

Bylaws of the SEPTA Youth Advisory Council

Version 3.0 // Unanimously Adopted June 29, 2016 // Replaces Version 2.2 (Effective November 18, 2015)

Hello. Thank you for reading the official bylaws of the SEPTA Youth Advisory Council. As part of the YAC's initiative to create more "plain-language" documents, this version of our Bylaws is starkly different from prior editions. Notable changes include more readable text and a high-level "constitutional" paradigm that serves to outline the structure of the organization.

I. Name

The name of the organization is the "SEPTA Youth Advisory Council." The organization may also be referenced as the "Youth Advisory Council" or "YAC." The organization's historical name, "Youth Advisory Council to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority," shall continue to refer to the organization, although this name is to no longer be used in reference to the YAC.

II. Vision & Mission

The SEPTA Youth Advisory Council aims to foster a culture in which public transportation in the Greater Philadelphia Area is the preferred method of transportation among the youth demographic. The YAC works to achieve this vision by advocating youth needs to SEPTA Leadership for the purpose of system improvement and by providing information about transit services to the region's youth.

III. Relationship with SEPTA

The YAC, established by SEPTA (officially the "Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority," herein also referred to as "the Authority"), serves as SEPTA's primary outreach and advocacy group to area youth ages 14 to 22. The YAC is charged with providing opportunities for youth riders to voice their thoughts to the Authority. The YAC will advocate youth needs to SEPTA leadership and assist the Authority in evaluating service and initiative implementation. Further, the YAC will assist in the creation of promotional, outreach, and educational materials related to SEPTA services and special events. The YAC will formulate recommendations, suggestions, and plans regarding the improvement of mass transit service for youth in the region and will similarly solicit and receive public opinion concerning SEPTA from youth. Members of the YAC are authorized to represent and advocate on behalf of both SEPTA and the YAC at Authority-organized or sanctioned events. The YAC is authorized to take all other such actions as shall be consistent with the foregoing mission and not in contravention of the law.

IV. Meetings

Meetings of the Youth Advisory Council shall occur on a regular basis and shall typically be conducted via electronic means. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Executive Chair. The YAC may act at a regularly-scheduled meeting in the presence of a quorum (designated as no less than fifty-one percent of those members in good standing). The YAC may act at a meeting not regularly scheduled in the presence of a "super-quorum" (designated as no less than two-thirds of those members in good standing). All decisions made at a meeting, except otherwise noted, shall be made by a majority of those members present after an opportunity for discussion.

Select meetings, typically four per year, shall be designated as "Member Summits." These meetings shall typically be more substantial in nature and require the physical presence of members at a designated meeting location in the SEPTA service area.

V. Officers

The YAC shall be led by three distinct officers. These officers shall both be elected, and remain in office, in accordance with the provisions set forth in §VI & §VIII.

1. The Executive Chair shall serve as the head of the organization.
2. The Executive Chair shall call and conduct all regularly scheduled meetings and special meetings of the body as deemed necessary.
3. The Executive Chair shall be the official spokesperson for the organization and is solely authorized and solely responsible for representing the YAC to both SEPTA Leadership and the public.
4. The Executive Chair shall be responsible for overseeing the organization's mission, vision, strategic plan, and organization's annual reporting.
5. The Executive Chair shall also serve as the treasurer of the organization and shall be responsible for overseeing all financial commitments of the YAC.
6. The Executive Chair has the authority to delegate, for any duration not to exceed their tenure, any and all of these powers as they see fit.
7. The Executive Vice-Chair shall assist the Executive Chair in the fulfillment of their responsibilities and will both assume the duties and perform the customary actions of the Executive Chair in his or her absence.
8. The Secretary shall maintain appropriate record-keeping of the organization including, but not limited to, meeting agendas/recordings/minutes where applicable, the processing of membership applications, etc.
9. In the Secretary's absence, the Secretary may delegate their duties to another member of the YAC. Should no member be delegated, the Secretary's responsibilities shall fall upon the Executive Chair who may exercise their authority to delegate said responsibilities pursuant to §V.6 of these bylaws.
10. The officers together may establish, amend, and revoke administrative policies and decisions necessary to the operation of the YAC. This section shall not empower the officers to amend bylaws without following the amendment procedures outlined in §IX.

VI. Calendar and Elections

The official YAC Operating Year begins on September 1 and ends on August 31 of the following calendar year. Elections for the positions of Executive Chair, Executive Vice-Chair, and Secretary shall be conducted annually by electronic ballot. The electronic ballot is to be distributed during the month of August and remain open for a period of one week. The ballot must be distributed such that the close date occurs before the earlier of August 31 or a Member Summit during the 3rd, 4th, or 5th weeks of August (where applicable). Candidates interested in running for a position must nominate themselves and email a candidate's statement to the Secretary prior to that Operating Year's month of August.

Candidates are elected to a term of one operating year, although officers are not subject to term limits so long as they continue to meet the YAC's membership eligibility requirements. Vacancies of offices shall be filled in an identical manner to the above, adjusting the timeline back by the number of months necessary to provide at least one week for candidates to write their candidate statements (due prior to the month of the election).

VII. Membership

Individuals are eligible to join the YAC provided they are — and can provide proof substantiating these facts — between the ages of 14 and 22 and reside, attend school, or work, within the SEPTA Service Area throughout the duration of their tenure. Applications for eligible individuals to join the YAC are approved upon an affirmative vote by two of the three officers of the YAC. Seats on the YAC are not limited to a specific number, but rather fluctuate around a target membership size to be determined by both the YAC and SEPTA.

Members of the Youth Advisory Council must continue to meet the aforementioned eligibility requirements of the YAC throughout the duration of their tenure and must have attended no less than 80% of the YAC's meetings to have occurred within the past 12 months or since the start of their tenure, whichever is shorter. Members are expected to be regular users of the SEPTA system throughout their tenure on the YAC.

Members leaving the area for a designated period of time must request a leave of absence to retain their position on the YAC. During their "inactive" state, members may be limited in their ability to act as full members.

Members who turn 23 during an Operating Year shall be permitted to continue their service until the end of the Operating Year. Members must comply with these bylaws as well as any policies and motions enacted by the YAC.

VIII. Removal from Duties

Members who fail to meet the requirements of YAC policies may be removed from the YAC, and — in the case of officers — removed from their positions should they fail to abide by the policies of the YAC, pursuant to a motion introduced at a regularly-scheduled meeting of the YAC. The member must be notified no less than 72 hours in advance of the intent to make such a motion, and evidence of such notification must be presented at the time such a motion is made. The motion must be seconded by a fellow member of the YAC, at which point the member whose status is in question shall be afforded the right to make a statement. Following a discussion and vote, the removal from office or from the YAC shall only occur upon satisfaction of the above removal policies as well as an 80% affirmative vote by the membership in good standing.

IX. Amendments and Waivers

These bylaws may be amended and/or replaced by a "supermajority" (two-thirds) affirmative vote at a regularly-scheduled meeting of the YAC. Waivers from select provisions may be issued upon independent and unanimous approval from each officer as well as two additional members to be randomly selected as independent reviewers using a computerized randomization tool.