



Atlantis Charter School
Special Education Process and Procedure Manual

Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Referral and Evaluation

Section 3: The Team Process and IEP Development

Section 4: Education Services in the Home or Hospital

Section 5: Discipline

Section 6: SEPAC

Appendix:

A. SST Intervention Plan

B. Notice of Evaluation

C. Physical Restraint Policy

D. SEPAC By-Laws

Section 1: Introduction

The Atlantis Charter School Special Education Process and Procedure Manual was created to ensure accuracy and consistency of special education practices across the district. All information contained in this manual reflects the provision of special education and related services according to 603 CMR 28.00.

All required forms and documents can be found on Frontline, the school's special education online platform, and the shared drive under "Special Education Resources". All special education personnel responsible for the implementation and/or coordination of the special education evaluation and services should become familiar with the procedures within this manual.

The manual will be reviewed at least annually and revisions to content will be made as deemed necessary. District administration and staff will be notified of any changes.

Section 2: Referral and Evaluation

The Atlantis Charter School utilizes a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) structure that includes a Student Support Team (SST) approach to address the needs of struggling students through general education. Our SST team is a group of educators who meet biweekly to discuss struggling students and develop intervention strategies. These strategies are documented on an SST Intervention Plan (**Appendix A**). SST Intervention Plans are shared with families. The K-6 and 7-12 Principals are responsible for coordinating the SST process and monitoring student progress.

SST Intervention Plans are designed to be implemented before students are referred for special education evaluation. Ideally, when concerns arise regarding student progress, the district would have first convened the SST Team to develop, implement, and document the effectiveness of accommodations and interventions to support the student within general education, including students falling significantly below the relevant benchmarks on the Early Literacy screeners. However, the evaluation process cannot be delayed because the district has not fully explored supports through general education.

A student may be referred for an evaluation by a parent or any person in a caregiving or professional position that is concerned with the student's progress in school.

School Referral:

When the SST Team determines that all efforts have been made to support the student through general education and these efforts have not been successful, the Principal should refer the student for an initial evaluation to determine eligibility for special education.

The Principal shall contact the Special Education Director via e-mail to initiate the referral. The Principal will also notify the parents that a referral for special education evaluation was made and they will receive a call from the Special Education Director within 5 school days. The Principal will submit the student's SST Intervention Plan and any relevant supporting documentation to the Special Education Director. The Special Education Director will review the documentation as well as contact the student's parents/guardians to discuss the referral and obtain their input on the student's strengths and needs to determine appropriate evaluations to be conducted. The Special Education Director will send out to the parent/guardian an evaluation consent form to review and sign off on to begin the evaluation process.

Parent/Caregiver Referral:

If a parent or caregiver makes a request for evaluation orally or in writing, the Special Education Director must be notified immediately. The Special Education Director will contact the parent/guardian within 5 school days to discuss the reason for the referral, explain the evaluation process, determine the appropriate evaluations and answer any additional questions.

Within 5 school days of receiving the referral for evaluation, the Special Education Director will provide the parent/guardian with a referral packet containing:

- Notice of Proposed District Action (N1)
- Evaluation Consent Form (N1-A)
- Notice of Procedural Safeguards

The evaluation cannot begin until the district receives the signed evaluation consent form from the parents.

If the parent does not return the Evaluation Consent Form within 30 calendar days, the Special Education Director will follow up with an email and call the

parent/guardian. A second referral packet will be sent home if/when appropriate.

Any and all efforts to obtain parental consent will be made and documented.

Upon receipt of the signed Evaluation Consent Form, the timeline for the evaluation process begins. **The evaluation must be completed within 30 school days. A team meeting must be scheduled within 45 days of receipt of the signed consent form.** The Special Education Records Clerk notifies all examiners that the consent has been received and they may begin their evaluations via a Notice of Evaluation form (**Appendix B**). The Special Education Records Clerk also contacts the parents to set up the Team meeting. A Team meeting Invitation (N3) and Attendance Form (N3A) are sent home to parents.

Upon request, all evaluations are made available to parents at least 2 days prior to the Team meeting. The Special Education Director is responsible for sending the evaluation reports to all parents.

Receipt of evaluation consent forms at the end of the school year:

If consent is received within 30-45 school days before the end of the school year, the district must ensure that a Team meeting is scheduled so as to allow for the provision of the proposed Individualized Education Program (IEP) or written notice of finding of no eligibility no later than 14 days after the end of the school year. For consents received fewer than 30 days prior to the end of the school year, the timeline starts at the receipt of consent and stops on the last day of school, and re-starts the following school year.

Required Assessments:

Evaluations must include assessments in all areas related to the suspected disability. All evaluations are administered and interpreted by trained professionals.

An educational assessment by a representative of the school district, including

- Educational Assessment: Part A - a history of the student's educational progress in the general curriculum
- Educational Assessment: Part B - an assessment of the student's attention skills, participation behaviors, communication skills, memory, and social relations with groups, peers, and adults (to be completed by general education teacher(s)).
- Specific Learning Disability Forms (SLD 1,2,3,4) – when students are suspected of having a learning disability (to be completed by Special Education Director).

- Related service assessment – when students are suspected of having a disability in an area of related service (SLP, OT, PT etc)
- Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) – if student's behavior interferes with his/her learning (to be completed by district Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)).

Optional assessments:

The Special Education Director may recommend, or a parent/guardian may request, one or more of the following:

- A health assessment
- A psychological assessment – all initial evaluations should have a psychological assessment
- A home assessment that includes information on pertinent family history and home situation and may include a home visit, with the agreement of the parent.

Reports of assessment results:

Each person conducting an assessment shall summarize in writing the procedures employed, the results, and the diagnostic impressions to help the Team determine eligibility for special education. Reports should be comprehensive, educationally relevant, and clearly written, so as to be easily understood by others. The examiner may recommend appropriate types of placements, but shall not recommend specific classrooms or schools. Reports should be given to the Special Education Director at least 3 days prior to the Team meeting unless otherwise specified.

Reevaluations:

A reevaluation will be conducted for each special education student at least every three years or more frequently if requested. Reevaluations may not occur more than once per year unless parents and the district agree that reevaluation is necessary. The Special Education Records Clerk and Special Education Director are responsible for monitoring reevaluation dates and initiating the reevaluation process.

If the district requests to waive any part of the evaluation, the Special Education Director will contact the parents to discuss the district's recommendation. The

parent/guardian may either consent to waive the evaluation(s) or choose to complete the evaluation regardless of the district's recommendation.

