

Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council ~ SEPAC

Organizational By-Laws

As of: February 4, 2024

Article I: Name of Organization:

The name of this organization shall be the Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council, also known as Medford SEPAC.

For the purposes of these by-laws the word "parent" shall mean: natural or adoptive parents, foster parents, legal guardians, family members raising the student and/or caregivers who are responsible for the student.

Article II: Authority:

The PAC receives its statutory authority from the Chapter 71B, Section 3 of Massachusetts General Laws. The authority is also codified in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR), 603 CMR 28.07(4).

Chapter 71B section 3 of the Massachusetts General Laws follows.

"The school committee of any city, town, or school district shall establish a parent advisory council on special education. Membership shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs. The parent advisory council shall establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures. In the course of its duties under this section, the parent advisory council shall receive assistance from the school committee without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources

Article III Purpose:

The SEPAC's purpose is to fulfill the directive stated in Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws which requires a school district to establish a PAC and assigns both an advisory and a participatory function to the PAC.

In meeting this requirement, the mission of the Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council is to:

- Advise the District on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities by seeking input from the Special Education parent members.
- Meet regularly with school officials;
- Participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district's special education program.
- Participate in planning workshops and activities, as prioritized by the SEPAC Board.

Article III: Terms of Membership:

General membership shall be open to any resident of Medford or person affiliated with the Medford Public Schools who has a child who has been found eligible for special education services; a student of not less than sixteen (16) years of age who is on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 plan who lives in the City of Medford; and other interested parties.

Voting membership is required to participate and vote at elections as well as other business that comes before any Medford SEPAC meeting. Voting membership shall be any general member who is a parent or guardian of a child who has been found eligible for special education services, who attends the Medford Public Schools and who has read and signed a copy of the Medford SEPAC bylaws. Bylaws are available online, at public meetings and by request.

Meetings are defined as any Medford SEPAC meeting, activity or committee at which attendance is taken.

Article IV: Board Members and Officers of the Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council

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Board members are elected from and by the voting membership and will hold office for two (2) years. Board positions are only open to voting members who are parents of a student on an IEP or 504 plan.

Board positions are; 1-Chair, 2-Co-Chair, 1 – Secretaries 1- Treasurer (if funds exist)

Medford SEPAC will also offer board positions to represent each of the following schools:

- 1 board member for Brooks Elementary School
- 1 board member for Missituk Elementary School
- 1 board member for Roberts Elementary School
- 1 board member for McGlynn Elementary School
- 1 board member for Andrews Middle School
- 1 board member for McGlynn Middle School
- 1 board member for Medford Vocational School
- 1 board member for Out-of-District Placement~Students Placed Privately by School District or in other educational settings on an IEP.
- 1-2 board members for Medford High School

Board member responsibilities of the Medford SEPAC may include:

- Be a representative for School Administration & Parents/Guardians/care takers at the school level.
- Work with School Principal and Special Education staff to distribute SEPAC information.
- Attend SEPAC board meetings.
- Represent special education interests through participation in school-based organizations and meetings.
- Participate in School-based SEPAC Activities/outreach.

Officers are elected from and by the Board membership and will hold office for the period of their term as Board member. The Chair and Co-Chair may not hold the same office for three (3) consecutive terms except by 2/3 majority vote of the Board members.

Office and officer responsibilities of the Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council are:

Chairperson

- Set the agenda for each general meeting.
- Preside at the majority of meetings of the Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council.
- Oversee the organization of sub-committees and monitor their functioning.
- Act as liaison with the Director of Student Services.
- Advise the board on matters of external communications.

Co-Chairperson

- Preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair, or at the request of the Chair.
- Assist the Chair to perform the responsibilities of the Chair at his/her request.

Secretary

- Coordinate all communication between the Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council and its membership.
- Coordinate the recording and filing of minutes of the Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council and its sub-committees to comply with Public Records Law outlined in the Massachusetts General Laws.
- Collect and review all correspondence of the Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council.
- Maintain SEPAC business records for public review at request.
- Prepare periodic reports for the Special Education Administration regarding PAC activities and needs.
- File notice of meetings with the clerk of the city of town at least forty-eight hours prior to the meetings and post all notices of meetings.

Treasurer

- Work with Medford's Director of Finance & Administration to manage and account for funds designated to and spent by the Medford SEPAC.

Article V: Elections

Elections shall be the first order of business during the May meeting. Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote collected through cast ballots. Elections will be advertised at least two months in advance of election.

Records will be transferred to the new board. New officers shall take office immediately following their election.

Any member may make a nomination for a candidate.

Prior to the May meeting, a volunteer election coordinator will be recruited from the voting membership of the Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council. The selection of the election coordinator will be decided by the board. The election coordinator will not be anyone who is running for office.

The Election Coordinator will coordinate activities necessary to complete the election for all open positions.

The Board reserves the right to fill open positions and create subcommittees as needed.

Article VI: Meetings

General meetings shall be held at least monthly, from September through June. Notice shall include publishing notices of meetings and elections in the local press, filing and posting notice of meetings and elections with the city or town clerk, and sending a notice to each voting member through the schools, by mail, email or some other communication method.

During the June meeting, the Chairs shall take recommendations for the calendar of meetings for the following school year. The calendar shall include dates and times of the meetings and projected activities for the year.

Topics that require a vote include, but are not limited to the following items:

- a change in the by-laws can only be voted on at a general meeting;
- a commitment of financial resources requires a simple majority of voting members present;
and
- Elections require a simple majority of voting members present.

Minutes of all Medford Special Education Parent Advisory Council meetings shall be recorded and retained as a matter of public record and shall be available upon request.

Article VII: Contact Information for Medford SEPAC

The Medford SEPAC will use the following mailing address for all advertising, correspondence and MassPAC membership or any other applications:

Medford Public Schools
Office of Director of Pupil Services
489 Winthrop Street
Medford, MA 02155

For email and phone contact information, the current Board may utilize personal email accounts and phone numbers for advertising to allow parent/guardian and District access to the SEPAC Board.

Article VIII:

Roberts Rules of Order are the default procedures for this organization.