

**Miami-Dade County Public Schools  
Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for  
Exceptional Student Education**

**By-Laws**

Article 1 - Name

The Panel shall be known as the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Exceptional Student Education (ESE), hereafter referred to as "the Panel".

Article 2 - Authority

The Panel exists by authority of the Superintendent and originated by initial approval as an Ad-hoc Committee by The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, on October 17, 1979.

Article 3 - Purpose

The purpose of the Panel is to assist the Superintendent in (1) reviewing the status of ESE services, including the development of programmatic goals and objectives; (2) recommending priorities for the provision of an appropriate public school education for students with exceptionalities, and (3) identifying opportunities/needs for improvement in ESE.

The Panel will advocate for ESE students and their families by offering counsel to the Superintendent and the administration of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) regarding matters affecting students with exceptionalities. For purposes of the Panel, ESE includes educational services for students with disabilities (SWD); the Gifted, including dual exceptional; and students with 504 Plans, as well as support services for their families.

Article 4 - Membership

The Advisory Panel will consist of 29 voting members, including 4 honorary members. Members shall be appointed by the Superintendent.

The Panel will include 10 parents/legal guardians of children with specialized needs and 3 alternates, who are attending a public M-DCPS school, traditional or charter. To the extent possible, the parents/legal guardians who serve in the Panel should be representative of the students served in ESE with regards to ethnicity, gender, grade levels, type of exceptionality, and ESE program delivery model. Each parent/legal guardian member will be entitled to one vote.

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In reference to honorary members, membership priority will be given to parents/legal guardians who have completed their three consecutive, 2-year terms as parent/legal guardians representatives and still have a child that attends M-DCPS as well as representatives of the public and private sector who, by virtue of their interest, position and/or training, can contribute to the quality of ESE services in the District. Honorary members are eligible to be members of committees. Each honorary member will be entitled to one vote.

The Panel will include 9 representative not-for-profit education, health, and human services agencies and/or organizations in Florida. The Superintendent shall appoint Agency/organization representatives. Each agency will designate a representative and an alternate. The agency/organization representative must work or reside in Miami-Dade County. Each member agency/organization will be entitled to one vote.

The Panel will include 4 staff members from Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Three (3) of the staff members will be district level administrators/staff that support students with disabilities. The other one (1) staff member will be a district level administrator/staff that supports students who are Gifted. Each Miami-Dade County Public Schools staff member will be entitled to one vote.

The Panel will include two (2) high school students who are representative of the students served in ESE with regards to ethnicity, gender, type of exceptionality in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. At least one of the student representatives should be a student with a disability. Student representatives will be appointed by the Superintendent. Each student representative will be entitled to one vote.

When a membership opening exists, individuals interested in serving on the Panel will be advised to submit a letter of interest to the Panel's Staff Liaison, including documentation supporting the membership category in which the opening exists (i.e. parents/guardians, not-for-profit agencies or organizations). Letters of interest will be shared for review with the Chief Academic Officer and the Assistant Superintendent over ESE, by the Panel's Staff Liaison, to ensure that the Panel's membership continues to equitably represent the students served in ESE with regards to ethnicity, gender, grade levels, type of exceptionality, and ESE program delivery model. A response to the letter of interest will be issued by the Panel's Staff Liaison within 60 days of receipt of the letter of interest.

Existing Panel members at the time of the approval of this bylaws will not have to submit a letter of interest to continue to serve in the Panel. Their membership in the Panel will be established in accordance with their membership category (i.e. parents/guardians, not-for-profit agencies or organizations, honorary members).

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Article 5 - Quorum

For general Panel meetings, quorum shall be declared upon reaching 12 members in attendance in person or remotely.

Article 6 -Term of Membership

Upon appointment by the Superintendent, each representative agency may serve for two (2) consecutive, 2-year terms. Parents/legal guardians may serve in the Panel for up to three (3) consecutive, 2-year terms, as long as they have a child enrolled in M-DCPS. Parents/legal guardians whose child graduates from high school during the parent's term of service in the Panel will be allowed to serve the full three consecutive, 2-year terms, if requested by the parent/legal guardian. The student representatives may serve for a term of two years. District level administrators/staff will be appointed to the Panel by the Superintendent annually.

