

# San Francisco Youth Commission 2013-2014 Bylaws

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## **Article I – Name, Authorization & Purpose**

### *(A) Name*

The Youth Commission (hereinafter called the “Commission”) was established by a 1995 amendment to the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco (SEC 4.122-4.125).

### *(B) Authorization*

The Charter provides the Commission with its authorization.

### *(C) Purpose*

The Charter mandates that the Commission advise both the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor on issues relating to youth and children, and that the Commission be under the jurisdiction of the Board of Supervisors.

## **Article II – Duties, Activities & Time Commitment**

### *(A) Duties*

In order to fulfill its Charter-mandated purpose, the Youth Commission shall have the following duties:

1. Respond to legislation referred from the Board of Supervisors by providing the Board and the Mayor with written comments and recommendations and by sending commissioners to speak at meetings of the Board of Supervisors, its committees and other relevant City bodies;
2. Adopt resolutions that recommend, encourage or urge the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to take certain actions;
3. Regularly meet with the elected officials who appointed each commissioner (and/or their aides), so as to develop a relationship with these officials and better advise them on the issues affecting children and youth in San Francisco; and
4. Monitor, research, investigate and analyze the budgets and programs of the various departments of local government that affect the children and youth of San Francisco—and non-governmental (not-for-profit or otherwise) organizations

that do the same—and propose a set of budget priorities (at minimum once a year) for policymakers to bear in mind when developing their budgets for the subsequent fiscal year.

*(B) Activities*

In order to fulfill the above 4 duties, the Commission shall regularly engage in the following three activities:

1. Identify the issues and unmet needs of San Francisco's young people by surveying, questioning and developing relationships with young people themselves and adults who work with youth at recreation centers, social service organizations, after school programs, religious institutions, and any other kind of community-based organization that has youth members or serves youth in some way; and
2. Read, research, discuss and analyze statistics, reports, surveys, news articles and any other kind of data relating to young people in San Francisco, the United States, and beyond.
3. Engage in community outreach, relationship building, promotion of Youth Commission, and tracking of all conveyed concerns to all San Francisco youth and young adult populations within each commissioner's respective district requiring a *minimum* commitment of attending (1) community event per month and/or visit to any youth-based community organization/school/etc.

*(C) Time Commitment*

As per the Commission Application for the 2013-2014 term, each Commissioner shall devote *at minimum* 15 hours per month to work on the Commission. Commission staff shall assist Commissioners in tracking and cataloguing their time and work on the Commission.

The time commitment requirement is greater for Commissioners elected by their colleagues to be officers, as per "Article V—Officer Positions," below.

**Article III – Membership & Meetings**

*(A) Membership*

The membership of the Youth Commission shall be determined by SEC 4.123 (a) of the Charter:

"The Commission shall consist of seventeen (17) voting members, each of whom shall be between the ages of 12 and 23 years old at the time of appointment. Each member of the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor shall appoint one member to the Commission. The Mayor shall appoint five (5) members from underrepresented communities to ensure that the Commission represents the diversity of the City. Commission members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authorities."

*(B) Regular Meetings & Mid Year Retreat*

In order to conduct its business, the Commission shall regularly meet on the first and third Mondays of every month from October 2013 through June 2014, unless this falls on a holiday, in which case the Commission shall meet on the day following that holiday

Adopted as amended  
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(i.e., the following Tuesday). Regular meetings shall be in room 416 of City Hall unless otherwise noted on the Youth Commission website ([www.sfgov.org/yc](http://www.sfgov.org/yc)).

Exceptions include September 2013 (in which the Commission shall conduct their Special Inaugural meeting, directly after their Swearing In ceremony, on the second Monday of the month) and January 2014 (in which the Commission shall have a regular meeting on the first Monday of the month and then hold a special Mid Year Retreat on January 19 and 20 at a location To Be Determined).

For the purposes of attendance (see Article IV—Attendance, below) the Mid Year Retreat constitutes a regular meeting.

*(C) Special Meetings*

Under the Brown Act, the Chairperson or a majority of the Commission have the power to call a special meeting of the Commission. In addition, the Executive Committee shall also have the power to call a special meeting of the Commission, if a minimum of three Executive Committee members vote to do so. For a special meeting, an agenda and 72 hours notice to the public must be provided, and all Meeting Procedures and Rules of Order below apply.

For the purposes of attendance (see Article IV, Section A, Attendance, below) all special meetings constitute a regular meeting.

