

# **Dedham SEPAC By-Laws as of October 18, 2007**

## **Article I. Name of Organization**

The name of this organization shall be the Dedham Special Education Parent Advisory Council, also known as SEPAC. SEPAC will be non- commercial, non-sectarian and non-partisan. The name of this organization or the name of any members in their official capacities shall not be used in any connection with a commercial concern or any partisan interest or for any purpose other than the regular work of the organization.

## **Article II. Mission of SEPAC**

The SEPAC receives its regulatory authority from the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 603 CMR 28:07 (4) under the Parent Involvement Section

### ***603 CMR 28.07 (4) Parent Involvement***

***(4) Parent advisory participation. Each school district shall create a district wide parent advisory council offering membership to all parents of eligible students and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: advising the district 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 district's special education programs. The parent advisory council shall establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures, and, in the course of its duties, the parent advisory council shall receive assistance from the district without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources. The district shall conduct, in cooperation with the parent advisory council, at least one workshop annually within the school district on the rights of students and their parents and guardians under state and federal special education laws. (See MGL c71B, 1C and 3)***

### **PURPOSE**

State law mandates the SEPAC and its duties include, but are not limited to:

- Advising the School 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

### **MISSION**

The Dedham Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) strives to be a positive, solution-oriented group that serves as a resource and advisor to parents of children of all ages with special

needs. We support appropriate education for all children with special needs in our community and work toward ensuring that students' needs are being met. For Dedham to have an effective and strong SEPAC, we need members' energy, support, and active involvement. Our goals are:

- To work towards the understanding, respect, support and appropriate education for all children with special needs in our community
- To ensure that students needs under Chapter 766 and other applicable laws are being met

### **Article III. Terms of Membership**

There are two types of Membership, *General* and *Voting*

#### **General**

**General membership** shall be open to any Resident of Dedham or person affiliated with the Dedham Public Schools. All meetings are open to the general public.

#### **Voting**

**Voting membership** is required in order to vote in annual officer elections and other business that comes before any SEPAC meeting. Voting membership shall be given to any general member who is either:

- A parent or guardian of a child with special needs residing in Dedham with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Accommodation Plan.
- A student not less than fourteen (14) years of age who is on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Accommodation Plan from the Town of Dedham.

Meetings are defined as a SEPAC-sponsored meeting in which the business of the SEPAC is conducted. This may include activities or committees at which attendance and/or minutes are taken.

### **Article IV. Staff Administrator**

Staff administrator shall be the current administrator of special education for the town of Dedham. He/she shall act as a resource consultant and advisor to the organization. The staff administrator is a non-voting member. The staff administrator shall perform the following functions:

- Represent the needs, concerns, and activities of the organization to the school administrators and staff.
- Provide the membership with documented information regarding changes in regulations, new policies, program changes and mandate reports.

- Provide technical assistance on all aspects of public laws, both state and federal, that impact special education.
- Attend all regularly scheduled meetings: arrange for a representative upon parent request when unable to attend.
- Provide administrative support services.
- Secure annual membership to MASSPAC as a resource for the benefit of all families of children with special needs in Dedham.

## **Article V. Voting and Election**

- Elections
  1. Elections will occur every other May (May 2009, 2011, etc.)
  2. Nominations will take place every other April (April 2009, 2011, etc.)
  3. Elections will take place every two years
  4. If there is a resignation from a board member, once the resignation has been accepted, a new election will take place for a new board member to serve out the remainder of term.
  
- Procedures for elections
  1. Voting is only open to Voting members as referred to in Article III
  2. Members have to be present to vote.
  3. For each election a neutral voting proctor will be chosen, and voting members will write their votes on paper. Proctor will collect and tally votes.

## **Article VI. Officers of SEPAC**

### **Executive Board**

Officers of the SEPAC shall be the chairpersons, secretary, and treasurer. All positions may be shared by two individuals, except the chair, which can be shared by three individuals.

### **Duties of the Executive Board**

1. Chairperson(s)
  - Preside at all meetings of the organization and meetings of the Executive Board.
  - Execute and supervise responsibilities related to contracts and agreements on the organizations' behalf, and sign any such contracts and agreements on behalf of the Executive Board.
  - Oversee the functioning of the SEPAC committees, special projects, and events.
  
2. Secretary(s)
  - Keep the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board and of general SEPAC meetings.
  - Maintain the organization's records, including a current membership list.
  - Keep and disseminate minutes.

3. Treasurer(s)
  - Preside over all financial matters that may arise and report at all meetings.
4. Term of all Officers is 2 years, as stated in Article V.

### **Article VII. Meetings**

- SEPAC meetings are subject to open meetings laws in accordance to MGL c.39, ss23A-23C.
- Meetings shall be held in a public place and all General Members are welcome. Attendees shall sign an attendance list at each meeting. Members may be invited to speak during General Membership participation times or at the discretion of the Chairperson(s).
- Business meetings shall be held at least two (2) times per year from September through June.
- General meetings shall be held at least six (6) times per year from September through June.

Publicity of all general meeting dates, business meetings dates and elections shall be done in no less than two (2) of these ways to reach as many people as possible.

- Published on the Internet
- Sent to the local press
- Sent to each voting member through the schools, by mail, email or some other communication method
- Connect ED voicemail message

### **Article VIII. Subcommittees**

- Subcommittees shall be established as deemed necessary by the existing Executive Board.

### **Article IXI. Amendments**

- These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the membership present at a business or general SEPAC meeting.