



**Saint Paul Public Schools
Special Education
Advisory Council**

Sec. 8 Minnesota Statutes 2004, section 125A.24 (PACs)

In order to increase the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in district policymaking and decision-making, school districts must have a special education advisory council that is incorporated into the district's special education system plan.

Attendees: Amy Eelkema, Joel Van Valin, Oanh Nguyen, Christina Locke, Christina Nicholas, Ashley Ousley, Nicole Warner, Amina Abdullahi, Rhonda Morrison, Kathleen Morrison, Rachel Sewell, Jackie Kelly, Mayra Mariscal, Amy Johnson, Heidi Nistler, Laura Wallo, Farhiya Ali, Markisha Havis, Saadia Mohamed, Salma Siddiqui, Pablo Matamoros

21 people: 10 of 17 members, 4 staff, 7 guests

Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

Date: 12-09-2024

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. meeting (5:30-6:00 p.m. light meal and connecting).

Location: Google Meet

To join the video meeting, click this link: <https://meet.google.com/awv-dthw-piv>

Otherwise, to join by phone, dial +1 727-325-2008 and enter this PIN: 322 143 009#

6:00 p.m. Housekeeping, Welcome & Member & Guest Introductions

What is SEAC:

SEAC is a group of parents, guardians, staff and community members that meet monthly "to increase the involvement of parents of children with disabilities in policymaking and decision-making".

How does SEAC work:

At SEAC meetings members are informed and share input to improve programs and systems for students with disabilities and their families.

What are Parents Supposed To Do At SEAC?

- **Learn** something that will benefit your child.
- **Share** what you learn with people in your community (neighbor, friend, child's teacher....).
- **Ask questions and share input.**

Member & Guest Introductions

- Share your name, if you're a member or guest and a little about yourself or your child.

[SEAC December 2024 agenda](#)

6:20 p.m. Approve [November Minutes](#)

6:20 p.m. Rachel Sewell moved to approve SEAC meeting minutes, Nicole Warner seconded. Minutes were approved and passed.

6:25 p.m. SpEd Update- Heidi Nistler, Director Special Education.

Board Policy 509 Update

- **[Policy 509](#)**
- Previous discussion at SEAC - want principals and teachers to be trained in this policy so they are prepared to implement policy and support students and families
 - Communication was sent to special education teachers about the policy (end of November)

- Principals trained in October
- Parent communication has been drafted
 - Still finalizing supplemental document based on questions and implementation of policy (working with SEM)
 - In future years, implementation information will be included in the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook

Clarify a sentence:

A student with an IEP may be removed in accordance with this policy regardless of whether the student's conduct would create an emergency.

Emergency: A situation where immediate intervention is needed to protect a child or other individual from **physical injury**

Non-emergency situations that may still result in removal may include: verbal threats, electronic threats, mental health crisis

- Removal would entail SEM staff transporting a student home in partnership and communication with parent/family

International Teacher Update

- Special education teachers from the Philippines have started to arrive in Minnesota.
- 19 special education teachers from the Philippines
 - All are fully trained and licensed (in Minnesota) for special education
 - Their work visas allow them to work in Minnesota (for SPPS) for up to 6 years - they can choose to apply for a Green Card during that time
 - Have been partnering with the Saint Paul Federation of Educators to support our new teachers
 - Teachers will receive training similar to New Educator Week and Opening Week (that all other teachers receive)
 - Additional training and support for technology, equity, Minnesota special education due process

Introduction to Special Education for SPPS Families- update

- Reviewed by and approved by legal
- Next step Communications will
 - format
 - translate into Hmong, Spanish, Somali, and Karen
- Print and distribute

6:45 p.m. SEAC Business

SPPS PAC Update, Pablo Matamoros, Assistant Director Family Engagement and Community Partnerships

The district is working on aligning 8 SPPS PACs:

- 1) **PAC focus to improve student outcomes**
- 2) **Guidelines/bylaws/organizational procedures**
Membership, voting rights, who can participate..
- 3) **How will PACs report?**
How will trends in the community be reported?
How will recommendations be reported?

The role of the PACs is to advise the district decision makers. SEAC can continue to review and update SEAC's Organizational Guidelines but pause on the "how". PAC reporting is paused for now until the decision makers (the Board, Directors, Programs) clarify how they want to be informed.

[SPPS PAC Alignment](#)

What's the **District map**? The district map shows the seven different areas (A,B,C, D, E, F1 and F2) of SPPS. Area F is divided by Randolph Avenue. The areas indicate which schools serve your Area. *Areas are used as attendance areas to help families find a school and determine bus transportation.*

Review and update SEAC Organizational Guidelines

Having a non-public school representative is part of the SEAC mandate; SPPS SEAC has not been in compliance.

Recommendation:

1. Special Education meets with non-public principals twice a year. SEAC flyer can be shared.
2. SPPS SEAC information can be shared with non-public schools PTA/PTO.

What established groups are at non-publics that SEAC could connect with?

Non-public schools participation in SEACs is a common challenge among districts. There are ways we can get information out and recruit.

Action: SpEd will follow up regarding non-public Jackie - share SEAC flyer with Amy J.

1/4 SEAC membership should be students (ages 16-22) is possibly unrealistic.

Recommendation: SEAC should provide more opportunity for student leadership especially at FB which is right next door, SEAC should provide more opportunities, publicize and seek input from students. If we do want student members, SEAC should be more intentional in outreach and recruiting.

Circle back to the plan for outreach and recruiting students. Stipends are not allowed. Share perks of being part of SEAC. SEAC could offer a letter of recommendation for students.

[Organizational Guidelines updated December 2024](#)

7:15 p.m. Forum, Reflection and Resource Moment

- hearing parent voice:
"What is the most important question about Special Ed to ask the 3 candidates for Superintendent?"
Question submitted to BOE for finalist interviews: **How will you foster an inclusive school culture where students with disabilities are fully integrated into the academic and social aspects of school life?**
- sharing stories from the disability community
- giving feedback for future agenda items
- sharing resources
 - Consider attending Pacer Center's upcoming Parent Training on SEACs. Register now to get the dates on your calendar!

BOE Chair Henderson would like to attend SEAC. Next steps: send invitation.

8:00 p.m. Adjourn

Next meeting: Monday, January 13, 2024 Virtual only