An Evaluation is required prior to ending an IEP service. The assessment can be a combination of standardized assessments and/or curriculum or classroom-based data.

“Outside Evaluation” at parental/guardian expense:

When the school district receives an outside evaluation that a parent completed at their expense, the report should be immediately given to the Special Education Director. The Special Education Director will review the report and determine if any additional required assessments need to be completed in order. If additional required assessments are needed the Special Education Director will contact the parent/guardian to discuss and send out an evaluation consent form to complete those assessments. If no additional required assessments are needed then *a Team meeting will be held within 10 school days to consider the information and recommendations contained in the report.* The Special Education Records Clerk will schedule the meeting with the parents/guardians and all relevant school staff. If the student currently receives special education services, the school district has the right to conduct its own evaluation to gain the best understanding of the student's strengths and needs.

Independent Education Evaluations (IEE) at public expense

- If a parent/guardian disagrees with evaluations completed by the school district, then the parent/guardian may request an independent education evaluation for up to 16 months from the date of the evaluation with which the parent/guardian disagrees. The district Special Education Director will respond to any requests for an IEE.
- All independent education evaluations shall be conducted by qualified persons who are registered, certified, licensed or otherwise approved and who abide by the rates set by the state agency responsible for setting such rates. Unique circumstances of the student may justify an individual assessment rate that is higher than that normally allowed.
- If the parent/guardian requests an IEE at public expense, the district must either pay for the IEE or, within 5 school days, request determination from the BSEA that the district's evaluation was comprehensive and appropriate.
- When the parent/guardian seeks and receives public funding for an independent education evaluation under these provisions, the

parent/guardian may request independent assessments in one, more than one, or all of the areas assessed by the school district.

- The parent/guardian may obtain an independent education evaluation at private expense at any time.
- Within 10 school days from the time the school district receives the report of the IEE, the Team shall reconvene and consider the IEE and whether a new or amended Individualized Education Program (IEP) is appropriate.

Extended Evaluations:

If the Special Education Team determines that a student is eligible for special education services, but the evaluation information is insufficient to develop an IEP, the Team, with the parents/guardians signed consent, may agree to an extended evaluation period. The Team documents their findings and the time period/information needed to develop an IEP on the Extended Evaluation Form. The evaluation period may be longer than one week, but not exceed eight school weeks. Extended evaluations cannot be used to deny services.

Section 3: The Team Process and IEP Development

The Team consists of:

- The student's parents/guardians
- At least one general education teacher familiar with the student
- At least one special education teacher familiar with the student or, if appropriate, a special education provider for the student.
- A representative of the district who acts as the chairperson and who is (1) qualified to supervise or provide special education; (2) is knowledgeable about the general curriculum; and (3) is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the district and is able to commit resources (Special Ed Director or Chairperson)
- Individuals who can interpret evaluation results
- Other individuals who have knowledge or expertise regarding the student or requested by the student's parent/guardian
- If appropriate, the student (beginning at age 14) will be invited to the Team meeting. The student's name will appear on the attendance form. Every effort will be made to have the student

participate in some or all of the Team meeting and their input will be included.

- When one purpose of the Team meeting is to discuss transition services, with the consent of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or student who has reached the age of majority, the public agency must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.
- When one purpose of the Team meeting is to discuss placement, a person knowledgeable about placement options is present at the meeting.

for students in a substantially separate classroom who participate in some inclusion opportunities, a general education teacher familiar with the student is required

The Special Education Records Clerk schedules all Team meetings (initials, reevaluations, and annual reviews) within mandated timelines. A Team meeting Invitation (N3) and Attendance Form (N3A) are sent home to parents/guardians. District staff receive an emailed Notice of Evaluation (NOE) or Google calendar invite and weekly IEP/504 Meeting Calendar with the meeting date/time. If a staff member receives the NOE and/or IEP/504 Calendar and they know they are unable to attend they must inform the Special Education Records Clerk or Special Education Director or Chairperson immediately otherwise their attendance is required unless they are excused by the student's parents/guardians.

Team Member Attendance Excusal Form:

If a Team member is unable to attend all or a portion of the Team meeting, the meeting can be held as long as the parents/guardians provide signed permission to excuse the attendance of the Team member. **If a Team member is unable to attend the meeting entirely, they must provide written input prior to the meeting.**

Team Responsibilities:

1. Determine eligibility for special education services (initial or reevaluation)
2. Develop an IEP for eligible students
3. Determine placement

Determining Eligibility:

Within school-working days after receipt of the parent/guardian's written consent to an initial evaluation or a reevaluation, the Team must review evaluation data, classroom performance, teacher, parent/guardian and student input to determine eligibility for special education services. A student may be found eligible for special education if:

1. A student has one or more of the following disabilities

Autism - A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction.

Developmental Delay - The learning capacity of a young child (3-9 years old) is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: receptive and/or expressive language; cognitive abilities; physical functioning; social, emotional, or adaptive functioning; and/or self-help skills.

Intellectual Impairment - The permanent capacity for performing cognitive tasks, functions, or problem solving is significantly limited or impaired and is exhibited by more than one of the following: a slower rate of learning; disorganized patterns of learning; difficulty with adaptive behavior; and/or difficulty understanding abstract concepts.

Sensory Impairment - The term shall include the following:

Hearing Impairment or Deaf - The capacity to hear, with amplification, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in hearing acuity tasks; difficulty with oral communication; and/or difficulty in understanding auditorally-presented information in the education environment. The term includes students who are deaf and students who are hard-of-hearing.

Vision Impairment or Blind - The capacity to see, after correction, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following: reduced performance in visual acuity tasks; difficulty with written communication; and/or difficulty with understanding information presented visually in the education environment. The term includes students who are blind and students with limited vision.

Deafblind - Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs.

Neurological Impairment - The capacity of the nervous system is limited or impaired with difficulties exhibited in one or more of the following areas: the use of memory, the control and use of cognitive functioning, sensory and motor skills, speech, language, organizational skills, information processing, affect,

social skills, or basic life functions. The term includes students who have received a traumatic brain injury.

Emotional Impairment - the student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Communication Impairment - The capacity to use expressive and/or receptive language is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: speech, such as articulation and/or voice; conveying, understanding, or using spoken, written, or symbolic language. The term may include a student with impaired articulation, stuttering, language impairment, or voice impairment if such impairment adversely affects the student's educational performance.

