

Wayne SEPAG By-Laws

Revised & Approved-March 19, 2018

Article I: Name

The name of this self-governed organization shall be the Wayne Special Education Parent Advisory Group, also known as Wayne SEPAG.

Article II: Purpose

Special Education Parent Advisory Groups are required for all school districts in New Jersey. The purpose of the SEPAG is to:

- 1) To offer an opportunity for parents to have a discussion on critical issues related to students with special needs.
- 2) To provide input and recommendations on programs and practices that impact services and supports for children with special needs and their families.
- 3) To advise on matters pertaining to the education, health and safety of children with special needs.
- 4) To advise on possible unmet needs of children with special needs.
- 5) To establish a venue to demonstrate mutual respect for the roles of parent leadership and school leadership.

Article III: Mission Statement

The mission of the Wayne Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG) is to empower parents of children with special needs to be involved in advising on matters pertaining to the education, safety and health of students with special needs and learning differences. The SEPAG meets to collaborate with the district's Student Support Services Director and administrators. SEPAG supports the development and implementation of programs and best practices to sufficiently meet the needs of special education students and families in the district. SEPAG offers the opportunity to raise questions, to voice your concerns, and to provide direct input to administrators regarding support services. SEPAG also provides parents and families opportunities to learn about district programs, services and resources.

Article IV: Authorization

The Wayne SEPAG was established by the Wayne Board of Education under the provision of New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.):6A:14-1.2(h), which states: Each district board of education shall ensure that a special education parent advisory group *is in place in the district to provide input to the district on issues concerning students with disabilities.*

Article V: Membership

General membership shall be open to all Wayne parents/guardians of children with special needs or learning differences whose child has an IEP or 504, is enrolled in the Wayne public schools, or whose designated home school district is Wayne but whose child currently attends an Out-of-District placement. The Director of Student Support Services, special education staff and other district representatives may attend meetings but without voting privileges and have 6 seats, one for the Director of Student Support Services and the remaining seats for any other district personnel. Voting membership will include the parent members who are the officers and school representatives on SEPAG. There will be a limit of 24 members with 20 parent members which include 2 WSPA representatives and 6 district members which includes the Director of Special Support Services. There should be a representation of all 14 schools in the district (3 in HS), as well as preschool and out-of-district.

Article VI: Officers and School Representatives

The Executive Board of the SEPAG shall be comprised of a President, Vice-President, and Secretary. The members of the executive board can also fill in the position that represents their child's school if no other representative is available.

- 1) The Officers of the Wayne SEPAG shall be the President, Vice-President, and Secretary. Officers shall be selected from the voting membership as per Article IV of these By-Laws.
- 2) Officers will hold office for a 2-year term.
- 3) All voting members are eligible to hold office.
- 4) The President shall accept nominations from the floor at the regular meeting in May or June.
- 5) Election of officers will take place at the last meeting of the year, held in May or June, and the new officers will take office on July 1.
- 6) All officers have the option to run for re-election.
- 7) A special election may be held to fill a vacancy if an officer or representative resigns or is otherwise unable to service as an officer or representative during the year. The new officer or representative will complete the remainder of the term. All resignations must be done in writing.
- 8) School representatives have a term of 1 year and may re-volunteer, if not contested. Volunteer forms will be sent out each year as well as when there is a vacancy.
- 9) School PTO, Child Study Team, WSPA, Director of Student Support Services, previous school representative may recommend a new School Representative.
- 10) Positions are available to any parent whose child has an IEP or 504 and is enrolled in a Wayne Public School.

Article VII: Duties and Responsibilities of Officers

President Responsibilities:

- >Set the agenda for each meeting with the Director of Student Support Services
- >Act as a liaison with the Director of Student Support Services
- >Attend and facilitate all meetings of SEPAG
- >Recommend the organization and monitor the function of committees and subcommittees and assign committee members
- >Oversee the creation, approval and distribution of informational materials from SEPAG
- >Coordinate and lead all SEPAG meetings and elections

Vice-President Responsibilities:

- >Support the President at all SEPAG meetings
- >Perform all duties of the President in the absence of, or at the request of the President
- >Work with the President to distribute approved information and materials from SEPAG
- >Attend and co-facilitate all meetings of SEPAG
- >Provide assistance to the President in matters pertaining to SEPAG functions and committees

Secretary Responsibilities:

- >Record, draft and forward meeting minutes to President and Vice President for purpose of public posting on district website
- >Post meeting notices and agendas according to state Open Meeting Law
- >Maintain meeting attendance logs
- >Count and record all votes results

Article VIII: Committees

The President, with input from the Executive Board, may create standing and special committees to promote the purpose and interest of SEPAG. Committee involvement shall be on a voluntary basis. President and Vice President shall be ex-officio of all standing and special committees. Standing committees include SEPAG School Representative Committee and WSPA Committee.