*(D) Meeting Procedures and Rules of Order*

The following rules hereby govern the Commission's quorum and voting procedure at Youth Commission meetings:

- (a) Quorum shall consist of a majority of the Commission's 17 members (i.e., 9 commissioners).
- (b) Quorum is needed to begin a Commission meeting and to pass any motion, unless otherwise noted.
- (c) Abstentions are only permitted if there is a clear conflict of interest or if the particular motion refers to a matter a Commissioner would not be in position to be knowledgeable of (e.g., the approval of minutes from a meeting they did not attend).

In general, the Youth Commission shall conduct its meetings by employing the parliamentary procedure known as Rosenberg's Rules of Order.

*(E) Meeting Agendas & Minutes*

Any commissioner and all members of the public are encouraged to request that items be added to the agenda. The Executive Committee (see Article V) shall meet the Wednesday prior to each Youth Commission meeting in order to approve the agenda for each upcoming meeting. Ultimately, the Executive Committee has the authority to determine the Commission's agenda. If the Executive Committee does not meet the week before a regularly scheduled Commission meeting, the Chairperson shall have the power to determine the agenda of the upcoming Commission meeting.

Agendas shall be posted (on the Commission's website, in front of room 416, and delivered to the San Francisco Public Library), no less than 72 hours before each meeting and draft minutes shall be posted no more than 48 business hours after the conclusion of the meeting in question.

**Article IV – Attendance, Resignation & Leaves of Absence**

*(A) Attendance*

The Commission's attendance policy will be as follows. According to SEC 4.123 (c) of the Charter:

“Any member whom the Commission certifies to have missed three regularly scheduled meetings of the Commission in any six month period without prior authorization of the Commission shall be deemed to have resigned from the Commission effective on the date of the written certification from the Commission.”

“Missing” a meeting means *any* of the following: being absent at a meeting; arriving 15 minutes after quorum is called; leaving *any time* before a meeting is adjourned; leaving the Commission meeting room during a meeting for more than 15 minutes at any time.

A Youth Commissioner arriving late to a meeting, but arriving within 15 minutes of when quorum is called, will be marked tardy. Every two tardies will be equated to one absence.

All absence authorization requests must be forwarded to the Executive Committee. To request that an absence be authorized, the Commissioner making the request must make said request to the Youth Commission Director via email by 5:00 PM PT on the Wednesday following the absence.

Staff shall have the responsibility of calendaring absence authorization requests on the next applicable Executive Committee meeting's agenda. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to authorize that the full Youth Commission consider an absence by a simple majority vote.

The full Commission shall have a standing agenda item dedicated to attendance review for Commissioners to explain their reason to authorize their absences. The full Commission shall have the authority to authorize an upcoming absence by a simple majority vote pending approval of consideration from the Executive Committee.

- (i.) The Commission shall have a standing agenda item dedicated to attendance review allowing for general comments on attendance where commissioners can explain past unauthorized absences and offer each other suggestions on preventing future absences, but in which commissioners will have the right to pass if they do not wish to state the reason for absence due to personal reasons.
- (ii.) Because the commission will not meet to approve absence authorizations in September 2013, commissioners can seek approval of a planned absence for the October 7, 2013 meeting by informing staff of the planned absence by Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Staff will, in turn, request commissioners to place the absence under consideration for approval at the upcoming meeting.

The Commission shall not have the power to authorize more than 3 absences per member per term. If an absence is not authorized by the Commission, that absence hereby counts as a “missed” meeting.

*(B) Resignation*

After a Commissioner has been found to have missed 3 meetings, Commission staff shall prepare a written resignation form to be voted on by the full Commission at the next full Commission meeting. Commissioners will have an opportunity to explain their absences before the full Commission makes a decision to certify a resignation. Only by supermajority vote shall the full Commission have the power to not certify such a Commissioner’s resignation.

*(C) Leaves of Absence*

A Commissioner may request a leave of absence, for any reason, of not more than 3 regular Commission meetings by submitting a written request to the Executive Committee by the Wednesday before a regular Commission meeting. The full Commission shall have the power to consider and grant a leave of absence.

**Article V – Executive Committee Officer Positions**

*(A) Names & General Purpose of Executive Officers*

In order to aid in the conduct, efficiency, productivity and joy of the Commission’s work of fulfilling its Chartered purpose and duties, the Commission shall have the following elected officers, who together shall constitute the Executive Committee: one Chairperson, one Vice Chairperson, one Legislative Affairs Officer, one Communications & Outreach Officer, and a Media and Public Relations Officer.

