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## **September 2017 Special Education Report**

A new year is on the way! As the school year begins, students are dealing with new teachers, new building and new faces. How overwhelming that must be for all students, but especially our students with special needs. The need to educate and inform that special education is a very broad and diverse umbrella. It encompasses many sub titles and classifications that we may not know of. We must educate ourselves, there by educating others and bringing about awareness.

There are many available resources to help parents, teachers and PTA members and leaders, in their mission to help children. By advocating for the children, we in turn help the entire community.

Showcased in the NYSPTA Summer Leadership Conference in July 2017, we must help parents and students recognize that “their disability does not define them.” Special education students who receive accommodations, learn the same as a main stream student, the accommodation simply changes HOW they learn the material. Please refer to the SLC Session 404 “**Issues in Special Education**”. [nyspta.org](http://nyspta.org)

From **NYSED**: there are changes made for all students regarding credit requirements, how credits are earned and the different types of diplomas that students can achieve.

There are new graduation guidelines and requirements: [\*\*http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/gradreq/Documents/nysed-diploma-requirements-june-2017.pdf\*\*](http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/gradreq/Documents/nysed-diploma-requirements-june-2017.pdf)

Remember the biggest advocate for any student is the parents, as PTA we are there to support, educate, advocate and guide. We should never underestimate the potential of any student this including the special education student. Encourage membership in local PTAs/SEPTA. Though SEPTA/PTA units, we can communicate and educate the parents. We stand as a support system, letting others know that they are not alone in this journey. It is important to bring in educational workshops, focusing on different topics will bring awareness. Networking with other SEPTAs will give many ideas. Having fun, instructional and informative events will bring members and families together. Having a “Make a Sundae with SEPTA” event to celebrate National Special Education Day in December is one great idea. Exploring Special Education with your members, inviting teachers, and administrators to an event such as this and all events. Partnering with the school is very important.

It is important to remember that Special Education students are the most vulnerable and need others to speak up for them. Together we can and will make a difference, by helping each other. Communication, education and advocacy is key to the mission.