

Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee (SECAC)

Meeting Minutes March 19, 2026

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting opened with a welcome from SECAC leadership. Members and attendees introduced themselves, and the previous meeting notes were reviewed and approved.

Upcoming Events and Updates

Members reviewed upcoming SECAC events, including the annual Resource and Transition Fair and the SECAC Awards Ceremony.

Tammy Chisolom, Parent Educator for Family Support, shared information about upcoming family engagement opportunities and encouraged families to complete the Maryland Special Education Parent Involvement Survey, emphasizing the importance of parent feedback in improving special education services.

SECAC Awards Ceremony

The Awards Ceremony subcommittee provided an update on event planning. The application was reviewed and minor clerical revisions were made. Members discussed ways to improve the efficiency of the event, including:

- Beginning the program with the family recognition portion so families who need to leave early are still able to participate.
- Sending reminders to staff that families will be in attendance to encourage greater participation.
- Identifying volunteer opportunities, including creating certificates, decorating, event set-up, and assisting with communications and emails.

Review and Approval of SECAC Bylaws

Members worked in small groups to review the proposed bylaw revisions. Each group shared its recommendations with the full committee, followed by discussion.

The membership voted unanimously to approve the bylaws with the agreed-upon amendments. The finalized bylaws will be uploaded once all revisions have been incorporated.

Review and Selection of the SECAC Logo

Two logo options were presented for consideration. Members discussed the designs in small groups before voting.

The membership unanimously selected the tree logo. Members shared that the design reflects SECAC's commitment to inclusion and collaboration:

- **Branches and leaves** represent students learning and growing.
- **The trunk** represents the advisory council and its role in supporting special education.
- **The roots** represent families and the community as the foundation of student success.

The committee also discussed the wording included in the logo and agreed that it accurately reflects SECAC's mission and vision:

- Advocates for students with disabilities.
- Elevates parent and community voice.
- Advises district leadership on special education services.

Executive Committee Update

An overview of the Executive Committee roles and responsibilities was provided.

The Executive Committee currently includes:

- Chair: David Silfies
- Executive Committee Members: Amanda Budzinski and Stacie Wilson

One Executive Committee position was vacant during the meeting. Following the meeting, Shannon Wach accepted the nomination and will fill the remaining position.

Highlighting Inclusion and Systems Change

Members participated in a discussion focused on promoting inclusive practices and identifying opportunities for systems-level improvement.

The committee shared examples of successful inclusive practices occurring throughout schools and the community, including school open houses, PTO-sponsored events, and community activities that foster belonging and acceptance. Members noted that inclusion efforts often have the greatest impact when they begin at the school or community level rather than through top-down initiatives.

The committee also discussed opportunities to strengthen the parent perspective in district planning and decision-making. Ideas included seeking parent input regarding yearbooks, school events, class schedules, communication practices, and other initiatives that directly impact students and families.

Public Comment

Members had the opportunity to share feedback and ask questions. Discussion continued around the importance of maintaining family engagement and ensuring parent voices remain central to future SECAC initiatives.

Closing

The meeting concluded with a summary of action items, including:

- Finalizing and publishing the amended SECAC bylaws.
- Beginning implementation of the newly selected SECAC logo.
- Continuing planning efforts for the SECAC Awards Ceremony.
- Exploring additional opportunities to incorporate parent perspectives into district initiatives.

The meeting was adjourned, and members were reminded of the next scheduled SECAC meeting.