



## Citizens' Advisory Committee for Special Education

### **BY-LAWS**

### **ST. MARY'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

#### **ARTICLE I: GENERAL**

**SECTION I: NAME** The name of this organization shall be the Citizens' Advisory Committee for Special Education, hereinafter referred to as CACSE.

**SECTION II: PURPOSE** CACSE will advise and counsel the BOE on matters pertaining to educational programs and related services for children and youth with disabilities of St. Mary's County, as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (20 U.S.C.1400), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13A.05.01).

**SECTION III: FUNCTION** The specific functions of CACSE shall include, as necessary:

- a. To advise and counsel the BOE about the needs of children and youth with disabilities.
- b. To advise and counsel on the relevance of educational programs and related services to meet the needs of children and youth with disabilities.
- c. To offer suggestions for the local proposed budget.
- d. To study specific issues and concerns of the BOE, concerned citizens, and parents
  - In order to better understand the specific issues and concerns, a written record will be kept by the Executive Board.
  - Representatives are encouraged to have concerned citizens provide confidential, written accounts of all issues or questions regarding students with disabilities.
  - CACSE members will review issues in a confidential manner.

#### **ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP**

**SECTION I: MEMBERSHIP** Membership of CACSE shall consist of one (1) Representative and one (1) Alternate Representative from each of the schools within St. Mary's County Public Schools hereinafter referred to as SMCPs and representatives from local or regional disability support agencies.

School Representatives should be a parent or guardian of a child who receives special education services in an IEP or 504, or an educator. Representatives and alternates shall be nominated, verbally or in writing, by the respective school principals, IEP Chairs, disability support agencies, other Members, or be self-nominated. School Representatives shall be voting Members of CACSE. Representatives may represent up to two (2) schools upon approval of the Executive Board.

Other members of CACSE may include one (1) representative from local or regional disability support agencies as requested by the Executive Board and representatives from school faculty and staff including IEP Chairs or special education teachers and paraeducators.

The membership term shall be September 1 through August 31. Members shall be confirmed by the Executive Officers at the September or October meetings. Executive Officers shall be acknowledged annually, in September, by the BOE upon submission by the Executive Board.

In case of the resignation of any CACSE member, CACSE shall work with the respective school and the Department of Special Education to quickly replace the representative. If no representative is assigned to a school or previously listed organization, that membership is considered not filled.

**SECTION II: PARTICIPATION** Full participation of all members is needed for effective and meaningful productivity. Each member is expected to fulfill the Duties of the Members. (See Membership Section V.) Members who fail to participate in CACSE on a regular basis (such as failure to attend meetings two months in a row without communication to the Executive Board) may be removed from membership by the Executive Board; such members shall be provided written notice prior to removal.

**SECTION III: VOTING RIGHTS** Voting rights shall consist of one (1) vote from each represented school and the agency representatives. In the absence of a serving representative, the alternate is eligible and responsible for voting privileges. When a member of the Executive Board is an alternate representative of their school or agency, and the representative of said school is in attendance, the Executive Board member shall cast their vote as an Executive Board member.

Non-voting, ex-officio Members shall include a representative from the Office of the Director for Special Education for SMCPS. Representatives from the schools may also represent a disability support agency, but shall only be allowed one (1) vote on behalf of the school they serve. IEP Chairs, special educators and other school faculty and staff shall be non-voting Members.

**SECTION IV: QUORUM** A quorum shall be considered at Regular Meetings when formal input on a proposal of action requiring a vote is received by the members. Formal input can include electronic or in-person representation. No final action shall be taken without formal input. A quorum will be established if the majority of attendees at the meeting are representatives with voting rights for the current meeting and if a majority of the Executive Board is present.

A quorum shall be achieved at Executive Board meetings when a majority of the Executive Board is present. A quorum shall be achieved at Subcommittee meetings when a majority of the subcommittee members is present.