SEPAG School Representative Committee:

- 1) Parent representation of all 14 schools: 9 Elementary, 3 Middle Schools, with exception of 3 at the High School level who may alternate as well as 1 from Preschool and 1 from Out-of-District. Executive Board members can also serve as school representatives, if left unfilled. Each committee member must be a parent of a child who has an IEP or 504.

Responsibilities:

- >Attend all SEPAG meetings.
- >Bring forward any questions, concerns, needs or issues specific to the school they represent to the SEPAG board for inclusion on meeting agendas
- >Communicate approved information and materials from SEPAG to their representative school
- >Provide input and possible solutions on systemic issues, district policies and practices
- >Maintain the confidentiality of parents and/or students
- >Direct parents to appropriate school personnel on matters regarding students IEP/504
- >Be familiar with P.R.I.S.E.: Parental Rights in Special Education

Wayne Special Parent Association (WSPA) Committee:

Consists of 2 members who may alternate attendance.

- >Provide and coordinate educational and informative meetings for parents within the district
- >Provide input on the needs of parents and coordinate with district to help facilitate parent workshops, transition/career fairs to assist and educate parents

Article IX: Voting/Quorum

A quorum of no less than 3 voting members must be present to constitute a meeting.

Voting on business matters such as by-law, amendments, and elections will be based a simple two-thirds majority vote.

Article X: Elections

Officers of the SEPAG are elected by the general membership who have voting privileges and hold office until June 30th of the following year. Elections shall occur by verbal vote if uncontested, and if contested with ballot and majority vote at the end of their term at the May or June meeting. All voting members, as defined in Article V, are eligible to make nominations.

Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the general members present at the May/June meeting, subject to the presence of a quorum. New officers shall take office July 1st, following the election.

Any office may resign by delivering a written notice of resignation by mail, in person, or by email to the President. If the President resigns, a letter of resignation is submitted to the Director of Student Support Services. Resignation shall be effective immediately and upon such delivery unless the resignation is slated to be effective at another time. An officer may be removed with cause by vote of the voting members.

The SEPAG will inform the school district of the outcome of the annual elections with the names and contact information of the new board by July 1st of each year.

- 1) Nominations for Officers of the board will be accepted at the May meeting. Nominated individuals will need to accept or decline their nomination. Elections will be held prior to the completion of the current officer(s) term. Elections are held at the May or June meeting following a nomination to fill an open position. Elections can take place as a verbal vote of agreement by the voting membership if the position(s) are uncontested. If contested, elections shall be held by a ballot and simple majority vote.
- 2) All officers may have the option to run for re-election.
- 3) If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held at the next monthly meeting, with term to expire June 30th following the election.

Article XI: Meetings

- 1) Meetings and procedures for this organization will follow the Robert's Rules of Order (latest revision).
- 2) Meetings shall be facilitated by the President, who shall set the agenda with the Director of Student Support Services, determine the length of the discussions, recognize participation and conduct the votes of the voting membership as needed.
- 3) Meetings are defined as any Wayne SEPAG meeting at which a quorum is met.
- 4) The number of meetings to be held each year and the dates/times of those meetings shall be determined annually by the Executive Board, and when appropriate in coordination with the Director.
- 5) Meetings are to be held quarterly in coordination with the District Representatives.
- 6) Additional meetings, such as input sessions, may be held on as-needed basis as determined by the Executive Board and its members.
- 7) All meetings shall be announced to all SEPAG members and notice given to the entire school community via e-mail, District Weekly e-Newsletter, SEPAG website and PTO e-mail blasts. There must be at least a two weeks notice of any and all meetings.
- 8) Minutes of all meetings shall be kept by the Secretary and posted on the SEPAG website.
- 9) Schedule of all meetings shall be posted on SEPAG website.
- 10) The annual meeting for elections will be held May or June of each year when a position will become available and will be noted on such meeting notice.

Article XIII: Amendments

These by-laws may be amended by a simple majority of the voting members at a general meeting, but by-law changes may not be voted upon in the same meeting as they are proposed, unless a quorum (as described in Article IX) votes unanimously to approve the change.