Physical Impairment - The physical capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas: physical and motor tasks; independent movement; performing basic life functions. The term shall include severe orthopedic impairments or impairments caused by congenital anomaly, cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures, if such impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Health Impairment - A chronic or acute health problem such that the physiological capacity to function is significantly limited or impaired and results in one or more of the following: limited strength, vitality, or alertness including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli resulting in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. The term shall include health impairments due to asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit with hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia, if such health impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Specific Learning Disability - The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language

spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

AND

2. The student is NOT making effective progress in school (for reevaluations – if student would not make progress without continued special education services)

AND

3. The lack of effective progress is the result of the student's disability

AND

4. The student requires specially designed instruction and/or a related service in order to make effective progress in school.

If a student has a disability but continues to make effective progress or does not require specially designed instruction, the student is not eligible for special education. However, the student may be eligible for a 504 plan.

An eligibility determination form is completed at every Initial and Reevaluation Team meeting. This form documents the evaluation findings and relevant information discussed at meeting. Parents/Guardians receive a copy of the flow chart at the end of the meeting.

Sec.300.541 Criteria for determining the existence of a specific learning disability: A Team may determine that a child has a specific learning disability if the child does not achieve commensurate with his or her age and ability levels in one or more key areas if provided with learning experiences appropriate for the child's age and ability levels. If the Team finds that a child has a severe discrepancy between his/her intellectual ability and achievement in one or more of the following areas, the Team may determine that the child has a specific learning disability:

- Oral expression.
- Listening comprehension.
- Written expression.
- Basic reading skill.
- Reading comprehension.
- Mathematics calculation.
- Mathematics reasoning.

The District has authority to use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as part of the evaluation procedures (See NCLB for definition of “scientific, research-based intervention”). The Student Support Team (SST) model is endorsed and utilized by Atlantis in conjunction.

Extra steps are required when a specific learning disability is suspected. The Team must fill out all of the SLD paperwork required by DESE to determine if SLD is an appropriate category.

Team members must certify in writing whether the written report reflects their conclusion of a finding of a specific learning disability. Any individual who disagrees with the written report must submit a separate statement to express their differing conclusions. The Team may not identify a child as having a specific learning disability if the severe discrepancy between ability and achievement is primarily the result of a visual, hearing, or motor impairment; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Finding of No Eligibility

After all assessments have been presented, if the Team makes a Finding of No Eligibility, the student is deemed ineligible for Special Education and the school must provide written notice to the parent/guardian within **10 school days** of the meeting (N2 if initial evaluation and N1 if reevaluation). Contained within the notice must be:

- What action is proposed or refused and why the decision was made
- Identify any other options considered and rejected by the Team
- Describe all evaluation tools and other relevant information used in reaching the decision
- Include procedural safeguards and source available to explain those safeguards.

Parents/Guardians also have the right to appeal any eligibility determination to the Bureau of Special Education Appeals, including a finding of no eligibility. Parents/Guardians may contact the Bureau directly or request district assistance in contacting this agency.

Eligibility can be determined at any age or grade level as some disabilities become more apparent as children progress through the grades.

A 504 Accommodation Plan may be appropriate.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. This law protects a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include learning. If the Team feels that the student requires a 504 plan then the Team will complete the 504 eligibility and develop such a plan if the student is found eligible.

IEP Development:

Once a student is found eligible for special education, the Team works collaboratively to develop an IEP. The IEP is a formal agreement between parents/guardians and the Atlantis Charter School District. An IEP is tailored to the specific needs of the student. The Team should consider the following areas when developing the IEP:

- Parent/Guardian/Student concerns
- Student's vision (ages 3-13) for that year and by end of elementary or middle school
- Student's vision/Postsecondary Goals (ages 14-22): while in high school; education/training after high school; employment after high school; independent living after high school.
- Parent/Guardian/Team's vision in response to student's vision for that year and the next 5 years
- Student strengths, preferences, interests
- Impact of disability on a student's progress in general ed curriculum and areas of other educational need (including accommodation and/or modifications, assistive technology, English Language Learner needs)
- Current level of performance and goals/objectives that are measurable and reflect high expectations
- Service delivery needs
- Modifications to length of school day/year and non-participation justification if applicable
- Transportation requirements if applicable
- Participation in State and District-Wide Assessments
- Social skill development and a student's ability to avoid or respond to acts of bullying, harassment, and teasing
- Autism specific related information if applicable
- Other information specific to the identified disability
- Transition planning for student's 14 and older
- Age of Majority, Transition to Adult Services if applicable

The IEP should be individualized, internally consistent, and assist the student in gaining independence.

Extended School Year (ESY):

According to Special Education Regulations, a student with an IEP is eligible for special education ESY services if he/she/they are likely to demonstrate substantial regression of skills and/or he/she/they are going to require a longer time to recoup the skills lost over an extended period such as a vacation.

Decisions about ESY eligibility are made yearly as part of the Team process. ESY recommendations are documented on the student's IEP.

The DESE interprets a child's difficulties with recoupment to be an aspect of significant regression. Regression and recoupment consist of the following:

1. Loss of performance levels that were attained before a break in service
2. The child's limited learning rate, which lengthens the amount of time the child requires to review and/or relearn previously obtained skills
3. The time it takes for the child to accomplish such recoupment is greater than the period of time the school district allows all other children for review and/or relearning.

Along with significant regression and limited recoupment, the DESE has also outlined other criteria that can also be considered:

1. The degree of impairment
2. The child's rate of progress
3. Lack of progress over 2 marking periods

Transportation:

The Massachusetts charter school statute, M.G.L. Ch. 71 § 89(cc), requires that students who reside in the school district in which the charter school is located shall be provided transportation to the charter school by the resident school district in the same manner as transportation is provided to students attending its local district schools. For disabled students enrolled in a charter school and who reside outside of the district in which the charter school is located, the charter school is obligated to provide these services.

State and district-wide assessments

Special education students must be included in state and district-wide assessments. The IEP Team is responsible for determining how a student will participate in these types of assessments.

For each district or statewide assessment, the Team must first decide whether the student can take the on-demand test as given. If not, Team members must determine whether the student can take the on-demand test with accommodations. Team members should ensure that their accommodation recommendations on the state and district-wide assessment section coincide with their earlier recommendations included in the student's classroom accommodations.

If the Team feels the student should not take any one of the on-demand assessments even with accommodations, then the Team may recommend the student to be assessed through an alternate assessment. Since Massachusetts has adopted state models for alternate assessments, after recording the reason for such assessment, Teams need only indicate that state alternate assessment models will be used.

