

**AAPAC for Special Education  
Committee Report to the AAPS Board of Education  
June 28, 2017**



**Committee Report  
June 23, 2017**

Good evening, President Stead, trustees and Dr. Swift. I'm Mary Duerksen, and I am the chair of the AAPAC Executive Committee for the coming school year. I've served as the co-chair for the past three years, and next year will be my fifth year on the committee. I have a son who is in the Young Adult Program, and I have three daughters who have graduated from Pioneer High School—my youngest just a few weeks ago!

As you know AAPAC for Special Education is a district parent/guardian group for those who have students with IEPs and Section 504 Plans. The AAPAC executive committee has not given a committee report to this board for some time, and we apologize. This report is an update of what we've done over the past school year and will give you an overview of what AAPAC does.

This past school year's executive committee was comprised of Andrea Bond and Melissa Epstein, with Barb Byers and I serving as co-chairs. Patricia Memmott, who was the secretary of the executive committee for three years previously, stayed online with us to help field parent questions and support the executive committee. Gail Einhaus took minutes of our monthly parent meetings. Valerie Mates is our webmaster. This model is not what the bylaws intend, but it reflects the difficulty this committee continues to have with finding parents who can do all that is needed to meet its responsibilities. In addition, we have a real need to round out AAPAC leadership representing parents of students from all levels.



**AAPAC**  
Ann Arbor Parent  
Advisory  
Committee for  
Special Education

Who we are.  
What we do.  
How we can help.

**AAPAC Mission**

*To positively impact the education of all students with an emphasis on those with special needs in the Ann Arbor Public Schools by representing students and parents of students needing or receiving special education services, advocating improvements, acting as a resource for our constituents, staff, and administration, creating opportunities for education, reporting regularly, facilitating communication, clarifying process, and creating an actual link between our constituents and the administrators responsible for all aspects of special education in the Ann Arbor district.*



**Parent Meetings**

**First Member of the month, October-June**  
4:45 - 6:00 PM IEP administration available to meet individually with parents.  
**T - 9 PM General Meeting**  
**Tappan Middle School**  
10000 E. Grand (2nd floor)  
Stables Blvd., Ann Arbor  
48106

<https://aapac.org/parents>  
Monthly meetings include guest speakers, special needs and IEPs - all welcome to IEP and 504 Plan meetings. Meetings and social events will be optional monthly with opening agendas, lunches and refreshments from previous parent meetings.

**Website:**  
<https://aapac.org/parents>

**Volunteer Group Contact:**  
[AAPACvolunteer@aapacgroups.com](mailto:AAPACvolunteer@aapacgroups.com)

**Feedback:** email to Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education (school group) Rev. 8/18



**WHAT. WHO. HOW.**

**What is AAPAC?**  
The Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education (AAPAC) is a group of parents whose focus is on supporting children in AAPAC who have IEPs or 504 Plans.  
**Who is included in AAPAC?**  
Any parent or guardian of a student with an IEP or a 504 Plan. Our volunteer executive board and individual building reps provide parents with a helping hand to go to anytime with questions.  
**How do we do it?**  
AAPAC meets one evening a month Oct-June to learn more about education and services in AAPAC, about local resources, to share ideas, and to collaborate with district administrators about important issues for students with special needs and diverse abilities. For meeting dates and locations: <https://aapac.org/parents>

**How can I help?**  
We have openings for volunteer building reps at some of our schools. Our building reps can offer a guiding hand to other parents or guardians in their building who are on the same journey. They can often help you with questions or be a reference for you in finding the person who can.  
Our volunteer executive board also has openings for parents who would like to collaborate directly with AAPAC administration in monthly (daytime) meetings, take minutes at meetings, organize monthly informational meetings for parents, and share news online.  
For more information, or to volunteer for any of the above, contact: [aapacexecboard@aapacgroups.com](mailto:aapacexecboard@aapacgroups.com)

**Q&A**

**What can AAPAC do for me?**  
AAPAC can provide resources, contact with new and experienced parents, an understanding of where the district is going and ensure the parents' voice is heard in policy decisions. It is a resource to help navigate special education within AAPAC.

