

Mansfield Special Education Parent Advisory Council (MSEPAC)



Information Packet for Parents/Guardians
who are new to special needs



This packet was created by the parent volunteers in the MSEPAC.

For more information on MSEPAC

Find us on facebook at:

www.facebook.com/mansfieldsepac/

Join the email list.

Email the SEPAC at mansfieldsepac@gmail.com and let us know you want to join the list. You will receive emails on local events, our SEPAC meetings and more.

Visit our Web site:

http://www.mansfieldschools.com/departments/special_education_office/special_education_p_a_c

What is an IEP?

An Individual Education Program (IEP) is a required document for all students receiving special education services. As part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the IEP is a planning tool that is commonly built around four major areas that reflect the need for instruction and service delivery. Each student's IEP must be based on the least restrictive environment (LRE), and these decisions must be made on an individual student basis. See www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iep.

What is a 504 Plan?

A 504 Plan is a legal document falling under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The term "504" refers to the section of the Rehabilitation Act specifying this document. It is designed to plan accommodations and modifications to assist students with disabilities (as defined under the Rehabilitation Act) to have access to educational opportunities. A 504 plan is not an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as is required for special education students.

What are some key differences between an IEP and a 504 Plan?

Section 504 does not require written plans. Section 504 protections follow the child after he/she leaves school. IEP does not. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act covers several areas: preschool, elementary and secondary schools, employment practices, accessibility, health, welfare, and social services. The school must notify the parent that a 504 plan has been developed but does not have to invite the parent to a meeting while it is being developed. An easy to compare chart can here found at <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/the-difference-between-ieps-and-504-plans>.

Parents Commonly Asked Questions

My child is found eligible for special education services, what happens next?	You will now work with a team of educators to develop an IEP (Individualized Education Program) for your child. The IEP will be updated every year and your child will be re-evaluated every three years.
Why might my child be found NOT eligible for special education services?	There are several reasons a student may be found ineligible for special education: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The student does not have a disability2. The student does not show a lack of progress3. The student's lack of progress is not due to the disability4. The student does not require special education. If your student is not eligible for Special Education, he or she may be eligible for accommodation(s) for disability (ies) under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or for other services in other programs. Your child's teachers, guidance counselor, and/or principal can discuss these options with you.
What if I disagree with the evaluation findings?	If you disagree with the evaluation findings, you have the right to seek and Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). You can also appeal eligibility determinations to the Bureau of Special Educational Appeals. Please review the "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" for more information about parents' rights.
My child is found eligible for accommodation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, what happens next?	A 504 plan is developed, shared in buildings with teachers and reviewed yearly. Each building has a contact. See below. Building Contacts: Robinson = Tanna Jango J/J = Jenn Hartman QMS = Dave McGovern MHS = Josh Fogel
Who is the Team Chairperson and	The Team Chairperson manages your child's team, runs the meeting

what does he/she do?	and handles all documentation. The Chairperson is usually a special education liaison, though it can also be a coordinator or the school's team chair.
Can I see a draft of the proposed IEP prior to my meeting?	A draft may be developed together as a team. The purpose of the meeting is for the Team members to develop the IEP together, so the final IEP will not be written until after your team meets. You are encouraged to provide the Chairperson your ideas, information or concerns ahead of time that you would like to discuss.
Can I invite others to the meeting?	Yes. You may invite others who have knowledge regarding your child. Please inform your team in advance of additional attendees. Also, beginning no later than age 14, students are required to be invited to their team meeting. Families determine at what age students start attending all or part of their Team meeting.
What happens if we run out of time in the IEP meeting?	You can arrange with your Chairperson to set up additional time to meet with one or more Team members.
I am not happy with the proposed IEP I received. What is the next step?	If you feel changes need to be made to the IEP, contact your Chairperson right away. Your Team can work with you to address your concerns. You also have the option of rejecting part or all of an IEP.
I don't think we will be able to sign and return the IEP within 30 days of the meeting. What will happen?	There is no penalty for returning the IEP late, but you are encouraged to return it as quickly as possible so that your child's team can begin implementing the IEP. If you have a current IEP already in place, it will remain until you sign the new IEP.

TRANSITIONS IN THE MANSFIELD SCHOOLS: 5 THINGS TO KNOW

Roland Green to Robinson (Pre-k to Kindergarten)

1. A Robinson representative will attend your spring transition meeting to discuss supports and programming.
2. Robinson supports inclusion opportunities as well as substantially separate programs.
3. Specialized support services are available.
4. Administrators aim for balanced classroom placements.
5. Kindergarten Screening usually takes place in late May.