All students must be included in the statewide assessment system. No student can be exempt even if a parent/guardian prefers the student not be included.

The Team meets at least annually to review student progress and rewrite the IEP. Input of parents/guardians and students (14 years and older) is a valuable component of the IEP. If the student is not making progress or meets their goals before the annual meeting date, the Team should reconvene. Parents/Guardians or the district can request a meeting to discuss the IEP at any time.

In most instances, The Special Education Director or Chairperson facilitates all initial, reevaluation and review Team meetings.

Special Education Director or Chairperson send a draft IEP to the parents/guardians via email for all annual meetings. This is a **working document** which is used to facilitate discussion. It is revised during the meeting based on the Team's discussion. Parents/Guardians receive a copy of the draft service delivery grid with goal focus areas along with any changes made during the meeting listed.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN DEVELOPING AN IEP

Eligible Students with Behavior Problems:

If an eligible student's behavior affects performance in the general curriculum, then the interfering behavior should be reflected in the Present Levels of

Academic Achievement and Functional Performance: Academics and Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance: Behavioral/Social/Emotional. Teams are reminded that IDEA-2004 requires pro-active steps in behavior management and in the provision of positive behavioral supports for eligible students whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others.

Requirements for Students with disabilities on the autism spectrum: Whenever an evaluation indicates that a child has a disability on the autism spectrum, which includes autistic disorder [autism], Asperger's disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified, childhood disintegrative disorder, and Rhett's Syndrome as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition (DSM-IV, 2000), the IEP Team shall consider and shall specifically address all Autism-Specific Questions embedded in the New IEP form and if student has needs in one or more area below indicate in what section of the IEP these needs are addressed.

- 1) The needs resulting from the disability that impact progress in the general curriculum, including social and emotional development (e.g., organizational support, generalizing skills, practicing skills in multiple environments
- 2) the need for any positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address any behavioral difficulties resulting from autism spectrum disorder; and
- 3) the need to develop social interaction skills and proficiencies
- 4) the needs resulting from resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines
- 5) the needs resulting from engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements
- 6) the needs resulting from the child's unusual responses to sensory experiences
- 7) the needs in the areas of verbal and nonverbal communication, including but not limited to those identified in assistive technology/AAC evaluation(s)

Bullying prevention and intervention law and identifying eligible students' needs: IEP Teams must determine whether the student has any needs based on disability-related skills and proficiencies in order to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. The provisions of the Massachusetts bullying prevention and intervention law apply to eligible students. The provisions apply if the student's disability (a) is on the autism spectrum, or (b) affects social skills

development, or (c) makes the student vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing.

For students on the autism spectrum, protection under the law will be automatic. Due to the nature of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), progress in positive social skill development is already a likely focus within the IEP of every student with ASD. Social skills instruction should be at the student's skill level and appropriate for his/her age. The focus of the IEP in relation to the bullying intervention and prevention law will be to aid the student in accessing social and emotional learning to handle more effectively challenges in his/her academic, social, and communication realms.

For students in the other categories, the Team must make a determination as to whether the student's disability affects social skills development or renders the student vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing. Teams should be aware that students with emotional impairments, developmental delays, health impairments, communication disorders, and neurological impairments are likely to have a disability that affects their social skills development. However, Teams should carefully evaluate whether students with any type of impairment have delays in social skills development or are otherwise vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of their disability.

The IEP Team's discussion focuses comprehensively on the student's educational needs and on the student's overall involvement in the school, including participation in the general curriculum and in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities. In this process, the IEP Team considers the student's disability and the impact of the disability on the student's interaction and communication with others. After the IEP Team has identified a student's needs, the Team should have a discussion of what goals, objectives services, supports, instruction, and accommodations should be included in the student's IEP. The IEP Team must consider the student's skills in the following areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Transition Planning

Transition services means a coordinated set of activities that:

1. Is designed with an outcome process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation
2. Is based on the student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests
3. Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-secondary adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Transition planning is required under Federal Law and becomes a major Team focus when a student reaches fourteen years of age. The IEP vision statement aids Team members in determining the student's transition needs, transition goals and transition services. The Special Education Director or chairperson works collaboratively with students, parents/guardians, and special education staff to develop a transition plan for students (14 years and older). The transition plan is reviewed annually. Transition plans are developed by the IEP Team with input from the student, parents/guardians, and other Team members. Transition plans are embedded in the New IEP.

As a student approaches 2 years prior to graduation, the Team must also consider the student's graduation status, the possibility of a referral for Chapter 688 services (services from adult human service agencies) and the involvement of adult service agencies. The Team is required to write IEPs that prepare students with disabilities for independence and employment and other post-school activities. According to regulations Chapter 688 referrals are made for students who are eligible for special education, have a severe disability, and are unable to work 20 hours/week. The Special Education Director will make any required Chapter 688 referrals.

Age of Majority:

At the age of 18, all rights under Special Education Law transfer from the parents/guardians to the student, except in specific cases provided by law. A notification letter is discussed and shared with the student and his/her/their parents/guardians at the IEP meeting that is at least one year in advance of the student's 18th birthday. The Special Director is responsible for reviewing this

notice with the student and his/her/their parents/guardians. Special procedures are available for students who voluntarily elect to share or delegate decision-making responsibilities.

Placement:

Once the IEP is developed, the Team determines the placement. Placement is always discussed after development of the IEP.

According to special education regulations, **the first placement option considered for each student with a disability must be the general education classroom with the provision of needed supports and services.**

Placement decisions must be consistent with the IEP and provide a student with FAPE in the least restrictive environment. The general education classroom is assumed to be the least restrictive unless the unique needs of the student determine otherwise.

An in-district placement should always be considered and recommended before an out-of-district placement is considered. If the Team determines that an out-of-district placement is necessary, the Team must be mindful of the requirement to give preference to approved programs located in Massachusetts.

Note: According to regulations, a specialized or substantially separate program operated in a public-school building that serves students with and without disabilities is NOT considered out of district.

Out of District Placement Recommendations

If the Team determines that the student cannot be serviced appropriately within an in-district program after several documented efforts to meet the student's needs, the IEP Team shall write the IEP to meet the needs of the student and end the meeting. ***Within 2 school days after the meeting the Team must schedule a meeting to determine placement and invite a representative from the sending school district. The sending school district must be given at least 5 days notice of the placement meeting and the meeting must be held within 10 school days of the IEP meeting.***

The proposed IEP, Placement Page, and N1 are sent to parents/guardians within 2 calendar weeks after the Team meeting. If the Team is unable to come a decision about IEP goals, services, and/or placement, the Special Education Director will determine the recommendation of the district and parents/guardians will be notified of their rights under due process.

