

GREENWICH SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL BYLAWS

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be Greenwich Special Education Advisory Council, referred to as the “Greenwich SEAC.”

ARTICLE II: MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Greenwich Special Education Advisory Council (“Greenwich SEAC”) is as follows:

1. To provide education and information to parents/guardians and the broader community on special education issues and services.
2. To establish better understanding of, respect for, and support of special education in Greenwich.
3. To advise the Greenwich Public School District (“GPS”) on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities and 504s to ensure that every student receives a Free and Appropriate Education (“FAPE”) and students' needs are being met.
4. To report annually (or more often if needed) to the Greenwich Board of Education (“BOE”) on matters related to the education of students with disabilities.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

Section 1: The Purpose of the Greenwich SEAC shall be:

- a) To promote better understanding, improved communication and collaboration between the parents/guardians of children with disabilities and the GPS;
- b) To promote a network of parents/guardians of children with disabilities and provide the forum to share information;
- c) To provide support for special education services and for meeting the individualized needs of all students who are enrolled in special education programs and 504 plans in GPS through communication with and feedback to the Superintendent and BOE;
- d) To promote communication, understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of students with disabilities within the community;
- e) To encourage a community commitment to quality education for all children and to support diversity within the educational setting.
- f) To work collaboratively with the special needs community to make workshops available to the public that addresses special needs.

Section 2: The Function of the Greenwich SEAC shall be:

- g) To participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of special education programs and 504 plans;
- h) To provide an effective link between parents/guardians and school administration regarding issues around special education and 504 plans;
- i) To provide information concerning special education and 504 plan issues to all parents/guardians of children enrolled in GPS or outplaced therethrough;
- j) To provide a forum for parents/guardians and other interested citizens to maintain a dialogue with GPS on concerns and issues relating to the education, health, and safety of all students enrolled in special education programs and 504 plans;

- k) To provide and promote information and educational opportunities for the community on topics related to special education services and 504 plans;
- l) To meet with the Superintendent and the BOE on a regular basis to advise them on issues pertaining to special education and 504 plans in Greenwich.
- m) The Greenwich SEAC shall annually establish and implement areas of priority for the continuous improvement of special education services.
- n) Submit a report on an annual basis to the BOE regarding the state of special education in the Town of Greenwich including recommendations for improvement thereof.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Section One: General Membership

- a) General membership shall be open to any interested parent or guardian of a child with a disability, previously known to have a disability, or suspected of having a disability, under the IDEA or Section 504, or who is currently eligible to receive Special Education or 504 accommodations and services, from ages 3-21, and who are residents of the Town of Greenwich.
- b) Parents/guardians of children receiving Special Education or 504 services from GPS shall be eligible General Members of the Greenwich SEAC and included in Greenwich SEAC mailings.
- c) For the purpose of confidentiality, the GPS does not share the email addresses of families receiving special education services and 504 plans with the Greenwich SEAC. Therefore, all Greenwich SEAC district mailings will be distributed by the Superintendent on the Greenwich SEAC's behalf.
- d) General members who do not have children receiving Special Education services or 504 plans through the Town of Greenwich and who would like to be included in the Greenwich SEAC mailings should contact the Greenwich SEAC as directed with their request and they will be added at the SEAC's discretion.
- e) Parents/guardians of children receiving Special Education services or 504 plans, and residents of Greenwich may opt out the Greenwich SEAC's direct mailing list by contacting the Greenwich SEAC as directed.
- f) All contact and personal information shall be kept confidential and used only for Greenwich SEAC purpose to protect the privacy rights of children.

Section Two: Voting Membership

Voting membership shall be limited to the Greenwich SEAC Board Members (see article VII).

ARTICLE V: MEETINGS

1. The Greenwich SEAC shall plan to hold at least five regular meetings (around September, November, January, March & May) each school year. The schedule of meeting dates shall be determined at the last meeting of the previous school year.
2. Additional meetings may be held on an as-needed basis as determined by the Executive Committee.
3. All meetings shall be announced to all Greenwich SEAC members and notice given to the entire community.

4. Any SEAC board member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings or fails to attend fifty percent of all meetings during any calendar year shall be referred to the executive committee for review.
5. Minutes of all meetings shall be kept by the Recording Secretary.
6. The purpose of the annual meeting will be to:
 - a) Elect officers and Greenwich SEAC board members as needed.
 - b) Review any final reports of committees
 - c) Conduct a final review of the Final Report
7. The Annual Meeting of the Greenwich SEAC shall be held in the spring of each year, no later than the 31st day of May.

ARTICLE VI: QUORUM AND VOTING PROCEDURES

1. More than 50% of Greenwich SEAC Board Members are required at a meeting to constitute a quorum for the purposes of voting on Greenwich SEAC business decisions.
2. At least 51% of the Greenwich SEAC Board Members present at a meeting must be parents of students with disabilities to constitute a quorum.
3. When a quorum is present at any meeting; a majority of the votes cast by Greenwich SEAC Board Members present shall decide any question.
4. All voting on matters before the Greenwich SEAC council will be limited to the members of the Greenwich SEAC Board.
5. Greenwich SEAC Board members may attend a meeting and be considered present to that meeting through acceptable electronic means.
6. The Superintendent, Chief PPS Officer and two (2) Greenwich Board of Education liaisons shall serve as ex officio members of the Greenwich SEAC Board subject to the following provisions:
 - a. Their presence shall not count toward the calculation of a quorum; and
 - b. They shall have no vote in any meeting except in case of a tie vote among the Greenwich SEAC board members. In the event of a tie, the Superintendent shall cast the tie-breaking vote.

