

**SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SEAC)
ROBBINSDALE AREA SCHOOLS**

Bylaws

The Special Education Advisory Council of Independent School District #281, Robbinsdale Area Schools, is also known as the Robbinsdale SEAC.

Article I: Mission

The mission of the Robbinsdale SEAC is to:

1. Support the following mission of Robbinsdale Area Schools' Special Education Department: "We will assist students with disabilities in increasing their capacity to contribute to their own well-being, their family and their community."
2. Advocate for the high quality programs and services necessary to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of all children with disabilities and their families.
3. Advise the District, through its Director of Special Education, on the policies, procedures, and practices required to implement effective special education and related services based on student needs under relevant federal and state law.
4. Assist the District in identifying needs and pro-actively support the development and implementation of programs and services to meet those needs.
5. Encourage and facilitate communication and mutual support among students, parents, school personnel, and persons in the greater community.

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of the council is to increase the involvement of parents/guardians of children with disabilities in district policymaking and decision making. The council will report recommendations made through the consensus of designated members. An annual report of council activities and recommendations shall be presented to the superintendent of schools and the board of education each school year by the Director of Special Education and designated members of SEAC.

Article III: Terms of Membership

Membership shall be by appointment of the SEAC at any of its regular meetings. The SEAC shall appoint persons who have a commitment to the purposes of the SEAC, provide the perspectives required to support those purposes, have attended at least one regular SEAC meeting as an observer, and have submitted a completed application to one of the SEAC Co-Chairpersons. An application form can be picked up at a SEAC meeting or accessed on the website at www.sped.rdale.org under SEAC.

The following are suggested areas of representation:

1. Parents/guardians of children with special needs attending District 281 schools.
2. Community members
3. School Staff: principals, teachers (regular and special education), health care professionals, specialists, educational assistants, etc.
4. Self-advocates: students

At least half of the designated members must be parents/guardians of children with disabilities. The committee membership must also include at least one parent/guardian or staff person from one of the private schools within the district.

Council members will commit to serving a two-year term, but can continue membership as desired as long as they follow the following expected membership guidelines:

Members shall be expected to attend regular meetings of SEAC and be interested in supporting extra-meeting activities in which their interest and skills may be beneficial. Two consecutive absences from regular meetings shall initiate a personal contact by another member to determine the member's future availability. The SEAC may grant temporary voting membership rights to observers who have otherwise met the voting membership requirements when appointed members have provided advance notice of their absence at a specific meeting.

When a formal action requires the counting of individual votes of members, the Co-Chair(s) shall ensure that a simple majority of voting members be parents of children with disabilities who are residents of the District. In the event that this is not the case, members who do not meet that criterion will be requested to voluntarily abstain from voting on the issue until the simple majority requirement is met. Abstaining members are not prohibited from speaking on the issue. All decisions will be made by consensus. A quorum will consist of one-third of the designated members.

Article IV: Officers

The voting membership of the SEAC shall elect officers for terms of one year or two school years at the regular May meeting. If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held immediately, with the term to expire at the May meeting.

Office and officer responsibilities of the SEAC are:

Co-Chairpersons

Two Co-Chairpersons shall serve alternating two-year terms, but can be re-elected by a majority. Co-Chairpersons shall be residents of the District and be the parents of children with disabilities. The Co-Chairpersons shall:

1. Set the agenda for each regular meeting, in consultation with the Director of Special Education or his/her designee.
2. Preside at all regular meetings
3. Represent, or delegate their authority to represent, the SEAC in all applicable forums. Activities requiring such representation shall be reported to the SEAC at the next regular meeting.
4. Recommend the organization and, upon gaining formal approval, appoint members to and monitor the activities of committees, sub-committees, and task forces.
5. Appoint members to subcommittees as needed to carry out the work of the SEAC. Each subcommittee must have at least three members, one of whom shall normally be a school staff member. The school district will solicit SEAC members to represent SEAC on other district committees as well.

Other Offices

The Co-Chairpersons may appoint persons to serve the functions of Secretary and Committee Chairpersons as deemed appropriate by the membership. Establishment of elected offices or standing committees shall be by formal action of the SEAC with applicable provisions to be added to the bylaws required.

Article V: Elections

Elections shall be the first order of business during the May meeting. Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership, subject to the voting membership provisions in Article III. New officers shall take office immediately following their election.

Article VI: Meetings

Regular meetings shall be held each month during the school year, with the exception of December, preferably on the same day of the month, time of day, and place. These meetings should be set at the May meeting of the prior school year. Additional meetings may be set by the SEAC at any regular meeting. The meetings are open to the public. The Director of Special Education will ensure that minutes are taken by a staff person. Members will receive meeting reminders and minutes via e-mail prior to each meeting. Meetings and approved minutes will also be publicized on the district website.

Article VII: Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a simple majority of the voting members at a regular meeting, but bylaw changes may not become effective until affirmed at the next regular meeting. Changes approved by unanimous vote may take effect immediately.

Article VIII: Role of the Director of Special Education

The Director of Special Education or his/her designee shall serve as an ex-officio member of the SEAC. To assist SEAC activities, the Director shall provide reasonable and appropriate resource services. To assist the SEAC in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, the Director shall maintain records required to document the District's implementation of M.S. 124A.24 (Parent Advisory Councils) including, but not limited to: meeting minutes, membership rosters, formal recommendations made by the SEAC, and the responses resulting from those recommendations.