

EVERY CHILD * YOUR VOICE!

CHILD ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

INDIVIDUALS * ELECTED OFFICIALS * LOCAL UNITS * COUNCILS * DISTRICTS

Honoring impactful work advocating for the education, health,
and well-being of students and school communities.

2021



Diane Cooper-Gould

Child Advocate of the Year

Diane Cooper-Gould is the co-founder of Fairfax Special Education PTA and has been a tireless advocate and leader in the Fairfax Special Education Community. After serving as Fairfax SEPTA President, Diane shifted into the position of Advocacy Chair where she has built a robust committee dedicated to advocating for those who cannot. During 2020-2021, she led the advocacy committee in developing positions and providing public comment on the concerns facing special education students as a result of the pandemic. Diane is a servant leader and her efforts have made Fairfax County Public Schools a better place for students with disabilities.



Fairfax Special Education PTA

Local Unit Advocate of the Year

The Fairfax County SEPTA's has engaged in a multi-year effort to reform restraint and seclusion practices for FCPS' 29,000 special education students. Fairfax SEPTA surveyed the special education community, compiled a findings report and position statement, met with the School Board, Superintendent and FCPS Administration, conducted press interviews, issued public statements, and called on the School Board to: ban seclusion; ban supine restraints; create safe de-escalation spaces; mandate staff training; require same-day notification to families and an annual policy notice; and provide mental health support for students and staff to address restraint and seclusion trauma. The School Board unanimously passed a Restraint & Seclusion policy with all of their asks in December, 2020.

Henrico County Council



Henrico County Council PTA

Council Advocate of the Year

Henrico County Council of PTAs has given parents and teachers a stronger voice during a critical year through robust communication and outreach. They worked to address misinformation by providing Q&As about Henrico's back to school plans, worked with local units to identify and advocate for equipment needed to provide quality instruction and hosted programs to help parents balance increased screen time, navigate their children's increased anxiety, and rebuild trust in the community. Henrico County Council PTA has expanded outreach through their new advocacy committee and publication of a monthly Advocacy Update for members that identifies issues, legislation, programs, and upcoming opportunities to learn or advocate.

Northern Virginia District



Northern Virginia District PTA

District Advocate of the Year

Virginia PTA's NoVa District established a new Advocacy Committee to facilitate collaboration across Fairfax County Council, Alexandria City Council, Arlington County Council, Fairfax SEPTA, and Arlington SEPTA. This close collaboration led to robust participation through-out General Assembly sessions and ability to speak to Virginia PTA priorities from a regional perspective on Good Morning Washington and the Kojo Nnamdi Show. The NoVA District PTA also established a first of it's kind Military Family Support Committee comprised of approximately 40 PTA leaders, Military Family Life Counselors (MFLCs) and school staff to support and advocate for the growing population of military connected youth in the NoVA district.

