

# Fargo Public Schools Special Education Parent Advisory Committee Bylaws

*Information was provided and adapted from:*

*Center for Parent Information and Resources, retrieved 7/9/21. Advocacy in Action: A Guide to Local Special Education Parent Advisory Councils, Newark, NJ, Center for Parent Information & Resources, 2019. [ADVOCACY IN ACTION:](#)*

## **What:**

Name: The name of the Committee shall be the Fargo Public Schools Special Education Parent Advisory Committee referred to hereinafter as, “FPS SEPAC or Committee”.

Mission Statement: The mission of the FPS SEPAC is to facilitate collaboration between students, parents, staff, the FPS Board of Education, and the community in order to promote inclusion, understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in our community. Additionally, the FPS SEPAC, offers the opportunity for feedback regarding the quality of district wide special education policies, programs and practices of Fargo Public Schools.

## **Why:**

The Purpose of the Committee:

The mission of the FPS SEPAC is to work for the understanding of, respect for and support of all children with special needs in the community. To that end, they will work to:

- Promote a network of parents of children with special needs and provide the forum to share information and increase parent involvement
- Provide input to the Superintendent, Director of Student Services and School Committee(s) on operations and development of special education programs, parent and teacher training needs, and policy development

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- Promote communications between FPS SEPAC members, local, State and National organizations, councils and groups
- Promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion

What Happens at FPS SEPAC Meetings?

***Remember that SEPAC meetings are not the forum for a discussion about individual students or a child's IEP. Topics are limited to those which impact all students or a group of students. Additionally, these meetings are for parents only. It is not appropriate to have your child attend these meetings.***

- Concerns related to a group of students are shared and discussed.
- District representatives provide updates related to special services in the school district and at the state and national levels.
- The committee has adequate time to discuss issues among themselves and propose potential agenda items for the next meeting.
- Speakers, other district leaders, and individual staff members may be invited, based upon requests from the SEPAC.

What else can a member of the SEPAC do to advance the mission?

- Volunteer to be a parent representative regarding issues and concerns raised at your individual school.

## **How:**

Terms of Membership:

General membership shall be open to any FPS parents/guardians of students currently attending and/or current FPS staff members.

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- General membership will be provided the opportunity for public comment as noted during the approved agenda and if time allows questions upon the conclusion of the approved agenda.
- Participants will not receive compensation to prepare for or attend meetings.
- Any member may request an opportunity to provide input on each topic.

A. SEPAC Internal and External Stakeholder Membership:

- Four (4) External Stakeholders FPS parent/guardian of students who receive special education services\*
  - \* A person who lives in the FPS District and who is a mother, father, or legal guardian of a student directly receiving special education services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) within a FPS school but not employed by the FPS district
- Internal Stakeholders employed by FPS:
  - (1) High School student representative
  - (1) Special Education Leadership Staff
  - (1) Non-teaching school staff, selected by non-teaching school staff
  - (2) teachers, selected by Fargo Public Schools teachers
  - (2) School principals, one from each division (elementary and secondary)
- Role: provide insight and support to the SEPAC in the understanding of parent / family issues and perspectives; attend all regular meetings and special meetings, as requested as a voting member.

**Officers of the FPS SEPAC:**

Section A: Officers and Election of Officers

Officers of the FPS SEPAC shall be the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson. These positions will consist of 1 parent/guardian representative and 1 district representative. These officers will be elected bi-annually by approved voting membership at time of election. Elections will be held at the first meeting that takes place after July 1 of the current year.

Officers are elected from the pool of internal and external stakeholders and may hold office for up to 2 consecutive terms. Each term will be 2 years in length (July 1 - June 30). If a new officer cannot be found, current officers can serve up to an additional year, if approved by the remaining SEPAC Stakeholder members.

If a vacancy in the Chairperson position occurs, the Vice-Chairperson will assume the role. If a vacancy in the Vice-Chairperson position occurs, a successor will be elected by the voting membership at the next regular meeting and that person shall serve the remainder of the term.

#### Section B: Duties of Officers

The Chairperson shall:

- Preside at all scheduled meetings of the committee
- Coordinate meetings of the FPS SEPAC with the Director, Assistant Director, or Designee of FPS Special Education Department Administration
- Develop agendas in collaboration with Director, Assistant Director, or Designee of FPS Special Education Department Administration

The Vice chairperson shall:

- Serve in the absence of the Chairperson
- Assist with agenda development

#### **Recording of Minutes:**

Minutes will be taken by the administrative assistant to the Director and Assistant Director of Special Education or other FPS Designee. Responsibilities of this position shall be:

- Recording minutes of each meeting using digital word processing document
- Maintain record of all past minutes

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- Present completed minutes to each subsequent meeting for approval

Audio or video recording of meetings is not permissible. No sitting officials shall post publically (to include social media) information or statements provided by membership. Only approved minutes will be made public on the FPS website.

### **Meetings:**

#### Section A: Number of Meetings

There will be a minimum of 4 (quarterly) FPS SEPAC meetings during the school year. Meetings will be held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month starting at 5:30 PM and will not exceed 2 hours in length. Meeting dates and agendas will be published on the FPS website and sent to parents of students who receive special education services via Blackboard or other electronic communication method. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson in collaboration with the Assistant Director of Special Education will make every attempt to hold the first meeting of each school year before the last working day in October. Subsequent meetings will be scheduled at the end of each current meeting.

- The Committee will follow Robert's Rules of Order and open meeting requirements.
- Minutes which have been approved by the Committee will be posted to the FPS website.
- Date/time/place of meetings will be posted on FPS website at least 10 days prior to the meeting.
- The SEPAC will provide input and make recommendations on special education policy, programs, and practices to the district.
- SEPAC members will act as liaisons to share comments and concerns with school leaders.
- The SEPAC will work to ensure that membership reflects the linguistic, religious, racial, cultural and socio-economic diversity of the local school community and includes members from each preschool, elementary school, middle school, and high school.

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## Section B: Rescheduling Meetings

Meetings will be rescheduled for the following reasons:

1. Neither the chairperson nor the vice-chairperson is able to attend and an agreed upon substitute cannot be found
2. On days that school has been canceled early district-wide for any reason
3. On days that school has been canceled fully district-wide for any reason

## Section C: Location of Meetings

The meetings will be held in an FPS building location that is ADA compliant or through a virtual platform.

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