

Barrington Public Schools
Barrington School Committee By-Laws

ARTICLE I. ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1. ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The Barrington School Committee shall meet for its organizational meeting on the first regular meeting date in December in each election year after new members have been duly sworn in.

SECTION 2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Committee Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected at the organizational meeting referred to in Section 1, or at such time as any such offices shall become vacant as further provided in this section. The superintendent shall preside at the call of the annual organizational meeting. A majority vote of the Committee members present at the election is required to elect the officers of the Committee. The office of Chair will be elected first, followed by the office of Vice-Chair. The election is for a period of two (2) years from biennial meeting to biennial meeting.

If the office of the Chair becomes vacant for any reason, the Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair until a new Chair is elected.

If the office of the Vice-Chair becomes vacant for any reason, the Committee Chair will appoint a temporary Vice-Chair from the Committee Membership until a new Vice-Chair is elected.

In the event that the Chair or Vice-Chair resigns from the Committee, the election of a new Chair or Vice-Chair will take place after the resignation has been formally accepted by the Committee and the vacated positions are filled pursuant to law.

ARTICLE II. MEETINGS

SECTION 1. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS

The School Committee shall hold at least nine (9) business meetings each year. Business meetings shall be live streamed and a recording of the meeting will be placed on the District website.

Topics to be presented shall be determined by the School Committee and the Superintendent at the outset of each school year to the extent possible as required by RI General Law. Additional topics will be added as included in Discussion Items during meetings, by written request of a member to the Superintendent or School Committee Chair, or as determined to be necessary by the Superintendent or the School Committee Chair. Meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public except when the Committee votes to go into executive session.

Meeting times limit at 10pm

SECTION 2. OTHER MEETINGS

SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called by the Chair, the Superintendent of Schools, or upon the written request of any three (3) members of the School Committee. This written request shall be made to the Superintendent. The Superintendent or their designee shall immediately forward the

request for a special meeting to each School Committee Member. The Superintendent shall poll members to determine if a legal quorum is available to meet at the proposed time and date. If such a quorum is available, the Superintendent shall schedule, advertise, and post the special meeting consistent with state law and local charter.

Notice of the special meeting shall state the special matter or matters to be considered and all members shall receive notice one (1) week prior to the special meeting. At special meetings, only the business for which the meeting was called will be in order.

EMERGENCY MEETINGS

Emergency meetings may be held as described in RI General Laws 42-46-6(c) upon a vote by the majority of the school committee. The emergency meeting may be convened “to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action to protect the public.” The meeting notice and agenda must be posted as soon as possible as provided by applicable law.

HEARINGS

Whenever the School Committee shall be required to hold a hearing on any matter, it shall be conducted in conformance with the related requirements of the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island, the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, ordinances of the Town of Barrington, and regulations of the School Committee.

SECTION 3. EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

By a majority vote at an open meeting, the Barrington School Committee may call a closed executive meeting as specified by the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act. The School Committee shall not discuss any other matter in the Executive Session which may properly be discussed at a public meeting. The School Committee shall comply with all procedural requirements of all applicable law when meeting in Executive Session, including the announcement of any votes taken in Executive Session once back in Open Session. The reason for closing a meeting to Executive Session and the vote of each member shall be recorded in the Open Meeting Minutes. The following items may be discussed and voted upon in Executive Session:

1. Any discussions of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons provided that such person or persons affected shall have been notified in advance in writing and advised that they may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting;
2. Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation, or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation;
3. Discussion regarding the matter of security including, but not limited to, the deployment of security personnel or devices;
4. Any investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct, either civil or criminal;
5. Any discussions or considerations related to the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, or of the disposition of publicly held property wherein advanced public information would be detrimental to the interest of the public;
6. Any discussions related to or concerning a prospective business or industry locating in the state of Rhode Island when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the interest of the public;

7. A matter related to the question of the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest. Public funds shall include any investment plan or matter related thereto, including, but not limited to, state lottery plans for new promotions;
8. Any executive sessions of a local school committee exclusively for the purposes: (i) of conducting student disciplinary hearings; or (ii) of reviewing other matters which relate to the privacy of students and their records, including all hearings of the various juvenile hearing boards of any municipality; provided, however, that any affected student shall have been notified in advance in writing and advised that he or she may require that the discussion be held in an open meeting;
9. Any hearings on, or discussions of, a grievance filed pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement;
10. Any discussion of the personal finances of a prospective donor to a library;
11. Any other purpose specified by the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act (RIGL 42-46- 5) as it may be amended from time to time.

