The Gardner Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a volunteer organization that serves as a resource and advisor to parents of children with disabilities ages 3-22. Our membership is open to parents and caregivers of children who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 or anyone interested in special education in Gardner. Raising a child with learning differences can be very challenging. Our group offers the opportunity for networking, support and to hear important speakers. By working together with Gardner Public School and the Special Education department we advocate for and support our children with learning differences in order to help them be successful in school and beyond.

For more information about our group, meeting dates and general information check us out at www.facebook.com/gardnerSEPAC
The mission of the Gardner Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is to work for the understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in the community.

**What is a SEPAC?**

SEPAC is a formally organized group of individuals committed to the best possible services for children with special needs. A SEPAC:

- Promotes a network of parents and forum to share information
- Advises the school district on special education programs, training needs, and policy
- Promotes communication between PAC members; local, state and national organizations, councils and groups
- Promotes understanding, acceptance and inclusion within the community
- Provides informational forums for parents, students, educators, and professionals

**Why get involved?**

- To network with other parents in the community.
- To share your own expertise and experiences with other parents.
- To learn about the services available for children with learning issues or differences.
- To learn to advocate for your child's needs more effectively

**How SEPAC helps:**

SEPAC provides a network of resources and support for parents of students with disabilities in Gardner. Some of those supports include:

- Offering advice parent-to parent about navigating educational services
- Monthly meetings that include family support and informational presentations.
- Helping understand special education laws, IEPs, 504s, and other available support services
- Collaborating with school administrators, teachers, and school committee to improve the educational opportunities available that promote positive educational outcomes for children with disabilities.

**MASSACHUSETTS STATUTE** Chapter 71B: Section 3 The School Committee shall establish a parent advisory council on special education. Membership shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties.

Chapter 71B: Section 1C Each school district shall conduct, in cooperation with the local parent advisory council, at least one workshop annually within the school district on the rights of students and their parents/guardians under the special education laws of the commonwealth.

**MASSACHUSETTS REGULATION 603 CMR 28:07 (4)** Each school district shall create a district-wide parent advisory council offering membership to all parents of eligible students, and other interested parties.