



**Wake SEPTA  
Newsletter  
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October 2008**

**SEPTA is a  
district-wide PTA that  
connects parents and  
educators of children  
receiving special edu-  
cation services from  
preschool through  
high school.**

**For more  
information:**

**24hr Voicemail  
919-788-2500**

**[Info@WakeSEPTA.org](mailto:Info@WakeSEPTA.org)  
[www.WakeSEPTA.org](http://www.WakeSEPTA.org)**

**Mailing Address  
P.O. Box 19472  
Raleigh, N.C. 27619**

**Annual dues are \$5  
Join & Pay Online  
Using PayPal**

# What the Future Holds

In this economy, I think we all understand how quickly the need for services can outstrip someone's capacity to "do".

Some of you know that outside of SEPTA, my husband and I own and run our own business. This business has grown and grown and, in spite of the recent downturn, is needing more and more of my time.

That is a problem for SEPTA. But, I am far from alone.

SEPTA currently has only 6 active board members. No committees and a couple (and I mean two) other volunteers who give of their time on specific, very necessary tasks such as the website. This means that 8 individuals bring you all the programming, support and information that SEPTA provides as well as serve on other various committees outside of SEPTA in an attempt to make our children's collective voices heard by the school system and other support groups in our area.

The good news is that in the past few years, we have made tremendous strides. Membership was way up at the end of last year. Our "tentacles" out in our schools and community have grown to a point where SEPTA's seen as a leader and partner.

The bad news, all of that might end this spring.

When I say there are only 8 people responsible for everything, I mean it. And, according to SEPTA's bylaws, we are only supposed to serve 2 year terms in our positions. Two of us, me included, have to work full-time now. Two of us are have children that are aging out of the system. And, two of us are done with their board service this spring. That is 6 out of 8. So, as a board, we are starting to wonder...

## **Will Wake SEPTA exist after next spring?**

Unfortunately, I don't know the answer. From a personal point of view, I would hate to see the hard work and dedication this group has put forth in the past 4 years just vanish. When I take my personal feelings out of the equation, it is much larger than that.

What will be we, as a community, be missing without SEPTA?

Who will hold FREE workshops on: IEP training, positive behavior support plans, assistive technology, alternative therapies, etc., not to mention be the information sessions when the Director of Special Education Services and

*(Continued on page 2)*

*Yesterday I dared to struggle. Today I dare to win.  
— Bernadette Devlin*

other WCPSS Special Education staff to present on topics like:

- New secondary education graduation tracks
- Reduction of cross-categorical classrooms and movement of students back to their base schools
- Open House for Special Education
- the annual state of our schools address (from a special education perspective)

Possibly.....no one. Where will you get information dealing specifically with the schools?

There are many diagnosis-specific support groups that do provide support for their members on education and health issues. But there are many families who have children who do not have diagnoses that fit nicely into a support group category and don't have easy access to those resources.

SEPTA connects parents directly to the schools in ways that regular support groups do not. I was deeply concerned by a call I received from one of the local support groups who asked me to request that the Director of Special Education Services present a workshop on the new Wake County IEP forms. I told her that our calendar was full and her response was, "I don't know what to do. The schools don't respond to us the way they respond to you (SEPTA)."

So I am putting this challenge to you. We need people. You can be a parent, guardian, teacher, specialist or any other interested party – as long as you are a SEPTA member and want to advocate for your child and others'. In other words, WE NEED YOU!

I could be wrong, but I believe that the biggest obstacles to SEPTA having more volunteers are that you believe:

- You don't have the skills necessary
- You don't know enough to lead this organization
- You don't have tons of time each month to dedicate to it

None of those are true. When I started as a board member, I was nearly always stopping someone to ask "what was that acronym you just used? What does it stand for?" or something like that. It took me a little while, but now I understand (not nearly enough some days) who the people and organizations and laws out there are which determine our children's fate each and every day. And I use that knowledge to advocate for my own child and yours.

As for skills, I strongly believe that the only *skill* you need is a desire to advocate for children. And, we all have that.