**How can I contact AAPAC?**  
Executive Board email: [aapacexecboard@aapacgroups.com](mailto:aapacexecboard@aapacgroups.com)

AAPAC strives to recruit **Building Representatives** for each AAPAC elementary, middle and high school for a local source for parents. The current Building Rep directory is located at: <https://aapac.org/parents>

**Our executive board members and building reps will not share your information with other parents or administrators without seeking your permission to advocate for you.**

**For More Information:** asks to special education resources such as a summer camp link, advocacy manual, and Ann Arbor & Michigan associations are at: <https://aapac.org/parents/contactinfo.html>

In

August, Dr. Elaine Brown again included a table for us at the SISS parent orientation for those who have students with IEPs or 504 Plans. Parents were greeted there by their children's building principals, special education staff and many service providers. AAPAC turn-out to welcome parents was widely appreciated. Our exec committee introduced AAPAC and referred parents to our website where our meeting schedule, current officers and building reps' contact information are listed. This past school year we had building reps for 25 out of 33 schools, most of whom introduced themselves to parents from the stage at their school's Curriculum or Capsule Night using a template script that we provide and the distributing the AAPAC brochures that Dr. Brown prints for us.

This year, as is usual, several building representatives, Barb and I have supported parents preparing for and at staffing and/or IEP meetings, in addition to giving parents support by phone or online. And SISS invites parents to be on interview committees via the executive committee as well.

We held parent meetings monthly from October to June. Our parent meetings are preceded by 45 minutes for parents to conference with SISS administrators and Terra Webster, the Section 504 Liaison. This conference time was implemented three years ago and has been very well-received by parents.

(Oct) Dr. Swift welcomed parents to the new school year with information on the district's progress with our students, and Melissa Epstein moderated a panel of BOE candidates

## AAPAC Parent Meeting

Monday, November 7, 7 pm

LOCATION CHANGED TO:

Slauson Middle School

SISS ADs available to meet with parents at 6:15 pm



Sgt. Tom Hickey,  
Ann Arbor Police Department

### Preparing for Emergencies Involving Your Child with Special Needs

- what first responders need to know
- helping your child understand helpers—people, and even dogs!
- helping your school prepare for an emergency involving your child

**Just announced!**

Children are welcome to come to the meeting with parents to meet K-9 Officer Jeff Robinson and his partner K-9 Jase!

Children are NOT available during meeting.



(Nov) Two AAPD officers and a K-9 officer gave a session for parents and children on preparing for emergencies with special needs children

AAPAC Parent Meeting  
Monday, December 5, 7 - 9pm  
Tappan Middle School

6:15 - 7pm

Dr. Brown and SISS Assistant Directors  
and Section 504 Plan Liaison Terra Webster  
meet individually with parents



Alison Paine, MS

NAMI State Trainer, Ending the Silence



Kathy Homan, JD

President and CEO, WACA

(Dec) Presentation by a local National Alliance on Mental Illness trainer and clients who told their stories, and from WACA on trends in special education and their services

## Parent Panel: Successful Transitions to Inclusion



(Jan) meeting was a Parent and Professional Inclusion Panel focusing on personal stories of children who began special education in inclusion or those who have had successful transitions from self-contained classrooms to inclusion.



