



# West New York Board of Education

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*Maximizing all students' potential  
for success in an ever-changing world.*

Department of  
Special Services

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## **OPERATING BYLAWS OF THE WEST NEW YORK PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

### **NAME**

West New York Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education Services (WNYPAC)

### **AFFILIATION**

The WNYPAC is sponsored and accountable to the West New York Public School District.

### **MISSION**

To positively impact the education of all students with an emphasis on those with special needs in the West New York School District by representing students and parents of students needing or receiving special education services, advocating improvements, acting as a resource for our constituents, staff, and administration, creating opportunities for education, reporting regularly, facilitating communication, clarifying process, and creating an actual link between constituents and the administrators responsible for all aspects of special education services in the West New York School District.

Through this mission, the WNYPAC will positively will positively impact the education of all students in the West New York School District.

### **MANDATE**

- Advise West New York Public Schools on matters pertaining to special education services
- Prepare written reports to the Superintendent a minimum of 2 times a year.
- Provide proposed meeting agendas and meeting minutes to the Director of Special Services and the Superintendent of WNYPS
- Meet with the Director of Special Services; Assistant to Director of Special Services, and/or Special Services Supervisors a minimum for 3 times a week.
- Meet with Superintendent of WNYSD 2 times a year.
- Meet as a PAC at least 3 times a year September through June, with additional meetings as needed
- Send PAC representatives to School Board meetings
- Make a twice-yearly report to the School Board
- Create working committees around goals and objectives of PAC/Constituency
- Hold a minimum of 2 times a year District-wide meetings yearly (at least one with the Superintendent of Schools in attendance)

**WE ARE AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

*We Do Not Discriminate As Of Race, Creed, Age, National Origin, Gender, Sexual Orientation, or Disability*

- Distribute educational materials concerning all aspects of Special Education Services in the West New York school district
- Foster relationships with other groups and associations representing stakeholders in the special education process

## **SUPPORT**

Support of the WNYPAC is coordinated by the District through posting information on the school district webpage, through mailings, space scheduling, and any other appropriate services in direct support of the Mission. Representative attendance of the WNY special services administrators at each PAC meeting and function will also support the PAC's collaborative mission and goals.

Fiscal resources available to the PAC shall be outlined in the special education budget submitted to the School Board for approval. The PAC will submit a budget request to the Director of Special Services by May 1<sup>st</sup>, for the following school year. The WNY School District may budget for postage for notices and other committee mailings, reproduction of appropriate documents for committee business, secretarial services, in-service related to the function of the PAC, and informational materials for the PAC.

Additional funding may be obtained through application to appropriate granting agencies, PTO, permissible fundraising, and corporate underwriting, though this would be limited to specific initiatives, and with the approval of both the WNYPAC and the West New York School District as a whole.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of the WNYPAC will be created through the representation of every West New York Public School entity/building within the District by one full member chosen from each preschool, elementary school, up to two full members from the middle school, and up to three from Memorial High School. At least one alternative member should be chosen for each, though any number of alternates may be chosen as is desired by the individual school community. Each general member has one vote on the PAC, so that larger buildings/entities will have a proportionally greater voting bloc. Members of the WNYPAC will be parents/guardians whose children are represented by an IEP or a 504 plan, or high school students who receive special education services in the WNY school district. To serve as full voting members, high school students must be at least 18 years of age and will be expected to fulfill the outlined duties of a general member. High School students between 14 and 18 years of age may serve as non-voting member in an advisory capacity to the PAC. Student younger than 14 may be considered for membership on a case-by-case basis. There may also be up to three "at large" members, recruited and appointed by the PAC in an effort to create a more representative body (disability organizations, private schools, charter schools, etc.)

Clarifications of the number of general members are as follows:

- ESC – one general member
- AMVETS – one general member

- PS #1 – one general member
- PS #2 – one general member
- PS #3 – one general member
- PS #4 – one general member
- PS #5 – one general member
- HLB – one general member
- Middle School – two general members
- MHS - – three general members

## **Selection**

New members will be selected in last meeting of the year, using a written and well-publicized procedure.

Initially the selection process will be facilitated by the each building principal and the Department of Special Services. Thereafter vacancies will be facilitated in each building by the principal and overseen by a current PAC member. Selection of representatives must be completed by June 1<sup>st</sup> with terms starting at the adjournment of the June meeting. Incoming representatives will be invited to this meeting.

## **Terms**

Members will serve for two years, June to June, and half of the representatives will be up for election every year. If a representative leaves the district early, or is unable to serve for any other reason, or if any vacancy exists, a new representative will be appointed, or the alternate will be elevated in their stead for the duration of their term. If a representative wants to serve one year before transition to a “next level” school, this must be done with the alternate/transitional plan in place.

Representatives may serve as many terms as they are elected or appointed to, though it is recommended that representatives be mindful of the value of allowing new representation whenever possible. This assures an inclusive and vibrant PAC as well as better educated and involved constituency.

