

Yinghua Academy
Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)
By-Laws

I. PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) is to ensure that members of the public and educators can work together in a positive way to improve the quality of special education for scholars in the community.

Mission

The mission of Yinghua Academy is to prepare our students to be engaged and productive global citizens by providing a research-based educational program that includes a rigorous academic program, immersion in Chinese language and culture, and a nurturing and supportive school environment.

II. PURPOSE

In accordance with MN State Statute 125A.24 the basic purpose of the SEAC is to advise the special education department regarding current issues, program development, parental concerns and involvement. Specifically, SEAC will:

- Promote respect and inclusivity for all students and families;
- serve as an advocate for high-quality special education programs;
- promote communication between family, school, and community.

III. MEMBERSHIP

A. The council consists of approximately 11 people, including parents, community representatives, and school staff. At least 50 percent of the members must be parents of students from diverse disability areas.

B. Initial membership is through appointment by the Yinghua Academy Executive Director, Director of Special Education and Special Education Coordinator and thereafter through an application process. Applications for SEAC membership are accepted on an ongoing basis to fulfill membership requirements outlined in Part III, subsection A of these bylaws. Applications can be obtained from the special education department, and all applications are submitted to the Yinghua Academy Executive Director, Director of Special Education and Special Education Coordinator for appointment to membership.

C. Members of the SEAC are appointed by the Yinghua Academy Executive Director, Director of Special Education and Special Education Coordinator to voluntarily serve as representatives for a two-year term, with the opportunity to reapply for additional terms as described in the SEAC bylaws (Part III, subsection B).

D. The SEAC shall elect a chairperson and co-chairperson who shall each serve a two-year term. The co-chairperson will run meetings in the absence of the chairperson and will assume the responsibilities of the chairperson after his or her term has ended. Both will be parents of children with disabilities who will work cooperatively with the special education director to set the agenda for each meeting.

IV. MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

A. Attendance and Preparation for Meetings

- a. Members must attend meetings regularly or notify the Director of Special Education/SEAC chair if personal schedules do not permit continuance.
- b. Prepare for meetings by reviewing agendas, minutes, reports and related materials.
- c. Provide requested input prior to meetings.
- d. The SEAC council shall be responsible for hosting an annual SEAC meeting for all special education families.

B. Conduct and Participation in Meetings

- a. Review and abide by the SEAC bylaws, including confidentiality of person-specific information shared or in SEAC-related activities.
- b. Members will operate in a positive manner during discussions, keeping in mind that the SEAC represents the entire community and students with special needs. The goal is to work toward meeting the needs of all scholars in our community.
- c. Participate in meetings by:
 - i. contributing ideas for solutions and asking clarifying questions
 - ii. identifying barriers or challenges experienced by other families
 - iii. focusing on student needs as a group, rather than on individual student concerns
 - iv. sharing personal experiences as they relate to decisions regarding policies and procedures

C. Collaboration and Community Connection

- a. Encourage parent involvement and participation; participate in community awareness activities and information sharing with families in the district.
- b. Work collaboratively with the school district's special education director, fellow SEAC members, other school personnel, and other parent and community members, to fulfill the district SEAC purpose and mission.

V. MEETING PROCEDURES

- A. Three formal meetings will be held each year once per school term within school hours. One of the three meetings will be held in person.
- B. Additional committee meetings may be requested or arranged with at least one school council member in attendance. Committee meetings will not make any final decisions. Proposals will occur within the formal SEAC meeting and approved by the vote of the council.
- C. Complete minutes will be recorded and sent out by e-mail to each SEAC member.
- D. The Yinghua Academy Executive Director, Director of Special Education and Special Education Coordinator in consultation with the SEAC chair/co-chairs, will set meeting agendas and email to members prior to each meeting.
- E. Chairpersons will be elected by a simple majority of secret ballots cast by designated members. If a chairperson cannot complete his or her term, another election will be held.

VI. BY-LAWS AND METHOD OF CHANGE

- A. All proposals for a change in bylaws must be shared with The Yinghua Academy Executive Director, Director of Special Education, Special Education Coordinator and the SEAC chair/co-chairs one month prior to the next regular meeting date.
- B. Two thirds of the committee must be in attendance for a vote to change SEAC by-laws to occur. All recommendations for change in the bylaws shall be made by a majority vote of the two thirds committee members present.
- C. Any change in the bylaws must have final approval by the Yinghua Academy Executive Director, Director of Special Education, Special Education Coordinator and the SEAC chair/co-chairs .