

WePAC, Westport's Parent Advisory Committee, By-laws

Article I: Name of Organization

The name of this organization shall be the Westport's Parent Advisory Committee, also known as WePAC.

Article II: Purpose of WePAC

The WePAC receives its regulatory authority from the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 603 CMR 28:07 (4) under the parent involvement section.

The WePAC is mandated by state law and its duties include, but are not limited to:

- advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with differing abilities
- meeting regularly with school officials
- to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school district's special Education programs

The mission of the WePAC is to work for understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in the community. To that end, it will work to:

- promote a network of parents of children with special needs and provide a forum to share information and discuss matters of concern and interest for children with special needs
- advise the Director of Special Education and the Westport School Committee on the operation and development of special education programs, parent and teacher training needs, and help to develop policy, to include providing reports to be integrated into the regular reports and plans sent to the Department of Education, and to review, revise and comment on such materials prior to their being finalized
- promote communication between WePAC members, local, state and national organizations, councils and groups that support children with special needs
- promote communication and programs within the community to encourage understanding, acceptance and inclusion of children with special needs
- provide informational forums to parents, educators, students and professionals involved with children with special needs

Article III: Terms of Membership

General membership shall be open to any resident of Westport or person affiliated with the Westport Public Schools who has attended at least one meeting of the WePAC during the past 12 months. Voting membership is required to vote in bi-annual officer elections and other business that comes before any WePAC meeting.

Voting membership shall be any general member who is a parent or guardian of a child with special needs residing in Westport, with or without an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or is a parent of a child with special needs who attends Westport Public Schools, who has attended at least one previous meeting of the WePAC during the past 12 months or has requested voting status in writing to the Secretary at least one month prior to the bi-annual, January, election meeting (Note: Officer election, January 2008).

Interested parties are not allowed to vote at WePAC meetings. Interested parties include

other/extended family members of children with special needs attending WePAC meetings in the interest of the child and employees of the Westport Public Schools. Note: Employees of WPS whom are also a parent/guardian of a child with special needs within the WPS system, can only vote on matters that would not be a conflict of interest.

Meetings are defined as any WePAC sponsored meeting in which the business of the PAC is conducted. This may include activities, or committees at which attendance and/or minutes are taken.

Article IV: Officers of the WePAC

Officers of the WePAC are elected by the voting membership and hold office for 1, 2-year term. The Co-chairs may not hold the same office for consecutive terms except by 2/3 majority vote by the voting members as described in Article V. If any office becomes vacant, an election for that office shall be held immediately, with term to expire at the bi-annual January election meeting (i.e. 2008).

Office and officer responsibilities of the WePAC are:

Chair/Co-chair

- Set the agenda for each general meeting
- At least one chair will preside at all meeting of WePAC
- Recommend the organization of and monitor the function of sub-committees
- Act as liaison with the Director of Special Education
- the chair or at least one co-chair will remain an officer for the following term – to be called the vice-chair

Vice-Chair

- Vacant seat the charter year of WePAC
- To attend WePAC meetings, as possible
- To consult, as needed, with the chair/co-chair

Secretary

- Co-ordinate the recording and filing of minutes of the WePAC and its sub-committees. (Note: Copy minutes at Special Education Department and disseminate at next WePAC meeting. E-mailing to members before the next meeting, is desired, if secretary has computer capability.)
- Copy of all minutes to be sent to Director of Special Education and one copy to be added to resource materials
- Collect and review all correspondence of the WePAC. Mailbox located at Westport Public School Administration: 17 Main Road, Westport, MA 02790.

Treasurer

- Research and coordinate efforts to apply for grants, donations, reimbursements or any Funds for which the WePAC may be eligible
- Manage and account for funds collected or donated for the WePAC
- Manage and account for funds spent by WePAC
- Coordinate fund raising activities

Note: All positions can be shared. Titles can either be chair, co-chair, etc

Article V: Elections

Elections shall be the first order of business at the next meeting when a seat is vacant.

Elections shall be decided by a simple 2/3 majority vote of the voting membership. New officers shall take office immediately following their election.

MASSPAC and the Department of Education will be informed of the bi-annual elections with the names, addresses and phone numbers of the new board by February 1. (i.e. 2008).

Nominations will take place during the meeting prior to the election meeting, which is in November. (i.e. 2007). All nominations or 'self-nominations' will be accepted.

During the meeting prior to the election meeting an Election Coordinator will be chosen by lottery from volunteers. The Election Coordinator shall not be anyone running for office. The Election Coordinator will coordinate activities surrounding the bi-annual election, specifically a ballot for each voting member.

Article VI: Meetings

General meeting shall be held every other month, year round. Notice of all general meeting dates and elections shall meet Open Meeting Law requirements and be published in the local press in advance, posted at Town Hall, and a notice sent to each voting member through the schools, by mail, email or some other communication method.

Topics for meetings can be discussed and added to the list year-round.

Topics that must be discussed only at a general meeting:

- a change in the by-laws needs to be voted on
- a commitment of financial resources requires a simple majority vote
- elections require a vote as described in Article V, Elections

Minutes of all WePAC meetings shall be recorded and retained as a matter of public record, as in Article IV: Officers of the WePAC, Secretary duties.

Article VII: Subcommittees

Subcommittees/task forces shall be created as needed.

Article VIII: Amendments

These by-laws may be amended by a simple majority of the voting members at a general meeting.

Article IX

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

