

## **LHEC Bylaws (Approved June 17, 2024)**

### **ARTICLE I. NAME**

The name of the organization shall be the “Lower Hudson Education Coalition” herein referred to as the “LHEC.”

### **ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

1. The Lower Hudson Education Coalition (LHEC) covers a five-county region — Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester — and is a regional voice for public education advocacy. Established in 1976, the Lower Hudson Education Coalition is a joint project of the Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents (LHCSS), Dutchess County School Boards Association (DCSBA), Rockland County School Boards Association (RCSBA), and Westchester Putnam School Boards Association (WPSBA). The coalition expanded in 2024 to include Orange County School Boards Association (OCSBA) and the Orange County Superintendents (OCS).
2. The LHEC serves as a clearinghouse for regional legislative activities, lobbying for regional public education issues with state and federal officials and providing legislative information to the subscribing school districts. The LHEC shall best accomplish its stated purpose when all eligible districts are subscribers.
3. The governance structure includes both superintendent and board of education representatives to facilitate the ongoing sharing of information and the development of a cohesive, strategic advocacy agenda. The organization is registered with the IRS as a 501c(6).
4. Any county that does not maintain a minimum of 50% of districts as paying subscribers to LHEC may lose status as sponsoring organizations and lose their appointed representation on the Steering Committee. This provision will only apply to Orange County after five years in the coalition (the 2029-2030 school year).

### **ARTICLE III. School District Subscribers**

1. Eligibility: Subscriptions shall be open to all school districts in the five-county region. Active members are eligible to participate on the Steering Committee (SC) as a representative of the LHCSS/OCS or the Regional School Board Association that represents their county.
2. Each eligible school district may become a member by signifying its intention to do so and paying subscription fees as described in Article V, 2.

### **ARTICLE IV. GOVERNING BOARD: STEERING COMMITTEE (SC)**

1. Steering Committee Composition
  - a. There shall be eleven (11) seats on the Steering Committee (SC), composed of four (4) voting members appointed annually by the LHCSS, one (1) voting member appointed annually by the OCS, three (3) voting members appointed annually by the WPSBA, one (1) voting member appointed annually by the RCSBA, one (1) voting member appointed annually by the DCSBA, and one (1) voting member appointed annually by the OCSBA.

- b. The LHCSS, OCS, DCSBA, OCSBA, RCSBA, and WPSBA may designate an alternate who is authorized to attend and vote at a SC meeting when a voting member is unable to participate.
  - c. It shall be the responsibility of the LHCSS, OCS, DCSBA, OCSBA, RCSBA, and WPSBA to appoint the appropriate number of SC voting members and an alternate annually, and promptly fill any vacancies.
  - d. The LHCSS, OCS, DCSBA, OCSBA, RCSBA, and WPSBA appointees must be either a sitting superintendent (or sitting interim superintendent) or sitting board of education member in a district located within their geographic area, or the current executive director of the organization.
  - e. Ex-Officio members of the SC shall include the Executive Director of the WPSBA as Administrator, and may also include the Directors of the LHCSS, DCSBA, OCSBA, or RCSBA.
  - f. No school district shall have more than one representative on the SC and/or on a SC committee unless appointed by separate represented organizations.
2. Steering Committee Role
    - a. The Steering Committee shall oversee all business of the LHEC, including but not limited to: approve the budget, set the advocacy agenda, hire and evaluate a Legislative Director and any other consultants or lobbyists.
    - b. Steering Committee members shall serve as a liaison between the SC and their organization, fostering conversation regarding advocacy needs, issues and the development and implementation of a shared agenda.
  3. Superintendents and board members in LHEC subscriber districts are encouraged to provide input to the Steering Committee.
  4. Steering Committee Officers
    - a. The SC shall elect a Steering Committee Chair from among its voting members by majority vote. It is expected that a nominee for Chair will have served a minimum of one year on the Committee.
    - b. The term of office shall be one year, and an officer may serve up to three consecutive terms in that position, unless additional years are confirmed by a 2/3 majority vote of the Steering Committee
  5. Sub- Committees of the Steering Committee:
    - a. The Steering Committee may convene ad hoc committees as needed to promote the purpose and policies of the LHEC, with representatives of member school districts in good standing.

## ARTICLE V. FINANCE

1. The fiscal year shall commence on July 1 and end on June 30, consistent with the school year.
2. The LHEC shall be funded by subscription fees from school districts in the four-county region.
3. The budget and school district subscriber fee shall be determined and approved by SC at the end of the prior year, with subscriptions payable during the 1st quarter of each fiscal year.
4. The Steering Committee shall re-affirm its depository institution each year.

5. The Administrator shall oversee financial disbursements and reporting, including the 990 and other required filings, and any required lobbying filings with the NYS Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government (COELIG).

#### ARTICLE VI. STEERING COMMITTEE (SC) MEETINGS

1. The SC shall convene a minimum of six (6) meetings per year, at a location to be approved by the SC members.
2. The Administrator shall work with the SC Chair to draft a meeting agenda and make it available at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting.
3. A quorum of five (5) SC voting members or alternates shall be required for the legal and proper conduct of any business. When a quorum is present to open the meeting, it is not broken should anyone leave prior to a vote.
4. Voting members may participate by means of conference telephone or videoconference allowing all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time, and shall be counted as present for a quorum.
5. Robert's Rules of Order, latest revision, shall govern all meetings and will be utilized in all cases in which they are applicable and are consistent with the Bylaws.

#### ARTICLE VII. ADMINISTRATION of the LHEC

1. The Executive Director of WPSBA shall serve as the Administrator of the LHEC, and Secretary to the Steering Committee.
2. WPSBA shall be remunerated for this service at a rate set annually by the SC.
3. The Administrator shall have general charge and oversight to: prepare the budget; receive, record and deposit all monies into the LHEC account; perform financial transactions and reporting; prepare, distribute, and follow-up on school district subscription packets; and conduct other business and disseminate communications as appropriate.
4. The Administrator and the SC Chair shall be authorized to make disbursements and to sign documents on behalf of the SC, as authorized by the SC.
5. All contracts shall be approved by a majority vote of the Steering Committee.
6. The Administrator shall report on subscribers and finances at each SC meeting.

#### ARTICLE VIII. ADVOCACY CONSULTANTS; LOBBYIST; LEGISLATIVE COORDINATOR

1. The Steering Committee shall contract annually with a lobbyist and/or a legislative coordinator to conduct the business of the LHEC and implement its advocacy agenda.
2. The SC shall set a job description, with roles and duties based on the annual priorities.
3. Contracted organizations or individuals shall be accountable to the Steering Committee.

#### ARTICLE IX. BYLAWS AMENDMENTS

1. The bylaws shall be reviewed annually.
2. Amendments to these bylaws shall be presented to the voting members of the SC prior to the meeting at which action is to be taken and shall require a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote of the SC.

#### ARTICLE X. APPENDIX

1. The LHEC will comply with all regulatory requirements, updated as required by law: whistleblower, non-discrimination, conflict of interest; indemnification.
2. Any changes to the Appendix shall be approved by majority vote of SC.