

Wakefield Special Education Parent Advisory Council Bylaws

Article 1: Name

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

Article 2: Authority

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).

Article 3. Purpose and Duties

The purpose of the SEPAC is to:

- provide direct input to the local school district about policies, programs, practices and services that have an impact on students with disabilities, and their families.
- work for understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with disabilities or other special needs in the community.
- build a support network of parents of children with disabilities or special needs and to provide forums to share information with this group.
- promote communication between SEPAC members, local, state and national organizations, councils, and groups.
- facilitate communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of children with disabilities.
- provide educational and informational forums to parents, educators, students, and professionals.

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.

- assisting the district in coordinating the presentation of at least one annual basic rights workshop.

- creating forums and programs that provide both information and support for families of children with disabilities.

Article 4: Membership

Section One: General membership

General membership shall be open to any resident of Wakefield or person affiliated with Wakefield Public Schools and students 14 years and above.

Section Two: Voting membership

Voting membership shall be limited to any general member who is a parent or guardian of a child with a disability or of a student receiving services or attending school in the Wakefield Public Schools with (or without) an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.

Voting members will vote in the annual election of officers and will vote on any other business that comes before the membership at a SEPAC meeting.

As used in these bylaws, the word “member” means general members, voting members or both, as the context indicates.

Article 5: Executive Board

Section One: The Executive Board of the SEPAC is elected by the voting membership and shall be comprised of a Chair and Vice Chair, or two equal Co-Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, and 1-2 At Large members, which may include the former SEPAC Chair. All Executive Board members shall be voting members of the SEPAC, elected per the provisions of Article 7. The terms of the Executive Board are two years, with elections happening at the Annual Fall business meeting. Officers may, from time to time, delegate any of their duties to another officer. The Board may also vote to establish additional transitional roles after the first full year of a Board member's service, with the goal of helping future Board members transition into a new role over the course of a year before taking on that role completely.

Section Two: The duties of the Executive Board shall include:

Chair/Co-chair

- Set the agenda for each general meeting in consultation with other Executive Board members
- Preside at all meetings of the SEPAC

- Act as liaison between parents of students with disabilities and the Director of Special Education.
- 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.
- Make an annual presentation to the School Committee.

Co-Chair/Vice President

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

Secretary

- Attend SEPAC meetings, take minutes, and keep a record of minutes.
- Share copies of SEPAC meeting minutes upon request.
- Draft any communication upon request by the Chair.
- Disseminate all communication between SEPAC and its membership.
- Maintain a list of members interested in receiving SEPAC communication.
- Collect and maintain all correspondence of the SEPAC.

Treasurer

- Keep a full and accurate account of receipts and expenditures, and in accordance with the budget adopted by the SEPAC.
- Arrange disbursements as authorized by the Executive Board or SEPAC. Disbursement for non-budgeted items must be approved at a SEPAC meeting.
- Present a financial overview at all SEPAC meetings upon request
- In collaboration with the Wakefield Public Schools, will coordinate efforts to apply for grants, donations, reimbursements or any other funds for which the SEPAC may be eligible.

Article 6: Voting/Quorum

A quorum of no less than 3 elected members must be present to constitute a meeting.

Article 7: Elections

Members of the Executive Board/Officers of the SEPAC are elected by the voting membership and hold office for 2 years. Elections shall occur bi-annually at the annual Fall Business meeting. All voting members are eligible to make nominations.

If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held by special meeting provided notice is posted, with term to expire at the next annual meeting/elections.

Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership. 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 Chair of the SEPAC or current remaining SEPAC senior officer and to the School Committee Chair. Resignation shall be effective immediately upon such delivery unless the resignation is slated to be effective at another time.

The SEPAC will inform the school district of the outcome of the annual elections and the names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of the new board by November 15 of each year.

Article 8: Meetings

Meetings are defined as any SEPAC meeting, committee or sub-committee meeting at which a quorum is present. 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 and agenda of SEPAC business meetings and elections will be published/posted on the Wakefield SEPAC website.

Minutes of all SEPAC meetings shall be recorded and made available upon request.

Article 9: 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 10: Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by a simple majority of the voting members at the Annual Fall business meeting.

Article 11: Procedures

Robert's Rules of Order are the default procedures for this organization.

Approved: November 8, 2021

NOTE: SEPACs under MA law, SEPACs shall establish bylaws regarding officers and operational procedures. 603 CMR 28:07(4)