

The Arc Guide to Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

As a parent of a student with a disability, you can make a difference in your school district by joining your local Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). SEAC members learn about their local school district's special education issues and make recommendations that could benefit all students with disabilities in the school district.

Why is SEAC important?

- SEAC can influence the programs and services of children who receive special education services in their district.
- School districts must have a special education advisory council that is a part of the school district's special education system plan. Parents of children with disabilities can be involved in the policy and decision making process.
- A successful SEAC collaborates with school district leadership.
- It is required that a SEAC meet once a year. SEAC members determine the number of members, the number of meetings and the general procedures.

Who are its members?

- At least half of the council members must be parents of children with disabilities.
- Membership includes special education staff, regular education staff, and staff from community agencies.
- A district may set up this council as a subgroup of an existing board, council, or committee.
- When a nonpublic school is located in the district, the council must include at least one member who is a parent of a nonpublic school student with a disability, or an employee of a nonpublic school if no parent of a nonpublic school student with a disability is available to serve.

Why should you participate?

- As a parent of a student with a disability, you can make a difference in your school district that could/may result in better program outcomes for students in the district.

For further information or advocacy services, contact The Arc Greater Twin Cities at 952-920-0855 or visit www.arcgreatertwincities.org. Thank you!

This document is not legal advice, and should not be construed as such. Thus, no information herein should replace the sound advice of an attorney.

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Things to consider for an effective SEAC:

- What is the mission statement? Does it make sense and relate to special education?
- Do parents reflect the population of the school including ages, types of disabilities, income, racial diversity, etc.?
- Are parents involved with setting the agenda and establishing priorities?
- What is the function? Is there a focus on discussing issues, shaping policy, making decisions and evaluating programs?
- How is information and business communicated with other parents, district staff, and the community?
- What is the relationship between SEAC and other school district committees?

How can I get involved?

- For more information on the SEAC in your district, call the Special Education Director.

The state of MN has a panel that advises the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). It is called the Minnesota Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP). SEAP members provide policy guidance for MDE about special education and related services at the state level. Members are appointed through the Governor's office. Information about SEAP is available at

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/about/adv/active/SEAP/>

Laws regarding parent involvement through SEAC and SEAP:

- Minnesota Statute 125A.24 Parent Advisory Panels
- Federal regulation 300.167-169

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