



Summit Performing Arts Resource Committee (SPARC), Inc.

- Founded in 1996 by a small group of performing arts teachers in the Summit Public Schools.
- Incorporated on December 26, 2003 with effective date of January 1, 2004 as a non-profit organization in New Jersey (501 (c) (3) for the charitable purpose of supporting and providing programs and activities involving the performing arts in the Summit Public Schools, NJ as well as in community events and programs involving Summit public school children.
- The bylaws define the purpose, membership, officer & board of trustees powers and duties, meetings, committees of the board, limitation of liability and force/effect of the bylaws
- SPARC's mission is to promote the performing arts in the Summit Public Schools, to recognize student achievements and to continuously enrich our program and productions through advocacy, financial support and educational initiatives.
- Over the past 21 years, SPARC has contributed over \$550,000 in grants to the Summit Public School performing arts programs. (We only have accurate documentation for the last 11 years). At the close of 2015-2016, SPARC contributed over \$76,000 in grant money to the schools, at the close of 2016-2017 over \$50,000, and at the close of 2017-2018 we granted \$60,000.
- In fiscal year 2013, SPARC was required to file a 990 due to the amount of funds raised.
- SPARC supports students across all 5 elementary schools, middle school and the high school.
- Programs supported are elementary school annual musical productions, middle school's drama workshops, fall and spring theater productions, TedX, STEP, and forensics and the high school's drama workshops, cabaret, fall and spring theater productions, speech & debate team, director's showcase, senior student scholarships and senior salute.
- SPARC normally hosts 2 major fundraisers per year. SPARC'ling Evening of Song (SEOS), started in 2010 as a major fundraiser, featuring alumni performers and the Pancake Breakfast featuring current performing arts students across the 7 schools. In 2016, the Executive Board reinstated a membership drive this time included in the summer packets going to all district families. In 2017, SPARC Board made changes to the fundraising events adding variety to appeal to broader audiences and sun-setting SPARC'ling Evening of Song (SEOS).

- SPARC's social media presence includes a website and FB page.
 - <http://www.sparcsummit.org/>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/sparcsummit/>

New in 2016-2017:

- A **Development Officer** was added to the bylaws. The role of this officer is to oversee all fundraising events, grants and tasks and provide suggestions for improving the effectiveness of fundraising for the organization.
- **Membership Drive** at the beginning of the school year. In accordance with our bylaws, dues shall be paid annually by all members. This had not been implemented consistently in the past. Membership drive is coordinated with the summer back to school packets that are sent home by the schools. We are mirroring the processes used by other parent organizations that are recognized by the Summit BOE and Administration as supportive organizations.
- **Clarity on Liaison Roles and Responsibilities.** The Executive Board updated the by-laws recognized that the full Board of Trustees is made up of the Executive Board (Officers) and the liaisons for up to a maximum of 15 trustees. The by-laws, however, only specify the duties of the officers. In order to help the liaisons fulfill their roles and be supported fully by the officers, we created a separate document, SPARC School Liaisons, Roles and Responsibilities. This was distributed to the liaisons at our first Board meeting of the 2016-17 school year on September 12, 2016 and is given to new liaisons as they come on board.
- **Updates to processes and forms.** In reviewing the current grant request processes and forms, we recognized that they were long, detailed and were not necessarily being completed as needed for our financial reporting to donors and to the government. The officers updated the forms and provided guidance to the liaisons to support their school performing arts directors in filling out the funding requests and the post grant report.
- **Collaboration with SMPA.** Both organizations identified lack of clarity in distinguishing the 2 organization to its members but more importantly to its potential members, donors and volunteers. We are working with the SMPA to clarify the distinctions while collaborating where possible to have a larger impact on the music and performing arts programs of the schools. One example of this is a project to enhance the displays of awards for both program in the high school. This request came from both the music directors to SMPA and from the theater director to SPARC. We've met with the HS principal to discuss and the current plan is to have a collaborative project between 9/5/2018SPARC, SMPA and the PTO.
- **Meet the Performing Art Coaches and SPARC Celebration** – as with sports coaches, SPARC will launch this event to allow rising 9th and 6th graders and their

families to hear from the performing arts coaches from the MS and HS and from graduating seniors as well. After the “formal” portion of the meeting, we will celebrate SPARC with food, drink and cake. This celebration will give students and families an opportunity to mingle and have 1-1 discussions with the coaches.

New in 2017-2018:

- **Additional Updates to By-laws.** These updates reflect changes implemented to our keeping accurate financial records of all transactions and the requirement to have dual signatures on all checks. We also made some smaller clarifying updates to the officer’s roles. These changes were approved at the Board meeting on September 11, 2017.
- **Fundraising Events:** The Board will be considering a variety of fundraising events to try to appeal to a broader audience. There will also be changes made to the 2 main events, SEOS and Pancake Breakfast based on feedback from participants and in an effort to lower our costs and increase our fundraising returns.
- **SEOS will be discontinued after 2017-2018.**
- **Launched a new event – SPARC Murder Mystery:** based on its success, it will be considered for upcoming years.
- **Meet the Performing Arts Coaches & SPARC Celebration – year 2!**
- **SPARC Recognition –** this year we decided to recognize every student in the district for every performing arts role they have participated in this school year. We recognized 769 students with over 1,200 certificates of participation! The participation could be in Cabaret, drama (fall & spring), technical theater, STEP, TEDx, Speech & Debate. These “participation” certificates will be given to seniors at the Senior Salute. For the rest of the students across the district, the certificates will be given to the SPARC liaison for each school and they will arrange for distribution. Each certificate will state the performance or team and the role that student played in that performance or team. The certificates will be signed by the SPARC President. (A pilot of this was done last year with the participants of the SHS musical. It was very well received.)

New in 2018-2019

- **SPARC Participation Certificates –** we will continue with these based on the overwhelmingly positive feedback we received from students and families. (Note that many students participate in a variety of performing arts events throughout the year.)
- In our continued effort to attract more donors with a variety of innovative fundraising events while minimizing volunteers needed, SPARC Board decided to have an October party – **SPARCtoberfest.** This will be our newest fundraising

event. Based on the success of our SPARC Murder Mystery launch last year, we will hold our **2nd annual SPARC Murder Mystery Theater** event this coming January 2019.

- **Member Meetings:** The SPARC Board has decided to rotate SPARC General (member) meetings to different schools in 2018-19. This is in an attempt to facilitate and thereby encourage more participation by the younger families who are starting in the performing arts.
 - **September 24, 2018 at Brayton School**
 - **October 22, 2018 at Franklin School**
 - **November 12, 2018 at Jefferson School**
 - **January 14, 2019 at Lincoln-Hubbard School**
 - **May 6, 2019 – Annual Reorganization Meeting – Location TBA**