

# Falmouth Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

## BYLAWS

### **Article I: Name of Organization**

The name of this self-governed organization shall be the Falmouth Special Education Parent Advisory Council, also known as Falmouth SEPAC.

### **Article II: Mission**

The purpose of the Falmouth SEPAC is to work for the understanding of, respect for and support of, all children with special needs in the community in accordance with the requirements of Federal and State special education laws. To that end and pursuant to 603 CMR 28.07(4), the Falmouth SEPAC shall:

- Advise the district on matters pertaining to the education and safety of students with disabilities.
- Meet regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the district's special education programs.
- Provide an educational forum for parents, students, educators and others in the community involved with special needs students.
- Promote communication among families with special needs students and the Falmouth Public Schools.
- Promote a network of parents of children/teens and young adults with special needs and provide a forum to share information, and discuss matters of common interest and concern.

### **Article III: Membership**

General membership shall be open to any resident of Falmouth or person affiliated with the Falmouth Public Schools. All meetings are open to the general public.

Voting membership is required in order to vote in annual officer elections. Voting membership shall be given to any general member who is either:

A parent or guardian of a child with special needs, residing in Falmouth with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Accommodation Plan.

A student not less than fourteen (14) years of age who is on an IEP or a 504 Accommodation Plan from the Town of Falmouth.

Meetings are defined as any Falmouth SEPAC sponsored meeting in which the business of the SEPAC is conducted. This may include activities or committees at which attendance and/or minutes are taken.

#### **Article IV: Officers of the SEPAC**

Officers are elected by the voting membership and hold office for one year (*or whatever term the SEPAC decides*). If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held immediately, consistent with the process described in article V, with term to expire at the May meeting.

Office and Officer responsibilities of the Falmouth Special Education Parent Advisory Council are:

##### Chairperson

- Set the agenda for each general meeting and keep minutes.
- Preside at all meetings of the Falmouth Special Education Parent Advisory Council.
- Oversee the organization of sub-committees and monitor their functioning.
- Act as liaison with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services.
- Advise the Co-Chair on matters of external communications.
- Coordinate all communication between the Falmouth Special Education Parent Advisory Council and its membership.
- Coordinate the recording and filing of minutes of the Falmouth Special Education Parent Advisory Council and its sub-committees.
- Collect and review all correspondence of the Falmouth Special Education Parent Advisory Council.

##### Vice- Chairperson

- Preside at meetings in the absence of the President, or at the request of the President.
- Coordinate public communications. (if needed)
- Assist the Chairperson as appropriate and perform the responsibilities of the Chairperson at his/her request.
- File notice of meetings with the clerk of the city or town forty-eight hours prior to the meetings, as required in Chapter 39, Section 23B of the Massachusetts General Laws, and post all notices of meetings required by law.

#### **Article V: Elections**

Elections shall be the first order of business during the May meeting. 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.

All voting members are eligible to make nominations.

Prior to the May meeting, a volunteer election coordinator will be recruited from the voting membership of the Falmouth Special Education Parent Advisory Council for the term of one year. The selection of the election coordinator will be decided by the prior year's Chairperson. The election coordinator will not be anyone who is running for office.

The Election Coordinator will coordinate activities necessary to complete the election for all open positions.

#### **Article VI: Meetings**

General meetings shall be held at least 5 times per year, from September through June; monthly meetings would be ideal. Notice of all general meeting dates and elections shall meet Open Meeting Law requirements described in Chapter 39, Section 23B of the Massachusetts General Laws. Notice shall include publishing notices of meetings, filing and posting notice of meetings and schools by mail, email or some other communication method.

During the last meeting, the Chairperson shall take recommendations for the calendar of meetings for the following school year. The calendar shall include dates and times of the meetings and projected activities for the year.

#### **Article VII: Subcommittee**

Subcommittees shall be created as needed. Examples of committees that the SEPAC may be interested in creating are Program Development, Parent Support, Resource/Information, Legislative Issues, and Liaison Coordinator.

#### **Article VIII: Amendments**

These bylaws may be amended at any SEPAC meeting by a majority of the voting members present provided that the amendment is submitted in writing to the Executive Board (See article IX) at least two (2) months before the vote is taken.

***Bylaws adopted Spring 2011 by the 2010-2011 SEPAC officers.***

*Katie Solimine, Chair*

*Steve Leighton, Vice-Chair*

*Susan Moffat, Election Coordinator*