

Nashoba Regional School District Special Education Parent Advisory Council BY-LAWS

Article I: Name of Organization

The name of this self-governed organization shall be the Nashoba Regional School District Special Education Parent Advisory Council, hereinafter referred to as Nashoba SEPAC.

Article II: Statement of Purpose

The Nashoba SEPAC receives its statutory authority from the Chapter 71B, Section 3 of the Massachusetts General Laws. This authority is also codified in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR), 603 CMR28.07(4).

Each school district shall create a districtwide parent advisory council offering membership to all parents of eligible students and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district's special education programs. The parent advisory council shall establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures, and, in the course of its duties, the parent advisory council shall receive assistance from the district without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources.

As such, the Nashoba SEPAC's duties include, but are not limited to:

- Advising the School Committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities;
- Participating in the planning, development and evaluation of the District's special education programs
- Meeting regularly with school officials and facilitating communication between school administrators, educators and parents.

Article III: Mission

The mission of Nashoba SEPAC is to advocate for the understanding of, the respect for, and the support of all children with special needs in the NRSD community. To that end, the SEPAC will:

Work with the District, including, but not limited to, the Director of Pupil and Personnel Services, the Superintendent of Schools, and School Committee, to review, evaluate and recommend policies, procedures, training needs and resources related to services and programs for students with disabilities.

Promote a support network for parents of children with special needs, and provide the forum to share knowledge.

Provide informational workshops open to parents, educators, and all other interested parties to increase awareness of issues and best practices pertaining to students with disabilities.

Article III: Mission (con't.)

Promote communication and programs within the district schools and communities to encourage understanding, acceptance, and inclusion by collaborating with PTO/PAC groups, School Councils, and other school organizations.

Article IV: Terms of Membership

Section I

General membership is open to any interested person.

Section II

Voting membership is required to vote in annual officer elections and other business that comes before any Nashoba SEPAC meeting. All parents of children receiving special education services (IEP or 504 Plan) through NRSD, and any interested parties, are eligible voting members of Nashoba SEPAC.

Matters which require a vote to be taken include but are not limited to the following items:

- Elections as described in Article VI
- A change in the By-LawsA commitment of financial resources
- Minutes from previous meetings

Article V: Meetings

General meetings shall be held at least three times a year, from September through June. During the final meeting of the school year, the Chair shall take recommendations for the calendar of meetings for the following school year.

Minutes of all Nashoba SEPAC general business meetings shall be recorded and retained for public record.

Article VI: Elections

Once a year, in the spring, the Nashoba SEPAC shall hold Elections for all Offices. Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership, subject to the presence of a quorum. New officers shall take office immediately following their election and hold office until the next annual election.

If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held at the next general meeting with a term to expire at the next annual election.

Any officer may resign by delivering a written notice of resignation by mail, in person, or by email to the Director of Pupil and Personnel Services. Resignations shall be effective immediately.

Any voting member may request a referendum to remove an Officer from office. The request must be sent in writing to either the Chair or the Director of Pupil and Personnel Services stating the cause for removal which shall be shared with voters. The Chair will add the referendum to the agenda for the next general meeting.

Article VII: Quorum

A quorum is met when one co-chair, two officers, and one member of the Nashoba SEPAC are present. Quorum does not apply for support groups, as these are privately held meetings.

Article VIII: Executive Board

Section I

The Executive Board of Nashoba SEPAC shall be comprised of a Chair and a Co-Chair (or two equal Co-Chairs), a Representative from each of the three (3) towns within NRSD, a PAC/ PTO liaison by town, a Social Media Coordinator, a Secretary, and a Friends of the Nashoba SEPAC manager. All Executive Board members shall be voting members of Nashoba SEPAC, elected per the provisions in Article VI. Officers may, from time to time, delegate any of their duties to another officer.

Nashoba SEPAC will inform the school district of the outcome of the annual elections and the names and contact information of the new board no later than one month after annual elections are held.

Section II

Responsibilities of Nashoba SEPAC Board Members are as follows:

ELECTED POSITIONS

Co-Chair positions:

1st Chair

- Complete Open Meeting Law Training
- Overall meeting, task and communications coordinator.
- Meet monthly with Director of Pupil Personnel Services
- Meet Monthly with 2nd Chair to discuss strategies for General meetings and duties.
- Liaison with SEPAC rep. on the School Committee and present year-end report in June
- Attend Nashoba SEPAC monthly meetings
- Respond to emails from parents to the nashobasepac email account
- Book speakers, reserve meeting location(s), produce information on meeting topic to be used for publicity and facilitate payment to speakers (if applicable)

2nd Chair

- Complete Open Meeting Law Training
- Support 1st chair in attending meetings if 1st chair is ill or cannot attend
- Meet Monthly with 1st Chair to discuss strategies for General meetings and duties.
- Attend Nashoba SEPAC monthly meetings
- Respond to emails from parents to the nashobasepac email account
- Book speakers, reserve meeting location(s), produce information on meeting topic to be used for publicity and facilitate payment to speakers (if applicable)

Officer Positions: Town Representatives

It would be essential to have at least 1 representative for each town and the high school, but it would be optimal to have at two per town- one for elementary and one for middle school.

Support needed in each school

- Publicize SEPAC monthly meetings at the school and community level
- Establish a SEPAC presence at each school (information table at the Parents' Night/Open House; listing in school directory, informational bulletin board at school main office--just a few ideas)

If we could have 1-2 volunteers who also help the town representatives, this would add to the robust support the SEPAC seeks to provide.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Liasons

It would be essential to have at least 1 representative for each town, who would attend all PAC/PTO meetings and have a scheduled time to present to the PAC/PTO at each meeting.

Support needed for each

- Meet regularly with school PTO's and/or Councils
- Establish a SEPAC presence at each school (through PAC sponsored events)

Social Media/Communications Manager

1. Monitor the nashobasepac@gmail.com and nashobasepac@nrsd.net accounts

- Review daily emails received from MassPAC list serve
- Forward parent emails with policy questions to Co-Chairs
- Respond to emails from families looking to re-locate to NRSD [mostly in the springtime; can ask for help from other SEPAC members from the appropriate town or parents with shared experience]

2. Maintain/monitor NRSD SEPAC Facebook page

- Post SEPAC monthly meetings / agendas
- Post pertinent listings of lectures, support groups, special events in the local area
- Manage the Events page
- Manage Cross-Postings on MassPAC, Pac-2-Pac, Regional SEPAC Leadership pages

3. Maintain SEPAC membership email list

- Add parent names when requested by sending a confirmation email including link to Facebook page (TBD based on renewal of Constant Contact)

Secretary

- Complete Open Meeting Law training
- Coordinate the recording, filing and posting of minutes of SEPAC meetings
- Post notices of SEPAC general meetings in accordance with Open Meeting Laws
- Count and record all vote results

APPOINTED POSITION (Not on Board)

Friends of Nashoba SEPAC Manager

- Manage and account for funds collected, donated, and spent for SEPAC
- Co-ordinate fundraising activities
- Delegate/manage individuals who can fundraise on behalf of the SEPAC
- Make recommendations to Co-chairs for how to utilize funds raised

Article IX: Procedures

Roberts Rules of Order are the default procedures for this organization.

Article X: Definitions

For the purposes of this document only, the term "parent" is used to refer to parents as well as guardians.

Approved: April 11, 2019