Holbrook Public Schools

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS (PACs)

Massachusetts General Law requires the formation and support of specific Parent Advisory Councils. These PACs can provide valuable feedback for School Committees. Committees should engage with their PACs to encourage stakeholder feedback by both designating liaisons to their PACs as with other groups and inviting the PACs to present updates on their activities to the Committee on a regular basis.

PACs must be granted access to district resources to assist them in their operations and activities where available, including but not limited to spaces for meetings and the ability to communicate with parents in the manner most accessible. PACs will not be charged for using district facilities.

Special Education Parent Advisory Councils

Every district in Massachusetts and their school committee are responsible for the establishment and support of a Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or SEPAC, in their city or town.

The school committee shall establish a parent advisory council on special education (SEPAC). Membership shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties.

The "duties of the SEPAC, 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 SEPAC shall independently establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures and in the course of its duties, shall receive assistance from the school committee without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources.

If a district does not have an established SEPAC, the School Committee, in conjunction with the district, shall solicit volunteers to form an interim SEPAC board which shall then work independently to create bylaws following the guidance put forth by DESE as modified by the MA Attorney General (with respect to Paragraph B in the application of the Open Meeting Law, Mass. Op. Att'y Gen. OML 2021-150).

In the absence of a SEPAC, the Student Services Department will hold the required annual Basic Rights workshop until one is established.

English Learner Parent Advisory Councils and Multilanguage Learner Parent Advisory Councils

ELPACs, or MLPACs, are required in Massachusetts under the following conditions:

"School districts or charter schools operating a language acquisition program for ELs serving 100 or more ELs or in which ELs comprise at least five percent of the school district's or charter school's student population, whichever is less; and/or

“Schools designated as underperforming or chronically underperforming and operating a program for Els.

ELPACs and MLPACs “are intended by law to advise school districts and schools regarding matters that impact Els.”

ELPAC duties include (but are not limited to):

- Providing advice on English learner education programs,
- Meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning and development of programs designed to improve educational opportunities for ELs;
- Participating in the review of school improvement plans and district improvement plans as the plans related to ELs; and
- Reviewing proposals by the school district to offer a new instructional program for ELs.

All parents and guardians of English learners who volunteer to participate in the English learner parent advisory council shall be appointed to the council by the superintendent or the superintendent's designee. The school district may recruit volunteer parents and guardians of English learners to participate in the ELPAC.

The ELPAC shall establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures which may address leadership roles and responsibilities including the process for selection of officers, the frequency of meetings, the process for amending the by-laws and, if desired, guidelines for attendance and participation of non-members. The school district shall, without charge, and upon reasonable notice and consistent with the availability of staff and resources, assist the ELPAC in carrying out its duties.

School districts and schools that are required to establish ELPACs must annually notify parents of ELs in writing of the opportunity to participate in the ELPAC. Districts should provide notification to parents in a language they can understand.

Source: MASC 2024~~-~~6

Legal Refs: MGL Ch 71B, Sec. 3
603 CMR 28.04
603 CMR 28.07 (4)
603 CMR 28.03 (1) (a) (4)
MGL Ch. 71A, Sec 6A
603 CMR 14.09
Mass. Op. Att'y Gen. OML 2021-150

Other Refs: Guidance for Special Education Parent Advisory Councils - DESE 2010
Guidance for English Learner Parent Advisory Councils - DESE 2018

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