COPAA’s mission is to be a national voice for special education rights and to promote excellence in advocacy. Our primary goal is to secure high quality educational services for children with disabilities.

COPAA is grounded in the belief that every child deserves the right to a quality education that prepares him or her for meaningful employment, higher education, and lifelong learning, as well as full participation in his or her community. The key to effective educational programs for children with disabilities is collaboration - as equals - between parents and educators. This is the premise of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, the federal statutes that guarantee children with disabilities a free appropriate public education. Access to quality representation protects student and parent rights and levels the playing field to enable full and meaningful participation as equal members of the child’s team.
The COPAA Board adopted the following goals in the Strategic Plan for 2012-2017:

**GOAL 1:** Increase Membership to 2000

**GOAL 2:** Increase Revenue to $500,000 per year

**GOAL 3:** Become the Leading National Information Dissemination Network on Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities and Their Families.

**GOAL 4:** Protect Civil Rights and Promote Excellence in Education for Students with Disabilities

**GOAL 5:** Assure Each Child Eligible for Services and Supports Has Equal Access to a Quality Education

**Co-Chairs: Selene Almazan and Catherine Merino Reisman**

The Amicus Committee continues its important work filing amicus briefs in cases of national significance and providing technical assistance to members. On February 21, 2012, COPAA filed an Amicus brief in *Jefferson Bd. Ed. v. Phillip Angie C.*, 11th Cir. As Amicus, COPAA’s interest is to offer its experience on the IEE issue, including the use of publicly-funded IEEs in the provision of FAPE, to aid in the protection of the rights of children with disabilities. The IEE provides an essential balance in the parent-school relationship to ensure FAPE by permitting input from independent professionals. COPAA members understand that publicly-funded IEEs have brought to bear necessary expertise and researched-based scientific practices for children and have generally enhanced parent-school collaboration.

Also of significance this year was the opinion in *Anchorage v. M.P.*, 9th Cir., a case in which COPAA had filed an Amicus brief before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. In that case, the district court had originally (11/1/11) found in favor of the parents on the issue of appropriateness, upholding the Hearing Officer’s determination that the school district did not satisfy the Rowley “meaningful benefit” standard when it utilized an outdated IEP. However, the district court ultimately ruled against the parents, finding that their behavior – their vigorous advocacy - excused the inappropriateness of the IEP. The Ninth Circuit reversed, finding that the district court had erred legally by concluding that the parents’ behavior excused the
inappropriateness of the IEP. Understanding the importance of this ruling to other cases, COPAA and its Amicus partner filed a Motion asking the Ninth Circuit to publish its decision in this matter. On July 19, 2012, the Ninth Circuit granted that motion and issued a new opinion in Anchorage Sch. Dist. v. M.P. that was substantially more complete than the original, relying heavily on the arguments presented in COPAA’s brief.

Awards Committee

Chair: Leslie Seid Margolis

This year the Diane Lipton Award Committee revised the criteria and purpose of the award, ultimately restructuring the call for nominations. The Diane Lipton Award recognizes outstanding achievement by a member of the special education advocacy community. The Committee considers, among other things, the criteria set forth in the application form. These criteria includes questions related to direct interaction/effect of work on students or children with disabilities and/or their families, education/public awareness efforts, legislation/public policy organizing efforts, and whether the applicant has championed a specific cause that embodies the mission of COPAA. For 2013, the Committee recommended recipient Terrie A. Rymer to the Board. The Committee has also recommended that the Board consider creating a workgroup to explore the possibility of additional COPAA Awards in future years.

Co-Chairs: Naomi Grossman, Cynthia Daniels-Hall, and David Beinke

Advocates Committee

The Advocates Committee has continued to meet this past year on a semi-monthly basis. Starting in March of 2013, however, the committee began using the following new format:

1) Hold quarterly meetings based on the schedules of the committee members, with meetings occurring more frequently if requested or necessary.

2) Continue the monthly toolbox.

3) Rotate topics of monthly conference calls (e.g., ask an advocate, board member, executive director, neuropsych, and attorney).

4) Schedule “Welcome New Advocate” meeting.
The Committee continues to explore the feasibility of advocate certification, recognizing that this is a complex issue and a monumental undertaking.

