

BYLAWS

Prince George's County Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC-PG)

ARTICLE I — NAME

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the Prince George's County Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC-PG).

ARTICLE II — MISSION

Section 1. Establishment

SECAC-PG is established pursuant to COMAR 13A.05.02.13.

Section 2. Purpose

SECAC-PG serves for the purpose of providing advisory input regarding the education of students with disabilities to the Associate Superintendent for Special Education, the Superintendent, and the Prince George's County Board of Education.

Section 3. Collaboration

SECAC-PG promotes collaboration among parents, individuals with disabilities, educators, and community stakeholders to improve services and outcomes for students with disabilities.

Section 4. Independence of the Committee

SECAC-PG functions as an independent advisory body. While the committee collaborates with Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), its deliberations, recommendations, reports, and governance decisions shall remain independent and free from undue influence by the school system or individual administrators.

No employee or representative of PGCPS may direct the recommendations, deliberations, or votes of the committee.

Section 5. Annual Report

SECAC-PG shall prepare an annual written report with recommendations regarding special education services.

ARTICLE III — MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility

Membership shall be open to parents and guardians of students receiving special education services, individuals with disabilities, community members, organizations, and representatives of Prince George's County Public Schools.

Section 2. Parent Representation

Consistent with COMAR 13A.05.02.13, parents or guardians of students with disabilities shall comprise a substantial portion of the voting membership.

Section 3. Nomination and Appointment

Individuals may submit nominations or applications for membership. Members may also be appointed by the Associate Superintendent for Special Education or their designee in accordance with PGCPs administrative procedures.

Section 4. Independence of Voting Authority

Once appointed, members act independently and shall not be directed by PGCPs staff or administrators regarding how they vote or participate in committee matters.

Section 5. Residency

Members shall reside in Prince George's County or be employed by PGCPs.

Section 6. Voting Eligibility

Voting members shall attend at least four meetings within a twelve-month period. Attendance may include in-person participation, virtual participation, or documented committee participation.

Section 7. Loss of Voting Status

Members who fail to meet attendance requirements may lose voting privileges but may continue participation as general members.

Section 8. Conflict of Interest

Members shall disclose conflicts of interest related to matters under discussion and recuse themselves when appropriate.

Section 9. Parent Majority Safeguard

To maintain compliance with COMAR 13A.05.02.13 and preserve the advisory role of families, parents or guardians of students receiving special education services shall constitute a majority of the voting membership whenever practicable.

PGCPS employees serving as members shall not constitute a majority of the voting membership.

Section 10. Protection from Administrative Removal

Once appointed, members may not be removed from the committee solely by administrative action without cause. Removal for misconduct, loss of eligibility, or failure to comply with bylaws shall follow the removal procedures established in these bylaws, including written notice and an opportunity to respond.

ARTICLE IV — EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1. Composition

The Executive Board shall consist of the following officers:

Chair

Vice Chair

Secretary

Co-Secretary (optional)

Treasurer

Immediate Past Chair

At-Large Member

Section 2. Eligibility

Officers shall be Eligible Voting Members of SECAC-PG and appointed by the Associate Superintendent of Special Education. However, individuals who are active members but do not hold voting status may serve on committees.

Section 3. Terms

Officers serve two-year terms with a two-term limit per position.

Section 4. Duties

Chair – prepares meeting agendas, presides over meetings, and serves as liaison with PGCPS leadership.

Vice Chair – assists the Chair and performs the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence.

Secretary – maintains official minutes and committee records.

Co-Secretary – assists the Secretary in maintaining records when applicable.

Treasurer – oversees fiscal documentation and financial records when applicable. At-Large Member – serves as liaison to the membership and assists with committee initiatives.

Immediate Past Chair – provides continuity and institutional knowledge.

Section 5. Governance Authority

The Executive Board manages the internal governance of SECAC-PG, including agendas, elections, and committee operations. PGCPs administrators may participate in meetings but shall not control the governance decisions of the committee.

Section 6. Agenda Authority

Meeting agendas shall be developed and approved by the Executive Board. PGCPs administrators or staff may suggest agenda topics but shall not direct or control the agenda without Executive Board approval.

ARTICLE V — CODE OF CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONALISM

Section 1. Professional Standards

Members shall conduct themselves with professionalism, respect, and integrity during meetings, communications, and committee activities.

Members are expected to treat fellow members, families, educators, and community participants respectfully; participate constructively in discussions; avoid harassment or disruptive behavior; and support the mission and credibility of SECAC-PG.