The last one I understand the most. I am sure it seems that we spend inordinate amounts of time working on SEPTA stuff. For the most part, we maybe spend 5 hours a month on it. And, if we had more volunteers, that too would get cut way down.

So are you wondering how you can help keep SEPTA afloat? Here are some first steps you can take:

- Email one of us – calls are hard to find time to return – and let us know you are interested.
- Come to the next General Meeting on October 16<sup>th</sup> at Meredith College and talk to one of us in person.
- Start coming to our board meetings. They typically are on the Monday preceding a monthly SEPTA meeting, but sometimes that varies. So check our online calendar. They are always in the same location – Carolina Café in Cameron Village at 7pm.

I promise we would love to have you.....and we don't bite. ☺

Best Regards,

Leslie Welch  
President  
Wake SEPTA  
Lwelch1@nc.rr.

# Upcoming SEPTA Calendar

**WCPSS Secondary Services (middle, high school and beyond) & General Membership Meeting :**

October 16th, 2008, 7pm. Are your kids preparing for middle, high school or beyond in the next few years? Learn what you need to know to help prepare them for this transition and the new graduation requirements starting with the 09-10 high school freshman class. Presented by: Wake County Special Education Secondary Education Director Jeff Larson, Senior Administrator, Secondary Education Lorenzo Melton, and Cam Lopes, Senior Administrator, Middle Schools.

**Video Presentation: Rick LaVoie's "How Difficult Can It Be?":** November 20th, 2008, 7pm. If you haven't seen this eye opening video, you should. Rick LaVoie helps parents, educators and students understand how difficult it can be for most special ed students in mainstream classrooms.

**IEP 101 Workshop & General Membership Meeting:** January 22nd, 2009, 6:30pm. Back by popular demand for the 4th year! ECAC presents IEP 101, a crash course in IEP basics and fundamentals. A must for all parents.

**Assistive Technology Resources:** February 19th, 2009, 7pm.

**Teacher Panel:** March 19th, 2009, 7pm.

**WCPSS Update / Q&A & General Membership Meeting;** April 16th, 2009, 7pm.

## NEW MEETING LOCATION!

**SEPTA meetings for the 08-09 school year will be held at the Kresge Auditorium at the Cate Center on the campus of Meredith College, off Hillsborough Street just inside the 440 beltline. See our [website](#) for a map and directions.**

## Other Events

**Holland Tour Group meeting - Positive Behavior Supports presented by ECAC.** October 21, 2008, 7-9p.m. at Brooks Avenue Church of Christ, 700 Brooks Avenue, Raleigh. Childcare is not available. Contact Rene' @ (919) 662-4600, ext. 257 or [rene@familysupportonline.com](mailto:rene@familysupportonline.com).

**Autism Society of North Carolina Workshop - What Is Autism?:** October 22, 2008, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Method Road Community Center, 514 Method Road, Raleigh. Child care is not available. To register contact Lisa Townsend @ (919) 743-0204, ext. 36 or [Ltownsend@autismsociety-nc.org](mailto:Ltownsend@autismsociety-nc.org).

**Trunk or Treat Festival:** October 24, 2008, 6pm - 8p.m. at Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian Church, 200 High Meadow Drive, Cary. Presented by the Wake County Autism Society.

**Autism Society of North Carolina Workshop - Autism Spectrum IEP.** October 28, 2008, 10 a.m. - noon. This workshop covers the basics of the IEP process and how to prepare and advocate for school age children on the autism spectrum, Autism Society of NC, 505 Oberlin Road, Suite 230, Raleigh.



First  
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PO Box 19472  
Raleigh, NC 27619  
919/788-2500  
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# ***PLEASE NOTE***



**SEPTA has a new meeting location for our monthly general and regular meetings in 2008-09.**

**SEPTA has partnered with Meredith College to host our monthly meetings. We will no longer be meeting at Nationwide Insurance.**

**Meetings will be on the Meredith Campus — which is located off Hillsborough Street just inside 440, in the Kresge Auditorium at the Cate Center.**