IEP Electronic or Digital Signatures

MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently (July 2024) shared the following guidance regarding electronic signatures for evaluation consents and IEP's:

Electronic or digital signatures may be accepted to indicate parental/guardian consent for an initial evaluation, reevaluation, or the provision of special education and related services *if* the school district ensures appropriate safeguards are in place to protect the integrity of the process. An electronic or digital signature can be used if the parent/guardian has been **fully informed and received written notice** in the parent's/guardian's primary language that is understandable to the general public of the activity for which the consent is requested. The **parent/guardian must agree in writing** to the activity and the signature must authenticate a particular person as the source of the consent. See [USED IDEA Part B Procedural Safeguards Q&A 06/30/2020 \(PDF\)](#).

If a district is utilizing an electronic process for IEP signatures, it must ensure parents and guardians are able to view and review the entirety of the IEP documents before signing. They should also be able to print or download a copy to maintain for their records and reference. If printing or downloading a copy is not an option in the electronic system, the district must provide hard copies consistent with [603 CMR 28.05\(7\) - Parent Response to Proposed IEP and Placement](#).

As a result of this guidance; Atlantis Charter Schools Electronic Signature Policy is as follows:

All IEP students at start of School year:

A notice in the student's/ families' primary language will be sent to all IEP student families at the start of each school year via text and email with a Google form embedded for the parent/guardian to indicate if they prefer a hard copy to sign or an electronic copy to sign via the DigiSigner portal.

Evaluation Consent Forms:

When an evaluation consent form is being shared, the Special Education Director will correspond with the parent/guardian to share that the document can be shared electronically via the DigiSigner portal or a hard copy. Parent/guardian will be asked their preference and an email will be sent to the parent/guardian for them to indicate preference. If the parent/guardian responds that they are requesting a hard copy, the district will send out 2 hard copies of the evaluation consent form. If there is no response, it is assumed that the electronic copy is permissible by the parent/guardian.

Per traditional procedure, if a consent is not signed within 20 school days, the district will reach out via email to remind the parent/guardian of the consent and again ask if they prefer hard copies of the evaluation consent form. If no response, the district will reach out by day 25 and again on day 30 of sending.

IEP or Amendment Signatures:

Parents/guardians will receive either a meeting summary form or draft IEP at the IEP meeting via email or in person. At the IEP meeting, parents/guardians will be asked if they prefer the proposed IEP to be sent electronically or hard copy to sign via the DigSigner. If the parent/guardian has not signed the initial consent form for electronic signatures one will be sent to them to complete prior to the sending the proposed IEP electronically. If parent/guardian agrees to electronic signature they will receive an electronic copy of the signed IEP via email and a hard copy of the signed IEP will be sent home via student back-pack or US Mail.

If the parent/guardian objects to the electronic receipt of the IEP, the district will send two hard copies of the IEP via US Mail or student back-pack if permitted by the parent/guardian.

Timeline for Parents/Guardians Response to Proposed IEP

No later than 30 calendar days after receipt of the proposed IEP and placement the parents shall:

- accept or reject all or a portion of the IEP or
- request a meeting to discuss the rejected portions of the IEP
- accept or reject the proposed placement

If the district does not receive a response from a parent/guardian within 30 calendar days the Special Education Director implements the following procedures:

After 35 days -email and telephone call made to parents/guardians as a friendly reminder and another copy of the IEP is offered.

After 45 days – telephone call and written notice is mailed to parents/guardians along with a second copy of the IEP.

After 60 days – a follow up call by the Special Education Director and a second written notice

After 80 days – another copy is sent home certified mail

After 90 days – TEAM convenes to determine best course of action. This may include a referral to BSEA

All attempts to obtain parent's/guardian's response to the IEP are documented in the student's file.

Receipt of signed IEPs:

Parents/ Guardians are provided a self-addressed envelope with **2 copies** of the proposed IEP to sign and return to the Special Education Department. The Special Director stamps the IEP as received, logs the parent's/guardian's response in Frontline and on a tracking spread sheet, notifies appropriate staff of the parent/guardian response, and files the IEP in the student file. All accepted parts of the IEP are implemented immediately.

Partially or Fully Rejected IEPs

When the district receives a rejected IEP (partial or full), the Special Education Director contacts the parents/guardians to discuss their concerns. At times, parent/guardian concerns are minimal and can be addressed directly over the phone. If their concerns cannot be resolved over the phone, the Team is reconvened. The Special Education Director notifies the BSEA in writing of the rejected IEP. The letter to the BSEA contains the reason for the rejection, the district's plan to resolve the parent's/guardian's concerns, the Administrative Data page, and all rejected pages of the IEP.

Stay-Put Provision:

In accordance with state and federal law, during the duration of any dispute regarding placement or services, the eligible student shall remain in his or her current education program and placement unless the parents/guardians and the school district agree otherwise.

If the parents/guardians are seeking initial placement in the public school, and the child is at least five years old, however, the child shall be placed in the public-school program.

Staff Notification of IEPs

During staff orientation week (August) or common planning meetings (during the school year), special education teachers are responsible for reviewing students' IEPs with general education teachers and answering questions about the students with disabilities on their caseload. Each general education teacher is responsible for acknowledging they have read and understand the IEP for students in their class. The special education teacher or related service provider is responsible for keeping staff informed of any amendments or changes to the IEP over the course of the year. The teachers also all have access to the IEP on Frontline.

Instructional Grouping

Once the IEP is signed and parent/guardian consent is received and the student receives special education or related services outside the general education classroom, the Special Education Director ensures that all instructional groups consist of students whom ages of the youngest and oldest student do not differ by more than 48 months. Also that the instructional group size does not exceed 8 students with a licensed (certified) special educator; 12 students if the licensed (certified) special educator is assisted by 1 aide; or 16 students if the licensed (certified) special educator is assisted by 2 aides. If after the school year begins, if instructional groups have reached maximum size the Special Education Director will make every effort to reduce the groups size and if that is not possible the Special Education Director will provide written notification to the Department and the parents/guardians of all group members of the decision to increase group size and the reasons for such decision (this would be only for the year in which they initiated the request). A written request for approval of a wider age range is submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in cases where the district believes is justified.