## **REPRESENTATIVES**

### **Mandate of Representatives**

To serve as a representative to your school community for all parents/student with IEP's or 504 plans; to deliver educational materials; to inform through programs and individual counseling; to attend meetings as a PAC/parent representative; to convey parental/student needs and concerns to the PAC and, through it, to District Administration; to attend regular meetings at school and at the PAC; to keep constituencies informed of PAC work through regular correspondence (newsletters); and to faithfully serve to create a better environment for the delivery of Special Education services throughout the West New York School District.

### **General Representative**

- Attend all PAC general, transitional, and special meetings
- Serve on at least one committee or task force, or serve as an officer, over their term
- Notify parents of all relevant meetings, PAC business, meetings through the school's regular newsletter process
- Read all minutes, notes, reports generated by the PAC
- Allow the widespread publishing of contact information for the purpose of representing a confidential constituency
- Facilitate the distribution of any and all educational materials to constituents and community at-large
- Make yourself available to meet at school with parents and administrators
- Planning meetings or programs specific to your school as specified by the PAC
- Attend one School Board meeting as a representative of the PAC
- Facilitate Nomination/Election of Representatives
- Maintain transitional materials of the PAC as they relate to your school/constituency/committees
- Are strongly encouraged to Visit programs, participate in workshops and attend in-services in order to enhance awareness of services
- Attend public hearings to speak in favor of, or against, proposed rules and the state plan for the delivery of special education services as they will affect special education services within the West New York School District
- Take positions on legislation
- Serving as a PCA representative to other related task forces and groups as requested.
- Be responsible for the taking of minutes at one PAC meeting over your term
- Organize and help sustain PAC

### **Alternate Representative**

- See above in conjunction with General member
- Duties may be split amongst the General member and alternate as may be cooperatively arranged. However, it is the responsibility of the General member to guarantee all expected duties are performed.

### **Advisor to PAC**

The Director of Special Services or designee shall act as advisor to PAC. At the request of the Committee, assistance shall be provided with:

- Surveying the committee for possible in-service on an annual basis and develop a program with the Chairperson of the PAC;
- Provide appropriate staff to be involved with the PAC upon request;
- Provide participation by representatives of other agencies as appropriate.

## **Officers**

There will be three officers for the purpose of performing specific functions required of the PAC by its organizational structure, or by specific duties designated under its mandate (e.g., twice yearly reports to the School Board, liaison meetings, recording of board meeting, authorized).

Officers of PAC will be chosen at the Annual meeting by secret ballot of all members in attendance (simple majority), assuming there is a quorum. These officers begin their term at the adjourning of the final June meeting. Nominations may be made by any member, including self-nominations through notification of the Secretary prior to the June meeting, or at the meeting itself. Seconds for all nominations will be taken at the meeting, if not received before, and the PAC may ask questions of all candidates prior to voting.

Officers serve one-year terms, beginning at the adjournment of the final June meeting through the following final June meeting. Officers may serve no more than two consecutive terms in office. No officer may hold more than one office simultaneously.

Officers of the PAC are expected to perform the following duties in addition to their duties as General members.

## **PAC Chair**

- Call/Chair all meetings
- Call for all voting (except for elections)
- Meet with District Administration
  - Director of Special Services - Quarterly
  - District Superintendent – Quarterly
- Prepare/coordinate the preparation of all official reports from the PAC
- Create/Distribute all Meeting Agendas through the PAC Secretary
- Coordinate Work/Reports of Standing Committees
- Present Progress Reports to the WNY School Board
- Act as the official spokesperson for the PAC
- Appoint members to committees and task forces as needed
- Meet at least monthly with other PAC officers for the purpose of planning and coordination
- Receive and act on all complaints/issues/concerns brought to the PAC in a timely manner

## **PAC Vice-Chair**

- Serve as Chair in the Chair's absence
- Plan the September PAC transitional meeting
- Act as Meeting Timekeeper
- Coordinate Work/Reports for Task Forces

- Meet with District Administration
  - Director of Special Services - ?
  - District Superintendent – Quarterly
- Prepare/coordinate the preparation of all official reports from the PAC
- Meet at least monthly with other PAC officers for the purpose of planning and coordination
- Receive and act on all complaints/issues/concerns brought to the PAC in a timely manner

### **PAC Secretary**

- Act as Secretary/Minutes Coordinator/Historian for the PAC
- Act as Voting Official
- Coordinate all e-mail, mailing, contact lists
- Coordinate all regular PAC correspondence to constituency
- Collect, maintain, and turn over all relevant materials, handouts, and correspondence relating to the PAC to anyone who needs or requests them

### **Committees**

Committees fall into the following three categories:

- **Standing Committees** are those committees that, due to the nature and mission of the PAC, are permanently required. This permanent status may change by a vote of the PAC.
- **Task Forces** are those committees that are convened by the PAC to address a specific concern or goal. They may be internally requested or requested by the District. They will be convened with a set date and may be upgraded to Standing Committees with the approval of the PAC.
- **Judicial Committees** are those committees that are convened by the PAC to address specific legislative concerns related to special education and transition services and hearings regarding complaints against Executive Committee members. The Executive Committee will hold hearings regarding complaints against general PAC representatives. They may be internally requested or requested by the District. They will be convened with a set date and may be upgraded to Standing Committees with the approval of the PAC.

