

# **WOONSOCKET SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Woonsocket Special Education Local Advisory Committee will serve as advocates in partnership with parents of students with disabilities to ensure that "free appropriate public education" is available to all eligible children ages 3-21 within the City of Woonsocket.

The goal of advocacy is to facilitate the advancement of all students toward the fulfillment of the Woonsocket Public Schools Mission.

The Woonsocket Public Schools' Mission Statement is:

Our mission is to educate all students in a safe, supportive, challenging environment where they can learn to be citizens of a culturally diverse society.

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## **BY-LAWS**

### **Article I: Name**

The name of the Committee shall be the Woonsocket Special Education Local Advisory Committee. It may also be referred to as the "SELAC".

### **Article II: Membership**

This Committee shall be composed of persons involved in, or concerned with, the education of students with disabilities. Parents of students with disabilities shall compose a majority of the Committee. The Woonsocket School Committee may appoint individuals to this Committee, however at least 50% of the membership will be parents of students with disabilities.

Membership shall ideally include an individual with a disability, a public school administrator, a special education teacher, a general education teacher and other members of the community at the discretion of the committee.

Members of the Committee shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses for attending and performing duties.

### **Article III: Function and Responsibility**

The Committee shall:

1. advise the school district on matters concerning needs of students with disabilities
2. comment on improvement plans including school support plans, local compliance with state and federal laws pertaining to the education of students with disabilities
3. comment on applications for federal and state funds
4. provide support and serve as advocates in partnership with parents for students with disabilities to ensure that they receive the entitlements provided to them under state and federal laws
5. provide seminars and workshops on topics of interest to Committee members

By September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, the Committee shall submit an annual report of the Committee's activities and suggestions to the school district. The school district special education program shall respond to the Committee within sixty (60) calendar days of receiving the annual report. These reports shall be made available to the public in a manner consistent with other public reporting requirements under the Federal Individuals with Disability Act, 1975, as amended.

### **Article IV: Conduct of Meetings**

The Committee shall meet as necessary to conduct business at least four (4) times annually. Official minutes shall be kept of all committee meetings and be available for public review. All committee meetings shall be publicly announced prior to any meeting, and meetings shall be open to the public.

Ad hoc committees will meet according to individual member schedules.

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## **Article V: Parent Notification**

When a child is referred to special education, LEA (Local Education Agency) will provide the parents with notification of the existence of the Woonsocket Special Education Local Advisory Committee. The notification will specify that a majority of the committee is made up of parents of children with disabilities, and will inform the parents how the chairperson(s) of the Committee may be contacted.

## **Article VI: Elections**

Ideally elections will be conducted annually and the beginning of each school year. These officers will serve one year terms and/or until a successor is elected. Officers will include a chairperson, or co-chairpersons, a vice chairperson, a treasurer (if there is a budget assigned to the Committee) and a secretary. The Minutes of each meeting will be maintained by the secretary and copies will be forwarded to all interested Committee members.

## **Article VII: Amendments to By-Laws**

The intention of this document is to replace previously adopted By-Laws. Amendments will occur as deemed necessary congruent with changes to the State and Federal regulations. This document will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **Article VIII: Responsibilities**

The Local Educational Agency shall provide:

1. Support to the Committee by contracting for technical assistance services with the Rhode Island designated Parent Training and Technical Assistance Agency or other community based non-profit organization. Such technical assistance shall include the role of advocacy committees in advocating for children, state and federal regulations, community resources, strategic planning and development of an annual report to the school committee.
2. School and district plans to the Committee for comment and make available appropriate records and data as permitted by the law.
3. Support the Committee in disseminating information pertaining to special education and inform the Committee of professional development opportunities available with the Local Education Agency.

The school district may provide assistance to the Committee in:

1. Developing the Committee's organization structure and by-laws that shall become effective upon approval by the School Committee or special education program.
2. Developing procedures for the Committee to carry out its function and responsibilities.
3. Providing legal, technical and consultative services.
4. Making available appropriate records and data as permitted by law.
5. Providing in-service training for Committee members in such areas as: the role of advisory committees, the role of advocacy groups, the conduct of meetings, State and Federal laws and regulations, procedural safeguards, community resources, relationships between the parent and the student with a disability, school district/Committee relationships.

**WOONSOCKET SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF RESOLVE**

Be it resolved that the articles and sections herein have been adopted by the Woonsocket Special Education Local Advisory Committee and the School Committee of the City of Woonsocket and are legal and binding. Amendments to the by-laws may be made as stated in Article VII. These by-laws shall remain in effect until the Woonsocket Special Education Local Advisory Committee ceases to exist in the City of Woonsocket at which time these by-laws shall be considered null and void.

<hr/> <i>Denise M. Bouley</i> Woonsocket SELAC Co-Chairperson	<hr/> <i>3/14/2007</i> Date
<hr/> <i>Lynn A. Kapiskas</i> Woonsocket SELAC Co-Chairperson	<hr/> <i>3/14/2007</i> Date
<hr/> <i>Jeanne D. Nespolo</i> Woonsocket SELAC Secretary	<hr/> <i>3/14/2007</i> Date
<hr/> Woonsocket SELAC Treasurer	<hr/> Date
<hr/> <i>Marc A. Dubois</i> Woonsocket School Committee Chairperson	<hr/> <i>3/14/2007</i> Date

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Denise M Bouley  
Woonsocket SELAC  
Co-Chairperson

3/14/07  
Date

Diana S. Kapishas  
Woonsocket SELAC  
Co-Chairperson,

2/14/07  
Date

James D. Appelo  
Woonsocket SELAC  
Secretary

3/14/07  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Woonsocket SELAC  
Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Maria Oahu  
Woonsocket School Committee  
Chairperson

3-14-2007  
Date