In order to maintain annual membership in good standing, each Panel member must attend in person at least 50% of the regularly scheduled Panel meetings as published in the calendar at the beginning of the school year; actively participate in Sub- Committee meetings; and participate in Panel sponsored activities such as, but not limited to, the Annual Awards Ceremony.

Panel members who are absent from general Panel meetings for more than 50% of the time will be issued a letter from the Chairperson thanking them for their past service to the Panel and declaring their position vacant. In cases where extraordinary circumstances have prevented a Panel member from maintaining membership in good standing (50% attendance or more), said Panel member has ten (10) work days to appeal their release from the Panel to the Chairperson. The Panel Chairperson will issue a final response within 10 work days of receiving such appeal.

Any applicant or current Panel member involved in Due Process and/or any litigation involving Miami-Dade County Public Schools is ineligible to participate as a Panel member until such time as the proceedings have ended.

Article 7 - Sub-Committees

The Panel's Sub-Committees are appointed at the discretion of the Chairperson. The Sub-committees function in a "fact finding" capacity only. Sub-Committees meet to gather information and report their findings to the Panel Chairperson and the Steering Sub-Committee. The Panel Chairperson will determine which Sub -Committee reports will be placed on the agenda for each general Panel meeting. The Panel Chairperson

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may appoint, at his/her discretion, members to represent the Panel on School District Committees such as the Attendance Boundary Committee.

Sub-committees are charged with fulfilling a specific "fact finding" mission and may include:

Awards Sub-Committee  
By-Laws Sub-Committee  
Early Childhood Sub-Committee  
Educational Programs and Inclusion Sub-Committee  
Gifted Education Sub-Committee  
Low-Incidence Disability Sub-Committee  
Mental Health Sub-Committee  
Nominations Sub-Committee (Officers)  
Parent Engagement Sub-Committee  
Secondary Transition Sub-Committee  
Steering Sub-Committee

Article 8 – Nominations of Officers

Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall take place every two years unless a seat becomes vacant earlier. The nominations process for officers shall begin in January of each election year with the Nominations Sub-committee approaching individual Panel members regarding their Interest in serving as officers of the Panel. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the January general meeting of each election year. The general election will take place in March of each election year and voting will be done by written ballot. The Chair-Elect will assume the Chairperson position at the first panel meeting of the new school year.

Article 9 - Steering Sub-Committee

The duties of the Steering Sub - Committee are to gather and report information to the Chairperson in order for the Panel to: (1) outline the annual priorities for the general Panel meetings and other Panel activities; and (2) inform the general membership about opportunities/ needs for improvement in the operation of the Panel. The Steering Sub-Committee is comprised of the Panel's Officers, the District - level administrators and the other Sub-Committee Chairs.

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Article 10 – Officers, Appointees and Duties

Officers must be voting members in good standing.

Chairperson:

The Chairperson may serve up to 2 consecutive, 2-year terms. The Panel can vote for an additional 2-year term at the discretion of the Panel.

The Chairperson must be a parent of an exceptional child and must have served on the Panel for a minimum of one year.

The Chairperson is the spokesperson for the Panel, and presides over each general Panel meeting and each Steering Sub-Committee meeting.

The Chairperson appoints Sub-Committee Chairpersons, Historian, and Parliamentarian, if the past Chair is not able to serve as Parliamentarian.

The Chairperson identifies and establishes Sub-committees as needed.

Vice-Chairperson:

The Vice-Chairperson may serve up to 2 consecutive, 2-year terms.

The Vice-Chairperson must be a parent of an exceptional child and must have served on the Panel for a minimum of one year.

The Vice-Chairperson presides as the Chair if the Chairperson is unable to do so.

