

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

Name

Ann Arbor Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education (AAPAC)

Affiliations

The AAPAC is sponsored by and accountable to the Ann Arbor Public School District, with a collaborative association with the Washtenaw Intermediate School District (WISD).

Mission

To positively impact the education of all students with an emphasis on those with special needs in the Ann Arbor School District by representing students and parents of students needing or receiving special education services, advocating improvements, acting as a resource for our constituents, staff, and administration, creating opportunities for education, reporting regularly, facilitating communication, clarifying process, and creating an actual link between our constituents and the administrators responsible for all aspects of special education in the Ann Arbor district.

Through this mission, the AAPAC will positively impact the education of all students in the Ann Arbor district.

Mandate

- Advise Ann Arbor public schools on matters pertaining to special education
- Provide proposed meeting agendas and meeting minutes to the Administrator of Student Services and the Superintendent of AAPS
- Meet with the Administrator of Student Services monthly
- Meet with the Superintendent of AAPS quarterly
- Meet as a PAC at least monthly September 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 twice yearly report to School Board
- Create working committees around goals and objectives of PAC/Constituency
- Hold a minimum of two District wide Meetings yearly (at least one with the Superintendent of Schools in attendance)
- Assemble and distribute educational materials concerning all aspects of Special Education in the Ann Arbor District
- Facilitate programming for individual school constituencies
- Foster relationships with other groups and associations representing stakeholders in the special education process

Initial Chartering Principles and Goals

The AAPAC was chartered through an Ann Arbor Special Education Steering Committee, who put forward the following Group Charter to serve as a founding document, June 2000.

Ann Arbor Special Education - Group Charter

Purpose - Strengthen and enhance partnership between students, parent, and educational professionals

Mission - Positively impact education of students with special needs in AASD

Members - any special education parent or guardian and special education students

Issues and Goals

- Clear set of expectations from superintendent to building administrators to district administrators
- Create transitional ECDD to adult plans for levels, especially when child is changing buildings
- Participate in identifying new Administrator of Student Support Services
- Have regular general meetings that include action and educational components
- Have a written guide to IEP's for parents
- Parents understand and help clarify role identified between WISD and AAPAC
- Identify volunteers willing to go to IEP's with parents who need/request support
- Include kids input on what works and what doesn't work
- Special education parents facilitate staff education
- Continuum of services reaffirmed and redefined
- Develop and implement training in high school and middle school on self-advocacy and self-determination
- List of summer programs published in Feb 2001
- Have a plain English manual for special education parents that covers everything
- We will know each other better and call on each other
- Education for general ed parents and students on compassion and understanding for special needs kids
- Have an education and mentoring program to support new special education parents
- Have the support and understanding of building administrators for special needs parents and involvement in school based programs

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. Representative attendance of Ann Arbor special education administrators at each PAC meeting and function will also support the PAC's collaborative mission and goals.

Additional funding may be obtained through application to appropriate granting agencies, the WISD, permissible fundraising, and corporate underwriting, though this would be limited to specific initiatives, and with the approval of both the AAPAC and the Ann Arbor District as a whole.

Membership

The Membership of the AAPAC is created through the representation of every Ann Arbor district school entity/building within the District by one full member chosen from each elementary school, up to two full members from each middle 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 Ann Arbor school district. 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. Students younger than 14 may be considered for membership on a case-by-case basis. There will also be three "at large" members, recruited and appointed by the PAC in an effort to

create a more representative body (disability category, minority representation, charter schools, private schools, and so forth).

Clarifications of the number of general members are as follows:

- Early Childhood Developmental Delay (ECDD) – One general member
- Ann Arbor Open – One general member
- Roberto Clemente – One general member
- Stone School – One general member
- Community High – One general member
- Young Adult Program – One general member
- Bryant – One general member
- Pattengill – One general member

Selection

New members will be selected in March/April, 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. Incoming representatives will be invited to this meeting.

Terms

Members will serve for two years, June to June, and half the representatives will be up for election every year (see Rotation Chart). 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 must 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.

Representatives

Mandate of Representatives

To serve as a representative to your school constituency for all parents/students with IEP's or 504 plans; to deliver educational materials; to inform through programs and individual counseling; to attend meetings as a PAC/parent representative; to convey parental/student needs and concerns to the PAC and, through it, to District Administration; to attend regular meetings both at school and at the PAC; to keep constituencies informed of PAC work through regular correspondence (newsletters); and to faithfully serve to create a better environment for the delivery of Special Education services throughout the Ann Arbor District.