These officer positions are not purely celebratory; being elected to them does not constitute any kind of victory-in-itself. Rather, the purpose of these positions is to aide in the work of the Commission—and *not* to advance the personal interests, positions and desires of the individuals elected to serve in these positions.

In other words: officers serve the entire Commission—and *not* the other way around.

*(B) Executive Officer Positions & Duties*

The Chairperson shall:

- i. Facilitate Commission meetings by upholding and enforcing the Commission’s Rules of Order and these Bylaws;
- ii. Motivate and encourage the active and engaged participation of all commissioners (and members of the public) at meetings by being fair, encouraging, positive and resisting expressing her/his/their own opinion on an item until the end of discussion;
- iii. Meet with Commission staff weekly to discuss Commission business;
- iv. Be the spokesperson for the Commission and, with the other officers, co-coordinate community outreach and educational material, commissioner testimony at legislative hearings, and media and public relations;
- v. Review the agenda for each Commission meeting in person with staff and the Vice Chairperson;
- vi. Schedule or cancel Commission meetings; and
- vii. Have a flexible schedule with free time during the day in order to conduct all of these duties.

*The Vice Chairperson shall:*

- i. If the Chair is not present, facilitate Commission meetings;
- ii. Facilitate Executive Committee meetings;
- iii. Review the agenda for each Commission meeting in person with staff and the Chairperson;
- iv. Coordinate Commission forums and Commission presentations at schools, City departments, community agencies, and events; and
- v. Working with the Legislative Affairs Officers, coordinate commissioner and other youth testimony at legislative hearings.

*The Legislative Affairs Officer shall:*

- i. Serve as the point people on receiving, monitoring, and reporting pending legislation at the Board of Supervisors to the Commission;
- ii. Monitor Board of Supervisors' agendas and hearing schedules for pending legislation;
- iii. Ensure that pending legislation that will be referred to the full Commission for comment and recommendation is considered separately and beforehand by the appropriate Youth Commission committee;
- iv. Ensure commissioners build relationships with the Board of Supervisors and Mayor by meeting about upcoming legislation and ongoing Youth Commission policy work;
- v. Regularly check in with fellow commissioners to make sure commissioners are meeting with their appointing officers regarding pending legislation;
- vi. Solicit interest and participation of Commissioners in giving testimony at public hearings; and
- vii. Attend Board of Supervisors meetings, if possible.

*The Outreach and Communications Officer shall:*

- i. Working with staff and the Media and Public Relations Officer, develop an annual outreach plan for the Commission and present the plan for approval to the Commission and coordinate assignment of responsibility;
- ii. Help acquire information, identify future opportunities, and engage peers at *each* community, government or other event in which the Commission (as a full body or as a committee) is involved.
- iii. Ensure that commissioners are attending meetings with youth and other community members each month;
- iv. Coordinate Commission forums and Commission presentations at schools, City departments, community agencies, and events;

*The Media and Public Relations Officer shall:*

- i. Working with staff and the Outreach and Communications Officer, develop and present an annual Outreach and Media plan for approval to the Commission and coordinate assignment of responsibility;
- ii. Help develop and disseminate media messages (talking points, press releases, etc.) for *each* community, government or other event in which the Commission (as a full body or as a committee) is involved.
- iii. Working with staff, maintain a strategic, professional and active presence on the Youth Commission's social media platforms;

- iv. Working with entire Executive Committee, produce and upload a biweekly video/digital update on the Commission's recent meeting and committee work for inclusion in the newsletter and social media platforms.

*(C) Executive Officer Time Commitments, Accountability and Removal*

Election to any of the above-named five officer positions requires a Commissioner to devote *at minimum* 2 more hours a week to work on the Youth Commission *on top of* the 15 hour per month commitment required of all other commissioners, except for the position of Chairperson, who shall be required to devote *at minimum* 3 more hours.

In order for Executive Officers to be accountable to the entire Commission, the Executive Committee shall prepare a brief report of its activities to be shared at each regular Commission meeting. Commissioners are encouraged to ask questions and refer to these Bylaws in order to keep officers accountable for their work.

Any Executive Officer may be removed from any position at any full Commission meeting by a supermajority vote of the Commission, provided that the item has been duly noticed.

No Commissioner shall serve in more than one Executive Officer position at a time.

*(D) Executive Officer Elections*

The election of Executive Officers shall be conducted at the first Commission meeting of the term as follows: Commissioners may nominate themselves or another Commissioner for any officer position. Commissioners nominated by others are allowed to decline nominations.

