

POLICY RELATING TO COMMUNICATION/PUBLIC RELATIONS

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

The School Committee believes that the school is the key unit for educational improvement and change. Successful school improvement is better accomplished through a planning and decision-making process that seeks meaningful participation from teachers, parents, and others at the individual school level. The School Committee believes that this will create ownership by those responsible for and benefiting from the education offered at the school.

Under this policy, the principal shall have primary responsibility for the management of the school. Decisions made at the school level must be aligned with the budget, policies, curriculum and long-range and short-range goals adopted by the School Committee and administrative regulations developed by the Superintendent. In addition, decisions must comply with state and federal laws and regulations and with any negotiated agreements of the school district.

The School Committee is committed to fully implement M.G.L., Chapter 71, Section 59C. As enacted by the state legislature in the Education Reform Act of 1993, a School Council shall be established in each school to advise the principal in specific areas of school operation. The principal, except as specifically defined in the law, shall have responsibility for achieving the composition and forming the group using a representative process approved by the Superintendent.

Organization of Council

The Council shall consist of:

- ° At least four parents of students attending the school, none of whom are employees of the school. Elections will be held by the local recognized parent teacher organization, and principals will ensure that the process is publicized in advance and open to all parents. Parents will have parity representation with professional school personnel, including the principal, on the Council.
- ° Teachers and other professional faculty staff elected by their peers within the building.
- ° At least two community representatives, neither parents of District students nor employees of the District, selected by the principal, with advice from the Council, and not to exceed 50% of the voting membership.

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- One other person representing school non-faculty staff selected by the principal.
- Student representatives for high school and Grades 6-8 will be selected by their peers in a representative process overseen by the principal. The number of students will not exceed the number of parents.
- A School Committee representative(s) as annually designated by the Chairperson of the School Committee who shall serve for the school year as ex-officio member(s), to be seated at the meeting table, and to participate in discussions, but to be a non-voting member(s).

Each School Council shall determine the term limits for membership and develop a staggered membership selection to encourage only a partial, annual turnover of council membership.

Meetings shall be presided over by the principal and parent representative selected by the Council as Co-chair at the first annual meeting. Meetings shall be held regularly with a minimum of six meetings scheduled annually. Meetings shall be conducted consistent with the open meeting laws of the Commonwealth, the principal being responsible to ensure that all meetings are properly posted and a quorum is present to conduct business. Notification for meetings shall be provided by the principal using the same notification process used by the School Committee. All School Council meetings shall be properly posted 48 hours in advance.

The agenda and copies of minutes shall be filed and maintained in the local school. Robert's Rules of Order shall be used to conduct the business of the Council, and at the discretion of the Council, an informal or consensus style may be used when appropriate. The School Committee recommends that each Council adopt bylaws that meet its needs.

Activities of School Council

The School Council shall advise the principal regarding the following:

- Adoption of educational goals for the school that are consistent with state and local policies and standards.

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- Identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school.
- Formation of the school budget.
- Dissemination of a yearly parent satisfaction survey to guide future school improvement decisions.
- Formulation of a School Improvement Plan may be implemented only after review and approval of the Superintendent and the School Committee.

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The School Improvement Plan shall address improvement of student performance and the organizational plan to achieve that performance. The School Improvement Plan shall address but not be limited to the following:

1. Goals of the state and the School Committee
2. Diverse learning needs of students to include cultural/linguistic diversity needs, gifted student needs, special needs services and regular education needs.
3. Staff development and training needs and allocation of funds.
4. Safety and discipline needs of the school.
5. School environment to include tolerance and respect.
6. Extra-curricular needs.
7. An assessment of:
 - The impact of class size on student performance.
 - Student-to-teacher ratios.
 - Ratios of students to other supportive adults.
8. Facility needs to include preventive needs, capital needs and maintenance needs.
9. Dissemination of information to parents and community.
10. Program evaluation.

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11. Time and learning requirements.

Timeline

Planning is a critical function of the District and requires the advice and input of the School Council. Therefore, each principal, with advice from the School Council, shall develop a three-year School Improvement Plan and annually update the Plan.

The Plan shall meet the following budget process timeline:

- December - Submission of preliminary school budget to Superintendent to implement School Improvement Plans.
- January to March - Review of budget submissions and meetings with Finance Subcommittee.
- March - Submission of District budget to Committee by Superintendent.
- April - School Committee adoption of budget.
- April - Submission of School Improvement Plan to include M.G.L. 71, Sec. 59C and District requirements by principals to the Superintendent.
- May - Submission of budget at Town Meetings.
- May and June - Submission of School Improvement Plan for School Committee approval.
- Upon approval of the budget – Submission of modified School Improvement Plan to Superintendent in conformance with the adopted District budget.
- Upon approval of the budget – Submission of summarized modified plan to the School Committee by the Superintendent.

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Training

The District shall provide annual training opportunities for School Council members.

First Reading: 02/13/95

Second Reading: 03/13/95

Amendment First Reading: 03/13/06

Amendment Second Reading: 03/27/06

Re-Amendment First Reading 04/23/07

Re-Amendment Second Reading: 05/23/07

Re-Amendment First Reading: 04/14/08

Re-Amendment Second Reading: 04/28/08

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