

**CITY OF NORWALK  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
FEBRUARY 2, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Heidi Keyes, Chair; Shirley Mosby, Mike Barbis.  
STAFF: Brenda Williams, Director of Communications;  
Frank Costanzo, Chief of School Operations,  
OTHER: Rosa Murray, Former Board of Ed Member; Molly Yordon, NFT;  
Joe Giandurco, Ponus Ridge Middle School;  
Jody Sattler, Rowayton PTO; Lisa Lenskold, PTO Council;  
Angela Harrison

Call to Order

Ms. Keyes called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. and stated that Committee members were in attendance as listed above, and a quorum was present.

Information and Reports: Policy 1211, School Governance Councils

Ms. Keyes referred to last month's meeting, as Dr. Adamowski presented a draft of the policy. She went through the policy highlights and fielded questions and comments from members of the public. There was dialogue and a workshop format exchange of information, and comments as follows:

It was suggested to look at the membership to determine whether terms can overlap with PTO members, other schools, members of the community, etc.

There was discussion on the state guidelines that must be followed regarding certified only membership, CAFE training, and statement of inclusion for membership.

Other areas to examine include operational areas such as membership recruitment process, ballots, elections, confidentiality agreements, finger-printing, background checks,

There was discussion on the proposed timing for this to be approved so that membership elections can take place in June for the Councils to be formed for the beginning of the 2016-17 school year. It was agreed for further independent review of the draft to be done by Committee members with comments and feedback brought to the next meeting.

Adjournment

**\*\* MR. BARBIS MOVED TO ADJOURN.  
\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.  
Respectfully submitted, Marilyn Knox, Telesco Secretarial Services

Attachments: Draft of School Governance Policy (pages 2-4)

## School Governance Councils

### Purpose

Consistent with the Board of Educations' adopted theory of action and its commitment to create and maintain a system of high-performing schools, all schools in the Norwalk Public School system will maintain school-based governance councils to guide the schools' development. The Board believes that the success of the school and the students it serves is the shared responsibility of school staff, parents or legal guardians and community members.

### Definition

The School Governance Council (SGC) is the primary, local school decision-making body of a school devoted to achieve its mission and vision. Toward this end, the SGC will focus on the analysis of student achievement, development of improvement plans, allocation of resources and programmatic and operational changes which enhance the quality of the school and the achievement of its students.

### Membership

School Governance Councils shall consist of 12 members plus up to three nonvoting members depending on the type of school involved. The following tables describe the category of membership, the number of members and how they are elected.

<i>Member</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Election Process</i>
Parents or guardians of students at the school	6	Elected by the parents or guardians of students attending the school, each household with a student attending the school will have one vote.
Teachers at the school	4	Elected by the teachers of the school.
Community leaders within the school attendance area or partner organization	1 – 2	Elected by the parent and teacher members of the Council.
School principal (nonvoting)	1	Principal or Assistant Principal.

Additional members and election process in high schools:

<i>Member</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Election Process</i>
Students, high school council members only (nonvoting)	2	Elected by the school's student body, one from each of the junior and senior classes.

All members are equal partners in decision-making and all decisions are made by consensus or a two-thirds majority vote of those Council members in attendance where consensus is not achieved and a vote may be required.

### **Requirements**

All members shall be required to participate in initial and annual training sessions provided by the District and to remain in good standing in the groups they represent during the term of their service on the Council, e.g. teacher representatives must be teachers in active service at the school and parent representatives must be parents of children currently attending the school. School Governance Councils shall meet monthly from September through June of each year. Absence from three consecutive meetings will result in forfeiture of Council membership.

### **Selection and Term of Members**

Members of the Councils shall be selected as follows:

- Parents representatives shall be selected from parents or legal guardians of children enrolled in the school. The process for parent selection shall be developed by the principal in collaboration with the school's Parent-Teacher Organization or comparable parent organization, subject to the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.
- Teachers shall be selected by the teachers of the school.
- Members representing one or more partner organizations external to the school shall be invited to serve by the elected members of the Council.

Voting members have a two-year term and no one member can serve more than two terms on a council. Notwithstanding the foregoing, at the first election of the Council, half of the voting members elected, selected by random drawing, shall serve one year terms. Thereafter, all voting members shall serve two year terms. The nonvoting student members serve a one-year term, and no student member can serve more than two terms. Elections will be conducted in the month of May following the requirements stated in the election process within this policy. The year of each term shall be from June 1 through May 31. Vacancies that occur during the year will be filled by the Council for the unexpired portion of a term.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **A. Parent Co-Chairperson**

A Parent Co-Chair of each School Governance Council shall be elected annually by the members. The Co-Chairs shall set meeting agendas, preside over meetings of the Council, attend bi-annual district-wide meetings of SGC Co-Chairs with the Superintendent and an annual meeting of SGC Co-Chairs with the Board of Education.