The Vice-Chairperson ensures that each Panel and Sub-Committee meeting runs according to its schedule and is in operation, as appropriate.

Recording Secretary:

The Recording Secretary is responsible for overseeing the taking the minutes and attendance at each general Panel meeting.

The Recording Secretary is responsible for distributing the minutes at least one day prior to the commencement of next general Panel meeting.

The Recording Secretary is responsible for correspondence to/from the Panel. All

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Correspondence from the Panel is subject to the approval of the Chairperson.

The Recording Secretary is responsible for documenting and keeping record of yearly Panel activities.

*Parliamentarian:*

The Parliamentarian is the past Chairperson. If the past Chairperson is not able to serve as Parliamentarian, then the Parliamentarian will be appointed by the current Chairperson.

The Parliamentarian will implement Robert's Rules of Order when needed to conduct an efficient meeting and to ensure an equal opportunity for each person to express his/her opinion.

The Parliamentarian will ensure the Panel's compliance with these By-Laws.

*Historian:*

The Historian and the Recording Secretary shall document yearly Panel activities and outcomes for submission to the Superintendent in the form of an Annual Report no later than October 31 of each year. The Annual Report will be reviewed at the first general membership meeting of each school year and subsequently transmitted to the Superintendent.

*Staff Liaison:*

The Staff Liaison will be appointed by the Superintendent annually.

The Staff Liaison will serve as the link between the Panel and the Superintendent and his/her staff.

The Staff Liaison will assist the Panel Chairperson in the coordination of meetings and activities, and will appoint the Recording Secretary

The Staff Liaison presides as the Panel Chair if the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are unable to do so.

The Staff Liaison will assist the Superintendent in the recruitment of Panel members when there is a vacancy.

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Article 11 – Schedule of Meetings

The calendar of regularly scheduled general Panel meetings shall be published at the beginning of each school year. Said calendar shall also include the regularly scheduled Sub - Committee meetings for the school year. Additional Panel and Sub-Committee meetings may be scheduled, if needed.

General Panel meetings shall take place in alternating months beginning with the month of September each school year (September, November, January, March, May).

Sub-Committee meetings will also take place in alternating months beginning with the month of October each school year (October, December, February, April), as needed. Dates may be subject to change as needed.

Article 12 – General

The membership directory shall be updated and distributed to all Panel members annually at the November general Panel meeting. Said directory shall indicate membership categories, and Sub-Committee assignments.

Panel members have adopted a Consent Agenda format; therefore, all minutes and committee reports shall be distributed prior to the monthly Panel meeting. Designation of Consent Agenda items will be determined at the beginning of each meeting.

The agenda for general Panel meetings shall include a maximum of three items for discussion in addition to general items of business. Each discussion item may be addressed by Panel members for a period of up to 15 minutes. If further discussion is required, the majority of the members present in person must pass a motion to extend the discussion for an additional 5 minutes. If needed, any additional discussion will be referred to the appropriate Sub-Committee or to an Ad-Hoc Committee appointed by the Chairperson. Meeting attendees who are not Panel members may address the Panel about an item for discussion on the Agenda with the approval of the majority of the members present in person. Comments from meeting attendees who are not Panel members shall be limited to two (2) minutes. The agenda may include reports from active Sub-committees, as determined by the Panel Chairperson.

Meeting attendees may address non-agenda topics with the Panel under "Other" at the end of the meeting Agenda. These discussions shall be limited to three (3) minutes. If further discussion is required, the majority of the members present in person must pass

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a motion to extend the discussion for an additional 5 minutes. If needed, any additional discussion will be referred to the appropriate Sub-Committee or to an Ad-Hoc Committee appointed by the Chairperson

There shall be no reading of minutes at any general Panel meeting. Only corrections to the minutes will be heard at the general Panel meetings.

Panel members who are not M-DCPS employees will be required to sign the Certification of Compliance with the Code of Ethics for Individuals Serving on Advisory Committees under The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, on an annual basis, during the first Panel meeting of the year.

Submitted for general Panel approval in June 2018.