

BY-LAWS OF THE CRANSTON, RHODE ISLAND
SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this committee shall be the Cranston Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). SEAC is a recognized member of SEAN (Special Education Advisory Network), and is recognized as an active LAC (local advisory committee) by RIPIN (RI Parent Information Network)

ARTICLE II: FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Local Advisory Committee shall:

1. Advise the Cranston School District on matters concerning the unmet needs of students with disabilities
2. Comment on improvement plans including school support plans resulting from Part B compliance reports, local compliance with state and federal laws pertaining to the education of students with disabilities
3. Comment on applications for federal and state funds
4. Serve as advocates in partnership with parents for students with disabilities to ensure that they receive the entitlements provided to them under state and federal laws.

ARTICLE III: OPERATING PROCEDURES

- The committee will run as a pro-active collaborative partnership between Cranston parents, students, educators and administrators.
- The committee will promote mutual respect and trust and assist parents in looking at the “big” picture.
- The advisory committee shall meet a minimum of 4 (four) times annually. Additional meetings shall be scheduled when necessary.
- Official minutes shall be kept of all committee meetings and be available for public review, once approved at Cranston Public School website- Special Education Link.
- All committee meetings and agendas shall be publicly announced prior to any meeting via the SEAC e-mail contact list, and as so distributed by those contacts.
- All meetings shall be open to the public.
- Availability of child care will be announced with presentation of agenda.
- The committee shall hold its regular meetings at a central location convenient to all members and accessible to persons with disabilities.
- The length of full committee meetings shall not exceed 2 ½ hours unless approved by a two-thirds vote of membership present.
- Members must be notified of all regular and special meetings. Any change in the established date, time, or location must be given special notice.

- Interpreters and other necessary services may be provided at meetings for members or participants when requested in advance.
- The advisory committee shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending meetings and performing duties.
- All participants of the Cranston Special Education Advisory Committee shall be provided with a copy of the by-laws, and the by-laws will be available at each meeting.
- A *formal* member of the advisory committee is defined as a member who (a) meets the membership criteria and (b) participates in committee meetings or activities. In the event that a *formal* member does not participate in some manner, it will be the responsibility of the officers to contact the *formal* member to determine his/her interest in serving on SEAC.
- An *attendee* is an individual who attends meetings but has not become a *formal* member either by choice or because they do not meet the membership criteria.
- Provided a quorum is in attendance, formal members will make all advisory committee decisions upon a vote. *see voting rights
- The rules of parliamentary practice as described in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the proceedings of this committee, provided that they do not conflict with the intent of the by-laws or any state, federal laws/regulations, and/or any school department policy and/or procedures.
- The committee shall submit such reports as are required by the School Committee, Commissioner of Education, Board of Regents, or United States Dept. of Education. Minority reports may be submitted by one person or a group of people.
- In order to comment publicly on rules, regulations, and special education issues, members shall either volunteer or be appointed by the Chairperson and the Assistant Chairperson to state, local, and other subcommittees.
- The Chairperson and Assistant Chairperson may establish such subcommittees as they deem necessary or desirable to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the committee and shall appoint a chairperson to each subcommittee. The majority of subcommittee members shall be parents.
- Correspondence sent to SEAC electronically will be deleted after a period of 90 days.
- Correspondence sent in physically will be recorded electronically, then the physical item will be disposed.

A. OFFICERS:

The officers of the Cranston Special Education Advisory Committee shall be:

- Chairperson
- Assistant Chairperson
- Past-Chairperson(s)
- Secretary
- The Assistant Chairperson shall assume the Chairperson's role in the absence of the Chairperson.

B. ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE:

- Length of term is two years, beginning in September

- Limit is 2 consecutive terms in same role unless a petition to extend the term is approved by the committee.
- The Chairperson shall not be a member of the administration of the Cranston School Department or member appointed by the Superintendent, Cranston Teacher's Alliance, or the School Committee.
- Elections shall be held in May.

C. REMOVAL:

- Any officer of the committee may be removed by a two-thirds vote of all members sitting on the committee, whenever in the judgment of the committee, the best interests of the committee would be served by this decision.

D. VACANCY:

- A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise shall be filled by the committee from a volunteer among existing membership for the unexpired portion of the term.

E. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Chairperson
 - Preside at all committee meetings
 - Will sign all letters, reports, and other communications of the committee
 - Respond and forward e-mails sent into committee
 - Maintain the Contact list upon the e-mail account
 - Send agenda/minutes out prior to meetings
 - Generally responsible for directing and coordinating affairs of the committee.
- Assistant Chairperson
 - Take over chairperson roles in the event chairperson, not in position, or absent
 - Assist Chairperson as needed to maintain goals of SEAC.
- Secretary
 - Take the minutes and attendance of all meetings
 - Post approved minutes on website per current defined process.
 - Prepare other necessary communications as directed by the Chairperson.
- Past Chairperson
 - Chairperson of the nominating committee
 - Nominating committee is responsible to present the names of persons nominated to the committee in April.

