BALTIMORE COUNTY SPECIAL EDUCATION CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BYLAWS

Article I: Name

The name of the committee shall be the Baltimore County Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC).

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of the committee is:
Section 1. To enable the community to participate in the educational process and to make that process more responsive to the unique and multifaceted needs of children and youth with disabilities.
Section 2. To insure that parents are actively and meaningfully involved in the educational process.
Section 3. To advise the Board of Education, Administrators, Educators and Office of Special Education personnel of the unmet needs of children and youth with disabilities.
Section 4. To facilitate effective communication and collaboration between the Baltimore County Public School System and children and youth with disabilities, parents, advocates, and the disability community.
Section 5. To foster respect and encourage acceptance of persons with disabilities in our community as equal and valued citizens.
Section 6. To strive to fulfill the intent and spirit of the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, The Americans with Disabilities Act and other Laws that define and protect the rights of students with disabilities.
Section 7. To provide information on research based best practices in special education to parents, the Board of Education, Administrators, Educators and Office of Special Education personnel.
Section 8. The committee year shall be from September through August, following the school year calendar.

Article III: Members
Section 1. Parents of children and youth with a disability, persons with special knowledge concerning disability related matters and students or persons with disabilities shall be encouraged to attend and participate in regular SECAC meetings.

Section 2. Local disability support or advocacy groups shall be invited to designate a representative to serve on the committee.

Section 3. The PTA Council of Baltimore County shall be invited to appoint a liaison.

Section 4. The Teachers Union shall be invited to designate a liaison to serve on the committee.

Section 5. The Baltimore County Public Schools Office of Special Education shall have one voting member appointed by the head of that Office. This person must have attended four regular SECAC meetings within the current or immediate past school year, September to June.

Section 6. The Parent Resource Center of Baltimore County public schools shall have one voting member appointed by the head of that Center. This voting member must have attended four regular SECAC meetings within the current or immediate past school year, September to June.

Section 7. Employees of Baltimore County Public Schools may be voting members only if they are participating on the committee in the role of parent or guardian of a Baltimore County Public Schools student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) currently enrolled in Baltimore County Public Schools and attended four regular SECAC meetings within the current or immediate past school year, September through June.

Section 8. Voting members are individuals who have attended four regular SECAC meetings within the current or immediate past school year, September through June.

Section 9. Membership criteria will be maintained through attendance records.

Article IV. Voting Member Rights

Section 1. Each voting member in good standing shall have one vote. Proxies are not permitted.

Section 2. Voting members may participate in the elections of SECAC officers, amendments to the SECAC Bylaws, and all other procedures requiring a vote as outlined in the SECAC Bylaws.
Article V: Membership Guidelines

Section 1. Members shall attend monthly meetings as determined by the SECAC officers.
Section 2. Members may serve on a standing committee, ad hoc committee, or subcommittee. Committee work sessions and executive work sessions may be scheduled on an as needed basis.
Section 3. The committee will advertise at least annually for new members.
Section 4. Any member of the SECAC shall fully disclose any relationship with an individual or with members of other organizations, which represents or has the potential to represent a conflict of interest or result in personal financial gain. A conflict of interest shall be defined as any alliance with a business, organization or employer that prohibits a member from freely executing the purposes of the SECAC. Personal gain shall be defined as directly soliciting business for monetary purposes from the SECAC.
Section 5. Discipline of members and guests shall follow Ground Rules and Guidelines for SECAC General meetings as written in Article VIII, Sections 7 & 8.

Article VI: Officers

Section 1. Chairperson
  a. The Chairperson presides over all meetings of the SECAC.
  b. The Chairperson shall serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee.
  c. The Chairperson shall prepare an annual written report for the Superintendent, Board of Education, Office of Special Education and general membership.
  d. The Chairperson may delegate roles or responsibilities to members as deemed necessary

Section 2. Vice Chairperson
The Vice Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in his or her absence, or at the Chairperson’s request. If the Chairperson resigns or is unable to perform their duties the Vice Chairperson shall assume said duties until another Chairperson is elected.

Section 3. Secretary
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a. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all SECAC and any Executive
Board Meetings.
b. The Secretary shall maintain attendance records and certify
membership for voting purposes.
c. The Secretary shall review and update SECAC membership lists
annually.

Section 4. Term of Office
The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary shall serve a term of two
years beginning at the conclusion of the Election meeting.

Section 5. Temporary replacement
In the event of the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair of the
SECAC, the voting members may, without removal, delegate the powers and
duties of the officers to any other officer or voting member in good standing
selected by the voting members for a period determined by the voting
members.

Section 6. Removal from Office
a. Any officer shall be subject to removal by a two-thirds majority of
voting members of the SECAC. The vote shall be taken by a written ballot.
b. In the event of the absence of any officer of the SECAC, the voting
members may, without removal, delegate the powers and duties of such
officer to any other officer or voting member in good standing selected by
the voting members for a period determined by the voting members.

Article VII: Executive Board

Section 1. The Executive Board shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice
Chairperson, Secretary, Past Officers (up to 2) and a representative of the
Parent Resource Center. The Executive Board shall meet at least four times
per calendar year and as needed to conduct committee business in addition to
regular full committee meetings. At the discretion of the SECAC officers,
any ad hoc or sub-Committee Chairperson(s) may be invited to attend
Executive Board meetings.

