

**BY-LAWS
OF THE
CHELSEA SPECIAL EDUCATION
PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Article I. Chelsea Public School District Special Education Parent Advisory Council

The name of this self-governed organization shall be the Chelsea Special Education Parent Advisory Council, also known as the Chelsea SEPAC.

Article II. Authority

The Chelsea SEPAC is formed pursuant to the provisions of Section 3 of Chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Article III. Purpose of the Chelsea SEPAC

The mission of the Chelsea Public School (CPS) Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is to work towards the understanding of, respect for, support, and appropriate education for all children with special needs in the CPS community. To that end, the Chelsea SEPAC will:

1. Advise the school committee and Director of Student Services on matters that pertain to the education, health, and safety of students with special needs by providing direct parent input, review, and feedback [CMR 306:28.07(b)].
2. Meet regularly with school officials (Administrator of Special Education, School Committee, etc.) to advise and participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the district's special education programs [CMR 306:28.07(b)]. This includes providing input to the development of policy and procedures, and parent and teacher training; advising and participating may include development and review of the Three-Year Program Plan and six-year Corrective Action Plan (as appropriate), prior to submission to the DESE. This will include the ability to provide input, review, revise and comment on any/all regular reports and plans pertaining to Special Education sent to the Department of Education, prior to their being finalized and submitted.
3. Promote a network of parents, guardians, educational surrogates, including but not limited to parents of children with special needs (developed through active outreach), and provide a forum to share information and discuss matters of concern and interest regarding children with special needs. This will include providing a network of support for parents including access to relevant information, training, and resources, and sharing timely information with the membership and the community in Chelsea, as well as CPS administration and School Committee.

4. Promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion of children with special needs, thereby encouraging an atmosphere of open communication, understanding and mutual respect among all students, parents, teachers, and the Chelsea community at large.

5. Provide informational forums to parents, educators, students and other professionals. This will include collaboration with parent/teacher groups, school councils, administrators, and other school and community organizations to promote the achievement of district goals and the SEPAC mission, and provide opportunities for parents and school personnel to participate in joint training to foster mutual understanding.

6. Promote communication between Chelsea SEPAC members, local, state and national organizations, councils and groups. This will include staying current on public policy issues, state advisories and regulation which impact all education in Massachusetts, and crafting responses, as necessary.

Article IV. Terms of Membership

1. Qualifications

Any such qualified person may become a member by communicating orally or in writing to any Officer of the Chelsea SEPAC such person's desire to become a member.

a. General membership shall be open to:

- any resident of the Chelsea Public School Districts, or

- any person affiliated with the Chelsea Public Schools, or

- any person affiliated with a child whose education is the partial or entire responsibility of Chelsea Public Schools (CMR 603:28.10), or

- any parent, guardian, or educational surrogate of a child attending an Chelsea Public School program,

-and who has attended at least one previous Meeting of the Chelsea SEPAC during the past 12 months.

b. Voting membership is required to vote in annual officer elections and any other business that comes before any Chelsea SEPAC meeting. Voting membership is open to any general member who:

- is a parent, guardian or educational surrogate of a child with special needs residing in the Chelsea School District; or

- is a parent, guardian or educational surrogate of a child whose education is the partial or entire responsibility of Chelsea Public Schools (CMR 603:28.10), whether being schooled in CPS, in an out-of-district placement, or in a home or hospital setting; or

- is a parent, guardian or educational surrogate of a child with special needs who attends Chelsea Public Schools,

and who has attended at least one previous meeting of the Chelsea SEPAC during the past 12 months or has requested voting status in writing to the Secretary at least one month prior to the vote.

2. Duties

a. All members shall endeavor to cause the Chelsea SEPAC to further its purposes as stated in Article III of these Bylaws.

b. All members shall endeavor to attend all regular meetings of the Chelsea SEPAC

c. All members who wish to receive notices or other communications from the Chelsea SEPAC shall deliver to the Secretary all of the necessary information required to receive such notices and other information in the form in which such notices or information are delivered.

Article V. Officers

Officers of the Chelsea SEPAC shall be voting members who are elected by the voting membership and whose term of office will run from the date of their election to the date of the next election of officers, approximately one year. If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held immediately. Office and officer responsibilities of the Chelsea SEPAC are:

1. The Chairperson shall:

a. Set the agenda for each General Meeting

b. Preside at all meetings of the Chelsea SEPAC

c. Recommend the organization and monitor the function of subcommittees

d. Coordinate all communication between the Chelsea SEPAC and its members

e. Act as liaison with the Director of Student Services

f. Prepare periodic reports for the Special Education Administration regarding Chelsea SEPAC activities and needs

2. The Co-Chairperson shall:

- a. Preside at meetings in the absence of, or at the request of, the Chairperson
- b. Coordinate other public communications, not including those that are the responsibility of the Secretary
- c. Assist the Chairperson as appropriate and perform responsibilities of the Chairperson at his/her request

3. The Secretary/Outreach officer(s) shall:

- a. Record and file Minutes of the meetings of the Chelsea SEPAC and its subcommittees in accordance with the Massachusetts Public Records Law.
- b. Provide copies of official Minutes, including attendance, to the CPS Office of Special Education annually (in June)
- c. Collect and review all correspondence of the Chelsea SEPAC
- d. Disseminate notices and other information to membership and other interested parties on a regular basis
- e. Advertise meetings and events
- f. Maintain SEPAC presence on social media

4. The Membership officer(s) shall:

- a. Manage, regularly check and update SEPAC membership list
- b. Respond to inquiries regarding SEPAC

5. The CPS Website and Media officer(s) shall:

- a. Through remote access, maintain “hard”(non-changing) areas of the site, design and upload
- b. Through remote access, post meeting and workshop information to the site

Article VI. Elections

Elections shall be the first order of business during the November meeting. Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership, subject to the presence of at least 4 members. New officers shall take office immediately following their election.

Nominations may be made by ballot or voice vote at the November meeting. Nomination ballots

will be made available to voting members at Chelsea Special Education Parent Advisory Council meeting. All voting members are eligible to make nominations.

Article VII: Meetings

1. In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, notice of all General Meeting dates will be on the CPS website and notices provided. Notice shall be published in the Chelsea Record (the newspaper of public record for the City of Chelsea) and shall be disseminated by other means including other local press, social media, and notices.

2. General Meetings shall be held at least 6 times per year, from September through June. Meetings postponed due to weather may or may not be rescheduled, at the discretion of the Chairperson in consideration of logistics and availability of speakers and locations.

3. During the last meeting of the academic year, the Chairperson shall take recommendations for the calendar of meetings for the following year. The calendar shall include dates and times of the meetings and projected activities for the year. The calendar shall be made available to all Chelsea SEPAC members, to public officials and school administrators at the beginning of each academic year.

4. Matters that require a vote to be taken of the voting membership include, but are not limited to, the following items: a change in the Bylaws can only be voted on at a general meeting; elections require a vote as described in Article VI, Elections.

5. Minutes of all Regular Meetings shall be recorded and retained for public record as described in Article V.3.a.

Article VIII: Subcommittees

Subcommittees shall be created as needed at the discretion of the Officers and shall report on activities to the Chairperson(s) and members at Regular Meetings.

Article IX: These by-laws may be amended by a simple majority of the voting members at a general meeting, but by-laws changes may not be voted upon in the same meeting as they are proposed, unless a majority (as described in article VI) votes unanimously to approve the change.