ARTICLE VII: BOARD MEMBERS, ELECTIONS, AND DUTIES

Section 1: Greenwich SEAC Board Members

1. The Board of the Greenwich SEAC shall consist of the following members:
 - a) Thirteen (13) parents or guardians who are eligible general members.
 - b) Five (5) 'educators' within Greenwich Public Schools and shall consist of (2) general education teachers, two (2) special education teachers and one (1) administrator.
 - c) Two (2) related service providers.
 - d) One (1) representative member from the Community
 - e) There will be four (4) alternates, two (2) being parents/guardians and two (2) being educators. Upon a vacancy occurring in a given position on the Greenwich SEAC, an eligible alternate whose position corresponds to the position being vacated will automatically be appointed to such position on the council, e.g. parent alternates would take parent voting member positions and teacher alternates would take teacher voting member positions, general education teacher alternates would take general education teacher positions and special education teacher alternates would take special education teacher positions, etc. If there are more eligible

alternates than vacancies for a particular position, a lottery will be held to determine which eligible alternate member will be appointed to such position on the council.

- f) At least 50% of parents should have children with IEP's.
- 2. A Board Member may resign by giving notice in writing to the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Greenwich SEAC. In the event of a resignation, the Board shall hold an election for a successor to fill an unexpired term.
- 3. The Original Board shall be comprised of seven (7) parents, three (3) educators, one (1) related service provider, and one (1) community member serving initial two (2) year terms and six (6) parents, two (2) educators, and one (1) related service provider serving an initial one (1) year term. Thereafter, all Board members shall be eligible to serve one (1) additional two (2) year term in the same position. After the additional term, two years must elapse before becoming eligible for re-election to the same position, unless there are not enough parents to fill the new position.
- 4. After the Original Board, all terms are two (2) year terms.
- 5. If a Board Member has been elected to fill an unexpired term, he/she will serve the remainder of such term. Such board member shall be able to service one additional two-year term.

Section 2: Executive Committee and Officers

- 1. Nominations of candidates for officers for the ensuing year shall be requested in April or May of each year. Nominations may also occur at the Annual Meeting.
 - a) The Superintendent shall appoint chair and vice chairs for the developing year.
 - b) Subsequently, officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting by a majority of votes cast by all general membership actually present at the time of the vote.
 - c) Each elected officer shall hold office for a term of at least one year (July 1 through June 30).
- 2. The Executive Committee of the Greenwich SEAC shall be one (1) Chair (parent), two (2) Vice-Chairs (both parents), Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary.
- 3. The Superintendent will serve in an advisory role to the Executive Committee.
- 4. The responsibilities of the members of the Executive Committee are as follows:
 - a. Chair/Vice-Chairs**
 - i. Preside at all meetings of the Greenwich SEAC
 - ii. Draft the agenda for each general meeting in consultation with the Executive Committee.
 - iii. Recommend the creation of and monitor the function of sub-committees
 - iv. Monitor and facilitate the activities of other Officers
 - i. Monitor compliance with the Bylaws
 - ii. Act as liaison with district and school officials and representatives, including the Superintendent and the Board of Education.
 - iii. Lead efforts to advise the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities.
 - iv. Coordinate regular meetings with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district's special education programs.
 - v. Update the Superintendent regarding Greenwich SEAC activities and needs.
 - vi. Identify and pursue ways to collaborate on common goals.
 - vii. Act as liaison between parents/guardians of students with disabilities or suspected disabilities and the Superintendent.

- viii. Transition knowledge and expertise to the next Chair/Vice-Chair upon end of term.
- ix. In the absence of the Chair, a vice chair shall preside over the meeting.

b. Recording Secretary

- i. Take meeting minutes
- ii. Draft and distribute approved general meeting minutes for public posting
- iii. Maintain an accurate attendance log of meeting attendees
- iv. Count and record all vote results
- v. Responsible for public comment forms at meetings
- vi. Arrange meeting locations in an accessible facility.

c. Corresponding Secretary

- i. Be responsible for all correspondence and communications pertaining to the Greenwich SEAC including emails and social media/web postings.
- ii. Maintain a list of all General, Board and Executive members of the Greenwich SEAC including their contact information.
- iii. Be responsible for delivering to all General and Board members copies of any Agenda for an upcoming regular or special meeting of the Board in a timely fashion and the delivery of any and all minutes of any such meetings of the board and committees thereof.

ARTICLE VIII: BYLAW AMENDMENTS

1. These bylaws may be adopted, altered, repealed or amended at any Greenwich SEAC meeting provided that the proposed change is submitted in writing to all Greenwich SEAC Board members at least 15 calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting in which the vote is to be taken.
2. Proposed Bylaws changes may be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Greenwich SEAC Board members present at a meeting.