General Representative

- Attend all PAC general, transitional, and special meetings
- Notify parents of all relevant meeting, PAC business, meetings through the school's regular newsletter process
- Read all minutes, notes, reports generated by the PAC
- Allow the widespread publishing of contact information for the purpose of representing a confidential constituency.

- Facilitate the distribution of any and all educational materials to their constituents
- Make yourself available to meet at school with parents and administrators
- Attend meetings or programs specific to your school as specified by the PAC
- Attend one School Board meeting as representative of the PAC
- Facilitate Nomination/Election of Representatives
- Maintain transitional materials of the PAC as they relate to your school/constituency/committees
- Serve as a PAC representative to other related task forces and groups as requested.
- It is highly recommended, though not a responsibility, to attend all SIT meetings, or School equivalent as a voting member
- It is also strongly encouraged to attend training or certification programs in Special Ed as available

Alternate Representative

See above in conjunction with General Member. Duties may be split amongst the General member and alternate as may be cooperatively arranged. However, it is the responsibility of the General member to guarantee all expected duties are performed.

Officers

There will be a minimum of three, but no more than five, officers selected to perform specific PAC functions required by its organizational structure, or by specific designated mandated duties (for example, twice yearly reports to the School Board, liaison meetings, or recording of board minutes).

Officers of the PAC will be chosen by the PAC at the May meeting by secret ballot of all members in attendance (simple majority), assuming there is quorum. These officers begin their term at the conclusion of the calendar school year. Nominations may be made by any member, including self nomination through notification of the Secretary prior to the May meeting, or at the meeting itself. Seconds for all nominations will be taken at the meeting, if not received before, and the PAC may ask questions of all candidates prior to voting.

Officers serve one year terms, beginning the first day after the calendar school year ends through the following calendar school year end. There is no limit to the number of terms that may be served.

To encourage a smooth transition to new officers, new officers will be the guests of the exiting officers at any June meetings with school administrators.

The PAC executive officers will divide the tasks listed below, at their first meeting, and will be expected to perform these tasks and fulfill the specific expectations that follow, in addition to their duties as General Representatives.

- Act as a contact person for information about the AAPAC (possible new members)
- Act as point person for handouts at each monthly meeting. Make sure responsible parties e-mail them to you (or CopyMax) in a timely manner. Create PO and pick-up copies before the meeting
- Arrange room/snacks for workshops
- Call for articles and follow up for Newsletter
- Copy Newsletters and arrange room/people for envelope stuffing
- Create and distribute a sign up sheet for workshop attendees.
- Create and maintain a spreadsheet showing status of Yellow Card Action/Green Card Good News items
- Create and maintain the Web page
- Create draft agenda for monthly PAC meetings; submit to executive committee for changes. Edit to final version and make copies
- Create draft agenda for meetings with Administrator and Superintendent and submit to executive committee for changes. Edit to final version and distribute to Superintendent and/or Administrator and executive committee before each meeting
- Delegate schools without reps to AAPAC members/Exec committee members
- Edit/write first draft of each Newsletter and submit to the executive committee for changes. Create final version

- Maintain AAPAC list serve
- Maintain e-mail contact list
- Maintain e-mail notification list (for those outside the PAC) and supply information updates as necessary
- Maintain Rep Status and 2 contact sheets for current and former members
- Maintain name cards for monthly meetings
- Observe and assert timekeeping at meetings
- Pick up the newsletter labels from the district and assemble team to place labels on newsletter.
- Plan the September PAC Transitional/Retreat meeting
- Research possible workshop dates for conflicts
- Schedule Executive Committee meetings (Time/Place)
- Schedule meetings with Pam and George, give a follow up call or e-mail before each meeting
- Schedule a person to speak at each BOE meeting
- Schedule speakers for workshops
- Take notes and create minutes for each meeting with Pam and George
- Write agenda for “Chair Report” for monthly meetings using notes from meetings with Pam/George and Yellow Card status
- Write draft of each BOE report, submit to executive committee for changes and edit to final draft
- Write minutes for monthly meetings

Note: To help facilitate proper determination of disability awareness workshop funds, Steve Schwartz, the founder of Ann Arbor Public School’s version of the disability awareness workshop, will act as an officer as long as the fund exists in conjunction with the Ann Arbor Educational Foundation. This will be Steve’s only function as an officer and his role is not inclusive of the minimum of three, but no more than five rule.

Tie Breakers

Should the Executive 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.