**SECTION V: DUTIES OF THE MEMBERS** Members shall be required to participate in the effective organization and administration of CACSE. Duties of each member shall include:

- a. Regular attendance at CACSE meetings during the school year; no member shall miss more than two regularly-scheduled meetings in a row without communication to the Executive Board.
- b. Provide a regular report, orally or in writing, to the member's school IEP Chair and additional groups such as Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or School Improvement Team at least twice a year. This can include a report filed in a school newspaper or website.
- c. Act as a liaison between parents and educators and the Department of Special Education, including serving as an initial point of contact for parent questions and concerns.
- d. Ensure that CACSE brochures, posters, event flyers, and other information are available at their school for parents to access.
- e. Participate on at least one subcommittee or working group during the school year.

### **ARTICLE III: MEETINGS**

**SECTION I: REGULAR MEETINGS** CACSE shall meet no fewer than five (5) times per year. The purpose of the regular meeting shall be to conduct the business of CACSE, including the election of officers, review and vote on projects and reports, update the status of ongoing efforts of any standing subcommittees, and to exchange information and ideas for the benefit of CACSE.

- a. Meeting dates, times, and/or additional meetings may be scheduled or rescheduled as necessary by the Chair or their designee.
- b. If a meeting falls on a Federal holiday or if school is canceled, the membership will meet on the 3rd Monday of the month or an otherwise agreed upon date.
- c. Summer meetings in June and July shall be called at the discretion of the Executive Board.
- d. An agenda for the meetings shall be prepared in advance by the Chair; requests by disability support agencies to present content or submit agency reports shall be submitted to the Chair in advance for inclusion in the agenda.
- e. All members are responsible to notify the Chair if unable to attend.

**SECTION II: PUBLIC COMMENT AT MEETINGS** CACSE shall allow public comment at CACSE meetings in a manner similar to BOE meetings. The following rules and procedure shall be used:

- a. Rules

- i. CACSE welcomes public input at CACSE meetings on items affecting our schools, students and families
  - ii. During public comment this is not a time for discussion but for all in attendance at the meeting to listen; discussion of issues raised in public comment will take place at subsequent meetings
  - iii. This is not the appropriate forum for negative comments or criticisms of individual staff or schools; concern about individual situations should be discussed at the level closest to the situation, and CACSE will not permit comments criticizing individual staff and schools
- b. Procedures
- i. Those who wish to make a public comment may submit requests prior (via email) or during (in the chat) the meeting in order that they be recognized and heard.
  - ii. Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per person; those making public comment may not yield their time to someone else
  - iii. CACSE encourages members and guests to present written statements to the Executive Board who can disseminate them as needed

**SECTION III: EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS** The Executive Board shall meet as necessary, in order to establish the agenda for upcoming regular meetings, conduct the business of the Executive Board, and ensure the ongoing dialogue necessary for effective operations of CACSE. In the event of a request for action on a particular topic for which a response is needed prior to the next scheduled meeting, the Executive Board may respond in lieu of the entire CACSE, and all such actions shall be documented in writing and presented at the next Regular Meeting. All actions taken by the Executive Board on behalf of CACSE are subject to review by the full CACSE.

**SECTION IV: SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS** It shall be the responsibility of the Subcommittee Chair of each standing subcommittee to schedule and conduct meetings as necessary to accomplish the charge of the subcommittee. A monthly report of each subcommittee's activity shall be electronically sent to the Executive Board by the Subcommittee Chairperson no later than five (5) days prior to the next CACSE meeting. Questions regarding reports shall be sent to Subcommittee Chairs.

**SECTION V: SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS** CACSE may establish regular, recurring support group meetings for CACSE representatives or for parents to meet anonymously with other CACSE members in confidence to discuss concerns related to IEP and 504 plans, curriculum, classroom issues, bullying and the like. School personnel shall not be present at these meetings.

**SECTION VI: ATTENDANCE** All CACSE meetings are open to the public. Attendance at CACSE meetings shall include, but is not limited to: Members of CACSE, staff, and the representative from the Office of the Director of Special Education for SMCPs.

