

Chelmsford Special Education Parent Advisory Council By Laws

Approved 11/29/18

Article I. Name: Chelmsford Special Education Parent Advisory Council,
SEPAC, or CSEPAC

Article II. Mission Statement: The mission is to effectively communicate the understanding, respect, and support for all children with special education needs in our community.

Article III. Purpose

Section 1. Advise the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with special needs. Participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the school district's special education programs.

Section 2. Collaborate with the district to inform parents about their rights regarding special education.

Section 3. Disseminate information about programs and services in the school system.

Section 4. Help direct parents to advocacy, support services, and parent education opportunities.

Section 5. Inform parents about special education legislation.

Article IV. Membership

Section 1. General Membership shall be open to any resident of Chelmsford or person affiliated with the Chelmsford School System.

Section 2. Voting Membership shall be open to parents/guardians of children with special needs who are receiving services through the Chelmsford School System. Members must have attended at least one previous business meeting during the current school year to vote in elections.

Article V. Officers and Liaisons

Section 1. The board members of this organization are the following but not limited to:
Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer

Section 2. Additional officer positions may be established and/or combined as needed. At least two officers must be present to facilitate meetings. The term of office shall be one year from June to June. Officers must be re-elected at each annual meeting. Board members shall represent SEPAC as a non-partisan organization.

Section 3. Duties of the officers:

a. Chairperson

- i. Determine business meeting agenda and facilitate meetings.
- ii. Coordinate representation of SEPAC at public functions
- iii. The chairperson shall manage the activities of the organization.
- iv. Communicate with administration and the school committee regularly.
- v. Coordinate new board members receiving open meeting law materials.
- vi. Coordinate management of electronic communications, duty shared with secretary
- vii. Duties may be shared with a Co- Chairperson.

b. Secretary

- i. Shall be responsible for recording meeting minutes.
- ii. The secretary shall maintain a permanent file of the organization's by-laws, the meeting minutes, and records of Certificate of Receipt of Open Meeting Law material by board members.
- iii. The secretary shall maintain a record of all outside correspondence and post all meetings in accordance with open meeting laws.
- iv. Coordinate management of electronic communications, duty shared with Chairperson.

c. Treasurer

- i. Shall be responsible for maintaining the records for all monetary transactions of the organization
- ii. Manage purchase order requests and financial transactions made on behalf of SEPAC
- iii. Provide a report of monthly activity and funds balances at every general meeting
- iv. Provide a report of yearly activity and funds balances by June 30th
- v. Communicate with administration and/or school committee when needed.

Section 4. Duties of the liaisons:

- a. The liaisons of this organization assists the CSEPAC board by ensuring the most current information is accessible to special ed families within their school.
- b. Liaison responsibilities include: Act as liaison between his/her school and CSEPAC.
- c. Connect with school's PTO/BSA and share CSEPAC information.
- d. Communicate CSEPAC information to his/her school and school administration.
- e. Attend CSEPAC meetings and provide status updates and feedback to CSEPAC Board.

Article VI. Election Procedures

Section 1. Officers shall be elected by a majority vote, of all in attendance, at the General Meeting

in May. 2.

Section 2. Nominations for office shall be discussed and accepted at the general business meeting prior to the May election. Absentee candidates can only be nominated with their written permission.

Section 3. If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held immediately, with person elected to complete the current term.

Article VII. Subcommittees and Interim Team

Section 1. Subcommittees

- a. shall be created as needed.
- b. The subcommittee chair shall be a volunteer or willing nominee accepted by a simple majority of the members present.
- c. The Subcommittee Chair is responsible for maintaining a record of subcommittee meetings to be presented at a business meeting.
- d. All subcommittee meetings are subject to Open Meeting Laws.

Section 2. Interim Team

- a. CSEPAC shall be established by the School Committee according to the provisions of The Massachusetts Spec Ed Law, ch. 71 B, Mass Gen Laws and exercising the powers and assuming the duties granted to it under said statute.
- b. In the event that the CSEPAC becomes inactive for a period of two or more years, an Interim Team consisting of three or more parents/guardians volunteers shall have the option to oversee the process of forming a SEPAC using the most current bylaws.
- c. Any parent volunteer that has a child with special needs in the district of Chelmsford is allowed the entitlement to equally participate in the forming of establishing or re-establishing the up and coming SEPAC.
- d. Interim team responsibilities are to oversee the formation of a parent elected board.

Article VIII. Meetings

Section 1. Business meetings shall be held at least quarterly, from September through June. When possible coordinate meeting calendar dates for the following school year by the end of the current school year.

Section 2. Notices of all general meeting dates shall be posted at town hall and communicated to

the public.

Section 3. Annual elections will be held at the general meeting in May.

Article IX. Finances

Section 1. Public Funds: As a public body, SEPAC funds are subject to M.G.L. chapter 44, section

53A and chapter 71, section 37A. Funds raised by the PAC must be deposited with the municipal treasurer, held as a separate account, and become part of the district's End-of-Year Pupil and Financial Report.

Section 2. Private Funds: Private funds may not be collected in Chelmsford SEPAC's name.

Article X. Electronic Communications

Section 1. Student confidentiality: The board shall take steps to ensure student confidentiality is maintained in all communications.

Section 2. Electronic communications: All communications shall occur under the description of the applicable board member's position and/or additional duties as discussed at a SEPAC meeting. This includes, but is not limited to: email, text messaging, online messaging, social media, photo sharing, message boards.

Section 3. Email: The board will have access to SEPAC email. Email shall not be used for personal communications of any kind, sharing any information about individual students or families, or deliberation or decision making about SEPAC business.

Article XI. Bylaws Amendments: These bylaws may be amended by a 2/3 vote, of those in attendance, at a business meeting. By-Laws shall be reviewed at least every 3 years.