

**Barrington Public Schools  
Advisory Committees to the School Committee Policy**

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. Advisory committees will provide recommendations on issues in certain standing areas of responsibility and on an ad hoc basis for issues outside those standing areas. In some instances, Advisory committees will receive updates and feedback from staff-based task forces, school improvement teams, and working groups who meet on a more frequent basis.

Advisory committee members will provide various perspectives of the community and are encouraged to solicit input from community members and organizations. Advisory committees will provide policy recommendations on specific areas as requested by the School Committee. In addition, the advisory committees will inform the School Committee and administration of issues that are brought to the attention of the committee by members of the community. The advisory committees are strictly advisory in nature. The School Committee will consider the advisory committee's recommendations, along with other inputs and recommendations, in making its final policy decisions.

**I. STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

The School Committee shall communicate the method for selecting advisory committee members representative of community members and BPS employees. Representation shall be determined by the School Committee, 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.

- A. With the exception of representation from the Central Office Administration, advisory committee members will serve specific terms detailed below. The School Committee shall confirm membership on the following standing advisory committees, with the exception of the Facilities Planning Committee, on an annual basis in September:

<b><u>Committee</u></b>	<b><u>Length of Term</u></b>
<u>Diversity and Inclusivity</u>	<u>1 year</u>
<u>Facilities Planning</u>	<u>2 years</u>
<u>Health and Wellness</u>	<u>1 year</u>
<u>Special Education Advisory Committee</u>	<u>1 year</u>
<u>Policy Committee</u>	<u>1 year</u>
<u>Social Emotional Learning</u>	<u>1 year</u>

- B. The initial terms of appointment to the Facilities Planning Committee shall be for one or two-year terms, which shall be determined by lottery at the initial Facilities Planning Committee meeting; thereafter, all terms will be for two years.
- C. Health and Wellness Committee and Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) are mandatory subcommittees under Rhode Island General Laws. In addition, the 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 approval.
- E. 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. If a member of any committee steps down, they will submit a resignation letter. The chair of the committee will then issue an application for the open seat, to be filled within two months of vacancy.

## **II. 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.

## **III. 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. Duties and Relationship with 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;  
and
- 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.

#### C. 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 elected Chair or Co-Chairs. The Chair(s) shall contact the staff liaison 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 and through the committee's report of the minority opinion outlined below, if necessary.
6. Shall adhere to the Open Meeting Laws.

#### D. Updates and Annual Report

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 begin with an executive summary of all recommendations, then very briefly summarize the activities of the committee, list the committee's meeting dates, and make specific, actionable recommendations, along with their pros and cons, to the School Committee. The draft report shall be circulated to all committee members with enough advance notice, preferably at least five days, so that members may comment before the draft is presented to the committee for voting at a committee meeting. Annual reports of all advisory committees shall be presented at a School Committee Workshop by June 30 of every academic year.

If necessary, a single report of the minority opinion, approved and signed by two or more voting members of the committee who have attended at least 50 percent of those meetings that they were eligible to attend, may be prepared and appended to the annual report of the advisory committee at the time of submission to the School Committee. The draft minority report shall be developed by no more than two members holding the minority opinion and circulated to all committee members prior to the committee's voting on the majority report at a committee meeting and prior to the submission of any minority report to the School Committee. Individual dissenting committee members retain the right to address the School Committee during the public comment period of School Committee meetings or to submit written comments for distribution to School Committee members.

#### **IV. STAFF LIAISON TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

Every advisory committee shall have a staff liaison assigned by the Superintendent, or designee, to coordinate the committee. The staff liaison shall be responsible for convening committee meetings until such time as the committee chair assumes this duty. The committee chair, with support from the staff liaison, shall be responsible for coordinating submission of the committee's report and recommendations to the School Committee. The staff liaison, in an advisory and support role, shall help the committee obtain information necessary to evaluate programs or issues under consideration, support activities required to fulfill the committee's assigned responsibilities, and prepare a report during every year of the committee's operation.

## **V. SCHOOL COMMITTEE LIAISON TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

The School Committee shall appoint one School Committee member to serve as a liaison to every advisory committee appointed by the School Committee. A member of the School Committee serving on any advisory committee shall only have the authority to speak or act on behalf of the School Committee when authorized by the School Committee. Every School Committee liaison shall submit a quarterly report to the School Committee on the progress of their advisory committee work.

## **VI. STAFF RESPONSE TO ANNUAL REPORT**

The Superintendent shall provide the School Committee with a staff response to every committee's report and shall take under consideration committee recommendations.

## **VII. 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

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