

Natick Special Education Parent Advisory Council By-Laws

Article I: Name

This organization is a self-governed, volunteer organization known as the Natick Special Education Parent Advisory Council (hereafter referred to as SEPAC).

Article II: Mission

The mission of the Natick SEPAC is to work for the understanding of, respect for and support of all children with special needs in the community. To that end and pursuant to [CMR 603 28.07\(4\)](#), SEPAC will work to:

- Support and encourage an innovative educational environment where students with disabilities have equal access to educational opportunities and a community environment where all students are encouraged to reach their full potential.
- Promote a network for parents of students with disabilities and provide a forum to share information and discuss matters of relative interest and concern.
- Support communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, respect, acceptance and inclusion of students with disabilities.
- Collaborate with the school community to continually improve the educational opportunities available throughout the Natick Public Schools that cultivate improved educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

Article III: Policies

The SEPAC will be non-commercial, non-sectarian, and non-partisan. The name of this organization or, the name of any members in their official capacities shall not be used in any connection with a commercial concern or any partisan interest, or for any purpose other than the regular work of the organization.

Article IV: Terms of Membership

General Membership shall be open to any resident of Natick including parents, guardians, educators and other parties interested in the special education of Natick students. In addition, a parent/guardian of a current student receiving Special Education services administered through the Natick School District may also be a general member even though the parent/guardian resides outside of Natick. New members are welcome at any time. All members shall strive to uphold the SEPAC mission as stated in these by-laws.

General membership responsibilities include electing the SEPAC Board and voting on changes to the SEPAC By-laws.

Voting membership shall be limited to the SEPAC Board Members.

Article V: SEPAC Board Members

The SEPAC Board shall include a chair (or co-chairs), secretary, communications coordinator and programs coordinator(s). This group of individuals shall be commonly known as the SEPAC Board. The term for co-chairs is two years, with the co-chairs serving staggered terms. All other positions are 1 year terms and can be shared by more than one member (if needed). When necessary, a SEPAC Board member may hold or perform multiple positions.

SEPAC Board members can delegate responsibilities as needed. SEPAC Board member responsibilities are:

Co-Chairpersons:

- Set the agenda for each meeting.
- Preside at all meetings.
- Coordinate the work of the SEPAC Board members and committees.
- Act as liaison between the SEPAC and Natick Student Services with regular communications with the Student Services Director.
- Act as liaison between SEPAC and the Natick School Committee.
- Prepare next Chair by sharing knowledge and expertise at the end of term.

Secretary/Treasurer:

- Post meetings, agendas, and approved minutes according to open meeting law.
- Record and post minutes of business meetings.
- Coordinate the approval of the meeting minutes in a timely manner.
- Maintain attendance log for purposes of voting membership.
- Manage funds collected, donated, and spent for the SEPAC

Communications Coordinator:

- Maintain the Natick SEPAC communication tools including Gmail list, webpage and Facebook page
- Coordinate all public communications and communications to SEPAC members, not including those communications that are the responsibility of the Secretary.
- Support in marketing upcoming events, speakers, workshops, etc.

Programs Coordinator(s):

- Coordinate the SEPAC programs
- Collect feedback and propose programming recommendations
- Coordinate volunteers to help plan, manage, organize and implement programs
- Partner with Communications coordinator to advertise and market programs

Committees:

- Committees shall be created as needed.

Article VI: Voting, Elections, Eligibility and Vacancies

Voting Guidelines:

- Only SEPAC Board members can vote on SEPAC business
 - Exception: General members are eligible to vote on changes to the SEPAC By-laws (see Article X)
- Voting must occur at a SEPAC meeting following Open Meeting law guidelines.
- A quorum of no less than 50% of the serving SEPAC Board members must be present in order hold a vote.
- All decisions requiring a vote will be made by a simple majority of the SEPAC Board present at the SEPAC meeting.
- Any expense greater than \$200, needs to be approved by a majority vote of the SEPAC Board members

SEPAC Board Election Guidelines:

- All general members are eligible to vote in the SEPAC Board elections.
- Elections will occur at a SEPAC meeting following Open Meeting law guidelines.
- Anyone who meets the SEPAC Board eligibility requirements and who wishes to volunteer for a SEPAC Board role should notify SEPAC prior to the election deadline (deadline will be posted).
- If there is only one person nominated for a SEPAC Board role, that person must receive a majority vote (50% or greater) from the general members present at the meeting to fill the position. If the nomination does not receive a majority vote then the position will remain open.
- If more than one person is nominated for a SEPAC Board role a simple majority of the general members present at the meeting will apply. Elections for positions on the SEPAC Board will take place each spring. Additional elections to fill vacancies/resignations may take place during the year (as needed).
- New SEPAC Board members will take office immediately following the vote.

SEPAC Role Eligibility Requirements:

Eligibility for the SEPAC Board and School/Out of District Liaison roles shall be limited to any general member who is:

- a Natick resident and a parent/guardian of a current student receiving Special Education services administered through the Natick School District and;
- who has attended at least one previous Natick SEPAC meeting in the past 12 months.
- In addition, for the School Liaison role: The Liaison's child must be attending the particular school they will be representing.
- In addition, for the Out of District Liaison role: The Liaison's child must be receiving services Out of District.

Resignations and Vacancies

Any SEPAC Board member may resign by delivering a written notice of resignation by mail, in person, or by email to the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services. A resignation shall be

effective immediately upon such delivery unless the resignation is slated to be effective at another time.

SEPAC Board vacancies will be handled as follows:

- Following the resignation of any SEPAC Board member, the SEPAC Board shall make the public aware of the open position and request for interested parties to notify the SEPAC Board.
- Open SEPAC Board positions can be filled during the year. Open positions filled during the year will have a term that expires at the following election.
- Voting will follow the Election Guidelines detailed above.

Article VII: Meetings

All meetings are open to the general public. Meetings will be held at least four (4) times per school year. Notice of all general meeting dates and elections shall meet Open Meeting Law requirements. Reasonable attempts shall be made to notify the general membership of meeting times and proposed agenda prior to the meeting.

Meetings are defined as any SEPAC meetings, activities or committees at which attendance is taken or members have signed in.

Article VIII: SEPAC Liaisons

Liaisons are not SEPAC Board members, but they serve a valuable role in increasing communication and collaboration between SEPAC and the community. Liaisons are appointed and removed as agreed by the SEPAC Board during a meeting. A liaison may also resign by informing the SEPAC Board. Liaison roles are filled in the best interest of the SEPAC and can be filled throughout the year. SEPAC is not required to have Liaisons. Liaisons are encouraged to attend SEPAC meetings, but if they cannot attend a meeting, they may communicate any updates to the Chair in advance. The SEPAC Board may create additional Liaison roles (and define the eligibility requirements) if they determine there is a need.

School Liaison responsibilities:

- Act as liaison between his/her school and SEPAC.
- Connect with school's PTO and share SEPAC information.
- Communicate SEPAC information to his/her school.
- Build awareness at his/her school of SEPAC and SEPAC events.
- Support the SEPAC Programs coordinator by volunteering for at least one SEPAC event. Attend SEPAC meetings and provide status updates and feedback to SEPAC Board.

Out of District Liaison responsibilities:

- Act as liaison between Out of District families and SEPAC.
- Communicate SEPAC information to the Out of District community.
- Support the SEPAC Programs coordinator by volunteering for at least one SEPAC event.
- Attend SEPAC meetings and provide status updates and feedback to SEPAC Board.

Article IX: Conflict of Interest

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

Article X: Amendments

These by-laws may be amended by a simple majority of the general members at a SEPAC meeting, but by-law changes may not be voted upon in the same meeting as they are proposed, unless the general members at the meeting vote unanimously to approve the change.

Article XI: Review of By-Laws

The SEPAC Board shall review these bylaws every two (2) years. Any amendments or revisions will follow Article X.

These by-laws were approved on 03/16/17 and go in effect of the day of the Spring 2017 Elections.