Robinson to Jordan Jackson (2nd Grade to 3rd Grade)

1. Transition night is held each year in the spring for the upcoming school year with all parents.
2. There is close collaboration between the schools to ensure a successful transition.
3. Curriculum and programming is consistent and developmentally appropriate throughout the elementary years.
4. Administrators aim for balanced classroom placements.
5. Jordan Jackson supports inclusion opportunities as well as substantially separate programs

Jordan Jackson to Qualters (5th Grade to 6th Grade)

1. Transition begins in Grade 5 at Annual Review meetings.
2. Students are assigned to Teams where they travel from one classroom to another on a small scale.
3. Academic content is delivered in Small Group and General Education settings based on the needs of the student.
4. Study Skills is offered to develop organizational skills and to allow preview and review of academic material, in place of an elective.

5. Students are invited to participate in their IEP meetings and Transition Planning Forms begin appearing on IEP's beginning at age 14.

Qualters to Mansfield High (8th Grade to 9th Grade)

1. Classes begin to be leveled – Honors, College Prep, Comprehensive.
2. Schedules are developed based on individual student needs and interests.
3. Recommendations are made by Grade 8 teachers based on a number of factors.
4. IEP TEAMS begin focusing on Post Secondary Planning (Graduation/ Age 22).
5. Students are presented with wider variety of academic opportunities.

Transition Planning: For students with severe disabilities, a Chapter 688 referral is made two years prior to graduation or turning 22. One year prior to graduation a representative from an adult agency will be invited to attend a Team meeting.

RESOURCES

A writing guide for the IEP from the Federation of Children with Special Needs. Information taken it has been taken from the MA DOE IEP process guide

<https://fcsn.org/rtsc/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/11/Annotated-IEP.pdf>

Exceptional Lives is a Massachusetts based organization that provides a number of resources guides that are focused on a step based action plan and are tailored based on the families individual needs. A guide to the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) can be found here.

<http://exceptionallives.org/iep-guide>

Mass Dept of Education - Special Education Page: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/>

For accurate, reliable information about special education law, education law, and advocacy for children with disabilities. - See <http://www.wrightslaw.com>

The Special Needs Advocacy Network (SPaN) provides a directory listing of advocates, educational consultants and other professionals in the MA area. For a list see www.spanmass.org

MSEPAC

The Mansfield Special Education Parent Advisory Council (MSEPAC) is a group of parents whose children receive special education support services from the Mansfield Schools.

Whether a student is receiving special education support services in a general education classroom or in a substantially separate program, MSEPAC is an important resource for parents, teachers and special education support staff.

If you have a child/student on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan then you are already a member! Meetings are held every other month. Please visit our webpage or Facebook page for a list of dates and meeting topics. Contact info can be found on the front of this packet or by calling the SPED Office at (508) 261-7507.

MANSFIELD SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL CONTACTS

Jim Leonard, Director of Special Education
Jordan/Jackson Special Education Office – C203
Phone: (508) 261-7507 Fax: (508)261-7518
Email: jim.leonard@mansfieldschools.com

Kelly Kreizinger, Assistant Director of Elementary Special Education
Phone: (508) 261-7510 (Robinson); (508) 261-7525 (JJ)
Email: kelly.kreizinger@mansfieldschools.com

Dr. Zachary Abrams, Assistant Director of Secondary Special Education
Phone: (508) 261-7530 (QMS); (508)261-7540 (MHS)
Email: zachary.abrams@mansfieldschools.com

Krista, DeMello, Director of Pre-School
Phone: (508) 261-1561 Fax: (508) 261-7415
Email: krista.demello@mansfieldschools.com

Dawn Nunnally & Debbie Loomer, Office Assistants
Jordan/Jackson Special Education Office – C203
Phone: (508) 261-7507 Fax: (508)261-7518

Carla Littlejohn Booker, Transportation Coordinator
Phone: (508) 261-7507

Address: 255 East Street, Mansfield, MA 02048

ACRONYMS TO KNOW

ABA- Applied Behavioral Analysis

ARC- Originally named the Association for Retarded Citizens. In 1991, the organization officially became “The ARC” and removed the word retarded from it’s name.

