Special Education Citizen’s Advisory Committee

Howard County, MD

By-laws COMAR 13A.05.02.13I

# Article I Name

The name of this committee shall be the SPECIAL EDUCATION CITIZEN’S ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SECAC) of Howard County, MD

# Article II PURPOSE

The purpose of the committee is to:

1. Strive to fulfill the intent and spirit of the laws that define and protect the rights of individuals with disabilities.
2. Enable the community to participate and ensure parents are actively and meaningfully involved in the educational process of their children.
3. Advocate for students who have disabilities with the leadership of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), the Board of Education, the County Executive, the County Council, and other community agencies and organizations.
4. Increase awareness to foster respect and encourage acceptance of persons with disabilities both within the school system and the community at large.
5. Foster collaboration between students, families, school staff, administrators and the community.
6. Research inquiries from the leadership of HCPSS, the Board of Education and the community at large and make recommendations or other appropriate responses.
7. Encourage participation or membership from parents, guardians, educators, community leaders, and other interested parties.
8. Provide a forum for countywide citizen input and education on special education programs, related services and relevant issues.

# Article III MEMBERS

SECAC membership will be sought from:

1. Parents and family members of children with disabilities
2. Individuals with disabilities, including students
3. Community members
4. Family Support and Resource Center
5. Disability and advocacy groups
6. HCPSS staff, including administrators, Special Educators, General Educators, paraprofessionals, and student assistants
7. HCPSS organizations, including PTA Council, PTA members, and Teachers’ Union representatives

# Article IV MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES

Section 1. Membership Rules

1. There shall be no limit on the number of committee members
2. Membership shall be open to the full range of families with students with disabilities from birth to 21 and all ethnic, cultural, and geographic diversity of the county
3. All members shall reside or work within Howard County
4. Voting members and non-voting members may participate
5. The term of SECAC membership shall be one year
6. Members may serve additional terms
7. A member shall forfeit membership if three successive meetings are missed without presenting in advance, to the Chairperson, a valid reason for absence.
8. The nominating subcommittee shall present a slate of nominees for Board elections to the voting members
9. Any member of SECAC who has a relationship with an individual or organization that is or may present a conflict of interest shall disclose that relationship. A conflict of interest is defined as any activity from which the member would or could derive personal or financial benefit

Section 2. Voting Members

1. All members of SECAC who have attended a minimum of 3 meetings in a given year
2. May resign by notifying the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson
3. Shall excuse themselves from a vote when there is a conflict of interest as described in membership rules above

Section 3. Executive Board Composition

# Article V EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. Executive Board shall:

1. Consist of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, immediate past Chair, and one at large member.
2. Meet monthly with the Executive Director of Special Education and Support Services and the Coordinator of Special Education.
3. Any vacancy in the Chair position shall be filled by the Vice Chair
4. Any vacancy in the Vice Chair or Secretary position shall be elected in the same manner as described in xxx.
5. A person filling a vacancy shall serve the remainder of the one year term.
6. A member may not be elected for more than 2 consecutive terms in any one Executive Board position.

The Chairperson shall:

1. Preside at all meetings
2. Create the meeting agenda
3. Act on urgent committee matters between general meetings
4. Create standing committees and ad-hoc committees
5. Delegate roles and responsibilities to voting members, as deemed necessary
6. Attempt to ensure the Executive Board is representative of the larger SECAC membership
7. Lead the committee in the preparation of an annual written report for the Executive Director of Special Education, BOE and full SECAC membership

The Vice Chairperson shall:

1. Perform the duties of Chairperson in his/her absence, or at the Chair’s request
2. Support the Chairperson in accomplishing duties as assigned
3. Assume the duties of the Chairperson if he/she resigns or is unable to perform his/her duties, until another Chairperson is elected

The Secretary shall:

1. Take the minutes of all SECAC and Executive Board meetings
2. Take the roll of attendees for all meetings and keep attendance records
3. Provide meeting minutes to the Chairperson to be uploaded on the SECAC website
4. Maintain a voting members list
5. Perform the duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence and the absence of the Vice Chairperson
6. Prepare and distribute informational mailings
7. Assist the website manager with website content and updates

The Immediate past- Chair and at large member shall:

1. Participate in public speaking and attend meetings around the county to represent SECAC, as needed
2. Lead sub committees and assist by reaching out to the community to enhance SECAC membership

# Article VI MEETINGS

Section 1. Monthly Meetings

1. The full membership of SECAC shall meet monthly, at a minimum, from September through June of each school year
2. Members may submit agenda items to the chair at least 2 weeks prior to each meeting
3. An agenda shall be prepared by the Chair and provided to committee members
4. All meetings shall be open to the public
5. Each meeting will include a designated period of time for an open forum for participants to raise issues for general discussion
6. In case of an emergency, the Executive Board may reschedule a regular meeting with a minimum of 3 days notification
7. The Executive Board will meet as needed
8. A simple majority of voting members present at any meeting shall be sufficient to pass motions and conduct business for the SECAC
9. Subcommittees may be established and constituted as needed
10. Special meetings may be called by the Chair or a majority of the members
11. Meetings shall be conducted according to Robert’s Rules of Order newly revised.

# Article VII ELECTIONS

Section 1. Nominating Committee shall:

1. Consist of an odd number (minimum of 3) SECAC members, solicited by the Chairperson at the March meeting
2. Be approved by the general membership
3. Present a slate of at least one nominee for each office at the regular May meeting

Section 2. Election of Officers

1. All elections shall be by ballot and a majority of voting members present shall be required for election
2. When only one candidate is nominated for an office, election shall be by voice vote
3. When necessary, run-off elections shall be held among the nominees who receive the two highest number of votes
4. Election of officers shall take place at the May general meeting
5. Nominations of officers may be made by the membership from the floor, in addition to the slate submitted by the nominating committee

Section 3. Other elections

1. A special election shall be held at the next general meeting following the occurrence of a vacancy of Vice Chair or Secretary.
2. Members shall be notified at least 2 weeks prior to the general meeting that a special election will be held.
3. All nominations for special election will be made from the floor
4. The election will be held in accordance with Section 2 of this Article

Section 4 Other members

1. At the regular September meeting at large members of SECAC shall be approved or at any time of the year as deemed advisable by the committee
2. SECAC meetings shall be open to the general public and do not require membership

# Article VIII BY-LAWS AMENDMENTS

Section 1 Proposed Amendments

1. Proposed amendments to SECAC by-laws shall be submitted in writing to the members at least 30 days prior to a vote during a general meeting
2. Amendments must be approved by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting
3. Upon ratification, these articles shall go into effect immediately unless otherwise specified.

# Article IX PRESENTATION OF BY-LAWS

The Chair shall present the by-laws to the general membership one month prior to the vote of approval

# Article X RECOGNITION

SECAC will sponsor an annual Teacher and Staff Awards Night

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Chair, SECAC

These by-laws of the Special Education Citizen’s Advisory Committee were approved at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Meeting of the general membership on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 2015.

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Secretary,

Special Education Citizen’s Advisory Committee of Howard County