

# **ANNE ARUNDEL SPECIAL EDUCATION CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **(AA-SECAC) BYLAWS, ratified 12/14/23**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To advise Anne Arundel County Public Schools regarding students with disabilities or special needs.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the committee is to:

- *Work collaboratively with the AACPS Director of Special Education and stakeholders to advise on issues, priorities, goals and potential solutions designed to improve achievement and outcomes of students with disabilities or special needs.*
- *Facilitate effective communication and collaboration between AACPS, children and youth with special needs, parents, advocates, and the community.*
- *Share information and education with parents, educators, students, professionals, and community members on issues related to special education.*
- *Promote the acceptance, awareness and inclusion of students with disabilities or special needs in our schools and community.*

### **COMMITTEE BY-LAWS**

#### **I. COMMITTEE COMPOSITION**

A. The Committee may include the following:

1. Anne Arundel County students, parents, guardians or other family members of students with disabilities or special needs.
2. Directors of the Department of Special Education
3. Department of Special Education staff members
4. Administrators
5. General and special educators and related service providers.
6. Special education paraprofessionals
7. Anne Arundel County community members.

#### **II. MEMBERSHIP**

- A. There is to be no set limit on the number of committee members.
- B. The committee is composed of voting and non-voting members.

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C. In order to be eligible to vote on SECAC motions, voting members must have attended 2 out of 6 past committee meetings.

D. Voting shall be conducted during SECAC business meetings. A tally of votes shall be recorded in meeting minutes. A voting member may attend the meeting in person or online. A non-response from a voting member will be considered an abstain vote.

E. Any member of the committee shall fully disclose any relationship with an individual or with members of other organizations which represents, or has the potential to represent, a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest shall be defined as any alliance with a business, organization, or employer that prohibits a member from freely executing the purposes of the committee, or that may result in personal, professional or financial gain.

### **III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

A. The committee shall have an Executive Board composed of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. At least 3 members of the board shall be parent/guardians of an Anne Arundel County student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Section 504 Plan. One member may be an eligible voting member of the committee who is not a parent. Central office staff are not eligible to serve as board members.

B. Nominations for open officer positions shall be held in April.

C. Elections for officer positions shall be held in May. In the event that a position becomes open due to resignation or removal, nominations and elections for such positions shall be held as soon as possible.

D. The officers shall be elected by a simple majority vote of the committee and shall serve a term not to exceed two consecutive years for the elected position. An officer elected to fill a vacated position due to resignation or removal, shall complete the remainder of the term of the original elected officer. An officer may subsequently run for a full two-year term if their initial term is less than two years.

E. Any officer, elected or appointed by the members, shall be subject to removal by a written ballot vote of two-thirds of the voting members as defined in Section II-C.

### **IV. OFFICERS' DUTIES**

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**A. Chair shall:**

1. Preside at committee meetings.
2. Generate and distribute an agenda for each committee meeting.
3. Represent the committee to the Anne Arundel County Board of Education, Anne Arundel County Public School System and the County Executive.
4. Delegate roles or responsibilities to other board members or voting members.
5. Coordinate with the board and the Director of Special Education to develop and submit a year-end report of activities and recommendations to the Director of Special Education, Superintendent and School Board.
6. Coordinate communications to SECAC members and the community.

**B. Vice Chair shall:**

1. Perform the chair's duties in his or her absence, or at the chair's request.
2. In the event the chair resigns or is unable to perform his or her duties, assume said duties until another chair is elected.
3. Organize subcommittees and workgroups as necessary.

**C. Secretary shall:**

1. Record minutes of all committee and Executive Board meetings.
2. Distribute minutes to officers and make them publicly available.
3. Take roll of committee meeting attendees, keep attendance records in order to determine voting members and maintain a committee membership database.
4. Assist the committee Chair with written correspondence and the development of public announcements.

**D. Treasurer shall:**

1. Act as a liaison to AACPS budget personnel on issues related to the SECAC budget.
2. Submit receipts from SECAC members to AACPS budget staff member for reimbursement.
3. Provide a report at SECAC meetings detailing budget expenditures and balance.

**V. BUDGET AND PLANNING**

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A. The Division of Special Education shall make provisions for secretarial assistance and administrative expenses of the committee.

B. The committee shall have the authority to allocate funds through an electronic vote or by other means to fulfill specific budget requests when time constraints necessitate that action be taken in between regularly scheduled committee meetings.

## **VI. MEETINGS**

A. The Executive Board shall meet as needed and no less than once per quarter to plan and review current issues such as strategic focus, events, and allocation of funds.

B. The Executive Board shall solicit ideas for SECAC agenda topics from the general membership at the first meeting in September and develop a meeting agenda and presentation schedule in collaboration with the directors of special education.

C. A minimum of 5 general committee meetings will be held between September through May.

D. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of eligible voting members present when the vote is taken.

E. All regular committee meetings shall be open to the general public.

## **VII. RELATIONSHIP WITH ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

A. The committee shall prepare an annual report related to SECAC's strategic plan to share with school system officials/MSDE as part of the local application.

B. The Superintendent of Schools may request that the committee research and make recommendations based on the system vision and/or goals.

C. The chair or designee shall work collaboratively with the county's Citizen Advisory Council and Anne Arundel County Council of PTAs to advocate for students with disabilities and special needs.

## **VIII. COMMUNICATION**

A. Any member of SECAC may discuss general information concerning SECAC with non-members, such as the definition and role of SECAC, meeting times and locations, presentations by speakers and committee sponsored programs and resources available to students and families.

B. Any oral or written statement issued on behalf of SECAC must be

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discussed by the voting members (may be done electronically) of the committee prior to its release. Any public statement shall reflect the position of a majority of voting members. A non-response from a voting member will be considered an abstain vote.

#### **IX. REVIEW OF BY-LAWS**

- A. The Executive Board shall review these by-laws every two years.
- B. Proposed changes to the by-laws shall be presented to voting members in writing at least 20 days prior to a vote.
- C. Changes to the by-laws must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the eligible voting members present at the meeting (either virtual or in person).
- D. Committee by-laws shall be presented to the Board of Education biennially.