Article VIII: Meetings
Section 1. The general meetings of the SECAC shall be held on the second Monday of September, October, November, January, March, April and May or unless otherwise determined by the Executive Board and indicated on the annual calendar.

Section 2. Sub-committees and ad hoc committees shall schedule work sessions as needed.

Section 3. Special meetings may be called either by the Chairperson or a majority of the voting members.

Section 4. A simple majority of voting members present at any regular meeting shall be sufficient to pass motions and to conduct business.

Section 5. The meetings of SECAC shall be open to the general public.

Section 6. SECAC meetings shall be conducted according to Robert’s Rules of Order, newly revised.

Section 7. Ground Rules for SECAC General Meetings

1. Be respectful:
   - Protect identity of BCPS children and employees
   - No personal attacks
   - Place cell phones on silent mode
   - Agree to disagree
   - Be concise: respect group’s time
   - Use parking lot for items to be discussed later
2. See the big picture; what is the broader issue that needs addressing?
   - Speak for the good of the group
   - Avoid personal vignettes
3. Participate, do not dominate
4. Collaboration between parents and educators – Maintain positive climate
5. Stay on topic
6. Hold side conversations outside of the room or after the meeting
7. Start/End on time

Section 8. The Guidelines below will be read at the start of each General Meeting

Guidelines for SECAC General Meetings

Special Education Citizen's Advisory Committee (SECAC) meetings are an opportunity for parents to learn from BCPS staff and invited guests about policy, programs and practices that relate to their children's education and welfare. Equally important, SECAC is a forum for BCPS Office of Special Education staff and Board members to become aware of the needs of students with disabilities in Baltimore County Public Schools.

While staff members from the Office of Special Education will take comments into future consideration, no action will be taken during a SECAC meeting. SECAC is not the proper forum for the resolution of specific student or employee matters. We encourage everyone to utilize
existing avenues of redress for complaints. Inappropriate personal remarks or other behavior that disrupts or interferes with the conduct of this meeting are out of order. Disruptive or loud members will be asked to leave. We will strive to give as many people the chance to speak as possible, but it is not the practice of this body to allow any one person to dominate the discussion by commenting repeatedly.

Research has demonstrated the importance of families and educators working together to benefit our children. While we can and do acknowledge occasional disagreements among our members, the vision of SECAC is to nurture the relationship between parents and educators through productive and professional communication.

Article IX: Elections

Section 1. Biannually, at the regular March meeting, a nominating committee consisting of not less than three Committee members shall be appointed by the Chairperson from the general membership.

Section 2. The nominating committee shall solicit nominees from the general membership and present a slate of at least one nominee for each office at the regular April meeting. Nominees must be voting members in good standing. Additional nominations for officers may be made by members of the SECAC from the floor at the meeting immediately prior to the final scheduled meeting of the year. Nominations will be closed fifteen days prior to the scheduled election meeting.

Section 3. Election of officers shall take place at the final scheduled General meeting for the school year. All elections shall be by ballot and a majority of those members present and voting shall be required for election. When necessary, run-off elections shall be held among the nominees receiving the two highest numbers of votes. When only one candidate is nominated for an office, election may be by voice vote.

Section 4. Special Elections

a. A special election shall be held within two months following the occurrence of a vacancy in any officer position.

b. All nominations shall be made from the floor. Nominees must be voting members in good standing.

c. The election shall be held in accordance with Section 2 of this article.

d. The officer elected through a special election shall remain in place until the next regularly scheduled election.
Article X: Subcommittees, Ad hoc Committees

Section 1. The SECAC Chairperson shall have the authority to create standing, ad hoc or subcommittees as necessary to conduct its business.

Section 2. Subcommittees and ad hoc committees may seek consultation from qualified individuals who are not members of the SECAC.

Section 3. Work sessions shall be scheduled as needed.

Section 4. An annual report shall be presented to the SECAC orally and/or in writing at the final regularly scheduled general meeting or earlier if appropriate.

Article XI: Relationship with the Board of Education

Section 1. The Chairperson and/or their designee may testify or provide written documentation regarding the Committee’s recommendations on an issue.

Section 2. All written correspondence to the Board will be made available to the full membership at a general meeting.

Section 3. All testimony offered at Board meetings in the SECAC stakeholder comment spot are available on the BCPS Livestream website.

Article XII: Financial Support

Section 1. Annually, the SECAC will receive funds from a state grant.

Section 2. The Executive Committee will develop a budget and submit the budget to the Baltimore County Office of Special Education, no later than February 28th of each year for the following year.

Section 3. SECAC, in collaboration with the Office of Special Education, is responsible for determining how funds will be used.

Section 4. Funds will be managed by Baltimore County Office of Special Education and are for the sole use of SECAC activities, unless otherwise determined by the SECAC. A copy of the final budget shall be provided to the general membership.

Article XIII: Amendments
Section 1. Proposed amendments to SECAC by-laws shall be submitted in writing to the members at least 30 days prior to a vote during a general meeting.
Section 2. Amendments must be approved by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting.
Section 3. Upon ratification, these articles will go into effect.

Article XIV: By-laws review

Section 1. The by-laws shall be reviewed every two years by the Executive Board. The Chairperson shall submit them with or without changes to the general membership for review and final approval.
Section 2. The Chairperson shall present the by-laws to the general membership one-month prior to the vote of approval.

(Signature)
Secretary, Baltimore County Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee

Adopted: May 9, 2016 (date)

Revised: June 8, 2016 (date)