



# Seattle Special Education PTSA Newsletter

Volume IV, Issue 4

December 2009

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## • **Mark Your Calendars - Save These Dates!**

**Our PTSA General Meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of every month at 7 pm.**

Locations will be indicated in the General Meeting Announcement sent out in the weeks prior to the meetings.

**Our board meetings will be held at 9:45 am on the first Wednesday of each month at the Zoka café at 2901 NE Blakeley Street, Seattle, WA 98105.**

Board meetings are open to all. If you have an item to include on the board agenda, please email it to **seattlespedptsa@gmail.com** 48 hours in advance.

**Tuesday, Jan. 19** - Transition Planning at All Grade Levels, Superintendent Update 7 pm

**Tuesday, Mar. 16** - Topic TBD

**Tuesday, Apr. 20** - Awards, Elections, SPS Special Ed Leadership Status Report, 7 pm

**Tuesday, May. 18** - Topic TBD

Who We Are

**2009-2010 Executive Board:**

**Elected board members**

President, Janet Anderson

Co-Vice President, Joyce Israel

Co-Vice President, Heidi Bond

Treasurer, Marti Bosma

Secretary, Peg Petersen

**Committee Chairs**

Membership/Outreach, Linda Scott

Legislative, David Garrick

External Relations, Rose Yu

Inclusion Working Group, Susan Sturms

Twice Exceptional Working Group, Lynne Tucker

Severely-disabled/Medically-Fragile Working Group, Joyce Israel

President Emeritus, Nancy Speer

Newsletter Editor, Jo Cross-Whiter

**Please, Pass It On!**

Please send a copy of this newsletter to a friend, your child's teacher, and your school-based PTA.

**• Next General Meeting - Tuesday, January 19, 2010**

Our first General Meeting of the new year will feature SPS Superintendent Maria Goodloe-Johnson discussing "Special Ed Services: Mid-year Assessment of New Delivery Model and Next Steps," including how the new Student Assignment Plan will impact students receiving special ed services. Please email your questions for the Superintendent to [seattlespedpta@gmail.com](mailto:seattlespedpta@gmail.com).

In addition, Special Education Supervisor Martha Lawson will provide a primer on "Transition Planning at All Levels." Her presentation will address the key features of transition planning that teachers and families should discuss in Elementary School, Middle School, and High School.

A Metrobus representative will provide a brief presentation on a Metrobus program that trains individuals with disabilities to use the transit system. The meeting will start at 7 pm in the library at Roosevelt High School, 1410 NE 66th St., Seattle 98115

**• We Need You!!**

Our PTSA operates on volunteer power, and we need a few good volunteers. Our annual elections will take place at the end of April, as mandated by our bylaws, and we will need some new individuals to run for office. We need candidates to run for our four elected officer positions - President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. With the exception of our intrepid Secretary, all of our elected officers have served two years and will be stepping down. That's where YOU come in. We need a few of YOU to serve on a nominating committee to find individuals who will run for office in April. We need YOU to step forward now, so we can elect a nominating committee at our January general meeting. Without YOU, our PTSA's existence is a question mark.

The nominating committee is a search team. It seeks out potential leaders, approaches them regarding their interest in serving, and prepares an official slate for the April elections. Individuals interested in running for office may approach the nominating committee to be considered for election

Just click on the "Forward email" button below to pass it on. Many thanks.

*This newsletter is edited by Jo Cross-Whiter. Any inquiries regarding its content may be directed to Jo Cross-Whiter at [cross-whiter@comcast.net](mailto:cross-whiter@comcast.net).*

*Se puede conseguir un folleto sobre esta PTSA en español en nuestro website*

**[To access our website, please click here.](#)**

**[cross-whiter@comcast.net](mailto:cross-whiter@comcast.net)**  
**[cross-whiter@comcast.net](mailto:cross-whiter@comcast.net)**

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**<http://www.seattlespecialdpts.org>**

The nominating committee ensures that we have continuity of leadership and can continue serving our members. Best of all, the nominating committee's work is done once the elections are held. We need YOU. Please email us at [seattlespedpts@gmail.com](mailto:seattlespedpts@gmail.com) to express your interest in serving on the nominating committee. We need YOU now.

#### • **Meeting with District Special Ed Leadership**

PTSA President Janet Anderson and SEAAC Parent Rep Rick Minutoli met with Becky Clifford, Director of Special Education Services for Seattle Public Schools, on December 16, 2009 as part of our monthly meeting schedule with SPS Special Ed leadership. Among the topics for discussion were a status report on the ICS Task Force, Ensuring a Continuum of Services with the ICS model, the role of the Resource Room teachers in the ICS model, and Expertise-building in the area of IEPs, IDEA and 504s.

The ICS Task Force is meeting every other week and has begun to outline and initiate its tasks. Three subgroups will engage in school visits after the winter break to gather data on how the ICS model is functioning. An important area of inquiry will be resource allocation and staffing. Members of the Task Force also will be connecting with Instructional Assistants and Related Services providers to get their perspectives. Staff members directly working within the ICS model already have been asked to fill out a survey to provide feedback to the Task Force. The next step will be a survey of parents.

