

# Special Education PTO

South Orange - Maplewood  
Minutes – November 24, 2015

## Welcome

- Meeting moderated by Sonya Selig
- We met in the general meeting room of the district admin building

## Updates

- Parenting Center Toy Drive beginning – Dec 13 will be distribution day, Barry Berg
- Maplewood Middle School – Intervention Academy for struggling all students, part of Title I initiative
- Education Summit overview
  - At Summit, Dr Ramos discussed a steering committee in the process of supporting a strategic direction for SOMSD
- PTO's Facebook group
  - Active private group page with many members
- SOMSD is beginning process to update district website
  - Paul Roth heading initiative
  - Committee formed to meet with vendors
- SEPAC – Updates from recent meeting from Erin Siders
  - Notes of presentation on lawsuits and other topics will be shared by SEPAC soon. More information can be found on their website: <http://somsepac.org>
  - Upon participant request, difference between SEPAC and Special Ed PTO was explained
    - SEPAC addresses broader-based special education community issues that pertain to policy and/or procedure within the district, as well as monitoring activity at the state and federal level
    - Special Ed PTO provides parents with tools and information to work collaboratively with the school district, and to be more effective advocates for their children, meeting in an informal, conversational setting
- Universal Design was briefly discussed
- Request of some parents for more info on transition information and/or services
  - The Special Ed PTO executive committee will follow up

## Discussion

- The conversation went off the agenda, and primarily focused on Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
  - Update on workshops offered by the state of NJ as part of the NJ DOE's settlement agreement
  - Parents expressed a desire to have their special needs child become exposed to more general ed peers.
  - The importance of role models, appropriate peer interactions, etc., were discussed

Special Education PTO  
South Orange - Maplewood  
Minutes – November 24, 2015

- Concern expressed that by sending kids out of district, and placing them in a more restrictive setting, the kids are losing out on opportunities to develop relationships with typically developing kids, which in turn may help with a special ed child's development; particularly social and emotional development.

Closing

- Attendees thanked for joining the meeting
- Reminder – Dec 22 meeting

Handouts/Flyers

- 4 Ways to Talk to a Child With Autism About Paris
- How to Talk to Your Kids About the Attacks in Paris