Progress reports:

Progress reports reflect steps taken towards annual goals. Progress reports must be sent to parents/guardians at least as often as parents/guardians are informed of their nondisabled children's progress (once per quarter along with report card). Progress reports must answer the following two questions for each goal:

1. What is the student's progress toward the annual goal?
2. Is the progress sufficient to enable the student to achieve the annual goal by the end of the IEP period?

Progress reports may prompt the Team to amend an IEP. If a lack of expected progress continues past the first progress report, the Team should make IEP adjustments and may want to consider rewriting a goal to set a different and more attainable standard.

If a student is making more progress than projected, progress reports may make recommendations on next steps.

Progress reports run the life of the IEP, not the school year.

All progress reports are completed by the service providers. Special education teachers or service providers are responsible for completing the progress reports in Frontline where they are reviewed by the Special Education Director. After reviewing the progress reports they are sent out electronically via email through Frontline. Progress reports that need to be translated are sent out to be translated and emailed to families once they are received back. A copy of the progress reports are printed by the Special Education Director and are given to the Special Education Records Clerk to be filed in the student's special education file.

Amendments:

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) Amendment is designed to be used in conjunction with other IEP pages. The form should be used for minor IEP adjustments that do not change the type of placement.

The explanation of a proposed change should include the IEP section(s) that the change will affect. Team members must attach the IEP page(s) to the amendment to help clarify the recommended adjustment. For instance, if an IEP goal is being altered, the goal page the reworded goal should be attached or if service delivery is being altered, the service delivery grid with the adjusted services should be attached.

The Team may be convened during the school year to consider evaluation reports and/or to modify or amend a student's current IEP. The IEP may also be amended or modified without the need to reconvene the Team by agreement of the parents/guardians and District.

Section 4: Educational Services in the Home or Hospital

The Massachusetts regulation requiring educational services in the home or hospital is 603 CMR 28.03(3)(c). It reads as follows:

Upon receipt of a physician's written order verifying that any student enrolled in a public school or placed by the public school in a private setting must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of not less than fourteen school days in any school year, the principal shall arrange for provision of educational services in the home or hospital. Such services shall be provided with sufficient frequency to allow the student to continue his or her educational program, as long as such services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. The principal shall coordinate such services with the Administrator for Special Education for eligible students. Such educational services shall not be considered special education unless the student has been determined eligible for such services, and the services include services on the student's IEP.

Once the student's personal physician (for example, a pediatrician, internist, medical specialist or psychiatrist) determines that a student's medical condition will require either hospitalization or home care for not less than 14 school days, the physician must notify the school district responsible for the student in order to begin the home/hospital instruction process. The student's physician must complete a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education form 28R/3 (or equivalent signed statement) and submit it to the student's *building principal or other appropriate program administrator*. At a minimum the physician's signed notice must include information regarding:

- the date the student was admitted to a hospital or was confined to home;
- the medical reason(s) for the confinement;
- the expected duration of the confinement; and
- what medical needs of the student should be considered in planning the home or hospital education services

Once a home/hospital form is received a specific instructional plan is developed based on an individual's circumstances, but common instructional services include the provision of in-home or in-program tutoring with an Atlantis staff member or tutor at the program child is at, design of an independent study project by classroom teachers that mirrors the in-school instruction, access to curriculum via Google classroom and/or Edgenuity and regular delivery of classroom instructional materials and guiding documentation for independent practice.

The school ensures that such services are provided with sufficient frequency (minimum of 1 hour per core subject area), but also works with students and families to ensure that the services do not interfere with medical needs.

Atlantis Principals coordinate this instructional planning with the Special Education Director for any student eligible for special education services.

If, in the judgment of the student's physician, a student with an IEP is likely to remain at home, in a hospital, or in a pediatric nursing home for medical reasons and for more than sixty (60) school days in any school year, the Special Education Director will convene a Team meeting, *without undue delay*, to consider evaluation needs and, if appropriate, to amend the existing IEP or develop a new IEP suited to the student's unique circumstances. (See 603 CMR 28.04(4)).

Section 5: Discipline:

Students with disabilities may be suspended for up to 10 days in any school year as typical peers.

In the case of a student with a disability a ***suspension of more than 10 days (or a suspension that would, with previous suspensions that year, total more than ten days) or expulsion (which is viewed as a change of placement) requires an emergency Team meeting.*** The purpose of this Team meeting is to make a manifestation determination.

Manifestation Determination Meeting:

Relevant members of the Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the IEP, teacher observations, and any information provided by the parents/guardians to determine if the conduct in question is caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability or was the direct result of the district's failure to implement the IEP. If any of these circumstances are found, long-term suspension or expulsion may not be imposed.

The IEP/504 Team must determine if there is a relationship between the school discipline policy violation and the student's disability in order to make decisions

about the consequence for the misconduct, as well as the student's continuing educational and behavioral needs. If the behavior in question is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the student may be disciplined under the general conduct code of the school. The IEP/504 Team considers all relevant information, including evaluation/diagnostic results, observations of the student, written teacher feedback, parent/guardian input and the student's IEP/504 and placement.

The Team must consider:

Is the IEP appropriate?

Is there a Behavior Intervention Plan? Is the plan appropriate?

Is the IEP implemented as written, including appropriate behavior management procedures?

Did the disability prevent the student from understanding the impact and consequences of the behavior in question?

Did the disability prevent the student from controlling the behavior in question?

As part of the Manifestation Determination Process a Functional Behavioral Assessment will be conducted, within the current school year if one has not previously been completed.

Functional behavioral assessment (FBA) is a process for addressing student problem behaviors, the settings under which the problem behaviors may or may not be observed, and the function (the why) of the problem behaviors. This information is obtained by collecting data from direct observation and is used to develop an effective plan to reduce the frequency or severity of the problem behavior. If a behavior management plan has not been developed, one will be created utilizing the most current assessments. If one has been created, the TEAM will revise the behavior management plan based on the most current results.

If the TEAM concludes that the student's conduct had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability, the TEAM should reevaluate the student's IEP and the appropriateness of the placement.

If after review of all the assessments, observations and parent/guardian/teacher feedback, the TEAM concludes the behavior is **not a manifestation of the disability** then the school's standard disciplinary procedures will be applied; and

the student will continue to receive educational services with access to the general education curriculum and progress towards IEP goals. If the student has a repeated pattern of change in placement beyond ten days, due to disciplinary action, then the TEAM must meet and re-write the IEP or 504 plan and determine appropriate placement if needed.