Parents and guardians of children with special needs and educators representing pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school aged students and other interested agencies and community stakeholders are welcome to attend CACSE meetings.

#### **ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**SECTION I: OFFICERS** Officers shall be nominated annually by CACSE at the April meeting, elected at the May meeting, and submitted to the BOE in September. At least three (3) Members shall be elected to serve on the Executive Board. Only Member Representatives or Alternate Representatives with voting rights shall be eligible to serve as an Officer or on the Executive Board. The Officers of the CACSE Executive Board shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. Co-Chairs may be elected as desired by the Members. Calls for nominations shall go out at least two (2) weeks in advance.

## **SECTION II: DUTIES OF THE CHAIR**

- a. Serve as Chair of the Executive Board.
- b. Preside at meetings.
- c. May assign *pro tempore* duties at meetings when they or other Officers are unable to attend.
- d. Serve as the official voice of CACSE to the BOE, and upon request by the BOE, to the public at large and outside agencies such as: The Commissioners of St. Mary's County and Agencies of the Maryland State Department of Education.
- e. Coordinate reports from CACSE and oversee the preparation of an Annual Report to the Board of Education. This report should include input from CACSE members or a committee drafted for that purpose, and present updates about CACSE activities and concerns on a periodic basis.
- f. Call for the creation of committees, subcommittees, or working groups for a time and purpose as required, and appoints Subcommittee Chairs and Members, subject to CACSE approval.
- g. Provide a budget report to CACSE with the assistance of the Department of Special Education, and preside over financial discussions including:
  - receipt of funds from funding grants
  - the allocation of earmarks for specific projects and expenses
  - monthly tracking of actual expenditures
  - ensure the spending of funds prior to expiration at the end of the fiscal year
- h. Oversee the development, use, and maintenance of a CACSE website and social media
- i. Outreach to, and collaboration with, other disability support groups, such as other SECAC groups and Partners for Success/Parent Connection groups from Charles and Calvert Counties for projects, workshops, resource coordination, and regional concerns.

## **SECTION III: DUTIES OF THE VICE CHAIR**

- a. Perform the duties of the Chair in their absence.
- b. Assist Chair in developing written annual report to the BOE.
- c. Assist Chair with duties as requested.

## **SECTION IV: DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY**

- a. Maintain full and accurate record of CACSE regular meetings and Executive Board meetings, including Executive Board actions taken outside of regular meetings.
- b. Track CACSE membership participation and disseminate reports to membership committee.

- c. Disseminate all meeting minutes to CACSE Members prior to the next scheduled meeting.
- d. Assist Chair with other duties as requested,

#### **SECTION V: ROLE OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

- a. Maintain and store the archives of CACSE, including any and all documents, correspondence and reports of CACSE and its subcommittees.
- b. Review all project reports, and contribute comments and recommendations.
- c. Responsible for coordination of presentation by CACSE to the BOE.

### **ARTICLE V: BY-LAW AMENDMENTS**

**SECTION I: AMENDMENTS** Recommendations for amendments to these By-Laws may be made by CACSE periodically with majority vote of the Members present. All CACSE members must be notified in writing regarding proposed amendments to By-Laws, and shall have thirty (30) days to comment prior to a vote on their approval. Changes to the By-Laws shall be noted in summary fashion upon issuance of each new amendment.

**SECTION II: ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLICY CHANGES TO BY-LAWS** Any By-law changes required due to administrative or policy changes, shall amend these By-Laws without a vote being required. This will be considered an administrative amendment to the By-Laws. Administrative amendments shall be reported in summary fashion upon notice of such changes at the next regular meeting.

**SECTION III: REVISION** Recommendation for revision to these By-Laws may be made by CACSE periodically with two-thirds majority of the Members present. All CACSE members must be notified in writing regarding a proposed revision to the By-Laws, which will be voted upon at the next regularly-scheduled meeting. Revision to the By-Laws shall be noted by a Revision Date.

***Revision Date: June 3, 2024***