ARICA- (An Act Relative to Insurance Coverage for Autism), is a law passed in 2010, requiring private health insurers in Massachusetts to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

AT- Assistive Technology

BCBA- Board Certified Behavior Analyst

DESE- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

FAPE- Free and Appropriate Public Education

FBA- Functional Behavioral Assessment

IDD- Intellectual & Developmental Disability

IDEA- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEE- Independent Educational Evaluation

IEP- Individualized Education Program

LRE- Least Restrictive Environment

OT- Occupational Therapist

PT- Physical Therapist

SEPAC- Special Education Parent Advisory Council

SLP- Speech Language Pathologist

504-Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

LOCAL SUPPORT AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

CHALLENGER SPORTS

Offers children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities who live in Mansfield and are between the ages of 5 and 22 exercise, athletics and an opportunity for community-based socialization. Children are paired with teenage volunteers who provide social experiences. Participation fee is \$35.

Heather McPherson at ChallengerSportsMansfield@gmail.com or <https://www.facebook.com/ChallengerSportsMansfield>

MANSFIELD SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Mansfield Special Olympics is based in Mansfield, MA. The teams compete in Soccer, Basketball, Bowling, and Track and Field and are open to athletes ages 6 & up. The schedule is: Sept. - Nov. Fall Sports – Soccer; Nov.- Mar. Winter Sports - Bowling, Basketball; Mar.-June Summer Sports - Athletics (track & field)

If you live in or around the Mansfield area and you're interested in learning more about our awesome Mansfield SOMA program, please like our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/MansfieldSomaProgram/>) and feel free to email Heather Gage at HeatherAndTheBoys75@Gmail.com or call (774) 219-4030.

MANSFIELD ADAPTIVE TRACK & FIELD

Information coming soon!

BEST BUDDIES (formerly Common Connections)

Fosters one-to-one friendships between Mansfield high school students with and without Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The Best Buddies High School program helps break through social barriers at an important time in a young person's life.

Advisors: Kelly Kenny and Christine Riley

YMCA- North Attleboro and Foxboro

There are several integration programs offered by local YMCA's that will provide children with special needs programs in swim, basketball, summer camps and others. See their website under integration initiative for more information. www.hockymca.org.

HORSEBACK RIDING

The Bridge Center

470 Pine Street, Bridgewater
Phone: (508) 697-7557
<http://www.thebridgectr.org/>

Greenlock Therapeutic Riding Center

59 Summer Street, Rehoboth
Phone: (508) 252-5814
<http://www.greenlock.org>

OTHER ADAPTIVE SPORTS

Little Wiffles Adaptive Baseball League

Pre-K through elementary school. Games are held in Norton and the team is open to surrounding towns.

Contact Coach Meg Fox: mmbkfox@comcast.net

<http://nortonyouthbaseball.website.siplay.com/>

RESPITE

Yawkey House of Possibilities at Stonehill College

320 Washington Street, Easton

They offer a Saturday respite program for ages 8 and over. They also offer overnight respite. Check their website as they have many, many great programs.

Phone: (508) 205-0555 or www.houseofpossibilities.org

The Bridge Center

470 Pine Street, Bridgewater.

They offer Saturday respite for ages 4 to 22 with a staff ratio of 1:3. They also offer summer camp, horseback riding and many other programs.

CAMPS

The Bridge Center

470 Pine Street, Bridgewater

Offers summer camp to kids with disabilities.

Phone (508) 697-8613 or www.thebridgectr.org

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mansfield Fire/Police Department

Did you know there are tools to help aid Mansfield's police and fire departments provide emergency care to homes where adults & children with special needs reside are available? These include: File of Life, Data Sheets, GPS tracking system, Beacons, Luminescent house signs and much more. To update information or enroll you may contact 508-261-7300.

If you have a resource that you would like to recommend be included in the MSEPAC Information Packet, please send an email to: www.mansfieldsepac@gmail.com

Members are advised to check out other MA SEPAC's as another great resource. Some recommended are:

Braintree at: <http://www.gpvillage.com/braintreesepac>

Concord at: <https://concordsepac.org/>

and Franklin at: <http://www.franklinsepac.org>

Special Education Timelines

- School has 5 days of receipt of referral to provide parents with consent forms.
- School has 30 days of parental consent to evaluate a child with credentialed, trained specialists.
- School has 45 days of parental consent to determine if a child is eligible for special education services.
- School has 10 school days to send 2 copies of the IEP to the parent.
- Parent has 30 calendar days to accept, reject or reject portions of the IEP.
- School has 5 days to report the Bureau of Special Education Appeals if IEP was rejected. Parent may request a meeting at any time.

For more information go to Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/pnps.pdf>