

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
NOVI COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
NOVI, MICHIGAN
September 17, 2026**

TOPIC: Oakland Schools SEPAC Representatives

Oakland Schools SEPAC bylaws stipulate in order for District Representatives to vote and/or be included in the minutes, District Representatives must be recognized by the District's Board of Education. We had two amazing SEPAC parents who stepped up to be District Representatives for Oakland Schools SEPAC.

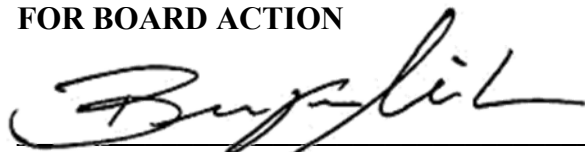
Jessica Benitez is a Michigan native with a nursing background who has lived in Novi for almost ten years with her husband and two children. She has a 9 year old son and 6 year old daughter who are both neurodivergent and attend Deerfield Elementary School within the Novi Community School District. Her daughter receives special education services. She joined the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee last school year and is committed to serving as a leader in this group. After her own journey navigating the special education system beginning in the early childhood school setting she has become inspired to help educate and support other families, be an advocate and support inclusive experiences for all. She looks forward to making connections, sharing perspectives and collaborating with district leaders in meaningful ways in order to foster the best school experience for all.

Monica Friel, originally from Texas, has proudly called Novi home for the past 15 years with her husband and three children. She is a former collegiate soccer player and currently works as an exercise physiologist. Her children are at Novi Woods and Novi Meadows. They have always known that Novi was where we wanted to raise our family. Her family's connection to the district is especially meaningful because our oldest son is autistic. Throughout his educational journey, Novi has provided him with an exceptional education, along with the individualized supports and services he has needed to thrive. He has surpassed so many of the expectations once placed on his trajectory and is now thriving in a general education classroom, building meaningful friendships, and even playing travel basketball! Seeing firsthand what is possible when a child is surrounded by the right educators, resources, opportunities, and a truly inclusive community has made her incredibly passionate about giving back. She hopes to be both an advocate and a helping hand as we continue building upon all the wonderful things Novi Community School District has to offer children of all abilities. Most importantly, she wants to help ensure that every child with a disability is seen for their potential, feels a true sense of belonging, and has every opportunity to learn, grow, thrive, and become the very best version of themselves. Thank you for considering me to represent our community!

Recommendation:

The Novi Community School District Board of Education, in the best interest of the Novi Community School District, approves Jessica Benitez and Monica Friel for the District's Oakland Schools SEPAC Representatives as presented.

**APPROVED AND RECOMMENDED
FOR BOARD ACTION**



Benjamin Mainka, Superintendent