

**THE BERLIN / BOYLSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SEPAC)  
BYLAWS  
As Amended & Approved October 28, 2008**

The name of this state-mandated, self-governed, volunteer organization shall be: *The Berlin/Boylston Public Schools Special Education Parent Advisory Council* hereafter referred to as SEPAC.

**Article I: Purpose of SEPAC:**

The mission of SEPAC is to work toward the understanding respect, support, and appropriate education for all children with special needs in our community. To that end, they will work to:

- Advise the school districts on:
  - operations and development of special education programs
  - parent and teacher training needs
  - policy development
- Promote a network of parents of children with special needs and provide the forum to share information
- Promote communication and programs within the local community to encourage understanding, acceptance, inclusion and compassion of all children
- Provide informational forums to parents, educators, students and professionals
- Provide information to SEPAC members on local, state and national organizations, councils and groups
- Assist members in locating information related to Special Education law
- Provide support to SPED staff in the form of volunteers and resources if possible

**Article II: Meetings and Membership - Definitions**

**General Meetings** are defined as monthly meetings to which all members, staff and the general public are invited. See Article VI for further details.

**Meetings** are defined as any Berlin/Boylston Special Education Parent Advisory Council general meetings, activities, or committees at which attendance is taken.

**General Membership** shall be open to any parent or guardian with a student in the Berlin/Boylston Public Schools, residents of Berlin or Boylston, teachers and other service providers in the district, as well as school committee members. A person must notify the Secretary of SEPAC of his/her intent to be a member or cancel membership either through email or by completing a SEPAC interest form.

**Voting Membership**

A. Annual Election: Open to all General Members in SEPAC

B. By-Law Amendment Voting: Open to parents/guardians who are General Members in SEPAC and who have attended three meetings in the last six school months.

C. Other Business Voting: Open to all General Members in SEPAC.

**Quorum** is necessary for By-Law Amendment and Business voting only. Quorum shall be 10% of eligible voters in each case.

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**Article III: Officers of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council**

Officers of SEPAC are elected by the voting membership and hold office for the length of time specified for each position, as indicated below. If any office becomes/is vacant, the current/remaining officers will make an appointment to fill the position(s) with the term to expire at the following May meeting. These officers shall comprise the Board of SEPAC.

Office and officer responsibilities of SEPAC are:

**Co-Presidents**

Term: Two Years

Note: There shall be two Co-Presidents. Each will be a parent/guardian of a child on an IEP with one representing Berlin and the other representing Boylston. Each term shall be two years, with each position expiring in alternating years.

Duties:

- Set the agenda for each general meeting
- Preside at all SEPAC meetings
- Recommend the organization of subcommittees and monitor their functions
- Act as liaisons between families/students and the Director of Pupil Personnel Services
- If the Secretary and Vice President are unable to attend a meeting, one of the Co-Presidents will assume the duties of Secretary for that meeting

**Vice President**

Term: One Year

Note: Vice President will be a parent or guardian of a child with a disability.

Duties:

- Preside at meetings in the absence of either Co-President
- Coordinate public communications and notifications, not including those communications that are the Secretary's responsibility
- Coordinate all communications between SEPAC and its membership
- Administer and update SEPAC Website
- Perform duties of the Secretary if position is vacant or the Secretary is unable to attend any meeting

**Secretary**

Term: One Year

Note: Secretary will be a parent or guardian of a child with a disability.

Duties:

- Coordinate the recording and filing of minutes of the SEPAC meetings and its sub-committee meetings
- Collect and review all SEPAC correspondence
- Maintain SEPAC membership and address list
- Maintain voting rosters for elections and bylaw voting
- Administer and monitor the SEPAC email Listserv
- Prepare periodic reports for the Special Education Administration regarding SEPAC activities and needs
- Maintain the official record of the organization, including attendance sheets and copies of meeting minutes
- Maintain two hard copies of all meeting documents and guest speaker handouts. One will be available to attendees at all general meetings and one will be maintained in a separate location

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**Treasurer**

Term: Two Years

Note: Treasurer will be a parent or guardian of a child with a disability.

Duties:

- Coordinate efforts to apply for grants, donations, reimbursements or any other funds for which SEPAC may be eligible
- Manage and account for funds collected, donated, and spent. At each meeting the checkbook, latest bank statement and summary financial report will be made available for General Members review
- Coordinate fund raising activities (fund raising can be done by anyone)

**Article IV: Annual Elections**

Annual Elections shall be held in September of each year. The election process outline is as follows (see Guidelines for exact timing and details):

Annual Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership (see Article II). The election will be conducted in such a manner as to include the entire General Membership (ie meetings, email and postal mail).

The Election Coordinator is a volunteer who is recruited, at a meeting/or via email, from the General Members of SEPAC. This is a temporary position. The selection of the volunteer will be decided by lottery if more than one person volunteers.

The Election Coordinator will coordinate the activities necessary to complete the election including:

- Send nomination forms to all voting members
- Collect the nominations
- Ascertain whether all nominees wish to remain on the ballot
- Prepare, send out and collect the ballots
- Tally the results
- Notify the Co-Presidents of the results who will then make the results public

The election will be finalized no later than September 30th.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and MASSPAC will be informed of the annual elections with a complete list of the names, addresses and phone numbers of the new board by October 1st of each year.

New officers shall take office the day after the elections.

**Article V: Nominee Qualifications**

Annual Election Nominee is a person who:

- Is a General Member of SEPAC
- Has been a member for at least six months
- Has also attended three meetings during the past six months

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**Article VI: General Meetings**

General Meetings shall be held at least monthly, from September through June. Notice of all General Meeting dates and elections shall be posted in the following locations:

- Local press
- Town halls
- Schools
- SEPAC website
- Flyers sent to parents/guardians
- Email to General Member mailing list

During the June General Meeting, the Co-Presidents shall take recommendations for the calendar of meetings for the following school year. The calendar shall include dates and times of each meeting and any projected activities for the year.

Matters that require a vote to be taken at a General Meeting include, but are not limited to, the following items:

- A change in the By Laws (see Article VIII)
- A commitment of financial resources above \$50.00
- Other general business items deemed eligible for a vote by the Officers

These items require a simple majority of the voting quorum.

Minutes of all SEPAC meetings shall be recorded and retained for public record by the Secretary and posted on the SEPAC website. The Officers will approve the Minutes taken at the General Meetings before being posted. The original signed Minutes are given to the school committee.

**Article VII: Subcommittees**

Subcommittees shall be created as needed and report to the Co-Presidents.

**Article VIII: Amendments**

These by-laws may be amended by a simple majority of the voting quorum at a general meeting. Changes to by-laws may not be voted upon in the same meeting as they are proposed, unless a quorum (as described in Article II) votes unanimously to waive this requirement. Proposed amendments need to be brought to the attention of the Board in writing at least two weeks prior to a General Meeting.

**Article IX:**

Robert's Rules of Order are the default procedures for this organization.