



SPECIAL EDUCATION FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE BYLAWS

Article I: Authority

Section One. Establishment. Under provisions of district policy BDF (LOCAL), the Special Education Family Advisory Committee (SEFAC) is established by the Superintendent and serves at the will of the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff member to serve as the Special Education Family Advisory Committee coordinator. The Special Education Family Advisory Committee coordinator, in consultation with the coordinator of district advisory bodies shall designate a member of the committee to serve as a co-chair.

Section Two. Limitations. The SEFAC shall serve strictly as an advisory body at the will of the Superintendent. The SEFAC shall have no power to expend public funds, enter into contracts, or otherwise place obligation or liability upon the district.

Section Three. Bylaws. Under the provisions of district policy BDF(LOCAL), it shall be the responsibility of the coordinator of district advisory bodies, in consultation with the committee coordinator, to establish and amend the bylaws, as needed.

Article II: Purpose and Responsibilities

Section One. Purpose. Recognizing the importance of strong parent-district partnerships for students to succeed not just in school but also throughout life, the district is establishing the Austin ISD Special Education Family Advisory Committee. The purpose of the SEFAC shall advise the Special Education Department on the agreed upon TEA Order CND # 227-901.

Section Two. Responsibilities. The responsibilities shall include the following:

- Clear & Inclusive Vision with Shared Ownership.
 - System-wide implementation of approaches to support inclusive schools;
 - Special Education learning sessions and resource development for capacity building for leadership, teachers, support staff and related personnel;
 - Family and community engagement and outreach for promotion of effective practices and child find awareness in support of students with disabilities;
- Strong Tier 1 Instruction within a Multi-tiered System of Support.
 - Implementation of high quality core instruction that includes progress monitoring and tiered intervention as needed;
 - Increased focus on universal design for learning to remove barriers to grade level content;
 - Focus on building background and content knowledge and academic vocabulary across content and subjects areas;
- Evaluation and compliance
 - Discussion and review of the strategic plan as identified in the agreed order

- Update on evaluation status for AISD

Article III: Meetings

Section One. Regular Meetings. The SEFAC shall conduct quarterly meetings as required by the TEA agreed order CDN # 227-901. The regular meeting schedule shall be placed on the SEFAC website. The regular meeting schedule may be revised as necessary by the committee coordinator. If necessary, the committee coordinator may cancel a regular meeting with good cause (i.e., inclement weather or other adverse conditions), and determine if the meeting should be rescheduled. Members shall be given the reason for meeting cancellations, and be given sufficient notice of canceled or rescheduled meetings.

Section Two. Open Meetings. Regular and other plenary meetings of the SEFAC shall be open to the public and conducted in accordance with the district standard citizen's communications and visitor guidelines.

Section Three. Quorum. For regular and other plenary meetings of the SEFAC, a quorum shall be the majority of current membership. Regular and other plenary meetings may be held without a quorum for purposes of presentations or discussions; however, no actions or voting may take place without a quorum.

Section Four. Attendance. Member attendance shall be monitored by the committee coordinator, who shall work with members to try and resolve any attendance problems. More than one unexcused absence within a one-year period may result in dismissal by the committee 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 members to report excused absences to the committee coordinator who shall record excused absences. In cases of numerous excused absences or long-term absences, the committee coordinator shall consider the factors in each individual case and determine whether continued service on the SEFAC is practicable.

Section Five. Decision-Making. Members shall attempt to reach decisions by consensus. However, if a clear consensus cannot be obtained, decisions shall be reached by a majority vote. Each member shall be entitled to one vote per motion. Members in virtual attendance may vote, but proxy voting is not allowed. In accordance with open meetings procedures, any voting must be done openly during meetings, normally by a show of hands (zoom poll or google doc)– any non-open voting methods, such as paper ballots or email, are not allowed.

Section Six. Agendas. Agendas shall be prepared for all regular meetings and posted on the SEFAC website at least 72 hours in advance of meetings. Agenda items shall be determined by the committee coordinator.

Section Seven. Minutes. Minutes shall be kept for all regular meetings and other plenary meetings. 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. As required by the agreed upon TEA Order CND # 227-901 within five business days following the first meeting, and within five business days of each quarterly meeting thereafter, Austin ISD will publish the meeting minutes and recommendations proposed by a majority of the members of the SEFAC.

Article IV: Membership

Per the Order (CDN # 227-901) Austin ISD will establish a new parent advisory group to meet quarterly, consisting of at least 15 parents/guardians of students served in special education throughout the district and who have not previously served on a district special education advisory group or committee during the preceding three years. The advisory group must be facilitated and attended by district leadership in the areas of curriculum and special education.

