

**Haverhill, MA Special Education
Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)
By-Laws**

Article I: Name of Organization

The name of this organization shall be the Haverhill Special Education Parent Advisory Council, also known as the Haverhill SEPAC.

Article II: Purpose of the Haverhill SEPAC

A. The Haverhill SEPAC receives its regulatory authority from the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 603 CMR 28:07 (4) under the parent involvement section. State law mandates the Haverhill SEPAC and its duties include, but are not limited to:

- a. Advising the Haverhill, Massachusetts school district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities.
- b. Meeting regularly with school officials.
- c. Participating in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district's special education programs.

B. The mission of the Haverhill SEPAC is to work for understanding for, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in the community. To that end, the Haverhill SEPAC will work to:

- a. Promote a network of parents of children with special needs and provide a forum to share information and discuss matters of concern and interest for children with special needs.
- b. Advise the Director of Special Education, Superintendent of Schools, and the Haverhill School Committee, and others on operations of special education services, parent and teacher training needs, and other needs within the Special Education

community.

- c. Communicate regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the School Committee's special education programs, as well as make school officials aware of the work of Haverhill SEPAC.
- d. Promote communication between the Haverhill SEPAC membership, local, state and national organizations, councils and groups that support children with special needs.
- e. Promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion of children with special needs.
- f. Provide informational forums to parents, educators, students and professionals involved with children with special needs. This will include collaboration with parent/teacher groups, school councils, PTAs, and other school organizations toward the betterment of education in the school district; it will also include exploration of opportunities for parents and school personnel to participate in joint training to foster mutual understanding.
- g. Promote communication and collaboration among parents, teachers, administrators and other service providers within the Special Education community.
- h. Serve as a resource and support network for parents/guardians of children with special needs regarding procedures, educational, and non-educational issues.
- i. Support and promote equal educational opportunities for all special needs children.

Article III: Terms of Membership

There are two types of membership, voting and general.

A.General membership shall be open to any resident of Haverhill or person affiliated with the Haverhill, Massachusetts Public Schools. All meetings are open to the general public and subject to Open Meeting Laws.

B. Voting membership is required in order to vote in annual officer elections and other business that comes before any Haverhill SEPAC meeting. Voting membership shall be given to any general member who is either a parent or guardian of a child with special needs residing in Haverhill with (1) an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or (2) a 504 Accommodation Plan.

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

Article IV: Voting and Elections

A. All decisions requiring a vote will be made by simple majority (50 percent, plus one) of the voting membership present at a meeting. Each voting member is entitled to one (1) vote per motion. At any Haverhill SEPAC meeting, at least five voting members must be present in order to cast a vote.

B. All voting members are eligible to make officer nominations between February 1st and April 30th of the school year at a SEPAC meeting. Nominees shall accept or decline their nominations within one week of being notified of their nomination in order to remain on the ballot. Elections shall be held and decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership present at the last Haverhill SEPAC meeting of the school year in even calendar years; e.g., 2020, 2022, 2024, 2026, etc. Elected Haverhill SEPAC officers shall hold office for two years.

C. The term of new officers shall run from the 1st of July to the 30th of June of the following year. It is expected that past officers will meet with their replacements and work with them for the first two months of the following school year to ensure a seamless transition. All confidential information such as passwords and other such

information shall be shared with the incoming officers by past officers.

D. The Haverhill Public Schools, MassPAC, and the Department of Education will be informed of the annual elections with the names, addresses and phone numbers of the officers by the end of the school year. The date of elections should also be provided.

Article V: Officers of the Haverhill SEPAC

A. Officers of the Haverhill SEPAC are elected by the voting membership and will hold office for two (2) years or more, preferably not more than four (4) years. These officers may be elected every other year (even calendar years) during the final SEPAC meeting of the school year. All positions may be shared by two individuals, except the Treasurer. All voting members are eligible to make an officer nomination at anytime to fill a vacant officer position. The election of said individual to fill the vacant position shall be held and decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership present at any Haverhill SEPAC meeting. The term of an officer elected to fill a vacant position shall expire on June 30th the next even calendar year; e.g., 2020, 2022, 2024, 2026, etc.

B. Officer responsibilities of the Haverhill SEPAC are:

a. Chairperson(s)

Sets the agenda for each general meeting and arrange for guest speakers/ workshops, as required. Presides at all meetings of the Haverhill SEPAC. Acts as liaison with the Director of Special Education, including meeting and/or communicating with said Director as needed during the school year. Acts as liaison with the School Committee and meet and/or communicate with the School Committee special education liaison, if there is a liaison, as needed. Develops SEPAC committees, as needed. Updates and maintains the Haverhill SEPAC

website. Uses SEPAC email for SEPAC business. Assists with coordinating the annual resource fair. Helps with duties of secretary and treasurer when those positions are not filled.

b. Vice-Chairperson(s)

Assist the chairperson with setting the agenda for each general meeting and arrange for guest speakers/workshops, as required. Attend meetings of the Haverhill SEPAC. If so desired, it is the expectation that the Vice-Chairperson will seek election as the Chairperson at the end of the current Chairperson's term. If necessary and at the request of the chairperson, act as liaison with the Director of Special Education, including meeting and/or communicating with said Director as needed during the school year. If necessary and at the request of the chairperson, act as liaison with the School Committee and meet and/or communicate with the School Committee special education liaison, if there is a liaison, as needed. Assist with updating and maintaining the Haverhill SEPAC website, if needed. Assists with coordinating the annual resource fair. Helps with duties of secretary and treasurer when those positions are not filled.

c. Treasurer

Manages and accounts for funds collected or donated for the Haverhill SEPAC. Manages and accounts for funds spent by the Haverhill SEPAC. Monitors and coordinates the financing of fundraising activities. Coordinates efforts to apply for grants, donations, reimbursements or any other funds for which Haverhill SEPAC may be eligible.

d. Secretary

Sends (email) meeting notices to the Office of the City Clerk for the City of Haverhill. Records minutes of SEPAC meetings and puts together the meeting minutes.

e. Fundraising Chairperson(s)

Develops and coordinates SEPAC fundraising events. It is expected the Fundraising Chairperson(s) will help coordinate the annual Haverhill SEPAC Resource Fair.
Conducts other SEPAC fundraising activities

Article VI: Meetings

General meetings shall be held at least five (5) times per year, from September through June; however, monthly meetings would be ideal. Notice of all general meeting dates and elections shall be publicized, if possible, through the local press, school newsletters, and regular announcements, SEPAC email newsletters, and as many Internet options as possible. During the last meeting of the school year, the Chairperson(s) shall take recommendations for the calendar of meetings for the following school year. The calendar of meetings shall include dates and times of the meetings and projected activities for the year.

Article VII: Amendments

These by-laws may be amended at any Haverhill SEPAC meeting by a majority vote of the voting members present provided that the amendment is submitted in writing to the Chairpersons at least 45 days before the vote is taken. Any officer may put forward an amendment at a SEPAC meeting, and a vote on the amendment may take place at a SEPAC meeting no sooner than 45 days from the date said amendment was put forward.

Article VIII: The Executive Board

This executive board will consist of the Haverhill SEPAC elected Officers. This board will meet as needed to conduct long-range planning, set objectives, and define priorities and goals, which will be presented to the School Committee annually.

Article IX: Expenditure of Funds

Expenditure of funds in excess of \$100 requires approval of a majority of the Executive Board. Expenditures by Executive Board members of less than \$100 are reimbursable by submitting receipts to the Treasurer, but these expenditures must be discussed in advance.

Article X: Review of Bylaws

The Haverhill SEPAC officers shall review these by-laws every two (2) years or as needed.