

Operating Bylaws of Ann Arbor Special Education Parent Advisory Committee

initially approved 9/8/01

amended January 7, 2002, March 4, 2002, November 9, 2005, **Sept 2021-TBD**

Name

Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education (AAPAC)

Affiliations

AAPAC is sponsored by and accountable to the Ann Arbor Public School District (AAPS).

Mission

To positively impact the education of all students receiving special education services and disability accommodations in the Ann Arbor School District by representing students and families of students needing or receiving special education services; advocating for improvements; providing resources for our constituents, staff, and administration; reporting regularly to the trustees of the district; and facilitating communication between district administrators, teaching staff, and families.

Mandate

- Advise AAPS on matters pertaining to special education and disability accommodation
- Provide proposed meeting agendas and meeting minutes to senior administrators for general education and Student Intervention and Support Services (SISS) and the Superintendent of AAPS
- Meet with senior AAPS administrators for general and special education monthly
- Meet with the Superintendent of AAPS quarterly
- Meet as a PAC at least monthly October through June, with additional meetings as needed
- Send regular representatives to School Board meetings
- Send a meeting liaison to all WISD meetings to serve as an ex facto member
- Make at least twice yearly report to School Board
- Create working committees around goals and objectives of the AAPAC constituency
- Facilitate programming for individual school constituencies
- Foster relationships with other groups and associations representing stakeholders in the special education process

Support

Support of the AAPAC is coordinated by the District through mailing, administrative support, space scheduling, and any other appropriate services in direct support of the mission. Support is also provided through attendance by District SISS administrators at monthly AAPAC meetings.

Funding may be obtained through application to appropriate granting agencies, the WISD, permissible fundraising, and corporate underwriting. This would be limited to specific initiatives and with the approval of both AAPAC and district administration.

Meetings

All general PAC meetings are free and open to the public. They are held once a month during the regular school year. The schedule of meetings will be made available in September. Agendas will be available in advance. Additional meetings, trainings, retreats may be held.

Membership

The Membership of the AAPAC is created through the representation by Building Liaisons of AAPS schools within the District by one full member chosen from each elementary school, up to two full members from each middle and K-8 school, and up to three full members from each high school. At least one alternate member should be chosen for each, though any number of alternates may be chosen as is desired by the individual school community. Each general member has one PAC vote, so that larger buildings/entities will have a proportionally greater voting bloc. Members of the AAPAC will be parents/guardians whose children are represented by an IEP or a 504 plan, or high school age students who receive special education services in the AAPS. To serve as full voting members, high school students must be at least 18 years of age and will be expected to fulfill the outlined duties of a general member. High School students between 14 and 18 years of age may serve as non-voting members in an advisory capacity to the PAC.

Building Liaison Selection

New members will be selected in May/June, using a written and well publicized procedure.

This selection process will be facilitated at each building by the principal and overseen by a current PAC member OR at the general PAC meetings in conjunction with the executive committee elections. Selection of representatives must be completed by June 1st with terms starting at the adjournment of the June meeting. Feedback and input from each building principal is considered vital to the selection process.

Building Liaison Role

In addition to serving as voting members of AAPAC, building liaisons serve as a representative of AAPAC to the member's school community. This may include such responsibilities as: serving as a resource and first point of contact of parents/guardians of students with IEP or 504 plans at the school; serving on interview committees for SISS positions; distributing AAPAC materials to the school; attending school meetings; conveying parental/student needs and concerns to the EC and or SISS administration; passing on AAPAC news to school community through school newsletters and/or school PTO; and to contributing to the improvement of delivery of special education services in the District.

Additional guidelines and role of building liaisons can be found in AAPAC's governing documents ("Building Liaison Roles and Responsibilities).

More than one representative can serve per school building. Alternative representatives can be designated in order to share responsibilities.

Terms

Members will serve for one year, June to June. If a representative leaves the district early, or is unable to serve for any other reason, or if any vacancy exists, a new representative will be

appointed, or the alternate will be elevated in their stead for the duration of their term. If a representative wants to serve one year before transition to a "next level" school, this should be done with the alternate/transitional plan in place.

Representatives may serve as many terms as they are elected/appointed to, though it is recommended that representatives be mindful of the value of allowing new representation whenever possible. This assures an inclusive and vibrant PAC as well as a better educated and involved constituency.

Diversity of representation

AAPAC recruits members for specific roles from the entire district. Outreach is conducted in a continual manner in order to create a more representative body, with attention to race, gender, and economic status, disability category, age/grade level, and across the classroom continuum from fully included in general education classes to predominately in self-contained programs.

Membership roles

Members may serve different roles in AAPAC. Executive committee (EC) officers and building liaisons are general members who take on additional responsibilities. EC officers may create additional member roles for specific areas or special projects on an as-needed basis.

