

Approved: October 2008

BOSTON SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this self-governing organization shall be the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Section 1

The Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council's sole purpose is to advocate for the welfare of Boston's children with disabilities.

Our goal is that every child with a disability will receive instruction and support services through the regulations and procedures, and under the rights which they are guaranteed by federal and state law; that the quality of these services will ensure that each child has a high-quality education that provides for effective and meaningful progress in the general education curriculum; and that these services occur within the least restrictive environment. All activities of the council are those which seek to create and/or promote this goal.

Section 2

The Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council will:

- A. Advocate for children with disabilities and, on behalf of those children, for parents of children with disabilities.
- B. Meet regularly with and advise officials of the Boston Public Schools about issues impeding students with disabilities from learning effectively and participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs, policies, and practices.
- C. Review data submitted by the Boston Public Schools to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding the district's performance on the annual targets identified in the State Performance Plan.
- D. Review final reports for the Special Education Coordinated Program Review and Mid-Cycle Review for the Boston Public Schools and participate in the planning of any required corrective actions.
- E. Encourage the Boston Public Schools to provide information to parents in multiple modes about district policies concerning the education of children with disabilities, including information describing placement options.

- F. Provide information and referral services to parents of children with disabilities, within the resources available.
- G. Provide information concerning rights and responsibilities under state and federal special education laws to parents of children with disabilities.
- H. Monitor the implementation of state and federal special education laws within the Boston Public School System.
- I. Ensure that all communications with parents are translated as necessary into appropriate languages and that qualified interpreters are used at IEP meetings.
- J. Present concerns about special education programs to appropriate officials of the Boston Public School Department.
- K. Provide training for parents on the rights of students and parents under federal and state special education law and encourage collaborative training opportunities for parents and teachers.
- L. Promote communication between parents of children with disabilities and school department staff and school department officials.
- M. Promote cooperation, communication and thereby mutual support and assistance among parents who have children with disabilities.
- N. Promote collaboration with other parent groups and with state, city and federal agencies and officials, private agencies and the larger community concerning the education and welfare of children with disabilities.
- O. Promote communication and programs that encourage the understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of children with disabilities in the broader community.

ARTICLE III – VOTING MEMBERSHIP

The voting membership of the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council shall be comprised of:

- A. Parents, foster parents, persons acting as parents, and guardians of children with disabilities who have an IEP or 504 Plan who are residents of the City of Boston.
- B. Parents and persons acting as parents who have requested an evaluation for special education services for their child.
- C. Students with disabilities who have reached their eighteenth birthday.

ARTICLE IV – ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Section 1

The Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council at the Annual Meeting shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and a minimum of three Members-at-Large. These individuals shall constitute the Executive Board.

The Executive Board shall set the agenda and request that the Boston Public Schools mail notices and provide additional outreach support for meetings, including the use of the Department's Connect Ed service. The Executive Board shall also engage in fundraising efforts for the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council.

Section 2

- A. The Chairperson shall preside at general meetings of the Parent Advisory Council, chair meetings of the Executive Board and perform other duties consistent with the office. The Chairperson is also empowered to appoint a special committee to deal with specific tasks or problem areas. The Executive Board may appoint a designee to temporarily perform the duties of chairperson if the chairperson is unavailable for some reason.
- B. The Vice-Chair shall support the Chairperson at general meetings and chair meetings of the Executive Board, if needed, and will perform others duties consistent with the office. The Vice chairperson may be appointed as a designee to temporarily perform the duties of the chairperson.
- C. The Recording Secretary shall record the proceedings of the organization and ensure that the minutes are distributed and preserved. The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all PAC motions, votes, and official business.
- D. The Treasurer shall manage the funds collected or donated for the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council. Any account books of the council shall be maintained in the council office. The Treasurer shall be accountable for all receipts and disbursements; therefore, the Treasurer shall regularly examine any information and/or account books pertaining to such transactions. The Treasurer shall present a financial report to the council at council meetings.
- E. The Members-at-Large shall be members of the Executive Board of the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council and shall attend meetings on an ongoing basis and have full voting rights. The Executive Board shall define further the roles and responsibilities of the Members-at-Large.

Section 3

The Executive Board shall create sub-committees and dissolve the same by majority vote of the PAC members in attendance at a meeting at which the issue is brought to a vote.

Each sub-committee shall elect a leader to report to the Executive Board. Members on the sub-committees shall be voluntary members.

ARTICLE V – ELECTIONS

Section 1

Elections for the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council shall take place each year at the Annual Meeting in May. At the Annual Meeting, parents shall have the opportunity to nominate themselves or someone else. If a parent is not elected into the office he or she seeks, the parent shall have the option of running for another position.

Section 2

In the event of a tie for any position, parents will vote in a run-off election to be held immediately following the tie vote.

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGS

Section 1

Before the start of the school year, the Executive Board shall establish and publish a schedule of general meetings and Executive Board meetings for the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council.

Section 2

At any PAC meeting, five voting members must be present to constitute a quorum for business requiring a vote.

A day long planning meeting for members of the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council shall be held each summer.

Section 3

A modified version of Roberts Rules of Order (Revised) shall be an informal guide at meetings.

Section 4

The Executive Board will meet monthly with the director of Special Education to identify and discuss issues – in particular those impeding students with disabilities from making educational progress and meeting state standards – and review strategies for improvement.

The Executive Board will meet with the Superintendent of Schools four times a year to discuss issues, goals, and progress toward goals.

The Executive Board shall present formally to the Boston School Committee two times a year to report on the goals of the PAC for the upcoming year and to report on the progress toward the goals during the year. The Special Education Parent Advisory Council presentations to the School Committee shall be made at the October and May meetings, subject to the PAC's consultation with the Chair of the School Committee.

ARTICLE VII – BY-LAWS

Section 1

The By-Laws may be amended at a regular meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present provided the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to members for their review at least 5 days prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII – DUES -- FUNDRAISING

Section 1

The Council will collect no dues from its members.

Section 2

The fiscal year shall be July 1 through June 30.

Section 3

The Council may raise funds from public or private agencies, as appropriate.

ARTICLE IX – EXECUTIVE SESSION

Section 1

Executive Session shall mean a period of time during a PAC meeting when only PAC members shall be present.

Section 2

If the necessity for Executive Session is known at the time of the setting of the agenda, it will be noted in the agenda. However, through the Chairperson, or by a majority vote of the PAC, an Executive Session can be called during any PAC meeting whether or not it was noted on the agenda.

APPENDIX A

If the Council receives public or private funds to hire staff, it will establish appropriate guidelines to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination in its hiring procedures.