SECTION 4. POSTING OF MEETINGS

Written notice of the dates, times and places of regularly scheduled meetings shall be established at the beginning of each calendar year. As specified by the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act, public notice of the agenda will be made available at least 48 hours before the scheduled meeting to the staff and community in the Barrington School District on the school website. Notice of the meeting and agenda shall be posted in the Barrington Town Hall and in the School Administration office, as well as at the building site of the meeting, and filed electronically with the Office of Rhode Island Secretary of the State.

SECTION 5. QUORUM/CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

Three members of the School Committee will constitute a quorum required to do business. In the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair, a temporary Chair shall be elected. In the absence of a quorum, only taking measures to obtain a quorum, fixing a time to adjourn, or taking a recess are permitted.

In the absence of applicable rule or law, all meetings shall be conducted according to the latest version of Robert's Rules of Order. A digital copy of this handbook will be available for all meetings and the Vice Chair will act as parliamentarian in the case of questions by members of the Committee. A majority of the committee may override a decision or ruling of the parliamentarian.

Any time a quorum gathers to discuss the Committee's business a meeting is constituted. Additionally, discussion of business between three or more members, even if not at the same time, constitutes a rolling quorum. Consequently, members should be cautious to only hold meetings and discussions as permitted by these by-laws and RI state law.

SECTION 6. WORKSHOPS

The School Committee shall hold Workshops in open session to allow a deeper discussion of defined topics relevant to the District Strategic Goals. There is no formal action by the School Committee at a workshop. Workshops are not recorded. Workshops allow for the School Committee and Administration to engage in a discussion of the topic at hand. Members of the public may also ask questions of the Administrators at the end of each session.

ARTICLE III. REQUIREMENTS AND DUTIES OF THE COMMITTEE AND ITS MEMBERS

SECTION 3. CHAIR

The Chair shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as are fixed by statute and as usually devolve upon the presiding officer of a deliberative body.

The Chair has no more authority than has any member of the Committee, and the Chair's actions are not binding on the Committee unless given such authority by the Committee.

The Chair will assist in preparation of the agenda, maintain order and see that debates and discussion remain relevant to the issue under discussion.

The Chair is the authorized signatory to all legal documents on behalf of the Committee provided the Committee votes to grant such authority.

Additionally, the Chair is empowered to:

Provide leadership to the School Committee by ensuring the integrity of the Committee's processes and By-Laws;

Chair its meetings with all the commonly accepted power of that position as described in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised;

Ensure consistency with the School Committee's rules and policies, and those legitimately imposed upon it from outside the organization;

Lead periodic self-assessments to ensure process improvement;

Facilitate sound Committee decision-making;

Represent the Committee, as appropriate;

Compile and facilitate the Committee's summative evaluation of the Superintendent;

Execute all documents as authorized by the Committee, except as otherwise provided by law;

Develop proposed Committee meeting agendas in concert with the Superintendent; and

Serve as the Committee's official spokesperson in announcing Committee-stated positions, and in stating decisions and interpretations within the areas assigned to the Chairperson.

The Chair has no authority to supervise or direct the Superintendent except as authorized by the School Committee.

With the assistance, as necessary, from the Superintendent, the Chair will represent the Committee in all its relationships with the Barrington Town Government.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair.

The Chair may be removed from the position of the Chair at the pleasure of the Barrington School Committee upon a majority vote of the total Committee membership.

SECTION 4. VICE-CHAIR

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair, as stated in Section 3 of Article III.

A non-union administrative secretary under the direction of the Vice Chair will keep a complete and accurate record of all meetings. Minutes are the legal record of a School Committee's actions and must, therefore, be accurate and in compliance with the Rhode Island Open Meetings Law.

The Vice Chair shall keep written minutes of the proceedings of the executive sessions of the School Committee.

Unofficial minutes will be reviewed by the Vice Chair as to accuracy prior to the approval of the Committee.

The Vice-Chair shall serve, with the Chair, as the parliamentarian of the committee.

The Vice-Chair may be removed from the position of Vice-Chair office at the pleasure of the Barrington School Committee upon a majority of the total Committee membership.

SECTION 5. INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

School Committee members have legal authority only during meetings convened in accordance with these bylaws and Rhode Island law. Members fulfill their obligations by participating in meetings. The method of participation is discussion, deliberation, debate and voting.

