Special Education Citizen’s Advisory Committee

Howard County, MD By-laws

COMAR 13A.05.02.13.I

# Article I Name

The name of this committee shall be the SPECIAL EDUCATION CITIZEN’S ADVISORY COMMITTEE of Howard County, MD, hereafter referred to as SECAC.

# Article II PURPOSE

The purpose of the committee is to:

1. The [Maryland State Code of Law (COMAR), Section 13a.05.02.13.I](http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/getfile.aspx?file=13a.05.02.13.htm) states that each school system in the State of Maryland will have a Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) to advise the local school system (LSS) on the needs of students with disabilities in the LSS jurisdiction.
2. SECAC is a committee established by the local school system to seek meaningful input from parents, community partners, service providers, educators, and administrators on local issues relative to the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and the achievement of students with disabilities.
3. Strive to fulfill the intent and spirit of the laws that define and protect the rights of individuals with disabilities, including federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), for students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individual Family Service Plans (IFSPs), and the Americans with Disabilies Act (ADA), for students with 504 plans.
4. Enable the community to participate and ensure parents are actively and meaningfully involved in the educational process of their children.
5. Advocate for students who have disabilities with the leadership of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), the Board of Education (BOE), the County Executive, the County Council, and other community agencies and organizations.
6. Increase awareness to foster respect and encourage acceptance of persons with disabilities both within the school system and the community at large.
7. Foster collaboration between students, families, school staff, administrators and the community.
8. Facilitate inquiries from the leadership of HCPSS, the Board of Education and the community at large and make recommendations or other appropriate responses.
9. Encourage participation or membership from parents, guardians, educators, community leaders, and other interested parties.
10. Provide a forum for countywide stakeholder input about special education programs, related services and relevant issues.

# Article III MEMBERS

SECAC membership will be sought from:

1. Parents, guardians, and family members of children with disabilities, IEPs, IFSPs and 504 plans.
2. Individuals with disabilities, including students.
3. Community members and community organizations.
4. HCPSS Family Support and Resource Center
5. Disability and advocacy groups.
6. HCPSS staff, including Administrators, Special Educators, General Educators, Paraprofessionals, and Related Service Providers.
7. HCPSS organizations, including but not limited to 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 years of age and all ethnic, cultural, and geographic diversity of the county
3. All members shall reside within Howard County or work within HCPSS.
4. Voting members and non-voting members may participate in meetings.
5. Quorum shall consist of 15 voting members.
6. The nominating subcommittee shall present a slate of nominees for Board elections to the voting members
7. 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 shall be defined as any alliance with a business, organization or employer that prohibits a member from freely executing the purpose of SECAC. Personal gain shall be defined as directly soliciting business for monetary purposes from the SECAC.

Section 2. Voting Members

1. All members of SECAC who have attended a minimum of 3 meetings in person during the current school year, July 1st- June 30th.
2. Shall excuse themselves from a vote when there is a conflict of interest as described in membership rules above.

Section 3. Executive Board Composition

1. Shall consist of interested parties that are voting members.

# Article V EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. Executive Board shall:

1. Consist of a Chair (or 2 co-Chairs), Vice Chair, Secretary, immediate past Chair, and one at large member.
2. Meet monthly with the HCPSS Department of Special Education (DSE) Leadership and other staff as appropriate.
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 section VI.
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.
7. A term shall consist of 2 years.

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.
8. Attend monthly meetings with the HCPSS DSE Leadership Team.
9. Maintain and respond to Gmail account and social media platform inquiries.

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
4. Maintain and respond to Gmail account, and social media platform inquiries

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 and post to social media.
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 and social media posts regarding meeting information.
7. Assist the website manager with website content and updates.

The Immediate Past-Chair and/or 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; space and weather permitting.
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.

Section 2. Executive Board

1. The executive board shall meet as needed.

Section 3. Sub-committees

1. Sub-committees shall schedule work sessions as needed.

Section 4. Special Meetings

1. Special Meetings may be called either by the Chair or a majority of the members.

# 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.
6. Co-Chairs shall run together as one ticket.

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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Co-Chair, SECAC

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Co-Chair, SECAC

These by-laws of the Special Education Citizen’s Advisory Committee were approved at the SECAC meeting of the general membership on March 11, 2020.

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Secretary,

Special Education Citizen’s Advisory Committee of Howard County