



The QPAC Resource

September 2011

The Newsletter of the Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education

Working towards the best education for all students within the Quincy Public Schools

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Welcome Back!

Another school year is upon us, and that means that QPAC is back with a full schedule of meetings and events! In response to your suggestions, this year's calendar will feature some changes. General Meetings will now be held bi-monthly, with presentations and events occurring in the intervening months. The Special Education Subcommittee will continue to meet on a quarterly basis, and QPAC Committees on an as-needed basis. A complete schedule of meetings and events is enclosed, and make sure to check our website for any updates: www.quincypac.org!

We are also back with a new set of goals for the year. Last year we worked on transportation, outreach, dispute resolution, a disabilities guide, fund raising, and establishing our Resource Center. This year's goals include the areas of visibility, communication, transition to adulthood, and substitutes, as well as creating a parents' guide and improving on our Resource Center offerings. We encourage all those interested in getting involved with one or more of these goals to check out our website for more information: <http://www.quincypac.org/about/goalsandcommittees.html>!

2011 - 2012 Presentation & Events

QPAC returns with another season of exciting presentations and events! The season kicks off with College Planning for Students with Disabilities, on Thursday, October 13th! Parents and students, aged 14 and up, are invited to attend this presentation by Eric Clark, Assistant Director of Academic Services at Eastern Nazarene College and founder of Quincy Tutoring. Mr. Clark will provide an overview of the college search process, applying for admission, and the use of support services and accommodations in post-secondary settings. Questions and participation are encouraged! This presentation begins at 6:30 pm at Quincy High School.

Other scheduled presentations and events include:

- Special Ed 101: Friday, November 4th at 9 am
- Parent's Rights and Program Overview: Thursday, December 8th at 6:30 pm
- An IEP for my Child: Thursday, February 9th at 6:30 pm
- Your Child's Mental Health: Friday, March 2nd at 9 am
- Understanding Educational Evaluations: Thursday, April 12th at 6:30 pm
- QPAC Spring Social: Thursday, June 7th

QPAC presentations and events are free and open to the public but an **RSVP** is requested. Details and schedule updates can be found on our website, at: www.quincypac.org/calendar/presentations.html.

Candidate Interviews

QPAC will be interviewing candidates in this year's School Committee and Mayoral elections! Interviews will be videotaped, and candidates will be asked questions provided by QPAC members. These interviews will provide an opportunity to learn more about each candidate, including their backgrounds, platforms, and viewpoints on important issues facing special education students in the Quincy Public Schools. Look for these interviews on our website in October!

Meet Maura Papile!

Quincy Public Schools is home to many amazing teachers, therapists, administrators, and other staff members working every day with and for our kids! QPAC will introduce you to one of these staff members in each issue of our newsletter. This issue features Maura Papile, LICSW, Director of Student Support Services. QPAC asked Maura some questions about her work in QPS, and here are her answers...



Maura Papile
Director of Student
Support Services

Q: What is your job and what does it involve?

A: I am the Director of Student Support Services for Quincy Public Schools. As the Director of Student Support Services I oversee the guidance staff, school psychologists, attendance officers, homeless coordinator, coordinator of health services and nursing staff. I also oversee the Quincy Teen Mother's Program. My job requires a great deal of collaboration with other Quincy Public School Programs, each school site, and outside agencies. Like all members of the Student Support Team my work is guided by our mission statement. The mission statement speaks to ensuring that all students achieve their personal best given proper instruction, access to services and support which recognizes individual differences and learning styles, student success which is accomplished through mutual respect, trust, open communication and personal commitment to succeed, and the development of the whole person, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally as it is critical to success.

Q: How long have you worked for Quincy Public Schools

A: I will be entering my 12th year with Quincy Public Schools this school year. I was a guidance counselor for 9 years at Central Middle School before I became a director.

Q: What is the best part of your job?

A: The best part of my job is the time I get to spend in the classrooms working with teachers and students.

Q: What is the most challenging part of your job?

A: I enjoy working with staff and families. Building positive relationships has been the best part of my job. I have been very fortunate to be able to get to know and work with such wonderful students and families and the Student Support Staff is outstanding and make me proud everyday! When everyone is working together to help a student succeed I feel best about the work I do.

Q: If you could have any job, what would it be?

A: I would want this job!

Q: What is your educational background and training?

A: I have a bachelor's degree in social work from Bridgewater State College and a Master's degree in Social Work from Salem State College. Before becoming a guidance counselor, I was a social worker and supervisor for DCF. I also worked for the Boston Emergency Services Team conducting emergency evaluations for children and adults experiencing psychiatric crisis.

Q: Are you originally from Quincy?

A: I am not originally from Quincy. I grew up in Milton. I have really grown to love and appreciate Quincy. Quincy's beautiful landscapes, diversity and richness in historical treasures make it a unique city. Quincy has so much to offer families.

Q: What is one fun or Interesting fact about you?

A: Well, people are always amazed that I have six sisters. So there are seven girls in my family and no boys. The usual response is "your poor father", which makes me laugh because he loved it!

As Maura mentioned, her job encompasses a lot of different areas. To learn more about the services offered through the Student Support Services Department, and for some great resources, visit the Quincy Public Schools website at <http://quincypublicschools.com/qpsinfo/student-support-services/> .

New QHS Department Head

This year brings change within the Quincy High School Special Education Department with the retirement of longtime Department Head, Karen Doran. Lorraine Kusy was chosen from among a strong field of candidates to take over that function. Lorraine is a dedicated staff member who has served in a number of different positions within Quincy Public Schools since 1989. She began as a teacher for the behavioral program at Sterling and Broad Meadows Middle Schools, and eventually transferred to Quincy High where she served as a resource room teacher and instructor in the Extended Vocational Alternative program. We hope that you will join QPAC in welcoming Lorraine to her new role!

