

School Advisory Councils

The School Committee believes that the school is the key unit for educational improvement and change and that successful school improvement is best accomplished through a school-based decision-making process. By involving those directly affected by any action or decision of the school advisory council in the process of determining that action or decision, it helps to strengthen the commitment to those decisions by those most affected by its implementation.

Under this policy, the Principal shall have primary responsibility for the management of the school. Decisions which are made at the school level must be aligned with the budgets, policies, curriculum and short and long range goals adopted by the School Committee and implemented by the Superintendent of Schools. In addition, decisions must comply with any state and federal laws and regulations and with any negotiated agreements of the School District.

As enacted by the legislature in the Educational Reform Act of 1993, a school advisory council (SAC) shall be established in each school to advise the Principal in specific areas of operation. The Principal, except as specifically defined in the law, shall have the responsibility for defining the composition and forming the group. Membership on the SAC must comply with five stipulations as detailed in the 1993 law:

1. Parents shall have parity with professional personnel on the council,
2. Not more than fifty percent of the council shall be non-school members, and
3. Membership on the council should be broadly representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school and its community.
4. A school employee should not serve as a parent or community member of the council.
5. Community members cannot also be a parent or school employee.

Members of the Council will serve one, two or three year terms, which will be staggered to provide continuity, except for the student member at the secondary school level who will serve a one-year term and is eligible for re-election.

The following general guidelines define the roles and responsibilities of the school advisory council:

The School Advisory Council shall meet regularly with the Principal and shall assist in:

1. Adoption of educational goals for the school that are consistent with state and local policies and standards,
2. Identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school,
3. Review of the school budget, and
4. Formulation of a school improvement plan (SIP) that may be implemented after review by the School Committee and approval by the Superintendent of Schools.

The School Advisory Council shall hold its first meeting within the first forty (40) days of the school year and shall review and revise its by-laws at that time once they have been established. The Council will conform to the Open Meeting Law, which stipulates that all meetings are posted at least 48 hours in advance and that minutes of the meeting will be maintained as required.

The School Advisory Council shall meet regularly at least once each month during the school year. At least once each year, a joint meeting between the Council and the School Committee shall be held. It is recommended that SAC's from across the island should meet together at least once per year.

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Revised:

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