

**Public Schools of Brookline  
School Council Procedures  
Draft  
March 30, 2020**

*“A school council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers, community members, and, at the secondary level, students, required to be established by each school pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 59C.”<sup>1</sup>*

*PSB School Committee Policy states that School Councils, by law, shall meet regularly with the principal of the school, and “**shall assist and make recommendations to the principal**” on the identification of the educational needs of students attending the school, in the review of the annual school budget, and in the formation of a school improvement plan.<sup>2</sup>*

**Membership (from PSB Policy unless otherwise noted)**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Council Role</b>
School Principal	Co-chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The other council co-chair is selected by the council as a whole during the first meeting</li> </ul>
Four Members of the School Staff	Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elected by school staff</li> <li>- Can be any employee who works at the school</li> </ul>
Four parents	Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elected by parents of school</li> <li>- Elections conducted by PTO Executive Board in consultation with the school Principal</li> </ul>
Two community members (non-parent)	Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Selected by Principal</li> <li>- Someone who is not a parent or teacher of students at the school<sup>1</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawn from such groups or entities as business, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, or other interested parties<sup>1</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
K-8 only: Up to two students	Members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Principal <b>may</b> invite up to two members of the 7th or 8th grade classes to participate as fully as possible in individual meetings</li> </ul>
BHS only: One student	Member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elected by Student Council</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Guidance on School Council Membership from PSB School Committee policy<sup>2</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Every attempt should be made to have School Councils broadly representative of racial and ethnic groups”</li> </ul>	

- “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.”

**School Council Responsibilities \***

1. Adopting education goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statement student performance standards
2. Identifying the educational needs of students attending the school
3. Reviewing annual school building budget
4. Formulating a school improvement plan
5. Reviewing the student handbook to consider changes in the disciplinary code consistent with PSB policies
6. Making recommendations for the development, implementation, and assessment of the curriculum accommodation plan

\* Responsibilities as stated in state law and PSB School Committee policy

**Further Details on School Council Responsibilities:**

	Definition(s)
Review of school budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council and Principal “read through documents that describe the school budget in order to understand the implications for items in the School Improvement Plan.”<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• The council should review the full school budget as provided by the district to the public and principal.</li> <li>• The council’s review should focus on whether the budget reflects the goals of the school improvement plan.</li> <li>• The School Council “shall have no authority over matters which are subject to collective bargaining (Ch. 150E of Massachusetts General Law).”<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Formulating a School Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School’s educational goals are determined by the Principal in consultation with the School Council.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Goals must be consistent with the MA student performance standards and with educational policies of the Public Schools of Brookline.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “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.”<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
Elections of Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elections happen in spring for the following school year.</li> <li>• Two year terms for all members.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms should be staggered to ensure a blend of new and experienced members.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• In spring 2020, half of the members should be elected for one-year terms, and half should be elected for two year terms so terms will be staggered going forward.</li> </ul>
Role of Co-Chair (non-principal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Agenda with Principal</li> <li>• Co-facilitate meetings with Principal</li> <li>• Ensure Council abides by Open Meeting Laws</li> </ul>

### **School Improvement Plans**

Submitted annually to the School Committee for review (timing determined by School Committee schedule)

#### Elements of the annual School Improvement Plan <sup>1</sup>

1. Assessment of:
  - a. Impact of class size on student performance
  - b. Student to teacher ratios
  - c. Ratios of student to other supportive adult resources
2. Scheduled plan for reducing class size, if necessary
3. Professional development for the school's staff and the allocation of any professional development funds in the school budget
4. Enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school
5. School safety and discipline
6. Establishment of a school environment characterized by tolerance and respect for all groups
7. Extra-curricular activities
8. Means for meeting the diverse learning needs of as many children as possible
9. Any further subjects the Principal in consultation with school council are considered appropriate

### **Practices and Procedures for School Councils**

- Decide up front the number and schedule of meetings
  - a. First meeting must take place no later than 40 days after the opening day of school
  - b. All meetings must be conducted in accordance with requirements of [Open Meeting Law](#):
  - c. School Councils should meet no fewer than four times per year
- Create simple/written agendas for each meeting
- Make decisions by consensus or majority rule.
  - a. Votes are not appropriate
  - b. Consensus on particular items that might be helpful to the principal

### **Open Meeting Law**

- Hold all meetings in public and allow anyone in attendance to audio or video-tape as long as it is not disruptive to the meeting
- Notice of each meeting should be posted with the Town Clerk in a public place at least 48 hours prior to the meeting using the Town website Calendar function
- Meeting minutes must be completed and include date, time, place, members present and absent, and actions taken. Per Open Meeting Law requirements, minutes must be approved in a timely fashion and be made available to the public for inspection and copying within ten days of a request.
- Meeting can only begin when a majority of council members are in attendance (quorum).

### **Communications with School Community**

- Agendas should be shared with the entire school community
- Minutes from meetings and a meeting summary should be shared with the entire school community
- Elections should be widely advertised and communicated

### **Sources:**

- (1) [MA Department of Education Guidelines](#)
- (2) [PSB School Committee policy](#)

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