



School Committee Policy:

#172

School Councils

This policy is designed to insure the consistent implementation throughout the Maynard Public Schools of provisions of Massachusetts General Law 71:59c which requires the establishment of School Councils in each of the public schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Purpose of the Councils

The purposes of the School Councils are to:

1. Advise the principal in the identification of the educational needs of the students;
2. Advise the principal in the formulation of a school improvement plan based upon schools and system goals; and
3. Participate in a review of the annual school budget proposal.

Membership

The principal of each school has the responsibility of forming a School Council subject to the following composition requirements:

- The school principal who will serve as co-chair;
- A minimum of two teachers elected by the professional staff of the school;
- A minimum of three parents elected, from among volunteers, by the parents of the respective schools, with the election conducted by the school's parent group in consultation with the principal; (Note: the number of parent members of the council must equal the number of professional personnel on the council.)
- At least one person selected by the principal from interested citizens who do not have a child in the school;
- And at the high school, at least, one student elected by the Student Council.

Eligibility for Membership

- School Committee members may not serve as members of the Councils.

- Employees of the Maynard Public Schools may not serve as members of the Councils except for the principals and teachers mentioned in the previous section.
- A parent who has children in more than one of the schools at the same time may serve on only one School Council.
- Membership shall be consistent with M.G.L. 71:59c.

Term of Office

Members of the Councils will serve three-year terms which will be staggered to provide continuity, except for the student member at the secondary school who will serve a one year term and is eligible for re-election. When a person resigns, an election will be held to fill the vacancy. The School Committee encourages schools to hold School Council elections prior to the close of school in June.

Meeting Calendar

The first meeting of each Council must take place no later than forty (40) days after the opening day of each school year. Councils meet at least once each quarter. Meetings will be held at the school in an area designated by the principal in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. At least once each year, a joint meeting of all School Councils will be held. The agenda for the meeting will be prepared by the School Councils co-chairs.

Meeting Procedures

At the first meeting of the Council a member will be designated to serve as co-chair with the principal. The meetings are to be conducted in accordance with the requirements of Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and must be posted 48 hours in advance with the Town Clerk. Information about the Open Meeting Law is available from the Superintendent's Secretary or from the Maynard Town Clerk. In addition to the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, an agenda for each meeting, prepared by the co-chairs, will be provided to the Council members, posted in the faculty room and in the main lobby of the school, and sent to the Superintendent prior to the meeting date. The Superintendent, any member of the staff, any parent, any student, or any member of the Council wishing to have an item included on the agenda may request its inclusion to the principal no later than one week prior to the meeting. Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the prepared agenda, additional items may be added at the discretion of the co-chairs. Minutes of each meeting will be prepared by a member of the Council designated by the co-chairs and distributed within five days of the meeting to the same distribution detailed above for the meeting agendas. Minutes must be filed with the Town Clerk; typing will be provided by the school.

Communication

The channel for communication between and among the School Councils, the principal, the Superintendent, and the School Committee is as follows: the School Council (through the principal) to the Superintendent, the Superintendent to the School Committee. All communication between parent and non-parent Council members and the school staff is initiated through the principal. Visits to the school are arranged with the principal. Minutes of School Council meeting will be sent to the Superintendent and School Committee.

Decision Making

The Councils, by law, are to advise and assist the principal and to serve as consultants in the formulation of educational goals for the school. Thus the formation of consensus on particular items, rather than votes, would be especially helpful to the principal.

School Improvement Plan/Education Goals

The School Improvement Plan, which establishes the school's Educational Goals, must be consistent with the educational standards and goals established by the Superintendent and the School Committee, must meet the requirements of the Education Reform Law, and is submitted to the Superintendent and School Committee each May or June on a date established by the School Committee. The Maynard School Committee will review and approve a format for School Improvement Plans in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 71. Each School Improvement Plan shall utilize available data to develop a three year strategic plan addressing the following issues:

- Professional development for school staff and the allocation of professional development funds in the school budget;
- Safety and discipline;
- The maintenance of a welcoming school environment characterized by tolerance and respect for all people;
- Extra-curricular activities;
- The development of means for meeting the diverse learning needs of all students;
- And such further subjects as the principal, in consultation with the School Council, shall consider appropriate.

School Council Resources

The School Committee recognizes the importance of the Councils' job and realizes that Council members must be given sufficient supportive information and materials to enable them to operate successfully. In order to facilitate members' efficiency and knowledge, the Committee encourages that Council members be given thorough information pertinent to their schools such as standardized test scores from recent years, school handbooks, budgetary information, the state school profiles, curriculum guides, and any other materials the Superintendent determines is useful to Council members.

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Cross Reference: #103, 113

Legal Reference: M.G.L. 71:59c
