

Stoughton Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Bylaws

Article I: Name of Organization

The name of this self-governed organization shall be the Stoughton Special Education Parent Advisory Council, also known as the Stoughton SEPAC.(hereinafter referred to as “SEPAC”).

Article II: Mission

The purpose of the Stoughton SEPAC is to work for the understanding of, respect for and support of all children with special needs in the community in accordance with the requirements of Federal and State special education laws. 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 business 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; and
- Participating in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district’s special education programs. The mission of the SEPAC is to work for the understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in the community. To that end, they will work to:
 - Advise the School Committee on matters that pertain to the education, health and safety of students with disabilities;
 - Meet regularly with school officials to participate in matters pertaining to the education, health and safety of special needs students, including in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the School Committee’s special education programs;
 - Assist the district in coordinating the annual presentation on the rights of students and their parents and guardians under state and federal special education laws;
 - Provide educational/informational forums to parents, educators, students and professionals
 - Promote communication among families with special needs students and the Stoughton Public Schools;
 - Promote a support network of parents of children with special needs, and provide the forum to share information and discuss matters of common concern and interest;
 - Promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion of special needs children.

Article III: Membership

General membership shall be open to any resident of Stoughton affiliated with the Stoughton Public Schools. All meetings are open to the general public.

Voting membership is required in order to vote in annual officer elections. Voting membership shall be given to any general member who is either:

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

Meetings are defined as any Stoughton 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: Officers of the SEPAC

Officers are elected by the voting membership and hold office for one year (*or whatever term the SEPAC decides*). If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held immediately, consistent with the process described in article V, with a term to expire at the May/June meeting.

Office and Officer Responsibilities of the Stoughton Special Education Parent Advisory Council are:

Chairperson/Co-Chairs

- Set the agenda for each general meeting
- Preside at all meetings of the Stoughton Special Education Parent Advisory Council.
- Oversee the organization of sub-committees and monitor their functioning.
- Act as liaison with Administrator of Special Education.
- Advise the Co-Chair on matters of external communications.
- Coordinate all communication between the Stoughton Special Education Parent Advisory Council and its membership.
- Coordinate the recording and filing of minutes of the Stoughton Special Education Parent Advisory Council and its sub-committees.
- Collect and review all correspondence of the Stoughton Special Education Parent Advisory Council.
- File notice of meetings with the clerk of the city or town 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 required by law.

Secretary

- Maintain an accurate attendance log
- Keep meeting minutes for each general meeting.
- Coordinate the recording, filing and posting of minutes of the SEPAC and its committees.
- Collect and review all correspondence of the SEPAC.
- Conduct hospitality correspondence as necessary.

Treasurer

- Shall keep a full and accurate account of receipts and expenditures, and in accordance with the budget adopted by the organization.
- Shall arrange disbursements as authorized by the Executive Board or SEPAC. Disbursement for non-budgeted items must be approved by the Executive Board. Disbursement for non-budgeted items exceeding this amount must be approved by a majority vote of the voting members at the monthly SEPAC meeting.
- Shall present a financial statement at least annually at SEPAC meetings and at other times when requested.
- Coordinate efforts to apply for grants, donations, reimbursements or any other funds for which the SEPAC be eligible.

Article V: Elections

Elections shall be the first order of business during the May/June 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.

Voting Members shall make a good faith attempt, whenever possible, to elicit input from the general membership before taking a vote on a particular item.

The SEPAC will inform the school district of the outcome of the annual elections and the names, addresses and phone numbers of the new board by July 1st of each year.

Article VI: Meetings

Meetings are defined as any SEPAC business meeting or committee meeting at which a quorum is met. The number of meetings to be held each year and the dates of those meetings shall be determined annually by the Executive Board. Meetings are to be held no less than three (3) times per year. Advance notice of any and all meetings and elections will be published/posted with a minimum of 48 hours advance notice and comply with the MA Open Meeting Law regulations. Meetings shall be conducted by the Co-Chairs, who shall set the agenda, determine the length of discussions, recognize participation, and conduct votes of the voting membership as needed.

Article VII: Subcommittee

Subcommittees shall be created as needed. Examples of committees that the SEPAC may be interested in creating are; Special Education Program Development, Parent Support Group and Resource/Information. Subcommittee chair and members shall be appointed by the Chairperson/Co-Chairs and shall serve for a term of one year congruent with the term of the other SEPAC officers.¹

¹ Effective 6/8/23