

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for**  
**Exceptional Student Education**

**By-Laws**

**ARTICLE 1 - NAME AND AUTHORITY**

The Panel shall be known as the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Exceptional Student Education (ESE), hereafter referred to as "the Panel". The Panel was established as an Ad Hoc Advisory Panel for Exceptional Student Education by The School Board of Dade County, Florida, on October 17, 1979. The Panel currently exists by authority of the Superintendent and can be dissolved by the Superintendent without cause.

**ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Panel is to advocate for ESE students and their families by serving in an advisory capacity 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 exceptionalities; and students with 504 Plans, as well as support services for their families.

The Panel advises the Superintendent on issues and concerns facing students in Exceptional Student Education Programs and their families. Provision of advisement will be based on (1) reviewing the status of ESE programs and 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 Programs including identifying and recommending how to best utilize allocated resources.

**ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP**

The Panel will consist of 29 voting members, including four (4) honorary members. Members will be appointed and may be removed without cause by the Superintendent. Any Panel member may resign from the Panel at any time by submitting a letter of resignation to the Chairperson or Staff Liaison.

The Panel will consist of ten (10) parents/legal guardians/caregivers of children with specialized needs, who are attending a public M-DCPS traditional or charter school. To the extent possible, the parents/legal guardians/caregivers who serve are appointed to the Panel should be representative of the students served in ESE with regard to ethnicity, gender, grade levels, type of exceptionality, and ESE program delivery model. Each appointed parent/legal guardian/caregiver member will be entitled to one (1) vote. All voting members are eligible to be members of Panel Sub-Committees.

The Panel will include four (4) appointed honorary members. In reference to honorary members, membership priority will be given to parents/legal guardians/caregivers who have completed their three (3) consecutive, 2-year terms as parent/legal guardians/caregiver representatives and still have a child that attends an M-DCPS traditional or charter school. Honorary members may also include 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 sub-committees. Each honorary member will be entitled to one (1) vote.

The Panel will include nine (9) representative not-for-profit education, health, and human services agencies and/or organizations in Florida. The Superintendent shall appoint agencies/organizations. 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 (1) vote.

The Panel will include four (4) staff members/representatives 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 appointed to the Panel will be entitled to one (1) vote.

The Panel will include two (2) high school students who are representative of the students served in ESE with regard to ethnicity, gender, and type of exceptionality in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. At least one (1) 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 (1) vote.

When a membership opening exists, individuals interested in serving on the Panel will be advised to submit an application 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). Applications will be shared for review with the Chief Academic Officer and the Assistant Superintendent overseeing ESE, by the Panel's Staff Liaison, to ensure that the Panel's membership continues to equitably represent the students served in ESE with regard to ethnicity, gender, grade levels, geographic region, exceptionality, and ESE program delivery model. A response to

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the application will be issued on behalf of the Superintendent by the Panel's Staff Liaison within 60 calendar days of receipt of the letter of interest.

Existing Panel members at the time of the approval of these by-laws will not have to submit an application to continue to serve in on the Panel. Their membership on the Panel will be established in accordance with their membership category (i.e. parents/guardians, not-for-profit agencies/organizations, honorary members).

**ARTICLE 4 - QUORUM**

For general Panel meetings, quorum shall be declared upon reaching 12 voting members in attendance including no less than five (5) parent members.

**ARTICLE 5 - TERM OF MEMBERSHIP**

Upon appointment by the Superintendent, parents/legal guardians/caregivers may serve on the Panel for up to three (3) consecutive, 2-year terms, as long as they have a child enrolled in an M-DCPS traditional or charter school. Parents/legal guardians/caregivers whose child graduates from high school during the parent's term of service on the Panel will be allowed to serve the full three (3) consecutive, 2-year terms, if requested by the parent/legal guardian/caregiver. Existing "parent/guardian/caregiver" Panel members at the time of the approval of these by-laws will continue to serve in on the Panel and the start of their three (3) consecutive, 2-year terms, (as long as they have a child enrolled in an M-DCPS traditional or charter school) begins with the date of approval of the by-laws. Each representative agency/organization 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 an M-DCPS traditional or charter school. 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 (3) consecutive, 2-year terms, if requested by the parent/legal guardian/caregiver. The student representatives may serve for a term of two (2) years at the discretion of the Superintendent. 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.

Panel members who are absent from general Panel meetings for more than 50% of the time will be issued a letter from the Superintendent 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 may contact the Panel Chairperson and Staff Liaison in writing within ten (10) work days of receipt of the letter from the Superintendent to appeal their removal from the Panel. The appeal request will be reviewed, and a final written response issued in a timely manner.

Any applicant or current Panel member involved in Due Process, Mediation, 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 6 - SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Panel's Sub-Committees are established at the discretion of the Panel Chairperson. The Sub-committee's primary function is "fact finding". Sub-Committees meet to gather information, report their findings, and make recommendations to the full Panel in writing at each Panel meeting. The Panel Chairperson will determine which Sub-Committee reports will be placed on the agenda for discussion at each general Panel meeting and will ensure that each Sub-Committee has the opportunity to report at least once annually. Sub-Committee Co-Chairpersons shall be identified by the Panel Chairperson in collaboration with the Superintendent's designee. The Panel Chairperson may appoint, at his/her discretion, members to represent the Panel on School District Committees such as the Attendance Boundary Committee.

