

BROOKLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Councils in 2020-2021

May 20, 2020

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

1. Advocate for the children of their school and school district.
2. Identify the needs of students attending each school.
3. Review the annual school budget.
4. Review and provide input into School Improvement Plan:
 - “Plan for Improving Student Performance”

What's New and What's Hot for 2021

- Opening School in FY 2021
- Remote Learning as a Contingency for the Future
- Future of Testing
- Important Local Issues (Overrides, Construction)
- Safety (Social/Emotional, Physical, Environmental).
- Budget Issues
- Federal Stimulus Legislation and Impact
- STEM

EMERGING CONCERNS in OTHER DISTRICTS

(In addition to student achievement)

- ❑ Restarting in 2021 in Aftermath of Virus
- ❑ Encroachment of bureaucrats in education getting in our way.
- ❑ Low Public Complexity Tolerance exploited by political leaders and profiteers around testing, curriculum, STEM, and Safety
- ❑ Low faith in public meetings/process.
- ❑ Low turnout for meetings.
- ❑ Influence of profiteers who might exploit parents and children.
- ❑ STEM Subjects

Ways School Councils Become Effective

- Activate and Engage Parents
- Build Relationships with Principals
- Exploit Collective Wisdom and Good Judgment
- Build Community Partnerships/Expertise
- Focus on Student Performance
 - More important today as a check and balance against state and federal officials who disdain local authority.

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Getting Started with Basic Tasks – Sample from Toolkit

- Set Meeting Topics for the Year*
- Establishment and Elections*
- Review/Analyze Student Achievement Data*
- Obtain Input on Priorities*
- Review of Parent Notification Letter*
- Review Academic Plan*
- Develop School Climate Needs Assessment*
- Plan Activities to Improve School Attendance*
- Develop Physical Environment Needs Assessment*
- Develop/Modify Budget*
- Review Language*
- Review Attendance and Discipline Data*
- Review Services of English Learners*
- Monitor Plan Implementation*
- Recommend the Plan for Board Approval*

What are issues that Massachusetts School Councils have addressed?

(We started with five in 2004.)

1. Hosting parent forums
2. Discussing professional development
3. Search Committee Membership
4. Analyzing student achievement trends
5. Arts and Electives
6. "Creativity Index" to measure effect.
7. Appropriate role of parent involvement.
8. Several areas of curriculum
9. School Climate
10. Gay, Strait, and Transgendered Students
11. Bullying
12. Head Injuries

What other issues:

13. Environmental Issues and Allergies
14. School security
 - Plant safety, Student on Student Safety, Building Security
15. School Scheduling (i.e., Block vs. Traditional, etc.)
16. Strategic Planning
17. Superintendent Entry Plan
18. Vacant Positions and Which and When to Fill
19. School Discipline
20. Suspension and Expulsion Policies
21. Diverse needs of a diverse school population
22. College Readiness in General
23. Address Race to the Top Agenda

Any more issues?

- 23. Leading Opposition to Charter Schools.
- 24. Advising on PARCC/Common Core
- 25. Innovation school initiative and support.
- 26. School nutrition standards (“cupcake policy”)
- 27. Support extended day, after-school and supplemental services
- 28. Student restraints
- 29. STEM

SPECIAL TASKS FOR THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

□ Reviewing the School Improvement Plan:

- Changes in school practices, structure, policy, or practices to help meet its goals.
 - Effective pursuit of district's goals
 - Relevance to current needs
 - Indicators of school leadership for evaluations
 - Budgetary and programmatic objectives
 - Focus on student achievement

SO, WHAT ELSE MIGHT WE FIND A SCHOOL COUNCIL DOING in 2021?

- Getting Back to School
- Address Student Wellness and Items that Create Stress, Depression, and Despair.
- Studying Curriculum Issues
- Educator Evaluation Standards – How’s it working?
- Consulting on Restructuring or Redistricting or Scheduling
- Addressing areas of Community Concern
- Resource to the Principal
- Principled Critics** and **Proponents** of Schools.
- Community Advocates