

Duxbury Special Education Parent Advisory Council

By-Laws and Organizational Design

Article I: Name of Organization

The name of this organization shall be *Duxbury Public Schools Special Education Parent Advisory Council*, also known as *the Duxbury SEPAC or Board*.

Article II: Purpose of the SEPAC

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).

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.

The mission of the Duxbury SEPAC is to work for the understanding of, the respect for and the support of all children with special needs in the community. To that end, the SEPAC will work to:

- a) Promote a network of parents of children with special needs; provide a forum for parent discussions of school special education related ideas, suggestions, proposals and programs. However, some matters will not be within the purview of this council (i.e., personal information on students and teachers, etc.)
- b) Meet regularly with school officials and the designee of the Duxbury School Committee to advise on matters that pertain to the education, health, and safety of students with special needs. Give recommendations or proposals which are considered effective ways and means of furthering the Duxbury Public Schools Special Education Program and improve educational opportunities and outcomes for students with disabilities. Participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the Special Education Program,

thereby advocating for special needs children.

- c) To serve as an advisory Board for: 1) innovative or new programs, 2) concerns of special needs parents in the school system-wide.
- d) To identify and sponsor parent training activities, programs and workshops and to serve as a resource to all special education parents.

This council is advisory in nature.

Article III: Terms of Membership

General membership shall be open to any resident of Duxbury or person affiliated with the Duxbury Public Schools who has a child who has been found eligible for special education services, and, at the discretion of the SEPAC membership, other interested parties including the Director of Special Education, a special education teacher/specialist and a member of the Duxbury School Committee.

Voting membership shall be limited to any general member who is a parent or guardian of a child with special needs residing in Duxbury AND who has attended at least two previous SEPAC meetings in the previous 12 months.

Meetings are defined as any SEPAC sponsored meeting at which the business of the SEPAC is conducted. This may include activities or committees at which attendance and/or minutes are taken but do not include events that are open to the public where the intent is other than to conduct SEPAC business.

Article IV: Officers of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council

The officers of the Duxbury SEPAC shall include a chair, secretary, and treasurer. Each shall be elected for a one-year term. The Duxbury SEPAC can, at its discretion, elect additional officers as required or desired. All officers shall be voting members. The officers shall preside at 2/3 of all meetings, unless there are extenuating circumstances

Officer responsibilities of the Duxbury SEPAC include:

Chair Person

- Set the agenda for each meeting.
- Preside at all meetings of the Duxbury SEPAC.
- Oversee the organization of sub-committees and monitor their functioning.
- Act as liaison with the Director of Special Education.
- Advise the Secretary on matters of external communications.

Vice-Chair (if applicable)

- Preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair, or at the request of the Chair.
- Coordinate public communications (if needed), not including those communications that are the responsibility of the Secretary.

- Assist the Chair as appropriate and perform the responsibilities of the Chair at his/her request.

Secretary

- In the absence of a Vice-Chair, preside at meetings in the absence of the Chair, or at the request of the Chair.
- Coordinate all communication between the Duxbury SEPAC and its membership.
- Coordinate the recording and filing of minutes of the Duxbury SEPAC and its sub-committees.
- Collect and review all correspondence of the Duxbury SEPAC.
- Prepare periodic reports for the Special Education Administration regarding SEPAC activities and needs.
- File notices of meetings with the Duxbury Town Clerk at least forty-eight hours prior to the meetings, as required in Chapter 39, Section 23B of the Massachusetts General Laws, and post all notices of meetings as required by law.

Treasurer

- Coordinate efforts to apply for grants, donations, reimbursements or any other funds for which the Duxbury SEPAC may be eligible.
- Manage and account for funds collected or donated for the Duxbury SEPAC.
- Manage and account for funds spent by the Duxbury SEPAC.
- Coordinate fund raising activities.

Article V: Voting and Elections

All decisions requiring a vote will be made by a simple majority (50% plus one) of the voting members present at any SEPAC meeting. A quorum of no less than five voting members must be present in order to cast a vote.

Elections shall be the first order of business during the May meeting. Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership, subject to the presence of a quorum. New officers shall take office immediately following their election.

All voting members are eligible to make nominations.

Officers are elected by the voting membership and hold office for one-year. The Chair may not hold the same office for 2 consecutive terms except by 2/3 majority vote of the voting members. If any office becomes vacant, the individual receiving a simple majority vote shall immediately assume the responsibilities of the position, with term to expire at the following May meeting.

Article VI: Meetings

All meetings are open to the general public. Meetings shall be held at least five times, from September through June. Notice of all meeting dates and elections shall meet Open Meeting Law requirements described in Chapter 39, Section 23B of the Massachusetts General Laws. Notice shall include publishing notices of meetings and elections in the local press, filing and posting notice of meetings and elections with the town clerk, and sending a notice to each voting member, by mail, email or some other communication method.

During the May meeting, the Chair shall take recommendations for the calendar of meetings for the following school year. The calendar shall include dates and times of the meetings and projected activities for the year.

Activities that require a vote to be taken of the voting membership include, but are not limited to the following items:

- a change in the by-laws can only be voted on at a meeting;
- a commitment of financial resources over \$150.00 requires a simple majority of voting members present; and
- elections require a simple majority of voting members present.

Minutes of all Duxbury SEPAC meetings shall be recorded and retained as a matter of public record.

Article VII: Conflict of Interest

Any voting member of the Duxbury SEPAC who has a financial, personal, or official interest in, or conflict (of appearance of a conflict) with any matter pending before the SEPAC, of such nature that it prevents or may prevent the member from acting on the matter in an impartial manner, will offer to voluntarily excuse him/herself and will refrain from discussion and voting on said item.

Article VIII: Amendments

These bylaws may be amended by 2/3 majority vote of the voting members present at a meeting. The Duxbury SEPAC shall review these bylaws every two (2 years).

Article IIX: Default Rules of Order

Roberts Rules of Order are the default procedures for this organization.