Panel Sub-Committees are charged with fulfilling a specific "fact finding" mission and may include but are not limited to:

- Awards Sub-Committee
- By-Laws Sub-Committee
- Early Childhood Sub-Committee
- Educational Programs and Inclusion Sub-Committee
- Financial Sub-Committee
- Gifted Education Sub-Committee
- Low-Incidence Exceptionality Sub-Committee

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- Mental Health Sub-Committee
- Nominations Sub-Committee (Officers)
- Family Engagement Sub-Committee
- Secondary Transition Sub-Committee
- Steering Sub-Committee

**ARTICLE 7 - ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Election of Panel Chairperson, 1st Vice-Chairperson and 2nd Vice-Chairperson shall take place every two (2) years unless a seat becomes vacant earlier. Nominations, including self-nominations, will be accepted from the floor at the January and March general meetings of each election year. Nominations, including self-nominations, can be submitted in writing to the Panel Chairperson of the Nominating Committee and Staff Liaison on or before the day of the election. The general election will take place in March of each election year, presided by the Panel Chairperson of the Nominating Committee and Staff Liaison. The names of candidates and position sought will be shared with Panel members prior to the election. The Panel Chairperson of the Nominating Committee and Staff Liaison will read the names of candidates submitted for open positions, starting with the Panel Chairperson position. On the election day, additional nominees may be added from the floor. Voting will be done by written ballot. Election shall be by a majority vote of the members of the Panel present and voting. In the event that there is no majority vote for an office, then the two (2) candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall go through a rerun election. If the election process cannot be completed by the designated date, maximum diligence will be made to reschedule the election. The elected officials will assume their positions at the first panel meeting of the new school year.

In the event that a vacancy on the Executive Board occurs out of cycle, the next officer in the cycle will move up into the vacant position to ensure all Executive Board positions are filled. The Panel will have the option to fill any remaining vacancies during the next general Panel meeting following the established voting guidelines.

If there are no candidates for an open position after the established election process has taken place, the Nomination Sub-Committee shall be asked to convene and submit names to be voted on at the next general Panel meeting.

**ARTICLE 8 - STEERING SUB-COMMITTEE**

The duties of the Steering Sub-Committee are to gather and report information to the Panel 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 successes and 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/staff and the other Panel Sub-Committee Chairs.

**ARTICLE 9 - EXECUTIVE BOARD, OFFICERS, APPOINTEES AND DUTIES**

Officers must be voting members in good standing. The Executive Board will be comprised of the Panel Chairperson, 1st Vice Chairperson and 2nd Vice-Chairperson.

Chairperson:

The Panel Chairperson may serve up to two (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/legal guardian/caregiver of an exceptional child and must have served on the Panel for a minimum of one (1) year. The Panel Chairperson is the spokesperson for the Panel and presides over each general Panel meeting and each Steering Sub-Committee meeting. The Panel Chairperson appoints Sub-Committee Chairpersons, Historian, and Parliamentarian, if the past Panel Chair is not able to serve as Parliamentarian as well as Panel member representatives to M-DCPS District Committees, as appropriate. The Panel Chairperson identifies and establishes Sub-committees as needed with input from Panel members.

Vice-Chairpersons:

The 1st and 2nd Vice-Chairpersons may serve up to two (2) consecutive, 2-year terms.

The 1st and 2nd Vice-Chairpersons must be a parent/legal guardian/caregiver of an exceptional child and must have served on the Panel for a minimum of one (1) year.

The 1st Vice-Chairperson presides as the Panel Chair if the Panel Chairperson is unable to do so.

The 2nd Vice-Chairperson presides as Panel Chair if the Panel Chair and 1st Vice-Chairperson are unable to do so.

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

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**Recording Secretary:**

The Recording Secretary will be appointed annually by the Staff Liaison. The Recording Secretary is responsible for overseeing the taking of the minutes and attendance at each general Panel meeting. The Recording Secretary is responsible for distributing the minutes at least three (3) calendar days prior to the commencement of the next general Panel meeting. The Recording Secretary is responsible for correspondence to/from the Panel. All Correspondence from the Panel is subject to the approval of the Panel Chairperson. The Recording Secretary is responsible for documenting and keeping record of yearly Panel activities.

**Parliamentarian:**

The Parliamentarian is the past Panel Chairperson. If the past Panel Chairperson is not able to serve as Parliamentarian, then the Parliamentarian will be appointed by the Staff Liaison. 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 will be appointed by the current Panel Chairperson. 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 June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. The proposed Annual Report will be sent to all members of the Panel in good standing to facilitate input and recommendations before it is presented by the Panel to the Superintendent at a meeting scheduled for this purpose.

**Staff Liaison:**

The Staff Liaison will be appointed annually by the Superintendent. 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 and Parliamentarian. The Staff Liaison presides as the Panel Chair if the Panel Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons are unable to do so if there is a quorum present. The Staff Liaison will assist the Superintendent in the recruitment of Panel members when there is a vacancy.

**ARTICLE 10 - 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.

The Panel shall meet with the Superintendent to present their recommendations at least once annually.

**ARTICLE 11 - 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 at least three (3) calendar days prior to the monthly Panel meeting. Designation of Consent Agenda items will be determined at the beginning of each meeting.

In addition to the general orders of business, the agenda for general Panel meetings may include a maximum of two (2) "special" items for discussion in addition to general items of business. Non-agenda items must be approved by consensus of voting members present. Each discussion item may be addressed by Panel members for a period of up to 15 minutes. Individual comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per person. If further discussion is required, the majority of the members present in person must pass a motion to extend the discussion for an additional five (5) minutes. If needed, any additional discussion will be referred to the appropriate Sub-Committee or to an Ad-Hoc Committee appointed by the Panel 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. If further discussion is required, the majority of the members present must pass a motion to extend the discussion for an

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additional time. 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 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 Panel 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.

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Adopted: October 17, 1979 (as part of the approval of the Ad Hoc Advisory Panel for Exceptional Student Education by the School Board)

Amended: XXXX

Amended: XXXX 2011

Amended: January 2014

Amended: June 2018

Amended: December 2020