Many advocate members are reporting a serious increase in advocate activity with school districts. Emerging challenges appear to include eligibility determinations, especially for the autism category, LRE issues, schools pushing more students out of IEPs and into 504s, and an increase in school-initiated due process hearings to challenge parent requests for IEEs.

The Committee will also explore ongoing Advanced Advocate Training – with the number of SEAT graduates expected to grow over the next couple of years, as well as for those experienced advocates within COPAA, it will be important to continue to offer advanced advocate training.

Conference Committee

Co-Chairs: Selene A. Almazan and Catherine Merino Reisman

Our 2013 Annual Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico boasted 354 registrants. We were fortunate to have Andrea Friedman as our Friday evening speaker. As is our tradition, our Friday evening speaker inspired and informed our work. Our Saturday general session speaker, Brian Reichow, Ph.D., is an Associate Research Scientist at the Yale Child Study Center. The Conference Committee was very excited to have Dr. Reichow address the then-pending changes to the DSM-V. As a service to our membership, COPAA – through the work of Pro Bono Coordinator, Caroline Heller of Greenberg Traurig - developed additional materials for members’ use once the revisions were published. Finally, as always, Judith Gran provided The Year in Review!

This year an additional 2-day Pre-Conference session was added, geared towards parents and new advocates. Our Pre-Conference sessions tend to be very well attended, with approximately 60% of registrants attending these sessions. There were four two-day Pre-Conference options this year, and seven one-day sessions available. The Conference Program itself featured 40 sessions from which to choose. And, for the first time ever, we are proud to announce an exciting development: We have an App for that!

**Conference 2014:** Baltimore, Maryland, March 6-10, 2014

**Conference 2015:** San Diego, California, March 5-8, 2015
In 2012, the Development Committee was resurrected. Six additional COPAA members who have experience in this area were solicited to provide input/expertise/assistance to the Development Committee. The Committee discussed a variety of topics, including the following:

1. Mission Statement – the Committee revised the mission statement through the lens of development.
2. Purpose of Development - the Committee discussed the need to identify certain COPAA projects and target potential avenues of funding for those projects.
3. Publications – the Committee briefly discussed the possibility of using publications, such as parent manuals, as a potential revenue source.
4. End of Year Donation Letter – the Committee discussed both the historical revenue associated with the letter as well as the content of the letter.
5. Policy on Accepting Donations – the Committee discussed the policy both in terms of its origin in response to a specific grant in 2007, and in terms of review and possible need for updating in response to changes in COPAA.

COPAA’s Government Relations Committee oversees policy, encourages grassroots action, and engages in direct meetings. Virtually the entire job of hands-on advocacy, both with congressional staff and with federal agencies, as well as with other disability rights organizations, is handled by COPAA’s Executive Director, Denise Marshall. Over the last few years, COPAA has developed strong relationships with numerous critical players in the fields of education and disability. Unfortunately, COPAA currently lacks the resources to have a full-time governmental relations staff person in Washington. We continue to work towards that goal to increase impact.

COPAA supplements direct contacts with our grassroots network of members. We multiply our voice through the networks of our members, through coalitions with other groups, and through connecting elected officials to personal stories. Our goal is for every COPAA member to meet with his or her local members of Congress and their education staffers, to develop relationships with these staffers, and to have the tools necessary to push for policy agendas that are aligned with the national organization’s mission.
The following is a list of our major policy areas for advocacy over the past years (note that our website contains detailed descriptions, as well as policy statements, on many of these issues):

A. Provide safe, positive learning environments for children with disabilities.

B. Protect the due process rights of parents and students.

C. End the use of aversive interventions, including restraint and seclusion.

D. Ensure that the reauthorizations of ESEA (a.k.a NCLB) and IDEA provide for meaningful and measureable education for children with disabilities.

E. Ensure that all students have access to high quality teachers who are well trained, particularly in the services needed by children with disabilities.

F. Block ESEA waivers that shortchange students with disabilities.

G. Require charter schools to provide equal access and high quality education to children with disabilities.

H. Prevent schools from using discipline as an excuse not to provide education to students with disabilities.

I. Prevent schools from using Response to Intervention (RTI) procedures to deny or delay students’ eligibility for special education services.

