shall ensure state guides are consistently applied for all Massachusetts special need students; and

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

Whereas, nearly 20% of the Massachusetts student population consist of individuals with special needs; and

Whereas, SEPACs 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; and

Whereas, The Coalition for SEPAC Awareness, Massachusetts Chapter, is calling for parents and interested parties throughout the Commonwealth to commit to fostering a collaborative relationship between the SEPAC and the district by supporting community engagement.

Now, Therefore, I, Charles D. Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim November 2019, to be,

**SEPAC AWARENESS MONTH**

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