The PAC may charge any number of Standing Committees, Task Forces, and Judicial Committees.

Committee chairs will be appointed by the PAC from the membership.

### **VOTING**

The PAC will vote in the following areas:

- Creation of committees
- By-law changes
- Appointment of At-Large members
- Content of reports, materials, documents, flyers for external distribution
- Election of officers
- All final Standing Committee/Task Force/Judicial Committee recommendations or reports
- All position statements or endorsements
- Other areas that the PAC may deem pertinent
- Hearing for complaints against Executive Committee members

The PAC for all general business will follow simple majority, with super majorities required in specific areas.

Standing Committees will follow simple majority voting rules.

Task Forces will follow a voting strategy initially agreed upon by the PAC members.

Proxy voting is allowable in writing or by e-mail to the Secretary, 48 hours prior to the meeting at which the vote takes place.

The PAC, as a whole, may also vote to allow members of the PAC to create and distribute documents based on agreed upon parameters, for the purposes of expediency.

## **QUORUM**

Quorum for general voting purposes will be one half of all West New York Public Schools/Entities **currently serving with representation**, plus one. For the purposes of quorum, At-Large members are not counted in the overall school/entity number.

Each general member will have one vote. In clarification, if a school is allowed up to three general members, that school may have up to three votes, etc.

## **MEETINGS**

All general PAC meetings are free and open to the public. Agendas will be available one week in advance through the PAC representatives. A portion of every meeting will be set aside for public comment.

The PAC will meet in general meeting at least 4 times from October through June. One transitional/training retreat will be held in September, prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> of the month.

## **TRAINING AND TRANSITION**

Transitional/training meetings will occur no later than September 30<sup>th</sup>. This meeting will act as training, transition, and retreats for the purpose of passing the responsibilities of

representation to the PAC's incoming members, goal setting, scheduling meetings, establishing committees/task forces/judicial committees, or any other appropriate topic of preparation for the new year.

All members; general, alternate, at-large, new and standing, are required to attend.

## **HEARINGS AND APPEALS**

The PAC may move to remove a representative by a super majority vote of 2/3. Ground for such removal may include though not be limited to:

- Poor attendance
- School/Parent/Student complaint
- Illegal behavior
- Inability to meet a majority of the expected duties
- Mistreatment of other members
- Misuse of e-mail lists

## **POOR ATTENDANCE**

In the case of attendance, it is expected that PAC representatives will attend all general meetings. Since this is not always possible, notification of absence in advance of the meeting is encouraged. Follow-up with the Secretary to receive important information is also encouraged.

However, in the case of chronic poor meeting attendance; more than three consecutive unexcused absences, the Executive Committees will act as follows:

- The Secretary will attempt to contact the member, allowing a two-week period and a range of modalities (e-mail, phone call, letter) to be used to find out what might be causing the chronic lack of attendance for the purposes of correcting the situation.
- If the general member cannot be reached, their circumstances have changed to disallow them to be a PAC representative, or they indicate that they no longer want to continue as a representative, then their name will be brought forward to the PAC as a whole to approve their release from their responsibilities.

## **OTHER GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL**

A complaint may be lodged with any of the three current PAC Officers. This complaint must be made in writing and signed and dated by the complainant.

Within 72 hours of receiving the complaint, a Judicial Committee of three randomly chosen members will be convened to judge the merit of the complaint. They will have one week to investigate the complaint, at which time they will recommend either a dismissal of the complaint, or that the complaint proceed to a full hearing. They will explain their reasoning and findings.

The Executive Committee will then notify the defendant in writing of the complaint, and find a mutually agreeable hearing time for all the parties. Both parties may bring anyone and anything they deem necessary to clarify the situation or to witness or support the proceedings. The hearing must be convened within 10 days to the written notification of the hearing, or as close to this as possible to satisfy all concerned parties; not to exceed two weeks. After the hearing, the Executive Committee will render a decision as to the resolution of the complaint, with that possible resolution being up and including the removal of the PAC member. This decision will be made in writing to the defendant within 3 days.

An appeal may be lodged in writing to the Executive Committee within 3 days of the decision. The Director of Special Services will hear the appeal of this ruling within 10 days of appeal notification. The Director's decision will be final.

If the complaint is lodged against any member of the Executive Committee, the Judicial Committee's recommendation will be made to the PAC as a whole for consideration. The defending Executive Committee member will recuse themselves from all pertinent discussions. The Judicial Committee will coordinate the hearing process, if necessary, with the PAC as a whole passing judgment through a consensus process.

The Notification and Appeal process remains the same, with a representative of the Judicial Committee serving as a PAC representative.

## **AMENDMENTS AND RATIFICATION**

All amendments to and ratification of this document must be done through a super majority of 2/3 current voting members.

All amendments and ratification must be discussed in full meeting and voted on in a subsequent meeting, allowing time for sufficient quorum and discussion to develop.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

The WNY PAC is an inclusive body, striving for the best possible representation of parents and students receiving special education services in the District. To that end we strongly encourage all interested and qualified parties to place themselves in nomination to serve as a representative.