PAC Chair

- Call/Chair all meetings
- Call for all voting (except for elections)
- Meet with Upper District Administration
 - Administrator Special Ed - Monthly
 - District Superintendent - Quarterly
- Prepare/coordinate the preparation of all official reports from the PAC
- Present Progress reports to the Ann Arbor School Board
- Act as the official spokesperson for the PAC
- Appoint members to committees and task forces as needed
- Communicate at least monthly with the other PAC Officers for the purposes of planning and coordination
- Receive and act on all complaints/issues/concerns brought to the PAC in a timely fashion

PAC Vice-Chair

- Serve as Chair in the Chair's absence
- Serve as ex facto liaison to the WISD PAC
- Meet with Upper District Administration

- Administrator Special Ed - Monthly
- District Superintendent - Quarterly
- Communicate at least monthly with the other PAC Officers for the purposes of planning and coordination
- Receive and act on all complaints/issues/concerns brought to the PAC in a timely fashion

PAC Secretary

- Act as Secretary/Minutes Coordinator/Historian for the PAC
- Act as Voting Official
- Collect, maintain, and turn over all relevant materials, handouts, and correspondence relating to the PAC to any who need or request them

Committees

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 may be internally requested or requested by the District. They will be convened with a set end date and may be upgraded to Standing Committees with approval of the PAC.

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
- Constitution/By-Law Changes
- Appointment of At-Large members
- Content of Reports, Materials, Documents, Flyers for external distribution
- Election of Officers
- All final Standing Committee/Task force recommendations or reports
- All Position statements or endorsements
- Other areas that the PAC may deem pertinent
- Hearings for complaints against Executive Committee members

The PAC for all general business will follow simple majority, with super majorities required in specified areas.

Standing Committees will follow simple majority voting rules

Task Forces will follow a voting strategy initially agreed upon by the members

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 one half of all Ann Arbor Public Schools/Entities **currently serving with representation**, plus one. For the purposes of quorum, at large members are not counted in the overall school/entity numbers.

Each general member will have one vote. In clarification, if a school is allowed up to three general members, that school may have up to three votes (as noted earlier).

Meetings

All general PAC meetings are free and open to the public. Agendas will be available one week in advance through the PAC representatives. A portion of every meeting will be set aside for public comment

The PAC will meet in general meeting at least once monthly from October through June. One transitional/training retreat will be held in September, prior to the 15th of the month.

Special Meetings will be called by the Chair as needed.

District wide meetings or any other PAC program will be scheduled on an as needed basis.

Training and Transition

Transitional/Training Meetings will occur not later than September 15. This meeting will act as training, transition, and retreats for the purpose of passing the responsibilities of representation to the PAC's incoming members, goal setting, scheduling meetings, establishing committees and task forces, or any other appropriate topic for preparation for the new school year.

All members, general and alternate, new and standing, are required to attend.

Hearings and Appeals

The PAC may move to remove a representative by a super majority vote of 2/3. Grounds for such removal may include though not be limited to:

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

Poor Attendance

In the case of attendance, it is expected that PAC representatives will attend all general meetings. Since this is not always possible, notification of absence in advance of the meeting is encouraged. Follow up with the Secretary to receive important information is also encouraged.

However, in the case of chronic poor meeting attendance (more than three consecutive unexcused absences), the Executive Committee will act as follows:

The Secretary will attempt to contact the member, allowing a two week period and a range of modalities to be used (e-mail, phone, letter) to find out what might be causing the chronic lack of attendance for the purposes of correcting the situation.

If the general member cannot be reached, their circumstances have changed to disallow them to be a PAC representative, or they indicate that they no longer want to continue as a representative, then their name will be brought forward to the PAC as a whole to approve their release from their responsibilities.

Other Grounds for Removal

A complaint may be lodged with any of the three 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 10 days of the written notification of the hearing, or as close to this as is possible to satisfy all concerned parties (not to exceed two weeks). 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 3 business days.

An appeal may be lodged in writing to the Executive Committee within 3 business days of the decision. Appeal of this ruling will be heard by the Administrator of Student Services within 10 days of appeal notification. 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

All amendments to and ratification of this document must be done through a super majority of 2/3 current voting members.

All amendments and ratification must be discussed in full meeting and voted on in a subsequent meeting, allowing time for sufficient quorum and discussion to develop.

Miscellaneous

The AAPAC is an inclusive body, striving for the best possible representation of parents and students receiving special education services in the District. To that end we strongly encourage all interested and qualified parties to place themselves in nomination to serve as a representative.