#### **B. Principal or School Director**

The principal is the chief executive officer of the school and accountable for school quality and student achievement. The principal shall be responsible for maintaining and supporting the School Governance Council at the school. The principal shall:

1. serve as the Council Co-Chair
2. make recommendations to the Council and implement Council decisions

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3. be a non-voting member of the Council
  4. make tie-breaking decisions in cases where the Council cannot agree or fails to act on items 1, 2, or 6 of section C of Roles and Responsibilities

In the exceptional case where the principal is in disagreement with two-thirds of the Council regarding items 1, 2, or 6 below, the Chief of School Operations shall review both recommendations and make a final determination.

#### C. Duties of Council Members

Subject to the provisions of Section F below, the Council collectively, shall establish a process and timeline for the following functions:

1. Conduct at least one meeting per year to which all parents and teachers of the school are invited, and at which the vision, mission and goals for the school shall be discussed and evaluated. The Council shall use the results of such meetings to guide it in appointment of committees, study groups and task forces, under section (D) below, to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities hereunder and carrying out projects for the improvement of the school.
2. Analyze student achievement data and school needs relative to the development and approval of the school's Accountability Plan.
3. Develop and approve the school's annual resource allocation plan (budget) in support of the school's improvement goals.
4. In the event of a vacancy in the Principalship, notwithstanding any other Board policy, the Council shall serve as the local interview committee and shall interview a slate of qualified candidates provided by the District and recommend to the Superintendent of Schools one or more candidates from said slate for appointment as Principal.
5. In addition, the council shall assist the Principal in the selection process for teachers and the other certified positions.
6. Provide advice and assistance to the principal regarding programmatic and operational changes which foster the school's improvement goals, subject to Board policy and to contracts made by the Board. This may include major program changes, adjustment of the school's focus, hours and days of operation and the school's enrollment goals.
7. Promote the school as a parental choice relative to its enrollment goals.
8. Develop and approve a School Compact for parents or legal guardians and students outlining the criteria and responsibilities for enrollment and school membership consistent with the school's goals and academic focus.
9. Provide advice and assistance to the principal on matters of importance to parents or legal guardians. Such advice shall be informed by an annual survey of parent satisfaction with aspects of school quality and student achievement and an annual parent forum. Such forum shall be conducted by the principal and parent representatives
10. Inform the Board of Education relative to the school's facility needs.
11. Participate in the selection of the school's "after school" program.
12. Determine the need for school uniforms and any type of unique school attire to be worn by students.

D. Committees, Study Groups, Task Forces

The Council may appoint committees, study groups, or task forces of parents, teachers and community members for such purposes as it deems helpful/necessary in order to carry out the responsibilities of the Council enumerated in these bylaws and to promote the vision, mission and goals of the school. No such committee, study group or task force may exercise the authority of the Council.

E. Other Provisions

The Council may adopt Bylaws providing for selection of additional officers in addition to the Co-Chairs, and addressing such other matters as the Council desires (provided that such Bylaws shall not be inconsistent with the provisions of this Policy).

The Council shall comply with any applicable requirements of state law at schools where such Councils are mandated by such law.

The Council shall comply with Norwalk Board of Education policies, procedures and contractual agreements.

School Governance Council meetings are open to all parents of the school.

F. Superintendent's Power to Suspend Provisions of Policy 1211

Consistent with the Board of Educations' adopted theory of action, individual schools are presumed to act autonomously to the extent provided above. Notwithstanding the foregoing, schools that fail to achieve the goals set forth in their improvement plans shall be subject to a reduction in their autonomy and intervention from the NPS administration. If the Superintendent determines that a school is failing to achieve said goals, the Superintendent may intervene and remove from the Council its authority under any or all of subsections 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 and 12 of Section C hereinabove.

### **Reporting and Oversight**

Each School Governance Council shall report annually to the school's stakeholders on their progress in meeting the goals of the school's Accountability Plan.

The Board of Education shall conduct an annual forum with School Governance Council Co-Chairs to assess the implementation of this policy.

The Superintendent will report annually to the Board on the effectiveness of School Governance Councils as an element of the Board's Strategic Operating Plan.

Policy adopted: mm/dd/yyyy

NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Norwalk, Connecticut