

FRAMINGHAM SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

(F-SEPAC)

- B Y L A W S -

(adopted Spring 2007)

Article I: Name of Organization

The name of this organization shall be the Framingham Special Education Parent Advisory Council, also known as F-SEPAC. F-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 II: Purpose of the F-SEPAC

The F-SEPAC receives its regulatory authority from the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 603 CMR 28:07 (4) under the parent involvement section.

State law mandates the F-SEPAC and its duties include, but are not limited to:

- Advising the school 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 F-SEPAC is to work for understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in the community. To that end, F-SEPAC will work to:

- Promote a network of parents of children with special needs and provide a forum to share information and discuss matters of concern and interest for children with special needs.
- Advise the Director of Special Education, Superintendent of Schools, and Framingham School Committee, and others on operations of special education services, parent and teacher training needs, and other needs within the Special Education community.
- Help to develop school district policy, to include providing reports/data to be integrated into the regular reports and plans sent to the Department of Education; and to review, revise, and comment on such materials prior to their being finalized.
- Promote communication between F-SEPAC members; local, state, and national organizations; and councils and groups that support children with special needs.
- Promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of children with special needs.
- Provide informational forums to parents, educators, students, and professionals involved with children with special needs. This will include collaboration with parent/teacher groups, school councils, PTOs, and other school organizations towards the betterment of education in the school district; and exploration of opportunities for parents and school personnel to participate in joint training to foster mutual understanding.
- Promote communication and collaboration among parents, teachers, administrators and other service providers within the Special Education community.
- Serve as a resource and support network for parents/guardians of children with special needs regarding procedures, educational, and non-educational issues.
- Support and promote equal educational opportunities for all special needs children.

Article III: Terms of Membership

There are two types of membership, voting and general.

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

Voting membership is required in order to vote in annual officer elections and other business that comes before any F-SEPAC meeting. Voting membership shall be given to any general member who is either:

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

Meetings are defined as any F-SEPAC sponsored meeting in which the business of the F-SEPAC is conducted. This may include activities or committees at which attendance and/or minutes are taken.

Article IV: Voting and Elections

All decisions requiring a vote will be made by simple majority (50% plus one) of the voting members present. Each voting member is entitled to one (1) vote per motion. At any F-SEPAC meeting, at least five voting members must be present in order to cast a vote.

Prior to the nomination meeting, the F-SEPAC Executive Board (see Article IX) will recruit a volunteer from the voting membership of the F-SEPAC for the temporary position of Election Coordinator. The selection of the volunteer will be decided by a lottery of names of volunteers. The coordinator will not be anyone who is running for office since the person holding this position must be an impartial party. The Election Coordinator shall prepare the ballots and coordinate activities necessary to complete the election.

All voting members are eligible to make nominations at the next to last F-SEPAC meeting of the school year. Nominees shall accept or decline their nominations within one week of being notified of their nomination in order to remain on the ballot. The ballots will be made available to voting members at the last F-SEPAC meeting of the school year.

Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership present at the last F-SEPAC meeting of the school year. New officers shall take office immediately following their election. It is expected that past officers will meet with their replacements and work with them for the first two months of the following school year to ensure a seamless transition.

MassPAC and the Department of Education will be informed of the annual elections with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the new board by the end of the school year. The date of elections should also be provided.

Article V: Officers of the F-SEPAC

Officers of the F-SEPAC are elected by the voting membership and will hold office for one year. These officers shall be elected annually during the final meeting of the school year. If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held immediately, with term to expire at the last meeting of the school year. All positions may be shared by two individuals, except the Treasurer. The F-SEPAC must run by two Co-Chairpersons.

Office and officer responsibilities of the F-SEPAC are:

Co-Chairpersons

- Set the agenda for each general meeting and arrange for guest speakers/ workshops, as required.
- Preside at all meetings of the F-SEPAC.
- Recommend the organization and monitor the function of sub-committees. Appoint committee members as needed and recruit parent leaders.
- Act as liaison with the Director of Special Education meeting preferably monthly and no less than quarterly during the school year.
- Clearly define their individual responsibilities in writing so that other Officers and Members will know whom to turn to for specific questions, comments, and concerns.
- Coordinate public communications (if needed), not including those communications that are the responsibility of the Secretary.
- Draft goals to guide the organization and present those goals at the first meeting of the school year.
- Execute and supervise responsibilities related to contracts and agreements in the organization's behalf, and sign any such contracts and agreements on behalf of the Executive Board (see Article IX).
- Oversee recruitment of new parent leaders and members.

Co-Secretaries / Communication Officers

- Coordinate all communication between the F-SEPAC and its membership.
- Record minutes of the meetings and arranges for their distribution and publication on the F-SEPAC Web site.
- Publicize meetings and handles all F-SEPAC correspondence.
- Prepare periodic reports for the Special Education Administration regarding F-SEPAC activities and needs on an as needed basis.
- If the position of Secretary is divided among more than one member then they must clearly define their individual responsibilities in writing so that other Officers and Members will know whom to turn to for specific questions, comments, and concerns.
- Oversee recruitment of new members.
- Create a periodic e-newsletter and/ or mailing.

Treasurer

- Coordinates efforts to apply for grants, donations, reimbursements or any other funds for which F-SEPAC may be eligible.
- Manages and accounts for funds collected or donated for the F-SEPAC.
- Manages and accounts for funds spent by the F-SEPAC.
- Monitors and coordinates the financing of fund raising activities.

Subcommittee Chairpersons (as needed)

- Recruit members and hold committee meetings, as necessary.
- Provide annual objectives to the Executive Board (see Article IX) at the beginning of the year.
- Report committee activities to the Executive Board and the full membership.
- Coordinate fund raising activities (as needed).

Article VI: Meetings

General meetings shall be held at least five (5) times per year, from September through June; monthly meetings would be ideal. Notice of all general meeting dates and elections shall meet Open Meeting Law requirements and publicity of them shall be done in no less than two (2) of these ways to reach as many people as possible:

- Published on the Internet
- Sent to the local press in advance
- Posted at Town Hall
- Sent to each voting member through the schools, by mail, email or some other communication method

During the last meeting of the school year, the Co-Chairpersons 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.

With a 48-hour notice, we will make every attempt to provide interpreters for foreign languages and ASL for anyone who requests such.

Minutes of all F-SEPAC meetings shall be recorded and retained as a matter of public record, and be available on the Web site and in an easily accessible location.

Article VII: Subcommittees

Subcommittees shall be created as needed. Examples of committees that the F-SEPAC may be interested in creating are Program Development, Parent Support, Resource/Information, Legislative Issues, and Liaison Coordinator.

Article VIII: Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any F-SEPAC meeting by a majority vote of the voting members present provided that the amendment is submitted in writing to the Executive Board (See Article IX) at least two (2) months before the vote is taken.

Article IX: The Executive Board

This committee will consist of the Officers of the F-SEPAC. This committee will meet as needed to conduct long-range planning, set objectives, and define priorities and goals, which will be presented to the School Committee annually.

Article X: Expenditure of Funds

Expenditure of funds in excess of \$30 requires approval of a majority of the Executive Board. Expenditures by Executive Board members of less than \$30 are reimbursable by submitting receipts to the Treasurer, but these expenditures must be discussed in advance.

Article XI: Review of Bylaws

The Executive Committee shall review these bylaws every two (2) years.

Bylaws developed and adopted Spring 2007 by the 2006-2007 F-SEPAC Steering Committee:

- Susan Arndt – 508-405-0770
- Cheryl Caira – 508-877-6475
- Michelle A. Cooper – 508-788-1314
- Steve Hakar – 508-877-6007
- Sue Hewlett – 508-877-1511
- Cathryn Kaner-Taytslin – 508-879-2110
- Marcy Rosch – 508-879-7404