Updates From The Resource Center

The QPAC Resource Center opens for another school year on September 9th! This year brings expanded hours; we will be open on Friday mornings once a month, from 8:30 to 11:30 am, with additional hours coming soon! We will also be open one Monday evening a month, from 5:30 to 8:30 pm, and will continue to be open at 5:30 pm prior to evening meetings and events. Additional hours may be available by appointment. See our website for a complete schedule: www.quincypac.org/about/resourcecenter.html!

We will also be overhauling our resource collection. All of our special education and disability resource sheets are currently being revised and updated, to better provide you with you the information you need! We are also creating new resources on a variety of topics, which will be available in the Resource Center (as well as posted on our website) as soon as they are completed! Also make sure to stop by the Resource Center to check out our ever-expanding lending library!

Help Wanted!

QPAC is in need of a committed and enthusiastic individual to serve as Secretary! The QPAC Secretary is responsible for recording meeting Minutes and attendance, as well as maintaining QPAC's membership list and correspondence. To serve as Secretary, an individual must be the parent or guardian of a Quincy Public Schools student on an IEP or 504 Plan. Students, aged 14 and older, on IEPs or 504 Plans may also serve. Interested in serving as QPAC's Secretary? Contact Jill Gichuhi, QPAC President.

QPAC has many other volunteer opportunities available for parents, students, and others willing to lend a hand! Working on goals, providing event refreshments, and helping with our newsletter or website are just a few of the tasks we could use your help with. Stop by a meeting, visit the Resource Center, or contact us to find out more about volunteering!

Come To Think Of It!

Are you struggling to raise a child with behavior issues? Do you spent your nights worried about tomorrow's behaviors or dread the next call from school? You are not alone. Join other parents with similar concerns for Come To Think Of It, a new parent-to-parent information and support group for those raising children with challenging behaviors. Come To Think Of It meets monthly throughout the school year, and utilizes strategies aligned with the Collaborative Problem Solving Approach. It is moderated by ThinkKids Certified Mentor (and past QPAC President!), Linda Perry. Visit our website for more information about this exciting new group: www.quincypac.org/calendar/group.html!

The Teen Center Social Group Is Back!

The Teen Center Social Group, QPAC's social club for adolescents 13 and up with Asperger's and related disorders, is back for the Fall season! The group, led by two enthusiastic and highly-trained teachers, meets on Friday evenings. Participants receive instruction and strategies for developing social skills while building confidence, developing friendships, and having fun in a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere! The Teen Center Social Group is offered in association with the South Shore YMCA, Quincy Branch, and funded through the City of Quincy's Community Development Block Grant Program. Registration for the fall session begins on September 2nd, with the 10-week group beginning on September 16th. Another 7-week session will begin in December. Visit our website for more information: www.quincypac.org/about/socialgroup.html!

Resource Roundup: Assistive Technology

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) states that the need for assistive technology (AT) must be considered whenever an IEP is developed or revised. So what is AT exactly? Check out these helpful resources to learn all about it!

- ◆ **Assistive Technology Guide for Schools** offers guidance to school districts in providing AT devices and services to students with disabilities: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/edtech/assistive/ATguide.pdf>
- ◆ **Hey! Can I Try That?** is designed to introduce AT to teens and help them be more active participants in the selection and use of it: <http://www.wati.org/content/supports/free/pdf/HeyCanITryThat08.pdf>
- ◆ **ABLEDATA** provides objective information on AT equipment and devices: <http://www.abledata.com/>
- ◆ **Better Living Through Technology** promotes the use of AT in Special Education: <http://www.bltt.org/>
- ◆ **MassMatch** is the Commonwealth's AT initiative whose mission is to promote the use of AT to enhance the independence of people with disabilities: <http://www.massmatch.org/>
- ◆ **Tech Matrix** helps locate AT products and information: <http://www.techmatrix.org/>
- ◆ **The Family Center on Technology and Disability** provides a range of information and resources on the subject of assistive and instructional technologies: <http://www.fctd.info/>

Guide To Disabilities

We are excited to announce that the Guide to Disabilities has been completed! This hefty booklet was a collaboration between QPAC members and the Quincy Public Schools Special Education Department. It provides an overview of thirty different disorders and conditions, including characteristics of the disorders and the classroom accommodations and modifications commonly associated with them. The guide will serve as a introductory reference for general education teachers and other staff members working directly with our kids! A copy of the Guide to Disabilities can be downloaded from QPAC's website, at: www.quincypac.org/resources/resources.html.

Stay Connected With QPAC

We understand that busy parents cannot always make it out to meetings and events. That is why we offer many other ways for you to stay connect with QPAC!

- ➔ **Visit our website!** Information about QPAC, including meetings and events, goals and activities, can be found online at www.quincypac.org. Our website also features information about Quincy Public Schools, news and events from the surrounding area, and extensive resource collection.
- ➔ **Sign up for our E-mail List!** List members receive periodic e-mails with QPAC meeting and event reminders, as well as news, resources, ideas, and other important information. Send an e-mail to qpacboard@gmail.com to join.
- ➔ **Find us on Facebook!** The QPAC Facebook page is updated frequently and features information about our events and activities, resources, news, and information from around the web, photos, videos, quick polls, and informal discussions on disabilities and special education. Find us at www.facebook.com/quincypac.
- ➔ **Follow us on Twitter!** The QPAC Twitter feed is a quick and easy way to learn about the latest QPAC news and happenings. Follow us at www.twitter.com/quincypac.
- ➔ **Contact us!** Individuals with questions or concerns about QPAC or special education are encouraged to contact us. We can offer information, help locate resources, and provide referrals to professionals and organizations.

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