



**AUSTIN**  
Independent School District

**ADVOCACY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**BYLAWS**

## **ADVOCACY ADVISORY COMMITTEE BYLAWS**

### **Article I: Authority**

*Section One. Establishment.* Under provisions of district policy BDF (LOCAL), the Advocacy Advisory Committee (AAC) is established by and serves at the will of the Board of Trustees. The administration shall designate an appropriate staff member to serve as the Committee Coordinator (the Coordinator).

*Section Two. Limitations.* The Committee shall be a standing advisory body and shall serve to provide guidance and counsel to the Board of Trustees, Superintendent and District administration. The Committee shall have no power to expend public funds, enter into contracts, or otherwise place obligation or liability upon the District.

*Section Three. Bylaws.* It shall be the responsibility of the Coordinator of District Advisory Bodies, upon the advice and counsel of the Coordinator, and upon any direction given by the Board of Trustees, to establish and amend the Committee bylaws. The Committee shall observe the bylaws. Under provisions of district policy BDF(LOCAL), the Committee shall be subject to a biennial sunset review process.

### **Article II: Purpose and Responsibilities**

The purpose of the Advocacy Advisory Committee is to assist the district in advancing its legislative priorities at the local, state and federal level. The Committee's advocacy shall be in alignment with the district's priorities, as adopted by the Board of Trustees. Its responsibilities shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Becoming informed how local, state, and federal governmental action impacts Austin ISD;
2. Recommend legislative priorities to the district and the Board;
3. Connect with parents, teachers, administrators, taxpayers, and students, empowering them to engage with elected officials; and
4. Collaborate with the Austin community to advance the legislative priorities adopted by the Board of Trustees.

When advocating, committee members may only identify themselves as members of the AAC if they are advocating in alignment with a Board-adopted priority and in alignment with that messaging.

### **Article III: Meetings**

*Section One: Regular Meetings.* The AAC Coordinator and co-Chairs shall establish the meeting schedule of the AAC. If deemed necessary by the AAC Coordinator and the co-Chairs, AAC meetings may be held virtually but, in such a case, must still adhere to Sections Four and Nine of this Article.

*Section Two. Cancellations of Meetings.* If necessary, the AAC Coordinator and co-Chairs may cancel a meeting of the AAC with good cause (i.e., inclement weather or other adverse conditions, scheduling conflicts due to attending to matters during the Texas legislative session), and determine if the meeting should be rescheduled. Members shall be informed of the reason for meeting cancellations, and given sufficient notice of canceled or rescheduled meetings.

*Section Three. Subcommittees.* Subcommittees may be composed of AAC members and established by the AAC Coordinator and co-chairs from time to time on any matter deemed necessary or appropriate, and shall develop specific guidelines for subcommittees.

*Section Four. Open Meetings.* All regular meetings of the AAC shall be open to the public, and the public shall have opportunity to provide comment. The co-chairs may limit the time given to speakers. (See the district’s Communications and Visitor Requirements.) Subcommittee meetings and retreats are not required to be open to the public.

*Section Five. Quorum.* For regular meetings of the AAC, a quorum shall be a majority of the current membership. Meetings may be held absent a quorum for purposes of presentations or discussions. However, no action may be taken without a quorum.

*Section Six. Attendance.* Members’ attendance shall be monitored by the AAC Coordinator, who shall work with members to address and resolve any attendance problems. More than three unexcused absences within a one-year period may result in dismissal of the member by the AAC Coordinator. Excused absences include, but are not limited to, personal or family illness, emergency situations, jury or military duty, or mandatory employment duty. It shall be the responsibility of the members to report excused absences to the Coordinator, and the Coordinator shall record excused absences. In cases of numerous excused absences or long-term absences, the Coordinator shall consider the factors in each individual case and determine whether continued service on the AAC is practicable.

*Section Seven. Virtual Attendance.* Members may participate in meetings virtually through various means, to the extent they are readily available to the AAC coordinator. However, members shall not participate virtually on a recurring basis.

