



Advisory Committee

I. PURPOSE

Barrington Public Schools (BPS) recognizes that community involvement is the backbone of BPS. The purpose of this policy is to identify and establish the responsibilities of standing and ad hoc advisory committees to the School Committee and to provide a mechanism by which the community may be involved in the decision-making process.

II. POLICY

Advisory committees to the School Committee will provide recommendations on issues, goal-setting and policy in certain standing areas of responsibility and on an ad hoc basis for issues outside those standing areas.

The work of the Advisory committees will be informed by updates and feedback from staff-based task forces, school improvement teams, and working groups who meet on a more frequent basis; information from the Advisory committee members directly; input from community members and organizations to the Advisory committee members; as well as requests specifically from the School Committee for policy or protocol input.

The Advisory committees are strictly advisory in nature, but are responsible for making recommendations or providing guidance as outlined above, as well as notifying the School Committee of concerns brought to the Advisory Committee by the community.

III. STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Administration shall provide an Advisory Committee membership application form to the community on behalf of the School Committee every September. Representation shall be determined by the School Committee in conjunction with Administration, in accordance with the committee's purpose and any applicable state or federal regulation. It is the intention of the School Committee that all selected committee members shall be residents of Barrington or employees of BPS. Priority will be given to professional experience, new applications, and ensuring the diverse representation of staff and community members.



- A. With the exception of representation from the Central Office Administration and School Committee Members, advisory committee members will serve specific terms detailed below. The School Committee shall confirm membership on the following standing Advisory committees, on an annual basis in September: **Committee Length of Term** Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity, Health and Wellness, Social Emotional Learning, and Facilities Planning 2 years; Special Education Advisory Committee determined by SEAC bylaws.
- B. At times, Advisory Committees work with working groups. These groups may not consist of a quorum of Advisory Committee Members. The working groups will report back to the larger committees, which will follow Open Meetings Laws. These working groups should include a member of administration or faculty in an effort to facilitate communication.
- C. Health and Wellness Committee and Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) are mandatory advisory committees under Rhode Island General Law. In addition, SEAC establishes by-laws that are approved by the School Committee and follow regulations established by the Rhode Island Department of Education (Rhode Island Specific Regulations Advisory Committees Local Advisory Committee on Special Education 300.900) and has authority to select its membership in accordance with said regulations.
- D. The School Committee will establish a Policy Committee with two members of the School Committee serving as standing members along with two members of District Administration. This committee shall review and act upon recommendations of the ad hoc and standing advisory committees and present policies to the School Committee for further discussion and approval.
- E. School Committee members shall hold an organizational meeting each summer to determine on which advisory committees they would like to serve. During election years, School Committee members may choose to revisit membership at the Annual Organizational meeting held in December with any newly elected members at that time.
- F. Notwithstanding the length of the term identified, all advisory committee members serve at the discretion of the School Committee. If a member of the advisory committee misses more than two meetings without cause, they will be asked to resign at the discretion of the chair(s).
- G. If a member of any committee steps down, they will submit a resignation letter. The chair(s) of the committee may choose to fill the opening if the number of School Committee members plus Administrators is greater than the number of members remaining. The chair(s) may reopen the application process for the open seat or choose from remaining applicants placed on a waitlist. The opening is to be filled within two months of vacancy. Chair(s) may choose not to fill the opening if general membership is greater than the number of School Committee members and Administrators.

IV. AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Ad hoc advisory committees may be established by action of the School Committee as deemed necessary or as mandated by law. The composition and duration of ad hoc committees shall be determined by the School Committee and any applicable state or federal regulations. Whenever possible, the School Committee will appoint members of the community who have not had an opportunity to serve on other committees and who have expertise in the area(s) to be considered by the committee. At the time such committees are established, the School Committee shall address the following considerations:

1. The charge of the committee, including its purpose and responsibility.
2. The scope and duration of the committee's operation.
3. The committee membership, including the total number of members, method of selection



and length of terms.