Section 2. Compliance with Law

Members shall comply with applicable laws governing public bodies, including the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

Section 3. Progressive Response to Conduct Violations

If a member fails to follow the Code of Conduct, the following steps may occur:

Step 1 – Informal Warning

The Chair or Executive Board may address the concern privately.

Step 2 – Written Notice

If the behavior continues, written notice outlining the concern may be issued.

Step 3 – Executive Board Review

The matter may be reviewed at a properly noticed meeting.

Possible actions may include mediation, temporary suspension of voting privileges, or recommendation for removal.

Section 4. Recusal During Conduct Votes

Any officer or member who is the subject of a conduct review shall not vote on matters concerning themselves.

Section 5. Due Process

Members shall receive written notice and an opportunity to respond before formal disciplinary action is taken.

Section 6. Removal of Members or Officers

Removal requires written notice at least thirty days prior to the vote, discussion at a publicly noticed meeting, and approval by a two-thirds vote of eligible voting members present.

ARTICLE VI — PROTECTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Section 1. Protection of Organizational Integrity

Actions intended to undermine the lawful governance of SECAC-PG are prohibited.

Section 2. Prohibited Conduct

Prohibited actions include attempts to improperly seize control of the Executive Board, manipulate committee procedures outside established bylaws, or organize efforts to disrupt the lawful functioning of the committee.

Section 3. Consequences

Such actions may constitute misconduct and may be grounds for immediate removal from an officer position or the Executive Board following review and vote in accordance with removal procedures.

ARTICLE VII — MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular Meetings

SECAC-PG shall hold regular meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month unless otherwise announced.

Section 2. Annual Meeting Cycle

The operational meeting year shall follow two periods:

July 1 through December 31

January 1 through June 30

No regular meeting shall be held during the month of December unless otherwise announced.

Section 3. Changes to Meeting Schedule

Meeting dates, times, or formats may be adjusted when necessary due to scheduling conflicts, holidays, facility availability, or other logistical considerations. Notice of changes shall be provided consistent with the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

Section 4. Emergency Meetings

Emergency meetings may be called by the Chair or a majority of the Executive Board when urgent matters arise. Notice shall be provided as soon as practicable in accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

Section 5. Government Closure

SECAC-PG shall follow the operational status of Prince George's County Government and Prince George's County Public Schools. When government operations are officially closed due to weather or emergency conditions, SECAC-PG meetings and activities shall be canceled or postponed. Operations shall resume when government operations reopen.

Section 6. Open Meetings Compliance

All meetings shall comply with the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

Section 7. Minutes

Written minutes shall be maintained as the official record of meetings. Recordings may supplement but shall not replace official minutes.

Section 8. Accessibility

Meetings shall provide reasonable accommodations consistent with applicable law.

Section 9. Public Comment

Public comment shall be included when practicable.

Section 10. Voting

Official actions require a majority vote of eligible voting members when quorum is present.

Section 11. Transparency of Records

Meeting minutes, reports, and official documents shall be maintained as public records consistent with the Maryland Open Meetings Act and applicable transparency laws.

ARTICLE VIII — ELECTIONS

Section 1. Nominating Committee

At least three Eligible Voting Members shall serve on a nominating committee.

Section 2. Election of Officers

Officer elections shall occur annually with quorum present.

Section 3. Special Elections

Vacancies may be filled through special election.

ARTICLE IX — SUBCOMMITTEES

Subcommittees may be created as necessary to carry out the work of SECAC-PG and shall comply with applicable provisions of the Maryland Open Meetings Act when required.

ARTICLE X — FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Funds associated with SECAC-PG shall be administered through PGCPs in accordance with applicable MSDE and district procedures.

ARTICLE XI — AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended with written notice at least thirty days prior to a vote and approval by a two-thirds vote of eligible voting members present at a meeting with quorum.

ARTICLE XII — STRUCTURAL PROTECTIONS AND BYLAW REVIEW

Section 1. Public Review of Structural Changes

Any proposal to significantly alter the structure, authority, or governance of SECAC-PG shall be presented for public discussion prior to adoption.

Section 2. Notice of Proposed Changes

Proposed structural changes shall be distributed to members and made publicly available at least thirty days prior to any vote.

Section 3. Opportunity for Discussion

Members and the public shall have an opportunity to discuss proposed changes during a publicly noticed meeting.

Section 4. Adoption of Structural Changes

Structural changes shall require approval by a two-thirds vote of eligible voting members present at a meeting with quorum.

Section 5. Consistency with Law

No bylaw amendment or structural change shall conflict with COMAR requirements or applicable Maryland law.

SIGNATURES

Approved on: _____

Chair: _____

Vice Chair: _____