*Section Eight. Decision-Making.* Members shall attempt to reach decisions by consensus. However, if a clear consensus cannot be obtained, members shall reach a decision by majority vote. Members attending by virtual means may vote. Proxy voting shall not be permitted.

*Section Nine. Agendas.* Agendas shall be prepared for all regular meetings and posted at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting. Agenda items shall be determined by the AAC Coordinator and co-chairs. A majority of the AAC may submit items to the AAC Coordinator for placement on a future agenda.

*Section Ten. Minutes.* The AAC Coordinator shall ensure that minutes are kept for all regular AAC meetings. Minutes are records of meeting highlights and are not intended to provide a high level of detail. At a minimum, minutes shall include: attendance of members, staff, and visitors; the time the meeting was called to order and adjourned; the outcome of any votes or other actions, and a brief synopsis of the meeting proceedings. Minutes for regular meetings shall be posted on the AAC website.

#### **Article IV: Membership**

*Section One. Definitions.* The following definitions apply to certain member categories:

1. Parent/guardian members must stand in parental relation to a student currently enrolled in the district. Parents/guardians may also be employees of the district.
2. Teacher members refers primarily to classroom teachers.
3. The business members must live or work within the district. The business member may also be a parent/guardian.
4. Community members must live or work within the district and be at least 18 years of age. Community members may not also be parents/guardians or district employees.

5. Students must be in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade and in good standing with attendance and graduation requirements.

6. The following persons may not serve on the AAC at the same time:

- Both parents or guardians of a student
- A sibling and the sibling's parent or guardian
- Sibling students
- Other close relatives [See DK(LOCAL)]

*Section Two. Membership Criteria.* Membership of the AAC will strive to reflect the geographic, ethnic, gender and economic diversity of the district. Membership of the AAC shall conform to the requirements in Section One of this Article. Unless otherwise specified, the Superintendent or designee(s) shall appoint the members of the AAC. The membership of the AAC shall consist of the following at a minimum, but the AAC Coordinator and co-chairs may expand upon this minimum as necessary or appropriate:

1. Nine parents/guardians - appointed by each of the nine trustees
2. Six teachers from different vertical teams
3. One elementary school principal
4. One middle school principal
5. One high school principal
6. Four other campus staff who are not a teacher or principal, each serving in a different role
7. Two central administrative staff
8. Nine community members - appointed by each of the nine trustees
9. One student from each high school
10. Nine business members or community partners - appointed by each of the nine trustees
11. One representative of the Austin Council of PTAs (ACPA) selected by ACPTA

*Section Three. Ex Officio Members.* The Superintendent may serve on the AAC in an ex officio (i.e., non-voting) capacity.

*Section Four. Term of Service.* The AAC will be organized on a two-year legislative cycle. Committee members are selected for one two-year term beginning in September of odd-numbered years and ending in August the following odd-numbered year. Members may serve one additional term, but renewed membership is not automatic. Members interested in serving an additional term must follow the process for appointment to the AAC which will require a new application.

*Section Five. Mid. Term Vacancies.* If a vacancy occurs after any member's term has commenced, including professional staff members, if a year or more remains in the vacated term, the position shall be filled within a reasonable time in the same manner provided in the sections above for the applicable membership category.

*Section Six. Change of Member Status.* If the status of a member changes, the member may fill an appropriate vacancy. If no appropriate vacancy exists, the member may continue to serve in the current position for a period of up to one year, if not otherwise prohibited under Section One of this Article.

*Section Seven. Continued Operation.* Any vacated terms left unfilled under provisions of Sections eight and nine of this Article shall not cause the AAC to discontinue its operations.

*Section Eight. Conflict of Interest.* Conflicts of interest shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Having a pecuniary interest in any discussion or recommendations of the committee.
- Involvement in any litigation or procedural challenges against the district.