Section One. Membership Criteria. Members are selected in accordance with District Policy BDF (LOCAL). Membership of the SEFAC will strive to reflect the geographic, ethnic, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, and economic diversity of the district. The SEFAC will make every effort to balance membership across vertical team and school levels. Membership applications will also be considered in accordance with Article IV: Section 8. The committee shall be comprised of no more than SEFAC members as follows:

- No more than two parents from each vertical team and Rosedale, Clifton or Specialized 18+ AISD program; (15)
- Assistant Superintendent of Special Education Programs (1)
- One member from the Superintendent Leadership Cabinet (1)
- One or two members from the District Academic Team (2)
- Two school administrators, including representation from both elementary and secondary level. School administrators may include assistant principals. (2)
- One Special Education teacher from Elementary, Middle and High School (3)

Section Two. Restrictions. The following restrictions apply to the SEFAC membership:

- Parent members must be a custodial parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled in the district;
- A district employee may not count as a parent member;
- Teacher members refer to classroom teachers employed by AISD;
- The following persons may not serve on the SEFAC at the same time:
 - Both parents or guardian of a student
 - A sibling and the sibling's parents or guardian
 - Sibling students
 - Other close relatives [See DK(LOCAL)]

Section Three. Term of Service. In accordance with BDF (LOCAL), members shall serve one two-year term. Members may serve one additional term, but renewed membership is not automatic. Members seeking a second term shall submit a standard application to the district advisory bodies coordinator.

Section Four. Member Selection. Austin ISD will establish a panel of district leadership in Special Education as well as a representative from the superintendent's cabinet and the assigned TEA monitor to review applications and nominations for the SEFAC.

Section Five. Mid-Term Vacancies. If a member resigns or is dismissed, the committee coordinator shall fill the position if a year or more remains in the term; if less than a year remains in the term, the position may be left vacant for the remainder of the term at the discretion of committee coordinator.

Section Six. Change in Member Status. If the status of a member changes, the committee coordinator may allow the member to fill an appropriate vacancy. If no appropriate vacancy exists, the coordinator may allow the member to continue to serve in the current position for a period of up to one year.

Section Seven. Continued Operation. Any vacated terms left unfilled under Sections Five and Six of this Article shall not cause the SEFAC to discontinue its operations.

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

- Having a pecuniary interest in any discussion or recommendations of the committee or subcommittee; and
- 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 for appropriate action. If a member is determined to have a conflict of interest, appropriate action may include:

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

Section Nine. Code of Conduct. The district welcomes freedom of expression and debate. However, SEFAC members, as well as subcommittee 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 committee coordinators before speaking, and otherwise respect the order maintained by the committee coordinators. Unless otherwise authorized by the SEFAC, members shall not speak for the SEFAC, and, unless otherwise authorized by the administration, members shall not speak for the district. Members, by their comments and/or actions, shall not reflect badly on the SEFAC or the district. Violation of this code of conduct may result in reprimand or dismissal by the coordinator of district advisory bodies.

Section Ten. Undue Advantage. SEFAC members shall not use their position to gain or attempt to gain an undue advantage for themselves or anyone else. Violation of this requirement may result in dismissal by the coordinator of district advisory bodies. (As examples, it would be considered an undue advantage if a person included his or her membership in the SEFAC in attempting a student transfer or for student entry into a particular program; it would be considered an undue advantage to request information that would ordinarily require a formal process to acquire; however, it would not be considered an undue advantage to include SEFAC membership on his or her resume.

Article V: Committee Coordinator and Parent Co-Chair

Section One. Role of the Coordinator. The committee coordinator shall provide ongoing support to the SEFAC. Responsibilities of the committee coordinator shall include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring that adequate arrangements are made for venues for regular and other plenary meetings, as well as any subcommittee meetings;

- Providing members and applicable staff with agendas and background materials sufficiently in advance of regular and other meetings;
- Serving as custodian of SEFAC records, including the status of member terms;
- Keeping minutes of regular and other plenary meeting;
- Ensuring that agendas and approved minutes for regular and other plenary meetings are posted in a timely manner;
- Serving as a point of contact and information for stakeholders, and conveying any pertinent information to the SEFAC;
- Ensuring that new members are sufficiently oriented to service on the SEFAC;
- Preside over the meeting keeping members on topic and managing time constraints; and
- Consulting with the coordinator of district advisory bodies as needed.

Section Two. Role of the Parent Co-Chair. The Parent Co-Chair plays a vital leadership role in the SEFAC, working in partnership with the committee coordinator to facilitate meetings, represent the perspectives of families, collaborate with the district on initiatives, and promote effective communication between families and the special education department. Terms of service are for one-year. Responsibilities of the co-chair shall include, but are not limited to:

- Co-leading and facilitating SEFAC meetings;
- Collaborating with the committee coordinator and district representatives to set meeting agendas;
- Representing the interests and perspectives of families of students with disabilities;
- Fostering open communication and collaboration among SEFAC members;
- Assisting in the dissemination of information to families and the community;
- Working collaboratively on SEFAC initiatives and projects.

Section Three. Technical and Specialized Support. The committee coordinator shall ensure that appropriate technical and specialized support, either internal or external to the district, are available to the SEFAC as needed.

Article VI: Sunset Review

Section One. Review of the Committee. Superintendent appointed-advisory committees that are not required by law shall sunset either on a specific date or upon the conclusion of an action or occurrence as set out in the committee's bylaws, unless specifically reauthorized by the Superintendent. The district advisory bodies coordinator shall consult with the committee coordinator to request a position statement or recommendation as to the reason why the committee shall continue. Based upon the information provided, the Superintendent shall have final approval for the continuation of the SEFAC committee.

Section Two. Time Frame. The SEFAC committee shall cease to exist on August 31st, 2027, unless the committee is reauthorized by the Superintendent.