

Article I: Name of Organization

The name of this organization shall be the Wakefield Special Education Parent Advisory Council, also known as Wakefield SEPAC or WSEPAC or W_SEPAC (hereinafter referred to as "SEPAC").

Article II: Purpose

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

The SEPAC's duties include, but are not limited to:

- Advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities.
- Meeting regularly with school officials.
- Participating in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district's special education programs.

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

- Promote a support network of parents of children with special needs and provide the forum to share information.
- Advise the Director of Special Education, the Superintendent and the School Committee on matters that pertain to the special education programs and policies, the safety of students with special needs, and parent/teacher training needs.
- Promote communication between SEPAC members, local, State and National organizations, councils and groups as well as the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion of special needs children.
- Provide educational/informational forums to parents, educators, students and professionals.

Article III: Terms of Membership

General membership shall be open to any resident of Wakefield or person affiliated with Wakefield Public Schools and students not less than 14 years of age. General members may bring a topic to the meeting for discussion.

Voting membership shall be limited to any general member who is a:

- a) Student (not less than 14 years of age) or parent or guardian of a student with special needs residing in Wakefield or attending school in Wakefield Public School system, with or without an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, or special needs. Voting membership is required to vote in annual officer elections and other business that comes before any SEPAC meeting.
- b) School district personnel, including teachers and other service providers and school committee members, may be general members. If they are parents of children with special needs in the Wakefield Public Schools, they may also be voting members of the SEPAC.
- c) School district administrators should not be SEPAC members, because that would put them in the position of advising themselves resulting in a conflict of interest.

As used in these by-laws, the word "member" means general members, voting members or both, as the context indicates.

Article IV: Executive Board

Section One: The Executive Board of the SEPAC shall be comprised of a Chair/President and Vice Chair/Vice President, or two equal Co-Chairs (Co-Presidents), Secretary and Treasurer. All Executive Board members shall be voting members of the SEPAC, elected per the provisions of Article VI. Officers may, from time to time, delegate any of their duties to another officer.

A Board will consist of up to six members. If the SEPAC functions as a Board, the role of meeting chairperson may rotate each meeting, as needed. Other responsibilities, as designated in the position descriptions defined for the Executive Committee, shall be handled by the Board Members, as deemed fit.

The Executive Committee or Board of the SEPAC are elected by the voting membership and hold office for one year with the term expiring at the following October's election. If any position becomes vacant, an election for that position shall be held immediately with the term to expire at the following October's election.

Section Two: The duties of the Executive Board shall include and be interchangeable based on co-chairs' decision:

Co-Chair/President

- Set the agenda for each general meeting.
- Preside at all meetings of the SEPAC.
- Recommend the organization and monitor the function of committees and subcommittees and appoint committee members.
- Act as liaison between parents of students with disabilities or suspected disabilities and the Director of Special Education, Superintendent and School Committee
- Prepare periodic reports for the Special Education Administration regarding SEPAC activities and needs
- Represent and speak on behalf of the SEPAC at meetings of the School Committee.
- Communicate with the School Committee.

Co-Chair/Vice-President

- Preside at meetings in the absence of the President, or at the request of the President.
- Coordinate public communications (if needed), not including those communications that are the Secretary's.
- Assist the Co-Chair as appropriate and perform their responsibilities of the at his/her request.

Secretary

- Coordinate all communication between SEPAC and its membership.
- Maintain a list of the voting members and a list of general members.
- Coordinate the recording, filing, and posting of minutes of the SEPAC and its committees.
- Collect and review all correspondence of the SEPAC.

Treasurer

Shall keep a full and accurate account of receipts and expenditures, and in accordance with the budget adopted by the organization.

Shall arrange disbursements as authorized by the Executive Board or SEPAC. Disbursement for non-budgeted items must be approved by the Executive Board and is limited to \$50.00. Disbursement for non-budgeted items exceeding this amount must be approved by a majority vote of the members at the monthly SEPAC meeting.

Shall present a financial statement at all SEPAC meetings and at other times when requested.

Coordinate and collaborate on efforts to apply for grants, donations, reimbursements, or any other funds for which the SEPAC be eligible.

At-Large Members

Create and send press releases making use of all media (newspapers, email, and school/district/town calendars) for purposes of providing visibility of the SEPAC on such matters as special meetings, projects, surveys, membership, recruitment, parent support groups, and other SEPAC initiatives. Promote communication between members of local, state, and national councils and organizations. Monitor and support email and social media (including Google, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.)

Article V: Voting/Quorum

A quorum of no less than 2 voting members must be present to constitute a meeting.

Article VI: Elections

Officers of the SEPAC are elected by the voting membership and hold office until the next annual meeting. Elections shall occur annually at the annual meeting. All voting members are eligible to make nominations. No vote taken by a public body, either in an open or in an executive session, shall be by secret ballot.

If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held (by special meeting, at the next monthly meeting, provided notice is posted), with term to expire at the end of academic school year.

Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership, subject to the presence of a quorum. New officers shall take office immediately following their election.

Any officer may resign by delivering a written notice of resignation by mail, in person, or by email to the Director of Special Education. Resignation shall be effective immediately upon such delivery unless the resignation is slated to be effective at another time. An officer may be removed with or without cause by vote of the voting members.

The SEPAC will inform the school district of the outcome of the annual elections and the names, addresses and phone numbers of the new board by November 1st of each year.

Article VII: Meetings

Meetings are defined as any SEPAC meeting, activities, or committee meeting at which a quorum is met. The number of meetings to be held each year and the dates of those meetings shall be determined annually by the Executive Board. Advance notice of all meetings and elections will be published/posted with a minimum of 48 hours advance notice and comply with the MA Open Meeting Law regulations.

Minutes of all SEPAC meetings shall be recorded and posted in accordance with the MA Public Records law.

The SEPAC shall hold an Annual Meeting of the voting members each year for the purpose of electing officers and to vote on any matters as shall be specified in the notice of such meeting.

Article VIII: Conflict of Interest

Any member of the Executive Board who has a financial, personal, or official interest in, or conflict (or appearance of a conflict) with any matter pending before the SEPAC, of such nature that it prevents or may prevent that member from acting on the matter in an impartial manner, will offer to the Board to voluntarily excuse him/herself and will vacate his seat and refrain from discussion and voting on said item.

Article IX: Amendments

These by-laws may be amended by a simple majority of the voting members at a general meeting, but by-law changes may not be voted upon in the same meeting as they are proposed, unless a quorum (as described in Article V) votes unanimously to approve the change.

Article X: Procedures

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

Approved: