

Revised and Approved as of March 24, 2011

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (“BPS SpedPac”) BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this self-governing organization shall be the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (“BPS SpedPac”).

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Section 1

The BPS SpedPac’s purpose is to advise the Boston Public Schools (hereinafter the “District”) on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meet regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school District’s special education programs and to advocate for the appropriate supports and special education services necessary to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities.

Our goal is that every child with a disability who resides in the District receives the individualized supports and special education services that they are entitled to under the Federal and State laws and regulations to address all of their needs resulting from their disability(ies), that to the maximum extent appropriate these services are provided within the least restrictive environment, to enable each child to make meaningful educational and functional progress. All activities of BPS SpedPac are focused on promoting this purpose.

Section 2

The Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council will:

- A. Advocate for children with disabilities and for parents, foster parents, and/or legal guardians (“parents”) of children with disabilities.
- B. Meet regularly with and advise officials of the District about issues impeding students with disabilities from learning effectively and participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs, policies, and practices.
- C. Review data submitted by the District to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding the District’s performance on the annual targets identified in the State Performance Plan.
- D. Review final reports for the Special Education Coordinated Program Review and Mid-Cycle Review for the District and participate in the planning of any required corrective actions.
- E. Encourage the District to provide information to parents in multiple modes of communication (paper, electronic, and phone) and in the native language about District

policies concerning the education of children with disabilities, including information describing placement options.

F. Provide information and referral services to parents of children with disabilities, within the resources available.

G. Provide information concerning rights and responsibilities under Federal and State Special Education Laws and regulations to parents of children with disabilities.

H. Monitor the implementation of Federal and State Special Education Laws and regulations within the District.

I. Ensure that all District communications with parents are translated as necessary into the appropriate language (including but not limited to; Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Cape Verdean Creole, Haitian Creole) and that qualified interpreters are provided by the District and used at IEP meetings.

J. Present concerns about special education programs to appropriate officials (including the School Committee, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education, and Executive Director of Special Education) of the District.

K. Provide training for parents on the rights of students and parents under Federal and State Special Education Laws and regulations and encourage collaborative training opportunities for parents and teachers.

L. Promote communication between parents of children with disabilities and school District officials and District staff.

M. Promote cooperation, communication, support and assistance among all parents in the District who have children with disabilities.

N. Promote collaboration with other parent groups and with Federal, State, and City agencies and officials, private agencies and the larger community concerning the education and welfare of children with disabilities.

O. Promote communication and programs that encourage the understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of children with disabilities in the broader community.

ARTICLE III – VOTING MEMBERSHIP

The voting membership of the Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council shall be comprised of:

A. Parents, foster parents, persons acting as parents, and legal guardians of child(ren) with disability(ies) who have an Individualized Education Plan (“IEP”) or a 504 Plan and are residents of the City of Boston.

B. Parents and persons legally acting as parents (foster parents, grandparents, legal guardians) who have requested that the District evaluate their child for special education services.

C. Students with disabilities who have reached their eighteenth (18th) birthday.

ARTICLE IV – ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Section 1

The BPS SpedPac at its Annual Meeting shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, and a minimum of three (3) but no more than eight (8) Members-at-Large, and two (2) alternate Members-at-Large. These individuals collectively shall constitute the BPS SpedPac Executive Board who serve in their respective roles on a voluntary basis. The two (2) alternate Members-at-Large shall have voting rights only when necessary to constitute a quorum of the Executive Board.

The duties of the alternate Members-at-Large will be to attend Executive Board and General meetings as much as possible, and to perform such other duties to support the overall priorities of BPS SpedPac, such as outreach for membership, attendance at meetings, administrative functions for BPS SpedPac, and other services they may propose for approval by the Executive Board.

The terms of Chair and Secretary will be the same, and the terms for Vice-Chair and Treasurer will be the same, each pair alternating between 2-year terms to establish consistency in leadership.

(For example, Chair and Secretary will be two (2) years in 2011, and Vice-Chair and Treasurer will be two (2) years in 2012, and so forth. With elections for Chair and Secretary thereafter being in 2013, 2015, 2017. . . , and elections for Vice-Chair and Treasurer elected for two years starting in 2012, then 2014 and 2016. . .)

The Chair with input from the Executive Board shall set the agenda for all Executive Board and General Meetings and request that the District mail and distribute to all parents of children with disabilities all BPS SpedPac meeting notices and information, and request that the District provide additional outreach support for meetings, including the use of the District email and the District's Connect Ed service.

Section 2

A. The Chairperson shall preside over general meetings of BPS SpedPac ,and Executive Board meetings and perform other duties consistent with the office. The Chairperson is also empowered to appoint a special committee within BPS SpedPac or necessary designees to committees working with the District to deal with specific tasks or problem areas. The Executive Board may appoint a designee to temporarily perform the duties of chairperson if the chairperson is unavailable for some reason.

Beginning at the election held in May 2011, the term of Chairperson will be for two (2) consecutive years.

B. The Vice-Chair shall support the Chairperson at general meetings and chair meetings of the Executive Board, if needed, and will perform others duties consistent with the

office. The Vice chairperson may be appointed as a designee to temporarily perform the duties of the chairperson.

