

# Bylaws

**Presented for approval – January 2012**

## **I. NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Methuen Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC).

## **II. PURPOSE**

The Massachusetts special education law, Chapter 71B1 of the Massachusetts General Laws, requires a school district to establish a PAC, and assigns both an advisory and a participatory function to the PAC.

Section 3 of Chapter 71B states "... The school committee of any city, town, or school district shall establish a parent advisory council on special education. Membership shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties 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."

- Advise Methuen's Director of Special Education, School Department, School Committee, parents and the community-at-large about education and safety issues affecting students with disabilities
- Conduct in cooperation with the school district at least one workshop annually within the school district on the rights of students and their parents and guardians under the special education laws of the Commonwealth and the Federal Government and shall make written materials explaining such rights available upon request
- Participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the Methuen Special Education programs
- Formally organize parents and professionals who are committed to obtaining the best possible service for students with disabilities
- Emphasize improving cooperation and communication between parents and professionals for the benefit of children in Methuen's Special Education programs
- Support Methuen's school staff in their efforts to improve Special Education Services
- Promote awareness of parents and school staff of Special Education Laws, Special Education Programs and support services in Methuen and throughout Massachusetts
- Supply information for Parent Resource Libraries
- Raise monies for activities to be determined by the vote of the membership of the SEPAC

## **III. MISSION**

Provide a network in which parents and guardians of children with special needs have access to relevant information, training and emotional support; and to encourage an atmosphere of effective open communication, understanding, and mutual respect among all students, parents, educators and the community-at-large.

## **IV. MEMBERSHIP**

- General Membership shall be open to any resident of Methuen or any person affiliated with the Methuen Public School District. All meetings are open to the general public.
- Voting Membership shall be any general member who is a parent or guardian of a child with special needs residing in Methuen with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Accommodation Plan.

## **V. DECISION- MAKING AND VOTING PROCEDURES**

Any member may bring a topic to the floor for discussion. If discussion necessitates a vote, a motion shall be made and seconded. Voting will be by hand vote and decisions made by a simple majority of the voting members present. In the event of low attendance or need for further study, the executive board may decide to table a vote and add the topic to the following month's agenda.

## **VI. MEETINGS**

A monthly meeting or workshop shall take place once a month for September through May. The organization will follow the municipal Open Meeting Law ( M.G.L. c.39, 23A-23C) which states : " a notice of every meeting of any governmental body shall be filed with the clerk of the city or town...and notice shall be publicly posted in the clerk's office...at least 48 hours prior to such meeting....The notice shall contain the date, time and place of such meeting...filing and posting shall be the responsibility of the officer calling such meeting." Accurate records of meetings will be kept, including the date, time, place, members present and action taken. The records of each meeting shall become a public record.

## **VII. EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS AND DUTIES**

All positions may be shared by two individuals, except the Treasurer.

### **PRESIDENT**

The President serves as the chief contact and spokesperson for the SEPAC. Duties are:

- Coordinate all SEPAC efforts and activities
- Chair monthly SEPAC and Executive Board meetings. Set the agenda for each general meeting and arrange for guest speakers and workshops
- Draft SEPAC goals and present at the first meeting of the school year
- Appoint subcommittee chairs
- Monitor information and reports from officers, subcommittees, and system-wide committee delegates.
- Meet on a regular basis with the Director of Special Education
- Perform other duties as necessary

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

The Vice President assists the President in his/her duties and preside over meetings in his/her absence.  
Duties are:

- Oversees activities of Technology Advisor
- Perform other duties as necessary

### **TREASURER**

The Treasurer serves as the financial agent for the SEPAC. Duties are:

- Maintain accounting of all SEPAC funds
- Attend monthly SEPAC meetings and report on funds available
- Coordinate all fundraising activities for the “Friends of the Methuen SEPAC” with the Fundraising Chairperson
- Create an annual budget and submit for approval at the first meeting of the school year
- Perform other duties as necessary

### **SECRETARY**

The Secretary serves as the scribe and maintains correspondence for the SEPAC. Duties are:

- Maintain minutes for general membership and Executive Board meetings.
- Maintain a SEPAC logbook of all agendas, reports, and any other materials that help create a paper trail of the SEPAC progress
- Attend monthly SEPAC meetings
- Perform other duties as necessary

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The Public Relations Officer serves as the liaison for the SEPAC. Duties are:

- Make use of Media (newspapers, e-mail, Facebook, TV, etc.) for purposes of advertising the SEPAC to the public on such matters as special meetings, projects, fundraisers and donations
- Other duties as assigned to promote awareness of SEPAC activities
- Serve as a backup to the Secretary in the case of an absence.

### **TECHNOLOGY OFFICER**

The Technology Officer is the organizations primary resource for information received by the SEPAC.  
Duties are:

- Coordinating and maintaining technological aspects such as website, e-mail, online survey, and Facebook
- Coordinates new membership recruitment and survey information
- Maintain membership list

## **VIII. ELECTIONS**

Officers are elected for a 2 year commitment. Maximum term in any one position is two terms unless there no one available to fill the position. In the event of a resignation during tenure, the Executive Board may appoint an interim officer.

The following time sequence will be followed:

- March: A nominating committee will be formed to accept nominations.
- April: A slate of nominations is made and is sent to all current members of the SEPAC. This notice should include the date of the election.
- May: Elections take place by a written vote. New officers are announced through written notification to the Special Education Department and posted on the SEPAC Website.
- June: Information and records for each office should be passed to the new officer.

**IX. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES:**

- Monthly meetings will consist of a business meeting and/or a speaker, presentation or special event
- The September meeting will be designated as an annual goal setting meeting
- Each business meeting shall follow a written agenda which will include, but is not limited to, topics for discussion, topics to be voted on, committee reports and time for general discussion
- Approve miscellaneous expenditures or advance funds up to \$150.00 for activities and fundraising events that is not on the approved budget with a majority vote of the Executive Board.

**X. COMMITTEES**

Subcommittees shall be created as needed.

**XI. BY-LAW AMENDMENT PROCEDURES**

By-laws will be reviewed at the October goal setting meeting. Changes and additions will be discussed and placed on the following month's agenda for a membership vote. However, by-laws may be visited at any point in the year by the membership.