AAPAC Parent Meeting  
Monday, February 6, 6pm\*  
Tappan Middle School  
5:15 - 6pm\* Parent Conferences with  
Dr. Brown, SISS Assistant Directors, &  
Section 504 Plan Liaison Terra Webster  
*\*note time change*

### **Alternative Routes** to an **Ann Arbor Public Schools High School Diploma**

Discover programs which offer unique options to AAPS students  
in meeting graduation requirements

Personal Curriculum



(Feb) Ms. Dickinson-Kelley moderated an AAPS Panel on “Alternative Routes to a High School Diploma in AAPS”



Tappan Middle School

Liaison

# Summer Camps & Activities Fair

Featuring representatives from over 20 local-area

- day camps
- overnight camps
- classes
- athletic activities
- therapies

serving children or young adults with special needs



Joint meeting of the Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education and the Washtenaw ISD Parent Advisory Committee



(Mar) We held our 2nd Annual Summer Camps and Activities Fair with over 20 vendors and at least 70 parents in attendance. Also in March, Building Rep Heather Eckner arranged for a program by AAPS parent and MSU associate professor Dr. Joshua Plavnick on Evidence-Based Practices and Implementation Fidelity



AAPAC Parent Meeting  
Monday, April 10, 7 pm  
Tappan Middle School

6:15 - 7pm Parent Conferences with  
Dr. Brown, SISS Assistant Directors,  
& Section 504 Plan Liaison Terra Webster

## The WISD: (Washtenaw Intermediate School District) Its Roles and Resources in AAPS



(Apr) Dr. Jennifer Scott-Burton led a presentation by several WISD employees on the WISD's Roles and Resources in AAPS



our concerns are impacted by both departments and it has been very helpful to have both special education and general education at the table.

We are very proud of the executive committee's teamwork with Dr. Brown and Ms. Dickinson-Kelly. We view ourselves as team members helping to find solutions. Aside from the work that the district already does, the following items were brought to the district's attention by the AAPAC exec committee and were resolved in 2016-17:

- Students known to be at-risk for eloping are documented in a "Health Plan" at their building in addition to other heightened protocols
- An adapted sexual health curriculum was developed for implementation in Fall 2017
- The state's required annual notice to parents of the Personal Curriculum option is present in 2017-18 AAPS Course Selection Guide
- AAPAC (and other parent support groups) were included alongside the PTO in 2016-17 AAPS General Back-to-School Guide
- Regarding transportation safety, bus drivers and aides received Autism Safety Training in 2015; and new drivers and aides in 2016. This summer, parents of students with special needs will be sent a form to detail their child's specific needs for accommodations while riding bus— for drivers and aides to have on first day of school
- The order of upgraded secure door entries which will be accessible for those who are deaf or hard of hearing

#### **2015-16:**

- The required ADA notice to the public for requesting accommodations at district events is now on the district's and each school's home page
- Improved awareness of providing ADA Title II accommodations to students

The executive committee met quarterly this school year with Dr. Swift and had good conversations about the district's work. The co-chairs were on her Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel. She graciously invited us to join the district at the Center for Independent Living Gala.



#### **2017-18 Executive Committee**

Mary Duerksen (YA), Chair  
Melissa Epstein (Young Fives), Vice-Chair  
Barb Byers (HS and YA), Secretary  
Cindy Hines (Elem), At-Large  
Lisa Dibble (Elem), At-Large

In June, for the first time in several years, we made a concerted effort to formally seek nominations for next year's executive committee. The membership voted as follows:

Mary Duerksen (YA), chair  
Melissa Epstein (Young Fives), vice-chair  
Barb Byers (HS and YA), secretary

Cindy Hines (Elem), at-large  
Lisa Dibble (Elem), at-large

Our committee has begun planning for next school year. We are setting goals and making programming decisions based on parent feedback that we gathered in June, with plans to send out an online survey to gather more data. And, we have proposed re-implementing a back-to-school meeting with district leadership.

Responding specifically to Trustee Kelly's request from May, our committee will be giving you another report after the new school year starts. It will give you detailed information on how well AAPAC is meeting the responsibilities given to the committee in its bylaws. We have had some preliminary discussion on this and will be forming a subcommittee to revise them this coming school year.

We are grateful for the opportunities that this committee provides for parents to have a voice and support each other.

Thank you,  
Mary Duerksen, Chair  
Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education