After all the nominations are made, each Commissioner who has accepted a nomination of the position-in-question will have 60 seconds to share a statement regarding why she or he would like to be elected to said position .

After each Commissioner has made this statement of up to 60 seconds, his/her/their colleagues may ask questions (of up to 60 seconds each) of each Commissioner running for executive office, who will have up to 60 seconds to respond. Each Commissioner is limited to one question of each candidate for executive office.

After the question-and-answer session has concluded, by roll call vote, officers shall be elected. If no candidate attains nine votes, the candidate with the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated and there will be another roll call vote. This process shall repeat itself until each officer position is filled.

**Article VI –Standing Issue-Based Committees**

*(A) Names & General Purpose of Committees*

Committees exist in order to aid in the conduct, efficiency, productivity and joy of the Commission's work of fulfilling its Charter-mandated purpose and duties. The Commission shall have an Executive Committee and the following standing committees: Education, Wellness, and Health (held jointly with representatives of the San Francisco Unified School District Student Advisory Council); Employment and Immigration; Youth Justice; and Housing, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) and Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Issues.

*(B) Responsibility, Authority and Meeting Time of Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee has the following responsibilities and authorities: approving Commission meeting agendas on the Wednesday before each regularly scheduled Monday full Commission meeting; preparing commissioners for discussion of legislation referred from the Board of Supervisors; regularly discussing and proposing solutions for issues raised by other committee members or individual commissioners; and Commission legislation.

*(C) Responsibility, Authority, Membership, Chairpersonship and Meeting Time of Standing Issue-Based Committees*

The Commission's other committees (i.e., non-Executive) are responsible for meeting with City and school district officials, community members, organizations and advocates, for conducting research and investigation, and for developing legislation and policy under their general subject matter jurisdiction.

It is encouraged that in addition to Commissioners themselves, Commission committees include other young members (ages 12-23 especially) who are not Commissioners.

Commission committees (non-Executive) shall operate according to Section III—Membership and Meetings, (B3) Meeting Procedures and Rules of Order, of these Bylaws. These committees shall establish their own regular meeting date and time.

Committees shall elect a Chairperson at their first official meeting, by any procedure the committee members deem appropriate. The Chairperson must be a Commissioner, except for the Joint Education Committee.

The Executive Committee of the Commission shall have the power to dissolve and create standing-issue based committees by simple majority vote.

*(D) Special Supercommittees and Youth Commission Participation in Outside Bodies: Youth Advisory Council; Youth Employment Committee and the City's Youth Council; Youth Justice Committee and the City's Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council*

The Commission's Executive Committee, by simple majority vote, shall designate which 2 Youth Commissioners will serve on the City's Youth Advisory Council, which serves as the in-house youth advisory body to the City's Department of Children, Youth and their Families. (The 2 Commissioners serving as the Commission's representatives on the Youth Advisory Council *may not simultaneously* serve as Executive Officers or as the elected officers of any other Commission Committee.)

The Youth Commission's participation in the City's Youth Council, a committee of the Workforce Investment San Francisco Board, shall be determined by the votes and positions taken by the Youth Employment Committee.

The Youth Commission's participation in the City's Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council, a state-mandated local body, shall be determined by the votes and positions taken by the Youth Justice Committee.

**Article VII – Commission Core Values**

The work of the entire Commission is guided by belief in the following core values:

- The best work is done in a manner that is respectful, inclusive and honest;

- A better world for all young people is possible;
- Belief in working towards a world that supports the safety, well being and positive enrichment of all young people;
- Belief in working towards a world where safety and justice, adequate housing, sufficient health care, and superlative education are the right of all young people; and
- Belief in working towards a world that is all inclusive, diverse, loving, and kind.

The Commission believes that young people have the knowledge and power necessary to create the world described above, and believes that our role as the voice of young people in San Francisco is to respectfully represent our communities to the best of our abilities.

### **Article VIII– Staff Role, Staff Mission, Vision and Accountability & Office Resources**

#### **(A) Staff Role**

Commission staff is responsible for assisting the Commissioners in fulfilling their Chartered duties and, in particular, to assure the day-to-day functioning of the Commission. Staff shall also enforce these Bylaws and other adopted Youth Commission policies and procedures.

Staff shall support the Commission in the following ways: training Commissioners in the structure of City government, the legislative and budget processes, public speaking and public policy, diversity and difference, and other topics of interest as they arise; assisting in the drafting of legislation and other Commission documents; speaking with or on behalf of the Commission at community and government meetings; assuring compliance with all local, state and federal public meeting and record retention policies; and facilitating the Commission's (and individual Commissioners') relationships with City and school district officials, community organizations and advocates, and other young people. Staff shall, in general, work 40 hour week.

