



BYLAWS of the Fort Bend ISD Special Education Parent Advisory Committee

Article I: Name

The name of this organization is the Fort Bend ISD Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC).

Article II: Purpose

Section 1

The mission of the Fort Bend ISD Special Education Parent Advisory Committee is to advocate for the support, respect and understanding of all children with disabilities in Fort Bend ISD. To that end, we work to:

- Advocate for an innovative and inclusive educational environment where children with disabilities are provided with the resources necessary to reach their optimum potential;
- Advise Fort Bend ISD on the operation and development of special education programs, parent and teacher training needs, and help develop policy;
- Create a network of parents and caregivers of children with special needs to provide support and facilitate effective communication between parents, students and the school district.

Section 2

In order to accomplish the above, the SEPAC will focus on the following:

1. **Resources:** Identify and provide needed resources for Special Education students and their families through collaboration with schools, Fort Bend ISD, and the community.
2. **Policy:** Become knowledgeable of local instructional services and personnel serving Special Education students as well as state or national laws, rules, regulations and guidelines affecting Special Education services. Contribute suggestions concerning policies and program improvements in Special Education services.
3. **Advocacy:** Advocate for Special Education students, families, and schools in an effort to promote the awareness of the unique social and emotional needs of Special Education students.
4. **Community:** Cultivate a strong Special Education Community in Fort Bend ISD by creating opportunities for positive interactions between families, schools, and the community.
5. **Education:** Facilitate community education within Fort Bend ISD with a focus on bridging the gap between community feedback and Fort Bend ISD actions.

Article III: Membership

Section 1

Members of the SEPAC shall be parents or guardians of currently enrolled students identified for special education services in Fort Bend ISD. Members may serve up to three years per campus where student is enrolled. However, if no other parents volunteer from the campus, a member may serve more than three years. The membership year shall be from July 1st to June 30th.

Section 2

The membership can be composed of one primary representative and one or more alternate representatives from each school. The primary and alternate representatives from each school will be chosen by the Executive Board from those that have volunteered to serve from each school. The Executive Board shall make every effort to have representation for all campuses, with varying ages, educational needs, and with cultural diversity. If a campus continues to be without a representative after at least 3 attempts by the special education department to secure one, a parent from another campus may volunteer to serve as a representative for a campus where they do not have a child enrolled, until a parent from the campus is identified.

Section 3

Each campus receives only one vote. Proxy voting and absentee ballots shall not be permitted, except that one campus alternate representative may vote if the campus primary representative is not present.

Section 4

Any member may resign by filing a written resignation. Three consecutive absences by any member of the SEPAC shall be considered as a resignation unless the member has notified and discussed his/her reasons with the President. Removal and replacement of members shall be the responsibility of the Executive Board and Steering Committee.

Section 5

Membership in the SEPAC is not transferable.

Article IV: Steering Committee and Executive Board

Section 1

The Steering Committee shall include the Director of Special Education, the SEPAC Liaison from the Fort Bend ISD Special Education team and two (2) members of the SEPAC. The steering committee is to oversee the initial implementation of the FBISD SEPAC By-laws. Once the Executive Board is established, the steering committee shall serve as advisors to the Executive Board and shall only include Fort Bend ISD personnel.

Section 2

The Executive Board shall be elected from existing SEPAC members and shall consist of but is not limited to President, Vice President, Secretary, and Parent Coordinator.

1. The President and a representative from the Special Education Department shall preside at all Board and General SEPAC meetings. The President shall sign all letters, reports, and other

communications from the SEPAC, and shall develop with the Executive Board a yearly operating plan (goals) for the coming year to be approved by the Executive Board prior to the first meeting of the year. The Special Education Department and the SEPAC Executive Board will collaborate to set the agenda for each meeting and recommend and monitor the creation of any committees. The President and the Special Education Department will collaborate to make the annual presentation to the school board. The President shall not be entitled to vote except in the event there is a tie in the voting process. In the event that the President is absent, the Vice President shall preside in his/her absence and shall cast the tiebreaking vote should one be required.