The Barrington School District does hereby establish a code of basic principles and ethical standards for School Committee members acting individually and collectively as boards of education in the management of the Barrington Public Schools, which principles include but are not limited to the following:

1. Recognize that the academic success and overall well-being of all Barrington students are the primary considerations in all committee decisions.
2. Formulate written policy for the administration of schools to be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary. BPS policies identify measurable outcomes or objectives, where possible, which assist in appraising the work of the District. Commit to decisions, policies, and protocols that have been developed collaboratively and are aligned to the District's strategic goals.
3. Exercise legislative, policy-making, planning and appraising functions. Delegate administrative functions in the operation of schools to the Superintendent and their delegates.
4. Recognize the critical responsibility for selecting the superintendent, defining the superintendent's responsibilities, and evaluating the superintendent's performance regularly without directly engaging in administrative processes. (See BPS Superintendent Evaluation Policy and BPS Chief Administrative Officer Policy.)
5. Accept and encourage a variety of opinions from and communication with all parts of the community.
6. Advocate District positions on educational issues with legislators and other state and local political leaders, staying abreast of relevant state and national educational issues.
7. Make public relevant institutional information in order to promote communication and understanding between the school system and the community. Communicate connections between decisions, district performance, and student data.
8. Act on legislative and policy-making matters only after examining pertinent facts and considering the superintendent's recommendations.

9. Conduct meetings with planned and published agendas.
10. Work collaboratively with the administration to formulate annual and 5-year strategic goals, creating clear priorities for district resources, with deliverable expectations. While responsive to issues arising outside of the strategic plan, ensure that those issues are balanced with the commitment to a focused strategy.
11. Give the superintendent full responsibility for discharging their professional duties and hold them responsible for the results. Do not give direction to any part of the organization except to the Superintendent.
12. Refer to the superintendent all complaints and criticisms of the school system, its personnel and operations. Act publicly with the Superintendent in their resolution, unless the private resolution of these matters is mandated by law or school department regulations.
13. Act only through public meetings since individual board members have no authority to bind the committee.
14. Openly debate and vote on all issues that come before the School Committee and support the majority decision of the committee.
15. Work with other committee members to establish effective board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the superintendent.
16. Evaluate both School Committee and Superintendent performance on a semi-annual basis.
17. When expressing individual views and opinions to the community and/or the media, members clearly indicate that they are speaking only on their own behalf.
18. Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using the committee position for personal gain.
19. Make no personal promises nor take private action that may compromise the integrity of the School Committee.
20. Keep confidential matters confidential.
21. As required by law, complete six (6) hours of Professional Development administered through or approved by the Rhode Island Association of School Committees (RIASC) on an annual basis.
22. Attend all regularly scheduled committee meetings as possible, and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings. Prepare for meetings by reading all related materials prior to the meeting. Fully engage in all meetings, reducing as much as possible the use of technology during the meetings.
23. Serve as liaison to or chair on at least two Advisory Committees annually. (reference Advisory Committee policy)

The committee may convene a duly posted meeting, under the provisions of applicable law, to sanction a member who does not comply with the individual limits, responsibilities and ethical standards set forth in this Article and in applicable law.

SECTION 5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

School Committee members are expected to understand and comply with the language and spirit of the Rhode Island Code of Ethics in Government Act and disclose any personal interests

or ties prior to discussion or to voting. Specific attention should be paid to items involving personnel, purchasing, or votes requiring expenditure of funds. School Committee members are expected to recuse themselves from all real or potential conflicts, as required by applicable law. School Committee members are expected to avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using the committee position for personal gain. If the committee member is in doubt about a possible conflict, an advisory opinion may be requested from the Ethics Commission. Members shall abstain from seeking employment in the Barrington School Department for at least four (4) years after completing their tenure as a Barrington School Committee member.

ARTICLE IV. ORDER OF MEETINGS

SECTION 1. ORDER OF BUSINESS, REGULAR MEETING

Business meetings of the School Committee shall be conducted in the following order unless otherwise agreed to by a majority of the School Committee:

- A. Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Achievement Recognition
- C. Superintendent Report
- D. Public Comment
- E. School Committee Business
- F. Public Comment
- G. Consent Agenda
- H. Discussion Items for future meetings
- I. Announcements

SECTION 2: PUBLIC COMMENT

The Barrington School Committee is the policy-making board for the Barrington School District, and as such, conducts school department business in public according to the Rhode Island Open Meeting Law. The open meeting is not considered a public hearing.

Comments by members of the community on issues that pertain to School Department business are appropriate and may be presented either during Right to Be Heard, Correspondence, or Community Comment.

