



SEPTA

Brick Township Special Education PTA

SEPTA Newsletter
Spring 2006

President's Message

SEPTA

Officers for 2005/2006

President - Diana Gerlach

1st VP—Dee Beringer

2nd VP—Nichol Manatakis

Recording Secretary - Denise Ragozzino

Correspondence Secretary - Kim Vaccaro

Treasurer—Corey Dalton

PTA Advisor—Candy Fredericks

Meeting Schedule 2006

Held at the EEC at 7:30 pm

June 12

Membership Information:

Contact: Janet Bixenman at

732-477-4845 Membership Fee is \$6.00

SEPTA Website: www.bricksepta.org

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Board of Education Meeting Schedule for 2006 is as follows:

June 8, 2006—Pre Agenda Mtg

BTHS Library

June 22, 2006—Regular Public Mtg

BTHS Library

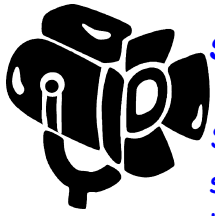
Bd of Ed meetings are open to the public. Please attend, if you are available. We encourage parent representation. For more information check the Brick Schools Website: www.brickschools.org

Hello everyone! The school year is winding down and summer is fast approaching. It is hard to believe that my two years as president has come to a close. Through SEPTA, I have learned so much and grown in so many ways on a personal level. I have gained more knowledge on special education and advocacy issues and learned that my voice can make a difference. I have learned to be a better listener, a stronger parent and less judgmental. I have made lifelong friends and have met so many exceptional and caring individuals because of SEPTA. I have also been privileged to watch the laughter and excitement of our children during our wonderful programs this past year. It has been a positive and fulfilling experience to be involved with an organization that has done so much in such a short time. We have hosted children's events such as the Halloween Carnival, a Magic Show with Bruce Bray and most recently a day at the Blue Claws. SEPTA has hosted "Appreciation Tea Parties" for all of the dedicated individuals that work with our children every day. Our first gift auction this past March was a huge success and has enabled us to provide these programs at little or no cost to those who participated. We have even established a website this past year which contains lots of information about SEPTA as well as upcoming events, workshops and useful links. We have also hosted many guest speakers at our meetings from DDD, CP of NJ and Family Support Center, just to name a few.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the success of SEPTA over the past two years. I know it will continue to grow, as will its voice through education and advocacy. SEPTA will always hold a special place in my heart and although I will not be serving on the Executive Board, I still plan to participate whenever possible.

Have a wonderful summer and thank you again.

Warmest regards, Diana Gerlach



SEPTA SPOTLIGHT

SEPTA would like to take this opportunity to shine the spotlight on one of our students, Michael Porter. Michael is five years old and attends the Primary Learning Center. He was recently chosen as the "sponsor child" for the Brick Elks Lodge and is one of four children representing the Elks of New Jersey. A charity ball will be held in his honor at the Brick Elks Lodge this coming October. Congratulations Michael!

Ways & Means - Annette Arthur/Chairperson

I would like to thank everyone for their participation in SEPTA's 2005-2006 fundraisers. A special thank you goes out to our families and friends for their generous contributions and time volunteered to make our gift auction such a tremendous success. We raised \$13,830. which will allow us to continue to offer special programs and activities for our children in the 2006-2007 school year. Again, thank you for your efforts and I look forward to working with all of you next year. Have a lovely summer!

Programs/Cultural Arts - Melanie McGackin/Chairperson

We had a tremendous response to the "Through the Years Quilt" project. Over one hundred quilt squares were requested by students through out our district. Paraprofessional, Rhonda P. Malone, has volunteered her services in putting the quilt together over the summer. Please remember to return your decorated quilt squares to the EEC by June 9, so we can get this project underway. We look forward to seeing each child's unique creation on the quilt which will be displayed at SEPTA's September meeting. We hope to see everyone there! The "Day with the Blue Claws" was a homerun! We had 160 SEPTA members attend, with the children also receiving lunch and inflatable playground tickets. A day out at the ballgame was the perfect way for families and friends to share the day together. Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a grand slam. Hopefully, we can make this one an annual event. Enjoy your summer and we look forward to next year!