Any cases or possible cases of conflict of interest shall be referred to the Coordinator of District Advisory Bodies, who may consult with the General Counsel as necessary, for appropriate action. If a member is determined to have conflict of interest, appropriate action may include:

- Required recusal from a particular agenda item or items;
- Required recusal from a particular meeting or meetings; and
- Removal from the committee.

*Section Nine. Code of Conduct.* The district welcomes freedom of expression and debate. However, AAC members shall conduct themselves, in meetings and at all other times, with courtesy and respect to fellow members, district parents and students, district staff and Trustees, and members of other district advisory committees. In meetings, members must be recognized by the co-chairs before speaking, and otherwise respect the order maintained by the co-chairs. Unless otherwise authorized by the AAC, members shall not speak for the district. Members, by their comments and/or actions, shall not reflect badly on the AAC. Violations of this code of conduct may result in reprimand or dismissal by the AAC Coordinator.

*Section Ten. Undue Advantage.* AAC members shall not use their positions to gain or attempt to gain an undue advantage for themselves or anyone else. Violations of this requirement may result in reprimand or dismissal by the AAC Coordinator. (As examples, it would be considered an undue advantage if a person included his or her membership in the AAC attempting to allow a student transfer or for allowing a student entry into a particular program; however, it would not be considered an undue advantage for a person to include AAC membership on his or her resume.)

## **Article V: Co-Chairs**

*Section One. Eligibility.* To be eligible to serve as a co-chair, a member must have served at least the majority of one school year on the AAC with reasonably acceptable attendance.

*Section Two. Election.* The AAC shall elect two co-chairs from its voting members. One co-chair shall be an employee of the district and one shall not. The AAC Coordinator shall announce a period during which members may self-nominate, with a firm deadline. If there is no competition, an election shall not be necessary. If there is competition, the Coordinator shall prepare a final ballot for election by the AAC. After the established deadline, the following are not allowed: further self-nominations, nominations from the floor, or write-in votes.

*Section Three. Terms of Service.* Each co-chair shall serve two-year staggered terms. Co-chairs may be re-elected and serve one additional term, co-chair elections shall be held during the second regular AAC meeting of the school year.

*Section Four. Mid-Term Vacancies.* If a vacancy occurs after a co-chair's term has commenced, the AAC shall elect a new co-chair to serve for the remainder of the term.

*Section Five. Responsibilities.* The responsibilities of the co-chairs shall include:

1. Establish an agenda for AAC meetings in collaboration with the AAC Coordinator.
2. Preside at all plenary meetings of the AAC, facilitating open discussion and participation of all members.
3. Ensure that commonly accepted parliamentary procedure is followed. (Refer to the district's information for Advisory Committee Chairs.)
4. Formally represent the AAC.

*Section Six. Removal of Co-Chairs.* The co-chairs serve at the will of the AAC. A two-thirds majority of the AAC may at any time remove a co-chair. Removal of a co-chair does not result in the co-chair's dismissal from the AAC.

#### **Article VI: Coordinator**

*Section One. Role of the Coordinator.* The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate professional staff member to serve as Coordinator for the AAC. Responsibilities of the AAC Coordinator shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring that adequate facilities arrangements and staff support are secured for all meetings;
2. Providing members and support staff with agendas and background materials;
3. Serving as custodian of AAC records. Agendas and minutes of regular meetings must be maintained for a minimum of two years. In addition, the AAC Coordinator shall keep a record of member term expirations and length of member service;
4. Maintaining minutes of regular and other plenary meetings of the AAC;
5. Ensuring that agendas are properly posted;
6. Ensuring that the AAC website is maintained;
7. Ensuring that orientation information is provided to new members
8. Maintaining a database of persons interested in serving as members of the AAC.
9. Creating and maintaining the rotating vertical team system for teacher and parent representatives;
10. Scheduling agenda items of an urgent nature, in consultation with the co-chairs; and
11. Providing an annual report on AAC activities and statutory compliance by June 30 of each year.