4. The time and means of reporting the committee's findings and recommendations to the School Committee.

Ad hoc committees shall be discharged when their assigned work is finished, or earlier than the specified completion date upon a majority vote of the School Committee.

V. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES

A. Powers

Advisory committees appointed by the School Committee shall not have any of the powers and duties invested by law in the School Committee but shall act only in an advisory capacity.

B. Committee Leadership

The role of the committee leadership is a shared responsibility between the School Committee member and the appointed Central Office Administrator for that advisory committee. The School Committee member and Central Office Administrator will serve as co-chairs, will select membership, set agendas, and provide reports to the larger School Committee.

C. Duties and Relationship with the School Committee

Every advisory committee shall maintain a set of norms and expectations and shall create a meeting schedule approved by the Advisory Committee. Every July the School Committee, in consultation with the Superintendent, shall approve and provide a clear charge as to the issues or outcomes it expects each advisory committee to address for the upcoming academic year. The charge of advisory committees shall be aligned with the District Strategic Plan and annual scorecard for BPS. Every advisory committee shall have a link on the BPS web page that is maintained by the District. Minutes shall be taken at all advisory committee meetings and shall be posted to the web page immediately upon approval.

Minutes should include:

- a.) the date, time, and location of meeting;
- b.) attendance;
- c.) a record of any corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting;
- d.) a summary of discussions on matters proposed, deliberated, or decided and a record of any votes taken by the committee.

Meetings of advisory committees are subject to the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act, and as such, must post notices of all meetings no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. Members of advisory committees must be physically present in order to participate in the meeting. The business of advisory committees is to be conducted at meetings where the advisory committee members are physically assembled, therefore, committee members are not authorized to discuss or transact committee business electronically or by conference telephone call. Open meetings of advisory committees may be recorded by the public, provided such does not interfere with the conduct of the meeting.

D. Code of Conduct

In order to maximize the committee's effectiveness, committee members:



1. Shall not direct BPS staff but shall send all requests to their Chair or Co- Chair. The Chair(s) shall contact the staff liaison or administrative assistant to relay the request to staff.
2. Shall refrain from making any personal attacks on any committee member or BPS staff members.
3. Shall conduct all committee business at public meetings of the committee.
4. Shall refrain from representing the committee unless specifically authorized by the entire committee.
5. Shall respect the decisions of the committee and shall not purposefully undermine the committee's work. If disagreements exist on the committee on stated positions, then committee members shall seek to address these disagreements within the committee.
6. Shall adhere to the Open Meeting Laws.

E. Updates and Annual Report

The work of the Advisory Committees is set by the charge of the School Committee at the start of the school year. The charge is determined by the recommendations of the Advisory Committee during the end of the year report in June combined with the Strategic Goals set by the Administration and School Committee over the summer.

Among other functions of review and advice, every advisory committee shall participate in development of a written annual report to the School Committee. The report shall include recommended charges and areas of interest/work that the committee has worked on, at the mid-year update and at the end of the school year. Annual reports of all advisory committees shall be presented at a School Committee Workshop by June 30 of every academic year.



VI. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Rhode Island Code of Ethics, Committee members shall recuse themselves from participating in, or voting on, any committee report, recommendation, proposal, or position that, if adopted by the School Committee, would result in a financial benefit to the committee member or a member of their immediate family and such benefit does not accrue to the public generally. If the financial benefit would accrue to the committee member by virtue of the committee member's employment or membership in a business, profession, occupation, or other group, such member may participate and vote if such employment or membership in the affected business, profession, occupation, or other group is disclosed to the other members of the committee and in any report or recommendation to the School Committee. No member of an advisory committee shall solicit or receive, directly or indirectly, any compensation in exchange for bringing a matter to the committee.

Legal Reference: Rhode Island General Laws §§[16-2-9](#), [16-2-9\(25\)](#), [16-21-28](#) and [42-46-1](#), et. Seq. Rhode Island Open Meetings Act

Barrington Public Schools School Committee

First Read: August 19, 2020

Second Read/Approved: September 3, 2020

Revised: January 7, 2021