Services for Children with Special Needs

Brick Special Services-732-785-3080

DDD - Division of Developmental Disabilities - 609-943-5960

Challenger/Brick Recreation - 732-262-1165

COSAC - 1-800-4Autism

POAC - Parents of Autistic Children - 732-888-1000

Family Support Center of NJ - 1-800-FSC-NJ10

New Programs:

Hands 4 Talking: Sign Lang. Interpreters/instructors have started a sign-story time at local libraries will offer a parent workshop to learn sign language if there are enough parents interested. If you are interested Please call: Lisa A. Glassford at (732)458-5813 or Judy Halleata at (732) 905-5406

Georgian Court College is now offering tutoring on Tuesdays and Thursdays to students with disabilities. Contact: Mary Siringo @ 732-987-2716

Club Sib - A recreational group offering support for the sibling of your child with special needs - Children's Specialized Hospital. Contact Linda Barriello @ 1-888-244-5373 ext. 3821

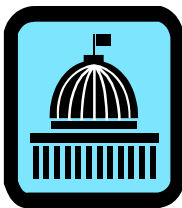
What's happening in Education?

by: Jeanette Smith

Short Term Objectives to Stay:

The just released version

of NJ code revisions will maintain short term objectives for all special education students! Specifically, the words "where appropriate" were deleted from the statement (deleted words in brackets): "Individualized Education Program" (IEP) means a written plan [developed at a meeting according to N.J.A.C.6A:14-2.3(i)2] which sets forth present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, measurable annual goals and [,where applicable,] short-term objectives or benchmarks...."



Supreme Court upholds aid freeze to Abbott Districts:

The state Supreme Court has given Governor Corzine permission to "flat fund" the Abbott districts in the upcoming school year. In an order released May 9th, the court unanimously upheld Corzine's budget proposal that freezes state aid for 2006-07 at this year's figure - \$4.25 billion - 31 districts covered by the Abbott v. Burke school funding equity case. The court also sided with Corzine's call to raise local levies in eight Abbott districts with property tax rates less than half the state average. In the Abbotts' favor, the court gave them the right to appeal for more money and ordered the state to conduct audits and program evaluations.

BOE Budget: Prior to the April 18, 2006 Board of Education Election, the Board unanimously approved the school budget which would have brought more supplies, textbooks, computers and would have essentially spared all staff reductions. Due to the failure of the school budget at the polls, the Board of Education met with the Town Council and was forced to cut the original General Fund budget by \$1,001,897 for school year 2006-07. Included in the over \$1 million dollar cuts were four special education line items:

Reduction of Paraprofessionals	\$212,000
Special Education Teacher	\$ 43,500
Extended School Year Paraprofessional	\$ 10,000
Special Ed Out of District Tuition	\$100,000

SPRING/SUMMER 2006

Challenger Activities Schedule

**Horseback Riding July 7 - Aug 4
Wednesdays - 6 pm @ Havens Farm**

CHALLENGER SUMMER CAMP

Registration - Begins May 1st

**Who: Children with special needs
ages 5 to 12 years old
who do not qualify for
extended school programs**

Dates: June 26 - July 28

Rain or shine

Monday - Friday

Time: 9am - 2pm

Place: Lanes Mill School

COST: *FREE*****

Call: 732-262-1165 for all details

The Challenger Program is open to children ages five and older to engage in several different activities and events throughout the year, where they might not have done so otherwise. This program gives children a chance to participate in activities and sports with others their own age and on the same playing level. Challenger has a year round schedule for the children of Brick Township: fall soccer, winter basketball and bowling, spring baseball and summer horseback riding. The cost is \$5.00 per program and all participants will receive a trophy at the end of each season. For more information on the Challenger Program, please call Dan Santaniello or Don Warn @732-262-1165 or stop by the Recreation Office located in the Civic Plaza on Chambers Bridge Road. ****Please note our new addition: Challenger Summer Camp (Info on left)!**

Announcements

SEPTA new elected officers:

President—Brenda Calderone

1st Vice President - Patricia Marsden

2nd Vice President - Jeanette Smith

Recording Secretary - Dee Beringer

Corresponding Secretary - Kim Vaccaro

Treasurer - Candy Fredericks

Check out our new website:

www.bricksepta.org

Our website has really evolved over this past school year. SEPTA would really like to see it be the "place to go" for up-to-date information and important dates. We would like to see the traffic to our website grow. If anyone has any ideas or information which may benefit our members, please feel free to contact me by email at: val.gray@verizon.net

A special CONGRATULATIONS to Candy Fredericks who just became the grandma of Kayla Morgan Fredericks on May 17th, 2006. Kayla weighed 9lbs 1 oz.

Thank you to all our guest speakers who volunteered their time to speak to our members at our monthly meetings.

Also, a very big thank you to all our Officers & Committee members, especially Diana, Nichol, Denise and Corey who served on SEPTA's Executive Board. They volunteered so much of their time to SEPTA over the past two years and made it a wonderful organization. Thank you.