ARTICLE IV: APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

- The School Committee shall appoint an Advisory Committee on Special Education.

MEMBERSHIP

The Advisory Committee must be composed of individuals involved in or concerned with the education of children with disabilities.

1. Parents of students with disabilities shall compose a majority of the committee membership, and at least fifty percent (50%) of this majority shall be selected by the parents of students with disabilities;
2. An individual with a disability;
3. A special education teacher;
4. A general education teacher;
5. A public school administrator; and
6. Other members of the community at the discretion of the Cranston Special Education Advisory Committee and the Cranston School Committee.
7. Membership shall be composed of twenty-nine (29) individuals involved in or concerned with the education of children with disabilities.
8. The Cranston Special Education Advisory Committee may expand the committee to include additional persons in the preceding groups and representatives of other groups.

A. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS:

- The Superintendent shall select the administrators.
- Cranston Teacher's Alliance shall select the teachers.
- School Committee shall select its representative.
- Parents will be selected by parents of children with disabilities and voting members of SEAC.

B. TERM OF MEMBERS:

- All new members shall be appointed for one, three year term.
- At the conclusion of a member's term, he/she may petition the for another term per Article IV, Section A.

C. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- *Formal (voting)* membership requires individuals to complete a membership enrollment form indicating their commitment to participate in committee activities and attend meetings on a regular basis.
- In order to comment publicly on rules, regulations, and special education issues, members shall either volunteer or be appointed by the Chairperson and the Assistant Chairperson to state, local, and other subcommittees.

D. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP:

- Causes for removal shall be for failure to carry out those responsibilities assumed by acceptance on the committee.
- SEAC, by a two-thirds vote, may request the resignation of, or remove a member upon committee recommendation, if there is just cause.

E. ATTENDANCE:

- Failure of a member to attend three meetings of the committee without prior notice to the Chairperson will result in removal from the committee.

F. RESIGNATION:

- Any member may resign by filing a written resignation with the Cranston Special Education Advisory Committee.

G. VACANCY:

- Any vacancy on the Cranston Special Education Advisory Committee shall be filled as in the process stated in Article IV, Section A.

H. ALTERNATE PARENT MEMBERSHIP:

- Parents/guardians may apply for special circumstance delegate/alternate membership and will also be selected by parents of children with disabilities.
- Each delegate, or in their absence, their alternate, shall be entitled to one vote and shall cast that vote on each matter submitted to a vote of SEAC.
- Each delegate/alternate team is considered to be one member of SEAC.

ARTICLE V: VOTING RIGHTS

- Each member shall be entitled to one vote and may cast that vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the committee.
- Proxy voting and absentee ballots shall not be permitted.
- Attendees will not have voting rights.

VOTING PROCEDURES

- Voting will be done by ballot for election of officers.
- Votes required for resolving issues arising at committee meetings will be done by majority hand count.

QUORUM

- All decisions of the committee shall be valid unless a majority of the members of the committee appointed and holding office, concur therein by their votes.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AGENCY

- The local agency shall provide support to the committee by contracting for technical assistance services with the Rhode Island designated Parent Training and Technical Assistance Agency or other community-based non-profit parent organization

- Such technical assistance shall include the role of advisory committees in advocating for children, state and federal regulations, community resources, strategic planning and development of an annual report to the school committee.
- The local education agency shall also provide school and district improvement plans to the committee for comment and make available appropriate records and data as permitted by law.
- The public agency shall also support the committee in disseminating information to parents of students regarding the role of the advisory committee, information pertaining to special education and inform the committee of professional development opportunities that are available within the LEA.
- The Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services shall be the local educational agency (LEA) contact person or their assigned designee (unless otherwise specified by the school committee). This individual shall work proactively and collaboratively in partnership with the SEAC members
- The LEA contact shall be the contact between SEAC and Cranston School Department Administration and shall be the link for any individual concerns of parents.

PARENT NOTIFICATION OF LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- When a child is referred to special education, each school district special education program shall provide the parents with notification of the existence of local advisory committee for Special Education established in compliance with these regulations.
- The notification shall specify that a majority of the local advisory committee is parents of children with disabilities, and shall inform the parents of how the local advisory committee may be contacted.

ARTICLE VI: REVIEW OF BY-LAWS

- By-laws will be reviewed when necessary by the Officers of SEAC to ensure that the by-laws align with the State of Rhode Island Regulations for Elementary and Secondary Education.

AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

- In the event that amendments are needed to the by-laws, then a sub-committee will be formed.
- The by-law subcommittee will be responsible for the review and revision of the by-laws as well as presenting the revised by-laws to SEAC for review.
- The SEAC bylaws/amendments shall be provided to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services who shall then review and recommend revisions if necessary.
- The Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services shall present the by-laws to the School Committee for approval.

ARTICLE VII: APPROVAL OF BY-LAWS

These by-laws and any subsequent amendment thereto shall become effective upon approval by the School Committee.

- The school committee by majority vote shall approve the by-laws of the advisory committee.

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

APPROVED: _____ DATE _____

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE VICE-CHARIMAN