2. The Vice President shall be informed in all aspects of the SEPAC and substitute for the President during his/her absence. If so acting, the Vice President shall not vote except in the case it be required to break a tie.
3. The Secretary shall maintain communication of meeting and event timelines to the SEPAC and shall keep the minutes of the meetings, both regular and special. The Secretary shall promptly transmit true and correct copies of the minutes to the members of the SEPAC. The Secretary will handle all communications within the group and members such as newsletters and other communications as agreed upon by SEPAC.
4. The Parent Coordinator shall work with the SEPAC members to provide guidance and direction on communicating and meeting with the parents within their campus. The Parent Coordinator shall be responsible for coordinating the parent social meetings and open house campus meetings. They will be responsible for maintaining the social media presence for SEPAC.

Section 3

The President and Vice President shall serve a maximum of two years in the role. The Secretary and Parent Coordinator shall serve a maximum of three years in the role.

Section 4

Duties and roles may be created or amended as needed.

Section 5

In the Spring semester of each school year, SEPAC members shall nominate any SEPAC member, including self-nomination, for service on the Executive Board and/or for general membership. SEPAC members will then vote to select someone from the nominated members for each Executive Board position by a simple majority vote.

Section 6

The Executive Board shall meet with the Steering Committee at least once a month separate and apart from General SEPAC meetings to discuss the yearly operating plan, progress towards the goals, and any other topics as determined by the President. Three consecutive absences by any member of the SEPAC Executive Board shall be considered as a resignation unless the member has notified and discussed his/her reasons with the President. Removal and replacement of members shall be the responsibility of the Executive Board and Steering Committee.

Section 7

The Executive Board and Steering Committee should report on its activities and progress to the FBISD Board on at least a yearly basis.

Article V: Subcommittees

The Executive Board may establish and abolish such subcommittees, as it may desire, to achieve the goals developed annually by the Committee. No subcommittee may exercise the authority of the SEPAC.

Section 1

The three subcommittees of the SEPAC are Communication, Policy/Advocacy, and Parent Resources/Community Outreach. Each committee shall have a committee chair who shall coordinate meetings with the committee and guide the committee through any initiatives they are working on. The committee chair role shall act to facilitate and organize the committee to meet its goals. This may be accomplished by means not limited to redirected conversations, helping schedule meeting dates, encouraging committee participants to share ideas and concerns, or contacting the executive board if issues or questions arise.

Article VI: Meetings

Section 1

The entire membership of the SEPAC shall meet regularly no fewer than two (2) times each semester, during the school year. The meetings shall be scheduled and announced by the Executive Board no later than August 1st and coordinated with the Fort Bend ISD calendar. Meeting shall be at a location approved by the Special Education Department. At least one meeting per year shall be open to all parents of students in special education in Fort Bend ISD.

Section 2

Special meetings of the SEPAC may be called by the President or by majority vote of the SEPAC.

Section 3

Board meetings may be called by the President or set by the Executive Board.

Section 4

Members must be notified of all meetings. Any change in the established date, time, or location must be given in writing (including email) not less than five (5) days before the date of such meeting.

Section 5

Decisions requiring a vote shall be determined by the Executive Board and shall be made by an affirmative vote of voting members in attendance provided a quorum is present. One third of the total voting membership for the Committee or Executive Board shall constitute a quorum for the Committee.

Section 6

Committee members shall be notified of voting opportunities within five (5) days of the vote at a general meeting.

Article VII: Amendments

A petition to amend these bylaws must be presented, in writing, to the Executive Board at any meeting of this organization. The proposed amendment is accepted when first approved by two-thirds majority vote of the Executive Board and then approved by a majority vote of the SEPAC. The proposal will be acted upon within 3 months of formal submission.

The SEPAC shall have no power to enter into contracts of any nature or to spend public funds except in cases of committee expense approved by the Director of Special Education. The Executive Board nor SEPAC shall have no power to bind any member of Fort Bend ISD to any debt, liability, or obligation in the absence of any express written authorization from the party to be bound. The Executive Board nor SEPAC shall have no powers beyond those expressly set forth herein.

Only the President of the SEPAC Executive Board shall be empowered to speak for the entire Committee unless authorized by the Committee. Such authorization must be reflected in the minutes of the committee.