The TEAM will present the alternative plan to the student's parents/guardians along with the written notice as required by state and federal laws and regulations. Refusal or failure of the parents/guardians to consent to the provision of services under the alternative plan shall not prevent the suspension from being implemented.

If the student's parents/guardians request a hearing before the Massachusetts Department of Education Bureau of Special Education Appeals, the student shall continue in the last agreed upon placement pending the hearing, unless another placement is agreed to by the parties or a court order permits the school to change the student's placement for up to forty five school days, based on a showing that the student's continued presence in school presents a substantial likelihood of injury to students or others. After an expedited hearing before the Massachusetts Department of Education Bureau of Special Education Appeals, the hearing officer may order a change in the placement of the student to an appropriate interim educational setting determined by the TEAM for not more than 45 days.

In all instances when a change in placement or a suspension of 10 or more days will be imposed, the student must be provided with a free appropriate public education.

The Team may determine a change in placement, with or without the parents/guardians' permission to an interim educational setting for a period not to exceed 45 days, as long as a free appropriate public education is provided, and a functional behavior assessment and manifestation determination is conducted in any of the following instances:

- a student carries a weapon to school or to a school function
- a student possesses or sells illegal drugs and/or controlled substances while at school or at a school function
- a student inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function

on the authority of a hearing officer if the officer orders the alternative placement after the district provides evidence that the student is “substantially likely” to injure him/herself or others.

No school shall suspend or exclude a student for more than 10 school days during any school year during the pendency of a Massachusetts Department of Education Bureau of Special Education Appeals process or judicial proceeding brought to challenge a suspension, proposed suspension, or any proposed disciplinary action, unless a court order has been obtained authorizing a temporary change in the student’s educational placement based on a showing that the student’s continued presence in school presents a substantial likelihood of injury to the student or others.

Parents/Guardians of students with a disability will be given written notice of procedural safeguards.

Use of Physical Restraint

Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the Atlantis Charter School District. Physical restraint shall be used as a last resort in emergency situations after other interventions have been attempted and there is an imminent safety concern. District Staff are required to contact the main office and seek immediate assistance for staff trained in physical restraint if a situation arises. (**Appendix C**)

Section 6: SEPAC

Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC)

SEPAC is a group of individuals focused on special education issues. It is comprised primarily of parents/guardians, but interested community members are welcome to attend. The Atlantis Charter School SEPAC is governed with a co-chair system with set by-laws (**Appendix D**). SEPAC is supported by Atlantis through payment of dues in MASSPAC and by providing space for meetings and resources/workshops upon request. Audio visual and other resources are available through a request to the Family & Community Resource Center Coordinator. The Special Education Director periodically attends SEPAC meetings. Participation in the planning, development and evaluation of the district's special education programming, and advising the district on matters pertaining to the safety and education of students with disabilities are functions of SEPAC. The school district and SEPAC conduct at least one workshop annually within the district on the rights of students and their parents and guardians under federal and state special education laws. All special education families are encouraged to participate.



Student name

General Info			
Strengths:		Concerns:	
SST Interventions Developed and Implemented by Team			
Concern	Intervention	Date Began + Person doing Intervention	Outcome
Running Notes			
Teacher Name and Date	Notes		



NOTICE OF EVALUATION

Date:

To: Click or tap here to enter text.

From: Jessica Lee

Re: Click or tap here to enter text.
enter text.

GRADE: Choose an item.

DOB: Click or tap here to

This student has been referred for:

- Initial—**
- Re-evaluation-**
- IEP Review-**
- Amendment—**
- Review of testing**
- Other—**

Parent/ Guardian Consent was received on:

(For Initials/ReEvals/Amendments Only)

The Testing Assessment Deadline is: Click or tap here to enter text.

All Written Teacher/Faculty Assessments are due to the Student Services Staff by at least THREE days prior to IEP meeting PART Bs DUE 3 DAYS BEFORE MEETING

Date of the IEP/504 TEAM Meeting: TBA-Please watch IEP calendar updates for posting to appear Click or tap here to enter text.

ASSESSMENT ASSIGNMENTS:

Part A: EDUCATIONAL STATUS: Click or tap here to enter text.
(Initials and 3 yr. ReEvals)

Part B: TEACHER ASSESSMENT: Click or tap here to enter text.
(All IEP & 504 Reviews/Initials/3 yr ReEvals/Amendments)

PSYCHOLOGICAL: Choose an item.

KTEA: Choose an item.

TEST OF DYSLEXIA (TOD): Choose an item.

VINELAND/ ABAS: Choose an item.

BASC: Choose an item.

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT (FBA): Choose an item.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE: Choose an item.

CTOPP: Choose an item.

PHYSICAL THERAPY: Choose an item.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY: Choose an item.

HEALTH ASSESSMENT: Choose an item.

(Nursing Office)

HOME ASSESSMENT: Choose an item.

CONNERS: Choose an item.

ASRS: Choose an item.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION: Choose an item.



Physical Restraint Protocol

1. The use of physical restraint on a student is to be used when the student is presenting with behaviors that constitute imminent physical danger to themselves or those around him or her.
2. The administration of a physical restraint should be done only by those staff members certified in the nationally accredited CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Program, which is the restraint training program endorsed by Atlantis Charter School (ACS).
3. All physical restraints should be terminated as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to themselves or others around them. In addition, a restraint must be terminated if the student verbalizes that he or she is having difficulty breathing or is experiencing severe physical distress.
4. A student needing to be restrained for a period longer than 20 minutes needs the approval of the Principal or their designee.
5. Whenever possible, the use of physical restraint shall be conducted by two or more trained staff members. There should always be an identified lead staff facilitator in the restraint. The lead facilitator is also responsible for communication with the student during the restraint.
6. After a student has been released from a restraint, the student should go through a debriefing period with the appropriate school personnel.
7. The Principal, if they have not already been involved in the incident, should be notified immediately upon the completion of the restraint that a restraint occurred.
8. All staff members involved in a physical restraint will conduct a follow-up debriefing where the events of the restraint are reviewed and reflected upon.
9. The Restraint Report Form is to be completed by the end of the school day that the restraint occurred. The reporting form should be completed by the staff member first to begin engagement with the student and should be submitted to the Principal and District Leader. Other staff members engaged in the restraint can assist with the documentation.
10. The parent/guardian of the restrained student will be notified of the physical restraint either by phone or in person by the end of the school day in which the restraint occurred. This notification will be completed by a Principal or Dean of Students. In addition, the parent will be provided with a written report notifying them of the events of the restraint either by e-mail or post marked mail within 3 working school days.
11. If a physical restraint results in physical injury to a student or staff member, the school must provide the MA DOE with a written report of the restraint within 3 working school days. This notification will be completed by District Leaders.
12. At the completion of each school year, all physical restraint data across the district will be submitted annually to the MA DOE per state regulations, by the District Leader.