J. Require schools to provide the type of outcome-based transitional services mandated by Congress in 2004.

K. Ensure that IEPs have measureable, challenging goals.

L. Stop out-of-level testing.

M. Ensure that children are evaluated promptly in all areas of suspected disability and that the right of parents to independent educational evaluations at public expense is safeguarded and enforced.

N. Ensure that FAPE requires the student to make real, measureable progress on challenging and relevant goals.

O. Reinstate the right of prevailing parents to recover expert witness fees from school boards.

P. Require school boards to carry the burden of proof in hearings to show that their proposed IEPs are appropriate.

Q. Restore the right of parents to recover attorneys’ fees from school district when their bringing of a due process hearing forces the district to provide what the student needs.

R. Make sure systemic progress monitoring is outcome-based, not process-based.
The COPAA Membership Committee continues to work hard on COPAA’s 2012-2017 Strategic Goals:

1. **Reduce member attrition to 5% per year to a norm of 25%.**
   - New website launched and outreach to existing members regarding benefits
2. **Establish an effective membership recruitment system.**
   - Proposal to launch a membership drive for the 2013-2014 year
3. **Value, respect, and encourage diversity in all aspects of the organization.**
   - Diversity data collected through member profile on new website
4. **Expand COPAA Community Tools.**
   - New website launched with much more robust online community features
5. **Review dues structure and consider increasing amount.**
   - Board approved increase in dues in 2012

**Publications Committee**

**Co-Chairs: Jon Zimring and Alice Nelson**

The Publications Committee published two checklists this year, the IEP Checklist and the Due Process Checklist. Additional checklists and short briefs are planned for the coming year. The Committee is also considering policy recommendations on related issues, such as limits on the use and republication or duplication of COPAA publication by members (for example, for advocacy use vs. personal use).
Co-Chairs: Eileen Crumm and Mandy Favaloro

The Training Committee continues to offer a successful series of webinars throughout the year on topics of interest to COPAA members and the special education advocacy community. SEAT training classes started last January, with Eileen Crumm and Mandy Favaloro teaching 38 students in Cohort A and Mark Kameleiter and Claudia Roberts teaching 36 students in Cohort B. The students seem excited by the material, engaged in the discussions, and eager to learn more about advocacy. It took some time for the students (and the instructors!) to get used to the various modalities (as we use SmarterU Online self-Study, Webex for Live Classes and Discussion Groups, Webex and Advocate Academy for recorded webinars on specific sub-topics, and the COPAA new group pages on the website). The Committee will evaluate the value added by each of these modalities to decide whether to continue to use them in future cohorts. Overall, the SEAT hybrid experience has been a learning experience for us all and is going well.

Volunteers

Our sincere thanks to COPAA’s many Committee Volunteers. Without you, COPAA would not be able to sustain such a high level of progress!

Thank you, Donors!

COPAA Benefactors

M. Kohn
S. Kwong (In honor of Kathryn Dobel)
M. Martin
J. Schunk
V. Vanaman

COPAA Supporters

L. Allen
A. Alvey
R. Berlow
G. Campbell
A. Casillas
L. Chang
T. Choma
E. Crumm
J. DuBovy
S. Gudger
Kule-Korgood Roff and Associates
M. Favaloro
A. Feinstein
M. Gorczynsk
B. Hathaway (In honor of Meliza Nabwire)
M. Hipple
V. Ikerd-Schreiter
J. Laviano

M. Lipsitt
H. Luke
D. Philpot
P. Radel
C. Merino Reisman
D. Marshall
A. Nelson
R. Safford
J. Siegel
R. Sibley
D. Savit
J. Tulman
S. Tropf
C. Watts
T. Whiteleather
D. Willcutts
J. Zimring
COPAA Board of Directors

COPAA Board of Directors (2013-2014)

Officers:
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Carolina Watts, Vice Chair (CA)
Mark Martin, Esq., Treasurer (MD)
Dana Jonson, Esq. Secretary (CT)

