

**Somerdale Public School District**  
**Early Childhood Advisory Council Bylaws**

**Article I: Name**

**Name of Organization:** The name of the Early Childhood Advisory Council serving the Somerdale Public School District shall be the Somerdale Early Childhood Advocacy Council (SECAC).

**Article II: Purpose and Function**

**Primary Function:** In accordance with *N.J.A.C.6A:13A-4.6*, the SECAC committee was established to ensure high-quality preschool through grade three program implementation. The committee will collaborate with all stakeholders to serve as advisory support for Somerdale's preschool program and support a smooth transition as children move from preschool through grade three.

**Primary Responsibilities:** Responsibilities include:

1. Collaborate with all stakeholders to obtain specific community needs and resources, including facilities, as they pertain to the implementation of high-quality preschool services.
2. Participate in the development of the District Operational Plan as organized by the district preschool leadership
3. Review and comment on the draft of the Three Year and Annual Operational Plan update, as well as on preschool budgets proposed by the district.

The committee may establish one or more subcommittees to handle issues relevant to their expertise.

**Article III: Representation and Membership**

**Number of Members:** The membership of the Somerdale Early Childhood Advisory Council shall be limited to no less than 3 members and no more than ten members. Following election to the council, membership begins with attendance at his/her first SECAC meeting.

**Representation:** The Somerdale Early Childhood Advisory Council will be made up of members that represent the Somerdale community. The SECAC is made up of three groups: mandatory stakeholders, parent representatives, and community representatives.

1. Mandatory Stakeholders: Mandatory stakeholders will include the chairperson, the Somerdale Community Parent Involvement Specialist, and Somerdale School District personnel.

2. Parent Representatives: Parent representatives are members who have children participating in preschool through grade three as part of the Somerdale Public Schools.
3. Community representatives: May or may not have children enrolled in Somerdale Public School district and may have ties to the Somerdale community at large. These representatives may contribute varying opinions and perspectives based on their own personal backgrounds. The council will continue to invite community representatives who can help address current committee goals and needs.

Community representatives may include, but are not limited to:

- Local health/social service agencies
- Early intervention services
- Business community
- Municipal government
- Higher education
- NJ Council for Young Children County Councils
- Philanthropic community
- Child/family advocates
- DHS managing agency
- Medical/Dental services
- Houses of worship
- Other community-based group members as needed

Parent and community members may be elected to the Council through recommendation by a current member.

### **Balance Across Stakeholder Groups**

In order to maintain balance across stakeholder groups, the following minimums have been established:

- Either the Community and Parent Involvement Specialist and/or the chair will maintain permanent membership on the council.
- Ideally, at least one parent representative and one community representative will always be present on the council.
- Ideally, at least 2 district employees will always be present on the council.

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

#### **1. General Membership Selection**

Members representing the Somerdale Public School District will be selected and become appointed to the council with final approval from the chair and/or CPIS.

Other stakeholders (including parent and community representatives) will be identified based on the recommendation of current council members to the CPIS and/or the current chair.

Parent and community representatives may be identified through various avenues such as recommendations of current council members, responses to interest forms, and other referral mechanisms.

## **2. Replacement**

There is no requirement that new members represent the same organization or representative group as the member they are replacing.

### **Article V: Terms of Office**

#### **1. Definition and Length of Term**

The term of office for ECAC Members is one calendar academic year. For the purpose of these bylaws, a year constitutes the academic calendar year and Summer (September through August 31<sup>st</sup>).

In the event of a vacancy, new positions will be filled at the first meeting of the upcoming school year.

### **Article VI: Officers, Election of Officers, and Key Duties**

#### **1. Officers**

The officers of this Council will be the CPIS and the Chairperson.

#### **2. Election of Officers**

The council shall elect its own officers at the first meeting of the academic year. Officers shall serve one term (one calendar academic year) and may be re-elected to additional terms. The Community and Parent Involvement Specialist (CPIS) serves as a permanent officer.

The chairperson will be determined by the following:

- A nomination made by a current ECAC member
- A consensus vote will be conducted by the council

In the event of a vacancy in a council officer position during an existing term, the vacancy will be filled by the ECAC through consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, council members may cast ballots and majority rule will prevail.

#### **3. Key Duties of Officers**

- CPIS: The CPIS will be present at all meetings of the Council. The CPIS shall list agenda items and share agenda items at each meeting. The Council reserves the right to modify the agenda as needed.
- Chairperson: The Chairperson may preside over meetings when the CPIS is not present.

Either the CPIS or the Chairperson may take minutes at each meeting.

#### **4. Key Duties of Council Members**

- Attendance at ECAC meetings
- Vote on/discuss/review issues brought to the ECAC
- Participate in Early Childhood Development Program events whenever possible

### **Article VI: Meetings**

The committee shall meet at least four times per academic year. In addition, the council may elect to meet during the summer as needed. A preliminary SECAC meeting calendar shall be set at the first meeting of the academic calendar year; however, this may be modified over the course of the year with consensus of the council.

### **Article VIII: Decision-Making**

#### **1. Decision-Making**

- Consensus will be the primary decision-making process used by the ECAC. Consensus is reached when all members understand the decision and are willing to support and implement the decision.

#### **2. Voting and Approvals**

- If a consensus cannot be reached, voting will be used. Voting can be used for the following purposes:
  - To determine if an issue should be referred to the committee for further study
  - To come to a decision if the council is unable to reach consensus
  - To approve new candidates to the Council
- Voting can be held at a meeting or held electronically
- A majority vote will become the official position of the ECAC

As per NJAC 6A:10A-2.2, the SECAC is an advisory council. The Community Parent Involvement Specialist and other Somerdale Board of Education employees have primary responsibility and accountability for determining how relevant SECAC recommendations will be carried forth.

In the absence of the CPIS or the Chair, the Council may still meet and work toward its goals.

### **Article X: Amendments**

#### **1. Amendments**

- The bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the SECAC by a majority vote.