The consent agenda is approved in its entirety. The Committee shall, from time to time, designate items to be routinely placed on this Agenda. Any member may remove an item for discussion and require a separate vote. The consent items are generally routine in nature unless, as mentioned previously, a Member of the Committee requests its removal from the consent agenda to discuss/debate.

Members of the community desiring to address the Committee on issues that pertain to District business shall be given fair opportunity to be heard. The public may address the Committee as follows:

1. Right to Be Heard. Prior to the convening of the meeting, the person(s) who would like to be heard need(s) to complete the appropriate form and submit it to the Chair. Under Right to Be Heard, members of the public may only address members on the agenda of that meeting, and shall be limited to five (5) minutes per individual.

2. Correspondence. An individual or a group will provide a written request to be placed on the agenda under correspondence. Said request must be received by the Chair and/or Superintendent seven (7) days prior to the meeting date. The request shall include the name of the individual or group, mailing address, telephone number of spokesperson, and the reason for coming before the School Committee.
3. Community Comment. Comments by the public that pertain to School Department issues on or not on the meeting's agenda will be heard, prior to adjournment of the meeting. Public comments made during Community Comment shall be limited to three (3) minutes per individual.

No comments on personnel issues or confidential matters shall be permitted during Right to be Heard or Community Comment.

SECTION 3. SUSPENSION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

The order of business for any meeting may be suspended by a majority vote of the members present providing a quorum has been maintained.

ARTICLE V. AGENDA

SECTION 1. DEVELOPING THE AGENDA

It will be the duty of the Chair, or the Vice-Chair in the Chair's absence, in cooperation with the Superintendent, to prepare the agenda for all meetings of the Barrington School Committee.

Any individual School Committee member may request in writing to the Superintendent or through the Chair, or the Vice-Chair in the Chair's absence, that an item be placed on the agenda. The established deadline for committee member requests for items to be included in the agenda shall be seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Such requests shall not be unreasonably denied. If such a request is refused, the member may direct that the item request be placed on the agenda under new business for consideration. A majority vote of the Committee may allow it to be considered as an action item on the next meeting agenda.

The agenda and supportive material will be written and distributed to School Committee members. Exception to this procedure requires acceptable rationale to the Committee. No item shall be acted upon at any meeting of the School Committee unless it had been placed on the distributed and posted agenda according to the Rhode Island Open Meetings Law.

ARTICLE VI. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

SECTION 1. POLICY LAW, PHILOSOPHY, AND ENFORCEMENT

Good policies:

1. Clarify the operation of the school system;
2. Create understanding and good will;
3. Provide direction;
4. Facilitate control and efficiency.

The Committee will ensure that its policies conform to the higher supremacy of municipal, state, and federal laws, including the provisions of municipal by-laws and state and federal constitutions. Questions concerning the legality of any policy should be addressed to the Office

of the Superintendent. Further, while it is not feasible to reiterate the principles of the Committee-adopted Educational Philosophy into the language of each and every policy statement, it is to be assumed that the spirit of this document will prevail in the implementation of all policies. The Committee expects compliance with its formally-adopted policies. Failure to comply with these policies will be considered cause for disciplinary action.

SECTION 2. FORMULATION OF POLICIES

The School Committee will reserve to itself the establishment of guidelines within which it shall function. It will also provide discretionary limits upon the actions of those to whom it delegates authority. These guidelines and limits of action shall constitute the policies governing the operation of the school system.

The formulation and adoption of written policies shall constitute the basic method by which the School Committee will exercise its leadership in the operation of the school system. The study, review and evaluation of reports concerning the adoption and execution of its written policies will constitute the basic method by which the School Committee shall exercise its control over the operation of the school system.

The adoption of all policies shall be recorded in the minutes of the School Committee meetings and placed in the Official Barrington School Committee Policy Manual. Only the written statements so adopted and so recorded will be regarded as official School Committee Policy.

SECTION 3. ADOPTION OF POLICIES

Policies will be adopted and/or amended only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the School Committee following a second reading, when such action has been scheduled and advertised on the agenda of a regular or special meeting.

To permit time for study of all new policies, amendments to policies, repeal of existing policies and to provide an opportunity for interested parties to react, proposed policies or amendments will be presented as agenda items to the School Committee in the following sequence:

1. Decision-Making Policy...state mandated, admin request, strategic goals or SC request.
2. Discussion item-first reading of proposed policy or policies; School Committee discussion and directions for any redrafting.
3. Action item-second reading of proposed policy(s), discussion, adoption/rejection.* Taking into consideration feedback from the community.

