

**SECTION C
GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

5. School Council Policy:

INTRODUCTION

This policy is designed to implement the provisions of MGL Ch. 71 Sec. 59C and 38Q ½, which emphasize the role of the principal in forming the Councils, for insuring "parity" among staff and parents, for seeking diversity in community representation, and for promoting the climate of participatory involvement and decision-making within each School Council.

MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SCHOOL COUNCILS

The law outlines the following major areas of responsibility for Councils. School Councils are to assist principals in:

- Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards;
- Identifying the educational needs of students attending the school;
- Making recommendations for the development, implementation, and assessment of the curriculum accommodation plan, as required under Sec. 38Q ½;
- Reviewing the annual school building budget;
- Reviewing the student handbook to consider changes in the disciplinary code, and
- Formulating a School Improvement Plan that may be implemented only after review and approval by the Superintendent;

In addition, the law states that:

"nothing contained in this section shall prevent the School Committee from granting a School Council additional authority in the area of educational policy; provided, however, that School Councils shall have no authority over matters which are subject to Ch. 150E [of the General Laws]."

Ch. 150E governs labor relations and collective bargaining for public employees, including teacher contracts. This provision leaves such issues as compensation, workload, conditions of work and worker evaluation procedures subject to the provisions of collective bargaining law.

Good practice also suggests that a Council should not become involved as an ombudsman or a grievance committee in individual cases that involve students, parents, teachers, and other school staff.

MEMBERSHIP

The School Committee recommends that each School Council be composed of:

- a. the school principal or headmaster who will serve as co-chair;
- b. four teachers, elected by the professional staff of the school;
- c. four parents, elected by the parents of the respective schools, with elections conducted by the PTO Executive Board in consultation with the principal. No more than one member of the PTO Executive Board will be an elected member of the School Council.
- d. two non-parent community persons, selected by the principal from interested citizens, and
- e. at the High School, one student, elected by the student council. At his/her discretion, the Principal may invite up to two members of the 7th or 8th grade classes to participate as fully as possible in individual meetings.

Every attempt should be made to have School Councils broadly representative of racial and ethnic groups.

ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

It is recommended that any elected official of the Town and employees of the Brookline Public Schools not serve as members of the Brookline School Councils, except for the principals and teachers in their roles mentioned in the previous section. It is further recommended that parents who have children in more than one of the schools at the same time serve on only one School Council.

TERMS OF OFFICE

Elected members of the School Councils will serve two-year terms, except for the student member of the High School Council, who will serve a one-year term, and are eligible for re-election one time. The School Council terms should be staggered to ensure a blend of new and experienced leadership. At the first election following the implementation of this policy, the two persons with the most votes in each membership group will serve two-year terms. Other elected members will serve an initial one-year term, and thereafter two-year terms.

In the event of a member resignation, the co-chairs may appoint a new member to fill the position until the next scheduled election. At that time, a member will be elected to complete the term of the member who resigned.

MEETINGS

The principals and headmaster shall convene the first meeting of each School Council must take place no later than 40 days after the opening day of each school year. Meetings of the

School Councils are to be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law (MGL Ch. 39, Sec. 23A-23C).

MEETING PROCEDURES AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Superintendent and his/her staff will develop clear and workable meeting procedures and communications guidelines consistent across all schools.

DECISION-MAKING

The School Councils, by law, are to assist and make recommendations to the principal. Votes are not appropriate. The formation of consensus on particular items would be helpful to the principal.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS/EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The school's educational goals will be determined by the principal, in consultation with the School Council. The goals must be consistent with the student performance standards adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education, and consistent with educational policies of the Superintendent and School Committee of the Public Schools of Brookline. The School Improvement Plan shall address goals as articulated by the School Committee, the Superintendent and his/her staff.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT

The Superintendent will:

1. Ensure that appropriate senior staff review, and where deemed necessary, discuss changes to School Improvement Plans (SIPs) with the principal and the School Council;
2. Ensure conformity with Department of Education district specifications;
3. Make all SIPs easily available for the School Committee to examine;
4. Annually place as part of his report on a School Committee meeting docket, a separate agenda item which will enable School Committee members to discuss SIPs;
5. Alert the School Committee promptly if any school is not in compliance with any aspect of the requirements of MGL Ch. 71 Sec. 59C, 38Q ½, or this policy.

Original Policy Voted: 9/28/93, #93-265; 11/9/93, #93-285

Revised Policy Approved by the Brookline School Committee: 6/1/06, #06-63

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