

# **Exceptional Student Education Advisory Council**

## **By-Laws - Approved November 2, 2015**

### **Article 1 – Name**

The Advisory shall be known as the:

“Exceptional Student Education Advisory Council”

Hereafter referred to as the “Council”.

### **Article 2 – Authority**

The Council exists pursuant to the Florida Department of Education IDEA discretionary grant.

### **Article 3 – Purpose**

The purpose of the Council is to:

Advise and assist the ESE Director and the Superintendent in reviewing the current status of Exceptional Student Education, identification of strengths and weaknesses, development of goals and objectives, by recommending priorities for the provision of a free and appropriate public school education in all areas affecting Exceptional Student Education.

Disseminate exceptional student education information to parents and the public.

For the purpose of the Council, the term “Exceptional Student Education” shall not include education programs for the Gifted, except when referring to Gifted Students with additional exceptionalities.

### **Article 4 – Membership**

Membership is open to all Palm Beach County residents with priority given to representatives of the public and private sector who, by virtue of their interest, position and or training, can contribute to the quality of education for Exceptional Student in the District.

The Council will strive to maintain 25 voting members and up to 5 non-voting honorary members.

Membership shall be voluntary and confirmed by appointment by the ESE Advisory Council. Although membership is voluntary, every member is strongly encouraged to attend each regularly scheduled Council meeting regardless of membership status, in order to ensure the proactive collaboration necessary to further Exceptional Student Education in Palm Beach County.

The Council will strive for the inclusion of no less than 51% of parents of children with a variety of disabilities and cultural backgrounds who are eligible to enter, are currently enrolled in or who have exited Palm Beach County Public Schools. The voting council shall not exceed 49% of School District employees.

The Council will strive for the inclusion of individuals with a variety of disabilities.

The term “parent” includes a Natural parent, Adoptive parent, Grandparent, Surrogate parent, Foster parent and Guardian.

The Council will strive to attain the following Council membership:

- 9 parents
- 5 agencies
- 3 principals (elementary, middle and high school preferred)
- 4 teachers
- 3 district employees
- 1 charter school representative

If this membership goal is achieved, the voting members of the Council will include 10 School District employees; 1 Charter School employee and 14 parents or agency representatives.

The ESE Director shall serve as a non-voting member of the Council.

Former ESE Directors and administrators who are not already members under a category listed above are invited to serve as non-voting honorary members.

Voting Council members are permitted to designate an alternate to attend a Council meeting and vote by proxy for them in the event of their absence, allowing only one proxy per person. It is recommended that the Council member ensure that their designated alternate represent their category (i.e., parent, teacher, etc.) The voting member must notify a Council officer of the designated alternate in writing 24 hours prior to the start of the regular schedule Council meeting.

### **Article 5 – Term of Membership**

To be nominated for membership, an individual must attend a minimum of three consecutive meetings and must have demonstrated the ability to collaborate with the other ESE Council members and effectively advocate for students with disabilities. A voting Council member may nominate an individual for membership during the first meeting of the year or during the meeting following a resignation of a voting member. At no time shall the council exceed 25 members. Individuals interested in being nominated for membership may submit a letter of intent to all voting members at any time.

Upon appointment by the ESE Advisory Council, each member shall serve for a term of two years. Automatic term renewals will occur unless the member is no longer in good standing or has indicated to the Chairperson the desire to vacate the position.

In order to maintain annual membership in good standing, each Advisory member must attend at least 50% of the regularly scheduled Council meetings. Absences will be recorded by the Secretary and appear in the minutes of each meeting.

Council members who attain more than an absence rate of 50% will receive a letter from the Chairperson thanking them for their past services to the Council and declaring the position vacant.

In cases where extraordinary circumstances have prevented a Council member from maintaining membership in good standing, said Advisory member has ten (10) days to appeal their dismissal.

## **Article 6 – Quorum**

For general business meeting purposes, a quorum shall be declared upon the attendance recording of 50% + 1 of the voting membership.

## **Article 7 – Sub-Committees**

Sub-Advisories can be suggested by anyone at an ESE Council meeting. The suggestion will be up for discussion and voted in by the Advisories.

Examples of sub-advisories are:

- By-Laws
- Early Elementary Education
- Inclusive Education
- Legislative
- Membership
- Nomination Recruitment
- Pre-K Committee
- Secondary Education
- Transition
- Vocation Education Training

## **Article 8 – Nominations/Recruitment**

Election of Officers shall take place every two years unless a seat becomes vacant earlier. The secretary of the Council will accept nominations from Council members in March for each election year. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the April general meeting of each election year. The general election will take place in May of each election year and voting will be done by written ballot.

## **Article 9 – Officers and Duties**

*Chairperson:*

- Must be a parent of an exceptional child.

- Must have served on the Council for a minimum of one year.
- May serve up to 2 consecutive 2 year terms, as previously defined in Article 8.
- Is the spokesperson for the Council.
- Sets agenda with the ESE Director prior to each meeting and may submit annual reports no later than August 31 of the current year.
- Appoints or accepts nominations from the Council for Sub-Advisory Chairpersons and members. If necessary, voting will be done by a written ballot.
- Is responsible for determining a quorum at each meeting.

*Vice-Chairperson:*

- Must have served on the Council for a minimum of 1 year.
- Presides over the meeting if the Chairperson is unable to do so.

*Secretary:*

- Is responsible for taking the minutes of each general membership meeting and strive to distribute them to each member, one week prior to the next General membership meeting.
- Is responsible for correspondence to and from the Council.
- All correspondence from the Council is subject to the approval of the Chairperson and or the general membership.
- Is responsible for recording attendance of the membership, alternates, non-voting membership and membership applicants at each meeting.
- Is responsible for maintain records of all meeting minutes, communications and attendance.
- The ESE Department may provide support staff to assist the secretary in producing the above items and maintain the above records.

**Article 10 – General**

The membership directory shall be revised and distributed to all Council members.

The membership directory shall also indicate voting status, membership categories and sub-committee Chairperson and members.

The agenda shall include reporting from all active committees, sub-advisories and advisories where the Exceptional Student Education Advisory Council has representation.

The ESE Department may provide support staff to assist the Council.

A web page will be developed and shall be maintained on the School District website about the activities of this Council in order to make the community aware of the many ways in which this Council advocates on behalf of exceptional students. The e-mail address of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson or their designee will be posted on the School District's website.

All meetings shall be advertised on the District's website.