Board Members:
Missy Alexander (MD) IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR
Selene Almazan, Esq. (MD)
David Beinke (TX)
Robert Berlow, Esq. (MD)
Susan Bruce (SC)
Alexis Casillas, Esq.(CA)
Eileen Crumm (CA)
Cynthia Daniels-Hall (NC)
Mandy Favaloro, Esq. (CA)
Andrew Feinstein, Esq. (CT)

Sharon Gudger (GA)
Franklin J. Hickman, Esq. (OH)
Mark S. Kamleiter, Esq. (FL)
Sonja D. Kerr, Esq. (PA)
Michele Kule-Korgood, Esq. (NY)
Catherine Merino Reisman (NJ)
Mark Martin, Esq. (MD)
Alice Nelson, Esq. (FL)
Lana Traynor, Esq. (OR)
Jonathan Zimring, Esq. (GA)

Our sincere thanks to long time COPAA Board members Leslie Seid Margolis and Dawn Smith, whose terms expired in 2013. Your dedication to the field and to COPAA is very much appreciated. We look forward to your continued contributions to the work of COPAA and its Committees.

Executive Director: Denise Marshall
Meetings and Membership Coordinator: Marcie Hipple
Consulting Accountant: Mary Fornoff
# THE COUNCIL OF PARENT ATTORNEYS AND ADVOCATES, INC.

## STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

**December 31, 2012 and 2011**

### ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$229,839</td>
<td>$211,917</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants and other receivables</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>1,629</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
<td>7,189</td>
<td>7,646</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred costs</td>
<td>43,400</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td><strong>Total current assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>280,703</strong></td>
<td><strong>221,192</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT** |          |            |
| Computer equipment       | 1,525     | 1,525      |
| Website                  | 11,844    | 10,325     |
| **Total property and equipment** | **13,369** | **11,850** |
| Less accumulated depreciation | 10,455    | 7,043      |
| **Total property and equipment** | **2,914** | **4,807**  |

| **DEPOSIT**             | 200        | 200        |
| **Total assets**        | $283,817   | $226,199   |

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT LIABILITIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts payable</td>
<td>$7,617</td>
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<td>Accrued expenses</td>
<td>10,742</td>
<td>7,529</td>
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<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>124,119</td>
<td>73,756</td>
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<td><strong>Total current liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>142,478</strong></td>
<td><strong>95,189</strong></td>
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### COMMITMENTS

### NET ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>130,937</td>
<td>117,829</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
<td>10,402</td>
<td>13,181</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total net assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>141,339</strong></td>
<td><strong>131,010</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Total liabilities and net assets** | $283,817 | $226,199 |
THE COUNCIL OF PARENT ATTORNEYS
AND ADVOCATES, INC.

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
Years Ended December 31, 2012 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated services</td>
<td>$446,722</td>
<td>$880,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference fees, net of refunds of $1,630 in 2012 and $3,880 in 2011</td>
<td>157,490</td>
<td>154,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership dues, net of refunds of $400 in 2012 and $500 in 2011</td>
<td>99,647</td>
<td>91,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinar training</td>
<td>12,278</td>
<td>10,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>5,597</td>
<td>9,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>1,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,642</td>
<td>2,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>725,183</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,151,415</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTION** | | |
| Satisfaction of restriction | 7,894 | 4,792 |
| **Total unrestricted support and revenue** | 733,077 | 1,156,207 |

| **EXPENSES** | | |
| Program services | 634,173 | 1,102,436 |
| Management and general | 85,796 | 91,687 |
| **Total expenses** | **719,969** | **1,194,123** |

| Change in unrestricted net assets | 13,108 | (37,916) |

| **TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS** | | |
| Contributions | 5,115 | 6,032 |

| **NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTION** | | |
| Satisfaction of restriction | (7,894) | (4,792) |
| Change in temporarily restricted net assets | (2,779) | 1,240 |

| Change in net assets | 10,329 | (36,676) |

| Net assets, beginning of year | 131,010 | 167,686 |

| Net assets, end of year | $141,339 | $131,010 |

*The complete independently audited 2012 COPAA Financial Statement is available to members upon request.*