*Amendments to the policy at the action stage, will not require repetition of the sequence, unless the School Committee so directs. (First read repeat)

Policies will be effective upon the date set by the School Committee. The date will ensure that affected persons have an opportunity to become familiar with the requirements of the new policy prior to its implementation.

Policies will continue from year to year and School Committee to School Committee until and unless the School Committee changes them in accordance with these by-laws. The School Committee will evaluate new and amended policies from time to time, and will revise them if they prove unwise or untenable.

SECTION 4. EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

On matters of unusual urgency, the Committee may waive the adoption of policies procedures set forth in Section 3 and take immediate action by a majority vote of the members of the Committee at a regular or special meeting called for that purpose.

SECTION 5. REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The School Committee reserves the right to review and veto administrative procedures should they, in the Committee's judgment, be inconsistent with the policies adopted by the Committee.

SECTION 6. POLICY DISSEMINATION

The Superintendent is directed to establish and maintain an orderly plan for preserving and making accessible the policies adopted by the Committee and the administrative procedures needed to put them into effect which shall include posting of the adopted policies on the Barrington Public Schools website.

ARTICLE VII. MEMBER ORIENTATION

SECTION 1. NEW MEMBERS

The School Committee and its administrative staff shall assist each new member-elect to understand Committee functions, policies, and procedures before and when the member takes office. The new member-elect shall be brought up to date with regard to current problems, concerns and issues. The following methods may be employed:

- a. The electee shall be given section material related to Committee membership;
- b. The electee shall be invited to attend interim school committee meetings and may be invited to participate in the discussions held therein;
- c. The Superintendent and Committee members may supply, under the direction of the Chair, pertinent materials and explain their use to electees;
- d. The electees shall be invited to meet with the Superintendent and Chair to discuss the services that the Administration performs for the Committee and they shall be offered:
 1. Title 16 Laws of the State of Rhode Island
 2. Rhode Island Special Education Regulations
 3. Barrington School Committee By-Laws
 4. Current Policy Manual
 5. Capital and Operating Budgets
 6. Collective Bargaining Unit Agreements and Contracts
 7. Key Works of School Committees Book
 8. Tour of all Barrington Public Schools and Facilities
 9. Opportunities to attend professional development workshops sponsored by the Rhode Island Association of School Committees (RIASC).
 10. Student and staff handbooks
 11. Open Meetings Act and Attorney General's Guide to open Government in Rhode Island
 12. Ethics/Conflict of Interest Regulations
 13. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition

SECTION 2. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

The Superintendent will prepare members of the School Committee for maximum service to the Community through:

1. Conferences with the Superintendent;
2. Visits to observe administrative office practices;
3. Membership in the State School Committee Association;
4. Annual visits to schools as a committee or individually;
5. Participation in educational workshops at the district and state level;
6. Attendance and participation at educational conferences and conventions;
7. Reading educational resources
8. Participation in community and school events;
9. Study of by-laws of the School Committee;
10. Familiarization with school department policies and procedures.

ARTICLE VIII. ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Committee may from time to time establish advisory committees to assist in the completion of its business and serve as representatives of the committee on approved advisory committees and boards. Please see the BPS Advisory Committee Policy.

ARTICLE X. SUPERINTENDENT

The Superintendent serves as the chief executive agent of the School Committee. The Superintendent carries out all policies, rules and regulations established by the School Committee. The School Committee expects its Superintendent to fulfill the role of educational leader in the community. This means the Superintendent will keep the public informed as to the activities, achievements, needs and directions of the school system. In so doing, the Superintendent should employ all avenues of communication including various media, small group discussions, speeches and other personal appearances. As the educational chief executive, the Superintendent, as a matter of routine, should inform the Committee regularly of new trends in education and their implications, if any, for the system. The Committee also needs to be kept informed regarding the school system's performance as compared to other systems within the state and throughout the nation with appropriate rationale and/or explanation. The Superintendent shall carry out the powers and duties of Superintendent as set forth in applicable state law.

Also look at BPS Administration in the Absence of Policy Policy.

Consider: Addition of the Decision Making Policy here

ARTICLE XI. REAFFIRMATION AND AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

SECTION 1. ANNUAL REAFFIRMATION OF BYLAWS

These bylaws shall be readopted at each biannual organizational meeting, subject to the understanding that all bylaws not established by law and/or contractual agreements may be changed through Committee action as described in Article XI, Section II below.

SECTION II. AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

These by-laws may be amended only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the School Committee when such action has been scheduled and advertised on the agenda of a

regular or special meeting. All revisions or additions may be approved by the School Committee after two readings.