SEPAC BY-LAWS

Atlantis Charter School Special Education Parent Advisory Council By-laws

Article I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the _Atlantis Charter School Special Education Parent Advisory Council, also known as Atlantis Charter School Special Education Advisory Council (hereinafter referred to as “SEPAC”).

Article II: Purpose

The SEPAC receives its statutory authority from the Chapter 71B, Section 3 of the Massachusetts General Laws. This authority is also codified in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR), 603 CMR 28.07(4).

The SEPAC’s duties include, but are not limited to:

- Advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities;
- Meeting regularly with school officials; and
- Participating in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district’s special education programs.

The mission of the SEPAC is to work for understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in the community:

“Parents and educators working hand in hand to promote understanding of special education and disability issues, and to support families for the benefit of the children with disabilities”

To that end, they will work to:

advise the School Committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities;

meet regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the School Committee’s special education programs;

assist the district in coordinating the presentation of at least one workshop annually within the school district on the rights of students and their parents and guardians under state and federal special education laws.

promote a support network of parents of children with special needs, and provide the forum to share information;

promote communication between SEPAC members, local, State and National organizations, councils and groups

promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion of special needs children..

provide educational/informational forums to parents, educators, students and professionals.

Article III: Membership

Section One: General membership

General membership shall be open to any interested person.

Section Two: Voting membership

Voting membership shall be limited to any general member who

- a) is a parent or guardian of a special needs student residing in or attending school in (District), with or without an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan'
- b) who has attended at least one meeting of the SEPAC during the past twelve months.

As used in these by-laws, the word "member" means general members, voting members or both, as the context indicates.

Article IV: Executive Board

Section One: The Executive Board of the SEPAC shall be comprised of a Chair/President and Vice Chair/Vice President, or two equal Co-Chairs (Co-Presidents), Secretary and Treasurer. All Executive Board members shall be voting members of the SEPAC, elected per the provisions of Article VI. Officers may, from time to time, delegate any of their duties to another officer.

Section Two: The duties of the Executive Board shall include:

Chair/President

Set the agenda for each general meeting.

Preside at all meetings of the SEPAC.

Recommend the organization and monitor the function of committees and subcommittees and appoint committee members

Act as liaison between parents of students with disabilities or suspected disabilities and the Administrator of Special Education.

Prepare periodic reports for the Special Education Administration regarding SEPAC activities and needs Represent and speak on behalf of the SEPAC at meetings of the School Committee

Make an annual presentation to the School Committee.

Co-Chair/Vice-President

Preside at meetings in the absence of the President, or at the request of the President.

Coordinate public communications (if needed), not including those communications that are the Secretary's.

Assist the President as appropriate and perform those responsibilities of the President at his/her request.

Secretary

Coordinate all communication between SEPAC and its membership

Maintain a list of the voting members and a list of general members
Coordinate the recording, filing and posting of minutes of the SEPAC and its committees.
Collect and review all correspondence of the SEPAC.

Treasurer

Shall keep a full and accurate account of receipts and expenditures, and in accordance with the budget adopted by the organization.
Shall arrange disbursements as authorized by the Executive Board or SEPAC. Disbursement for non-budgeted items must be approved by the Executive Board and is limited to \$50.00.
Disbursement for non-budgeted items exceeding this amount must be approved by a majority vote of the members at the monthly SEPAC meeting.
Shall present a financial statement at all SEPAC meetings and at other times when requested.
Coordinate efforts to apply for grants, donations, reimbursements or any other funds for which the SEPAC be eligible

Article V: Voting/Quorum

A quorum of no less than _____ (#) voting members must be present to constitute a meeting. (A quorum is usually a simple majority of the members of a public body. A quorum is the minimum of members who must be present for official decisions to be made. Individual SEPACs should set realistic quorums based on their practice and membership.)

Article VI: Elections*

Officers of the SEPAC are elected by the voting membership and hold office until the next annual meeting.(for one year or two years in some towns, each SEPAC decides). Elections shall occur (annually) at the (month or annual) meeting. All voting members are eligible to make nominations. No vote taken by a public body, either in an open or in an executive session, shall be by secret ballot.

If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held (by special meeting, at the next monthly meeting, provided notice is posted), with term to expire at the (state end of term – next annual meeting/elections).

(* it is a good idea to have elections before the end of the school year so you can be operational at the beginning of the subsequent year)

Elections shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the voting membership, subject to the presence of a quorum. New officers shall take office immediately following their election.
Any officer may resign by delivering a written notice of resignation by mail, in person, or by email to the Administrator of Special Education. Resignation shall be effective immediately upon such delivery unless the resignation is slated to be effective at another time. An officer may be removed with or without cause by vote of the voting members.

The SEPAC will inform the school district of the outcome of the annual elections and the names, addresses and phone numbers of the new board by June 1st of each year.

Article VII: Meetings

Meetings are defined as any SEPAC meeting or sub-committee meeting at which a quorum is present. The number of meetings to be held each year and the dates of those meetings shall be determined annually by

the Executive Board. Advance notice of any and all meetings and elections will be published/posted with a minimum of 48 hours advance notice and comply with the MA Open Meeting Law regulations.

Minutes of all SEPAC meetings shall be recorded and posted in accordance with the MA Public Records law.

The SEPAC shall hold an Annual Meeting of the voting members each year for the purpose of electing officers and to vote on any matters as shall be specified in the notice of such meeting.

Article VIII: Conflict of Interest

Any member of the Executive Board who has a financial, personal, or official interest in, or conflict (or appearance of a conflict) with any matter pending before the SEPAC, of such nature that it prevents or may prevent that member from acting on the matter in an impartial manner, will offer to the Board to voluntarily excuse him/herself and will vacate his seat and refrain from discussion and voting on said item.

Article IX: 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 V) votes unanimously to approve the change.

Article X: Procedures

Roberts Rules of Order are the default procedures for this organization.

Approved: (Date) 2/4/2021 _____