The term of Vice-Chair will be for one (1) year, and in 2012 it will be for two (2) years..

C. The Recording Secretary shall record the proceedings of the BPS SpedPac and ensure that the minutes are distributed and once approved preserved. The Secretary shall keep an accurate record of all PAC motions, votes, and official business.

Beginning at the election held in May 2011, the term of Recording Secretary will be for two (2) consecutive years.

D. The Treasurer shall manage the funds provided by the District, collected, or donated for the BPS SpedPac. Any account books of the council shall be maintained in the council office. The Treasurer shall be accountable for all receipts and disbursements; therefore, the Treasurer shall regularly examine any information and/or account books pertaining to such transactions. The Treasurer shall present a financial report to the council at council meetings.

The term of Treasurer will be for one (1) year, and in 2012 it will be for two (2) years.

E. The Members-at-Large are considered members of the Executive Board of the BPS SpedPac and shall attend meetings on an ongoing basis and have full voting rights, subject to the limitations set forth in Section 1 above. The role for the Members-at-Large will be determined on an on-going basis at Executive Board meetings based on the current needs of the BPS SpedPac to ensure that there is a distribution of responsibilities among the Executive Board as a whole to support the needs of children with disabilities and their parents throughout the District.

All members of the Executive Board must agree that any position of the BPS SpedPac represented to the District and other third parties has been reviewed and approved previously by a majority of the Executive Board members.

F. To ensure the ability of the BPS SpedPac to perform its duties, all members of the Executive Board are required to attend all of the Executive Board meetings as scheduled. In the event that any member of the Executive Board; 1) fails to repeatedly attend Executive Board meetings without advance notice to the Board, (this requirement does not apply to alternate Members-at-Large) 2) fails to fulfill their assigned duties; or 3) is found by the other members of the Executive Board to have acted in violation of the by-laws, the other members of the Executive Board may remove and replace said member by a majority vote of the Executive Board and appoint an interim member. Said interim member will serve for the remainder of that member's individual term and then an election will be held for said position.

"Every effort should be made for the SpedPac Executive Board to be broadly representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the BPS community."

Section 3

The Executive Board may from time to time create sub-committees and dissolve the same by majority vote of the Executive Board members in attendance at a meeting where the issue is placed on the agenda in advance. Each sub-committee (comprised of BPS SpedPac members) shall elect a leader to report directly to the Executive Board.

ARTICLE V – ELECTIONSSection 1

Elections for the BPS SpedPac shall take place each year at the Annual General Meeting in May. At this Annual May Meeting, parents shall elect BPS SpedPac officers and members at large for the position(s) that are up for election. Parents will have the opportunity to nominate himself or herself or someone else for any position up for election. If a parent is not elected into the office he or she seeks, the parent may run for another position.

Section 2

In the event of a tie vote for any position, parents will have the option of voting in a run-off election to be held immediately following the tie vote, or agreeing by a majority of those present to have both parents represent the position as co-representatives for said position.

ARTICLE VI – MEETINGSSection 1

Before the start of the school year, the Executive Board shall establish and publish a schedule for said school year of the Executive Board meetings and the General Meetings for the BPS SpedPac.

Section 2

At any Executive Board meeting, at least five (5) members of the Executive Board must be present to constitute a quorum for any vote being taken.

At any General BPS SpedPac meeting, five (5) voting members must be present to constitute a quorum for any business requiring a vote. A daylong planning meeting for the BPS SpedPac Executive Board will be held each summer.

Section 3

A modified version of Roberts Rules of Order (Revised) shall be an informal guide at meetings.

Section 4

The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson will meet monthly with the Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services to identify and discuss issues – in particular those impeding students with disabilities from making educational progress and meeting state standards – and review strategies for improvement. The Executive Board will meet with the District’s Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Student Services, and the Executive Direct of

Special Education four (4) times a year to discuss special education issues, goals, and progress toward goals.

The Executive Board shall present formally to the Boston School Committee two (2) times a year to report on the goals of the SpedPac for the upcoming year and to report on the progress toward the goals during the year. The BPS SpedPac presentations to the School Committee shall be made at the October and May meetings, subject to the BPS SpedPac's consultation with the Chair and Secretary of the School Committee.

ARTICLE VII – BY-LAWS

Section 1

The BPS SpedPac By-Laws may be amended at a regular meeting by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present provided the proposed amendment(s) has/have been made available in writing to members for their review at least five (5) days prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII – DUES -- FUNDRAISING

Section 1

The Council will collect no dues from its members.

Section 2

The fiscal year shall be July 1 through June 30.

Section 3

The Council may raise funds from public or private agencies, as appropriate.

ARTICLE IX – EXECUTIVE SESSION

Section 1

Executive Session shall mean a period of time during a BPS SpedPac meeting when only Executive Board members are present.

Section 2

If the necessity for Executive Session is known at the time of the setting of the agenda, it will be noted in the agenda. However, through the Chairperson, or by a majority vote of the BPS SpedPac Executive Board members present, an Executive Session can be called during any BPS SpedPac meeting whether or not it was noted on the agenda.

APPENDIX A

If the Council receives public or private funds to hire staff, it will establish appropriate guidelines to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination in its hiring