

Policy for the Installation of Public Art on the Outside of PSB School Buildings

Overview

The Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) values the role of art in enhancing the quality of life in the community, strengthening civic identity and cultural heritage, creating an attractive environment, and bringing enjoyment to residents of all ages. The district also recognizes the interest of students, residents and community groups in displaying art, objects of historical significance, and other items in or on Brookline public school buildings and welcomes such forms of civic participation.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the standards for reviewing high visibility public art and temporary art exhibits on Brookline Public School buildings and grounds.

Scope

For purposes of these guidelines, “art” means works or objects owned by PSB, or work or objects owned by others but displayed on school properties on a temporary or permanent basis, including, but not limited to, two- and three-dimensional works of art such as paintings, murals, drawings, photographs, graphics, fabric art, collages, ceramics and sculptures, and objects of historic significance. “Large scale high visibility” means anything larger and/or more visible to the broader community than typical student-produced art, which is not subject to this policy. Interpretation of what constitutes “large scale high visibility” shall be at the discretion of the Chair of the Capital Improvements subcommittee.

Selection Criteria and Procedures

Recognizing that the authority to display art on PSB properties ultimately rests with the Brookline School Committee, the Chair of the Capital Improvements subcommittee will appoint an Advisory Art Selection Committee when a proposal comes to the Capital Subcommittee. The Advisory Committee shall consist of one member of the Brookline Arts Commission, one student, the principal and one community member living near the school where the proposal is proposed/planned, and the Chair of the Capital Improvements subcommittee of the School Committee. Recommendations by the Advisory Art Selection Committee to the Capital Subcommittee shall be based on appropriate considerations of quality, scale, aesthetic, condition, and historic value of the proposed exhibit.

To be eligible for selection, items must be in stable condition and suitable for display, without requiring extraordinary costs, procedures or equipment for maintenance or exhibition.

In light of laws applicable to public buildings, the following types of items shall not be selected or approved for display:

- (i) promote political fundraising within the meaning of Mass. Gen. Laws. Ch. 55,
- (ii) promote or oppose a matter placed, or to be placed, before voters at the polls or that otherwise promote a political campaign purpose within the meaning of Mass. Gen. Laws Ch. 55; and
- (iii) endorse or oppose any particular religion.

In addition, items selected or approved for display shall be appropriate for a general audience of all ages. Accordingly, the delegated entity shall not select for display art that a reasonably prudent person applying contemporary community standards would find offensive, including the following:

- (i) contain material that, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interests or depicts or describes nudity, or
- (ii) depicts sexual conduct in an offensive or prurient manner; or
- (iii) features material depicting graphic violence.

Repair

The PSB have an interest in ensuring that all public art elements remain in good repair, and in ensuring that the short- and long-term repair costs are reasonable. Art elements must be of high quality using appropriate materials, to ensure a long life and resistance to the elements, wear and tear, or acts of vandalism.

Ownership

Unless a special condition is agreed to the contrary, all art installations are the property of the PSB. Upon selection of an artist, or artists, the Capital Improvements subcommittee shall work with Town Counsel to create a contract between the town and the artist(s) for the installation of the public art.