

Parent Advisory Council For Special Services (PACSS)

September 2021

Thom Keeling and Sabrina DeStefano
Co-Chairs

Who we are

- State Mandated
- District-level
- Parent driven
- Provide input on **system-level** challenges in special education and related services.
- Provide opportunities for **parents and community members** to offer input to their districts on critical issues relating to students who utilize special services

“Each district board of education shall ensure that a special education parent advisory group is in place in the district to provide input to the district on issues concerning students with disabilities (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.2(h))”

Mission

- Serve as the **parent-driven organization** that partners with school administrators and educators to improve programs and best practices in support of students who utilize special services.
- Provide **input and recommendations** on education policy, practices, and programs.
- **Develop** topics of interest, **programming and speakers** concerning special needs as well as topics affecting the wider school community as a whole
- **Foster awareness and acceptance** of special needs in the school environment and community
- Identify and **bring attention to opportunities to enhance support** for students who utilize special services.
- **Share information** and resources with parents and build greater **parent engagement**.

Current Focus Areas

- Inclusion/Least Restrictive Environment
- Advanced Co-Teaching Model
- Technology Support
- Evidence Based Best Practices in Special Education
- Support Model for Students Supported by Special Services during COVID
- Learn and Adapt Best Practices from Surrounding School Districts and Special Services Departments
- Additional Training for General Education Teachers and Support Staff on Special Education Topics

Events (Winter – Spring 2021)

- Presentation on technology best practices and supports Presenter: Dr. Brian Friedlander
 - Dr. Korowski has purchased technology called Rocketbook (converts handwriting into typed-ink notes) and Rocket Beacon (electronic whiteboard for image capture) and working on training teachers.
 - Dr. Korowski working with Kami to see what they can offer that is similar or different than Google Read & Write and how we can train teachers a
- Presentation on How to Keep Your Child Motivated and Engaged in School, Emotionally and Academically. What to do (and what not to do) When Your Child Struggles Presenter: Meredith Alvaro, National Consultant (Hosted by Chester Board of Education)
- Presentations to be linked on PACCS page under Special Services web page

PACSS Presentations & Meetings on the School Website

- Michele Perkins: The Impacts of Sensory Processing
- Dr. Friedlander: Technology in the classroom
- Presentation on Social Emotional Learning by MTSD School Counselors Ms. Perrotta and Ms. Probert
- PACSS General Meeting & Intro to the School Year by Dr. Koroski and CST
- General meeting and presentation by Michele Cote and Michele Ippolito on Executive Functions/Mindfulness
- General Meeting & Presentation by Dr. Liz Matheis on Social Skills and Anxiety
- General Meeting & Presentation by Dr. David Leigh, Director of Special Services at WMRHS,
- High School Transition

Resources for Parents on the School Website

- **Need Quest:** A warehouse for disability resources for families ranging from camps and babysitters to therapists and recreation. All searchable by living area/zip code.
<https://needquest.com/>
- **SPAN:** Parent Advocacy Network
<https://spanadvocacy.org/>
<https://spanadvocacy.org/programs/p2p/>
- **[Family Partners of Morris and Sussex Counties](http://www.familypartnersms.org/)**
Providing support, education & advocacy for families with children with mental health, emotional or behavioral challenges.
<http://www.familypartnersms.org/>
- **ADDitude:** A wonderful website for support with both ADD and ADHD.
<https://www.additudemag.com/>
- **NJCIE:** NJCIE's vision is of a society where ALL individuals are valued members of their community and have opportunities to reach their maximum potential.
<https://www.njcie.org/>
- Special Olympics of New Jersey
<https://www.sonj.org/find-local-program/morris-sussex-warren-counties/>
- <https://decodingdyslexianj.org/>
- **The Benefits of a Pet for Children**
The link below is from Medical News Today. In the article, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention share research on the benefits of pets supporting the health of children.
<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/303276.php>

Open Discussion