Executive Committee

Officers

There will be a minimum of three officers (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary) elected to perform specific PAC functions required by its organizational structure and mandate. EC officers will divide roles and duties as appropriate each time a new EC is constituted. For details on roles and duties, see AAPAC's governing documents ("Executive Committee Roles and Responsibilities"). Co-officer duties may be designated in order to share responsibilities.

Nomination and Election

Nomination to serve in a position on the EC may be made by any member, including self-nomination. The EC will publicize a call for nominations and specify a submission process and deadline prior to the meeting at which voting occurs. Candidates standing for election are expected to be present at that meeting. The PAC may ask questions of all candidates prior to voting.

Executive committee (EC) members will be elected at the last AAPAC general meeting of the year (typically June). Elections will be won by simple majority, and voting can be by secret ballot or voice vote. All general members in attendance at the meeting are able to vote. Any changes to the voting procedures must be voted on by the full membership.

Terms for EC members are one year. Officers begin their term as soon as they are elected. EC members may serve as many terms as they are elected to. To encourage a smooth transition to new officers, new officers will be the guests of the exiting officers at any post-election meetings with school administration.

Tie Breakers

Should the EC officers be unable to achieve a majority opinion in how to act on a given situation, the situation will be brought to the PAC membership and a majority vote will decide how to proceed.

Roles

In addition to serving as Building Liaisons and the duties associated with that role, EC officer duties include but are not limited to: calling and holding meetings with members, the AAPAC constituency, and AAPS administrators, presenting reports to the Board of Education, appointing members to committees and task forces as needed, record and archive meeting minutes, receive and act on complaints/issues/concerns brought to AAPAC, communicate and coordinate with Building Liaisons, and representing AAPS at the WISD PAC. Additional guidelines and role of EC officers can be found in AAPAC's governing documents ("AAPAC Officer Roles and Responsibilities).

Committees

Committees fall into three categories: standing committees, task forces, and judicial committees.

Standing committees are those committees that, due to the nature and mission of the PAC, are permanently required. This permanent status may change by a vote of the PAC. Task forces are those committees that are convened by the PAC to address a specific concern or goal. They will be convened with a set end date and may be upgraded to Standing Committees with approval of the PAC. Judicial committees are those formed to adjudicate complaints of malfeasance or removal of an executive committee officer or member.

Any number of Standing Committees or Task Forces may be charged by the PAC.

Committee Chairs will be appointed by the PAC from the membership.

Voting

The PAC will vote in the following areas:

- Creation of committees
- Bylaw changes
- Executive committee officers
- All final committee and task force recommendations or reports
- Hearings for complaints against Executive Committee members
- Other areas that the EC deems necessary

Voting is by simple majority unless otherwise specified. Proxy voting is allowable in writing or by email to the Secretary, 48 hours prior to the meeting at which the vote takes place.

Quorum

Quorum for general voting purposes will be a simple majority of members.

Hearings and Appeals

The PAC may vote to remove an executive committee officer or a member by a super majority vote of 2/3 of attending members. Grounds for such removal may include though not be limited to:

- School/Parent/PAC/Student complaint
- Illegal Behavior
- Inability to meet a majority of the expected duties
- Mistreatment of other members
- Misuse of email lists

Grounds for Removal

A complaint may be lodged with any of the current PAC officers. This complaint must be made in writing and signed and dated by the complainant.

Within 72 hours of receiving the complaint, a judicial committee of three randomly chosen members will be convened to judge the merit of the complaint. They will have one week to investigate the complaint, at which time they will recommend either dismissal of the complaint, or that the complaint proceed to a full hearing. They will explain their reasoning and findings.

The Executive Committee will then notify the defendant in writing of the complaint, and find a mutually agreeable hearing time for all the parties. Both parties may bring anyone and anything they deem necessary to clarify the situation or to witness or support the proceedings. The hearing must be convened within 14 days of the written notification of the hearing. After the hearing, the Executive Committee will render a decision as to the resolution of the complaint, with that possible resolution being up to and including the removal of the PAC member. This decision will be made in writing to the defendant within three business days.

Appeal

An appeal may be lodged in writing to the Executive Committee within three business days of the decision. Appeal of this ruling will be heard by the SISS administrator. The administrator's decision will be final.

If the complaint is lodged against any member of the Executive Committee, the judicial committee's recommendation will be made to the PAC as a whole for consideration. The defending Executive Committee member will recuse themselves from all pertinent discussions. The judicial committee will coordinate the hearing process, if necessary, with the PAC as a whole passing judgment through a consensus process.

The notification and appeal process remains the same, with a representative of the judicial committee serving as the PAC's representative.

Amendments and Ratification of Bylaws

All amendments and ratifications to the bylaws must be discussed in full meeting and voted on in a subsequent meeting, allowing time for sufficient quorum and discussion to develop. Amendments to and ratification of bylaws must be approved through a simple majority.