#### **(B) Staff Mission, Vision & Accountability**

Commission staff believes:

- That the Youth Commission must positively impact the communities of San Francisco by engaging, enabling, and bringing to the forefront of legislative and policy debates the compelling voices of San Francisco's youth;
- In the presence and active roles of young people in government—locally and beyond; and
- In being truthful and respectful to ourselves, our commissioners, our colleagues in the community and government, and the youth in the many communities of San Francisco.

The work of Commission staff is guided by a vision in which staff works to:

- Create and maintain a safe, productive, upbeat and fun space at the Commission in which respectful, supportive, open, and honest relationships amongst Commissioners and Staff can develop, change and thrive;
- Develop the leadership abilities, communication skills, knowledge of the fundamentals of City government, the budget, legislative processes and parliamentary procedure, and socio-emotional intelligence of our Commissioners

and other young people, in order to ensure active, effective youth participation in San Francisco City government;

- Collaborate with community members, organizations, and schools; and
- Honestly share our insight, history, and vision in order to provide the best possible experience for all Commissioners, while maintaining a commitment to our Commissioners that the institution truly be—with respect to its policy direction and culture—a youth led institution.

Commission staff works to be accountable to Commissioners by:

- Being forthright, communicative, honest and direct with Commissioners about our work as staff, including: sharing and explaining what we do during the work day; introducing Commissioners to as many policies, procedures, City departments, organizations, books and individuals as Commissioners would like;
- Being direct and communicative with Commissioners about our expectations for their work—including its relative quality, quantity and positive spirit; and
- Seeking feedback (both formally and informally) from Commissioners regarding their expectations and opinions of staff work.

#### (C) Office Resources

The Youth Commission Office, room 345 of City Hall, shall be open, in general, from 9am to 6pm on regular City & County of San Francisco work days. Staff reserves the right to close the office for 1 hour at lunch, and to modify this schedule based on other hours worked by staff.

The three non-staff computers and three non-staff phones, along with mailboxes for each of the Commission's 17 members, are available for Commissioners to use *only for their official work as Commissioners*.

For purposes of safety and oversight, Commissioners may only use the office if a staff person is present.

### **Article IX– Legislation**

#### (A) Types of Legislation & Tracking System

The Commission shall have three types of legislation: Reports to the Board and Mayor; Action Legislation; and Resolutions of Commendation.

The Commission shall maintain the following format for tracking its legislative work: each document will begin with a shorthand for the current 2013-2014 fiscal year (i.e., “1314”), followed by a dash (i.e., “—”) followed by the number that the document is in the line of introduced legislation for that fiscal year (e.g., if the document is the fourth piece of legislation introduced this year, then “4”) followed by another dash (i.e., “—”) and the shortened title of the legislation.

#### (B) Reports to the Board and Mayor (RBM)

Reports to the Board and Mayor are official responses to pieces of legislation referred from the Board of Supervisors under Charter SEC 4.124. The substance and content of these Reports are developed through conversation, on the public record, at Commission meetings where the Commission takes a position on a piece of legislation referred. The Legislative Affairs Officers and staff are vested with the authority to type up these

Reports and the responsibility to deliver them to the Clerk of the Board, the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor's Office.

Except for extraordinary situations, Reports to the Board shall only be considered once by the Commission before being adopted.

**(C) Action Legislation (AL)**

Action Legislation consists of written communications that suggest a change in policy or administrative practice, or formally support a campaign, organization or event. This can take the form of resolutions, endorsements, policy reports or statements. If there is no physical legislation—such as voting to support an event—a copy of the motion will double as a resolution and be placed into the legislative record.

Resolutions shall normally be considered twice by the full Commission before being adopted. In extraordinary situations, the Commission may by simple majority vote motion to suspend this rule and take action on a resolution on its first reading.

**(D) Resolutions of Commendation (RC)**

Resolutions of Commendation officially recognize the work of an individual, organization or an organized effort.

Except for extraordinary situations, Resolutions of Commendation shall only be considered once by the Commission before being adopted.

**Article X – Amendments to Bylaws**

The Commission can create, repeal, amend, or reword bylaws with a majority vote of the full Commission. Changes made to the bylaws must be placed on the agenda and be noticed according to all applicable public meeting laws.



Nicholas Persky

YOUTH COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON, 2013-2014  
December 16, 2013