We discussed what appears to be the lack of a continuum of services within the ICS model at some schools. Becky noted that a small number of schools are requiring more intervention to make their services more robust. One measure is to look at more flexible teaming at schools that have inclusion programs as well as the ICS model. Although in some cases within the ICS model a variety of resources are used to implement components of a child's IEP, the main case manager remains the Resource Room teacher.

In discussing the role of the Resource Room teacher, we expressed concern that some Resource

Room teachers seem to be overloaded with cases and/or not have experience with children who have socio-emotional and behavioral issues. Work is being done, especially at the elementary level, to increase communication regarding what is required of staff members working within the ICS model. We all agreed that, for the future, a variety of factors need to be taken into consideration when determining staffing ratios. This is an area that will be examined by the ICS Task Force.

Finally, in our conversation around how staff members and administrators are made aware of requirements for under IDEA and 504 legislation, especially as pertains to IEPs, Becky outlined a variety of measures employed by the district. Executive Director for Special Education Services Marni Campbell and her Supervisors meet weekly with district legal counsel to discuss specific issues and learn about areas of particular concern. Supervisors transfer this knowledge to their Consulting Teachers in weekly meetings and hold monthly meetings with staff members where legal aspects are embedded within the specific subject matter. IEP training is held twice a year with legal components addressed, and Consulting Teachers review some IEPs ahead of time, while each Consulting Teacher and Supervisor reviews at least 5 completed IEPs each month.

- **Become a Member of the Seattle Special Ed PTSA**

If you have not already joined the Seattle Special Ed PTSA or renewed your membership please do so now. Your PTSA dues help us to maintain our website, publish our electronic newsletter, organize and promote our general meetings, put on conferences, as well as provide end-of-the-year awards to deserving teachers and volunteers.

This year our membership costs \$14 per person. Of that amount, \$1.50 goes to the Seattle Council PTSA, \$5.25 to the Washington State PTA, and \$1.75 to the National PTA. (which means that out of your \$14, the Special Ed PTSA retains only \$5.50. Donations of additional amounts are always welcome!). Membership forms are available at our General Meetings or email [seattlespedptsa@gmail.com](mailto:seattlespedptsa@gmail.com) to receive a form. Many thanks!

- **"Including Samuel"**

The Seattle Children's PlayGarden, in partnership with the Seattle Special Education PTSA and the Experimental Education Unit presented their first film screening and discussion panel on Saturday, December 5th at the REI in downtown Seattle. Over 70 attendees sipped wine - sparkling cider for the younger crowd - and snacked on edibles both sweet and savory before the lights dimmed and the screen descended. The film, "Including Samuel", deftly slides between the personal and the political over its brief 58 minutes, exploring the debate surrounding inclusion from various angles. Documentary filmmaker and photojournalist Dan Habib uses his own family's story as a starting point and centerpiece, visiting with five different individuals and families along the way.

The audience was treated to a post-screening discussion panel made up of five local young people living with disabilities. Noah Seidel, Yomara Bedolla, Elizabeth Scriven, Kayla Brown, and Jared Johnson each shared their instant impressions of the film and reflected on their own experiences with inclusion at various levels of education. The reaction to the film was favorable and the student's experiences with inclusion positive but not without qualification. Audience members and panelists alike emphasized that "each child must be looked at individually" and that the proper training of teachers is critical to successful inclusion. Noah warned, "don't assign the kid in a wheel chair a 'special friend' they know and we know and it sends the wrong message."

For those unable to attend, the film can be viewed for free online at [www.includingsamuel.com](http://www.includingsamuel.com). Log on to our Facebook page (search 'Seattle Children's PlayGarden') afterwards to share your thoughts and personal experiences with inclusion.

- **Special Olympics Program**

As the father of a son with autism, I tried to involve him in many team sports, but the attempts ended in failure. The confusion of the game and the movement completely foiled my son. I then tried him with individual sports which became his recreation but they provided little social interaction.

We enrolled him at Ingraham High School where we were informed of their Special Olympics Basketball program. Being skeptical of team sports, my wife and I agreed to let him play. In the first game he stood around and didn't know what to do, but he ran up and down the court and lo and behold made a basket! The team members congratulated him and smiles came. The next game he ran up and down the court and scored two baskets. It was just like a light went on. Every game and practice he looked forward to. His team mates became his social group and his self confidence grew all year long.

Special Olympics Track and Field provided more of the same improvements and big smiles. As I have become one of the coaches, I have to watch first hand the change in behavior of the players. One problem we have found is that there are no teams in the Seattle area. We go to Issaquah, Auburn and Federal Way for practice games and we all know the problems of transportation.

Don't think Special Olympics ends after high school. The Seattle Parks and Recreation have programs for adults as I saw first hand with my son playing softball this summer. He made new friends and had an outside activity.

I am sold on the Special Olympics and I hope to see other schools adding this program.

Raymond Langberg

- **The Seattle Special Ed PTSA Website**

Our website has had some difficulties over the last year, which we are now trying to remedy. A wonderful volunteer has stepped forward to help reconstruct our website. We thank him, and we thank you for your patience as we work on this project and look forward to a new, improved website in the new year!