

Special Education Advisory & Advocacy Council (SEAAC)

Description and Charge January 2006

I. Charge

The Superintendent of Seattle Public Schools will establish a Special Education Advisory and Advocacy Council and seeks to appoint members who are dedicated to the improvement of educational programs, policies and procedures for children who have disabling conditions and need specialized educational services.

Scope

Seattle Public Schools is committed to a high quality education for all children. We are dedicated to providing a learning environment that inspires and supports all of our students. We know that the meaningful involvement of parents and supportive community agencies is a very important part of attaining that level of excellence, especially for our children with disabilities. Parent input may be gathered prior to, during, and following programmatic decisions and activities.

The special Education Advisory and Advocacy Council provides a District-recognized forum for the parent community and agencies that support children with disabilities. The primary responsibility of the Special Education Advisory and Advocacy Council is to provide Seattle Public Schools with parental and community agency perspectives on special education programs including current operation and management, policies, proposed changes, future plans, and goals. The Special Education Advisory and Advocacy Council will present its recommendations and opinions in a report on an annual basis, and more often as requested, to the Director of Student Services. The annual report will include a review of all projects and activities of the council, and all recommendations of the council.

Membership

A. Number

The council will include up to twenty members appointed by the Superintendent or his designee. A minimum of two-thirds of the members will be parents of children with disabilities currently enrolled in a special education program in Seattle Public Schools. The balance of the council will include staff representatives, agency personnel, civic groups, college or university personnel and/or members from other groups who have an interest in the education of children with disabilities.

B. Qualifications and Selection Criteria

Parent/family members

Parent/family members will have a student currently attending Seattle Public Schools. Preference shall be given to individuals who reside within the District.

Staff Representatives

Staff Representatives may include, but not be limited to, certificated teachers, building administrators, instructional assistants and central office staff/administrators.

Community Organization Representatives

Community representatives may hold positions in educational, service government or not-for-profit organizations/associations with an interest in and knowledge of special education. A representative of the organization should be nominated by the executive director or senior manager of the organization.

Appointments to the council will be made so that collectively the group will represent the diverse population of Seattle Public Schools in terms of ethnicity, language, race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, type of family (single-parent, foster care/kinship), geographic location within the city, and school level (pK-12).

C. Selection Process

- a. Nominations due by _____ on _____
- b. Nominations reviewed by Review committee: Between _____ and _____.
Members of the review committee will be appointed by the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning – and is likely to include:
 - Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning
 - Director of Special Education Services
 - Special Education Supervisor
 - University Representative
 - Consulting Teacher
 - Parent Representative
 - Special Education Ombudsperson
- c. Review committee recommends appointees and alternates to Superintendent
- d. Invited appointees notified by letter by _____
- e. Invited Appointees accept or decline a seat on the council
- f. Remaining seats will be filled by alternates
- g. Membership will be posted on the District website

No one may serve on the committee who has a financial interest in the outcome of the recommendations made by the committee.

D. Manner of notification – Notice of Nomination Process

The District shall provide public notice to individuals and organizations that may reasonably be interested in serving on the special Education Advisory and Advocacy Council. Notice shall include the following activities:

- a. District Website
- b. Direct written notice to active community organizations which may have an interest in participation
- c. Direct written notice to all Parent Student Teacher Associations at all school sites
- d. Direct written notice to all parents of students with disabilities
- e. Email to all staff, email to key communicators (Staff email will include a note asking faculty and staff to nominate parents that have expressed general concerns about special education services in Seattle Public Schools, with an emphasis on those who have not historically been actively represented in District decision-making processes. These include parents/families of differing gender, ethnicity, race, age and geographic locations.)
- f. News release to all news outlets, including g community and ethnic newspapers
- g. Postings in neighborhood centers
- h. Postings in public clinics and housing
- i. Posting at Public Libraries and community centers

E. Discussion of Consideration & Efforts

Members will be selected and appointed in accordance with School Board Policy F 08.00 and the accompanying Procedure F 08.01.

F. Duration of Committee and Terms of Office

- a. SEAAC is established as a standing committee unless otherwise dissolved by the Superintendent.
- b. Term of Office is set at one calendar year (September 1 – August 31).

II. Operations

A. Staffing

- a. The Special Education Advisory and Advocacy Council will operate fully on the work of its members and volunteers
- b. School District resources may be used for the following activities at the discretion of the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning
 - Scheduling meetings
 - Distributing agendas, handouts
 - Preparing and distributing minutes

B. Orientation

- a. An orientation session will be held to begin the work of the newly-appointed council, and annually thereafter for all new council members.

C. Responsibilities

- a. Council Members will be expected to attend monthly meetings (dates and times to be decided) and initial orientation training.