

**OCEAN COUNTY COUNCIL PTA
SPECIAL EDUCATION/GIFTED & TALENTED
COMMITTEE**

SEPTA

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is a SEPTA?

A: SEPTA stands for Special Education Parent Teacher Association. National PTA first introduced the concept of SEPTA in 1996 to address the needs of parents of children with special needs.

Q: What's the difference between a SEPTA and a regular PTA?

A: In many ways, SEPTAs are just like any other PTA. Every SEPTA has bylaws and an executive board, including a President, Secretary and Treasurer. Like all PTAs, SEPTAs report their membership to NJPTA and submit the same dues. And like all PTAs everywhere, SEPTAs exist to improve the welfare of children.

In other ways, SEPTAs are unique. Some Septas are a district-wide organization. They aren't associated with a single school, like the vast majority of PTAs. Unlike most PTAs, SEPTAs focuses primarily on special education issues and advocacy for children with disabilities.

Q: Why should there be a PTA for parents of children with special needs?

A: Because parents of children with special needs have special needs themselves. They need to learn how to work with the special education teachers and other specialists who educate their children. They need to understand the system of special education and their rights under the law. And they need to connect with and support other parents in the same position. SEPTAs help meet these needs by bringing together people who have an interest in special education and providing a forum for them to share their experiences.

Q: If I belong to a SEPTA do I need to become a member of the PTA in my child's school?

A: SEPTA members are encouraged to join and participate in their school PTA. School-based PTAs provide parent involvement opportunities within your child's school that a district wide SEPTA cannot.

Q: Is SEPTA the only kind of special interest PTA?

A: No. National PTA and NJPTA also encourage the formation of PTSA (Parent Teacher Student PTA) in middle and secondary schools, Early Childhood PTA for parents of young children and Senior Citizen PTA for older people who want to get involved in the PTA mission.

Q: Why does SEPTA fundraise?

A: SEPTA fundraises to provide specifically tailored programs for special needs children and their families. SEPTA also coordinates guest speakers or workshope to provide parents with informtion regarding raising a special needs child as well as providing information on special education law.