

Melrose School Committee policy pertaining to School Councils:

**Suggested reading –**

Melroseschools.com –

- On the Policy and Planning subcommittee page –
- School Site Council Information - September 2009
- On District Policies page -
- 1601 School Councils
- 2400 School Improvement Plans

MASC proprietary information – generic policies (attached – see pages 5 - 7)

- BDFA SCHOOL COUNCILS
- BDFA-E-1 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
- BDFA-E-2 SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN
- BDFA-E-3 CONDUCT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL BUSINESS

Mass General Laws of interest –

**Chapter 69: Section 1I. Performances of public school districts and individual public schools; evaluation system; assessment instruments; reports**

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/69-1i.htm>

**Chapter 71: Section 59C. School councils; members; meetings; duties**

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/71-59c.htm>

**Chapter 71: Section 38Q1/2. Curriculum accommodation plan**

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/71-38q%20.5.htm>

Mass DESE –

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/schoolcouncils/>  
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/schoolcouncils/appx.html>

The purpose of this review and any recommended changes, are to make sure that the policies of the Melrose School Committee (MSC) reflect not only the wishes of the committee, but also the reality of what is being done.

There have been many changes in the past several years in the area of School Improvement Plans. The MSC is taking these plans very seriously, and has begun to ask for them to be completed earlier in the year in order to use them during the budget planning process. In addition, as the current Principals have taken ownership of these plans, the plans have begun to evolve, showing the individual characteristics of the school communities more. Over the last few years, the plans have been much more informative for the committee, when compared with years past.

We would like the MSC Policies governing School Councils and School Improvement Plans to better reflect the current environment.

**EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1993  
SCHOOL COUNCILS**

**1600  
1601**

The building principal has the primary responsibility for the management of the school. The Education Reform Act of 1993, designates a school council is to be established in each school to advise the Principal in certain areas of school operation.

A School Council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, teachers, parents, community members and, at the secondary level, students, required to be established pursuant to M.G.L. c.71, s.59C.

**School Council's Responsibilities**

School Councils are to advise the principals in:

1. Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards
2. Identifying the educational needs of students attending the school
3. Reviewing the annual school budget
4. Formulating a school improvement plan
5. Annually reviewing and making recommendations regarding revising the student handbook at the secondary level

The School Council shall have no authority over matters that are subject to M.G.L. Ch. 150 E of the General Laws (Collective Bargaining).

School Councils must follow the requirements of the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c.39, s.23A, 23B, 23C, which includes posting of meeting times and keeping of meeting minutes. In addition, agendas and minutes for each meeting must be delivered to the Superintendent in a timely manner.

The Melrose School Committee will assist the work of the School Councils by:

- Setting district wide performance standards and educational policies that building level school improvement plans will take into account
- Review and approve building level school improvement plans in a timely manner
- Approve a representative process for the election of parent and teacher members of the council, after the membership makeup is determined by the Principal
- Receiving a list of the members of each School Council along with their addresses, as well as agendas and meeting minutes, in order to better follow the work of the councils.

The Committee may approve a council's School Improvement Plan. As a reviewing and approving authority, the Committee has the discretion to set a schedule and timelines for the submission and review of the improvement plans. The Committee may approve or disapprove parts of a School Improvement Plan. The Committee has the final authority to approve improvement plans. Plans must be submitted to the Committee for review and approval every year; the Committee must review said plans within thirty days of receipt of said plan; otherwise, the plans shall be deemed approved. School Improvement Plans must be submitted annually by March 15<sup>th</sup> unless in any given year the Committee sets some other date for submission.

## **ADMINISTRATION 2000 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS 2400**

### **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS/EDUCATIONAL GOALS:**

The principals, in consultation with school councils, shall adopt educational goals for the schools and shall formulate a School Improvement Plan to advance such goals. The plan shall address the following:

1. The school's educational goals which must include the student performance standards adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education and, be consistent with any educational policies established for the District. The Council shall assess the needs of the school in light of their goals.
2. The school improvement plan shall address the system-wide goals/core values adopted by the Committee each year.
3. An assessment of the impact of class size on student performance, and shall consider student to teacher ratios and other factors and supportive adult resources, and may include a scheduled plan for reducing class size.
4. Professional development for the school's professional staff, the allocation of professional development funds in the annual school budget,
5. The enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school
6. Safety and discipline, the establishment of a welcoming school environment characterized by tolerance and respect for all groups,
7. Extracurricular activities,
8. Means for meeting the diverse learning needs of all learners
9. Such other subjects as the principal in consultation with the school council shall consider appropriate.

### **RELATIONSHIP TO SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Each school must develop and implement an annual school improvement plan. Each school's objectives must be framed in the context of the Education Reform Act of 1993 elements and the priorities identified by the Superintendent and Committee.

Each council's school improvement plan is to be submitted to the Committee for review and approval each year. If the plan is not reviewed within thirty days of its submission, it is considered to be automatically approved.

### **PLANNING PROCESS**

The planning process followed by the School Councils in the writing of each school's plan is critical to the development of a successful plan, one that addresses the needs of the students, staff and parents, that is, the entire school community. It is critical that the plan be built on a documented needs assessment that has had input from staff and parents, and possibly students at the high school level.

First vote 3/9/2010

MASC Generic Policies – this information is proprietary to the MASC and is provided here to show one example of policies in this area of School Councils.

**File: BDFa School Councils**

The School Committee believes that the school is the key unit for educational improvement and change and that successful school improvement is best accomplished through a school-based decision-making process. By involving those directly affected by any action or decision of the school council in the process of determining that action or decision, it helps to strengthen the commitment to those decisions by those most affected by its implementation.

Under this policy, the Principal shall have primary responsibility for the management of the school. Decisions which are made at the school level must be aligned with the budget, policies, curriculum, and long-range and short-range goals adopted by the School Committee. In addition, decisions must comply with any state and federal laws and regulations and with any negotiated agreements of the school District.

As enacted by the state legislature in the Education Reform Act of 1993, a school council shall be established in each school to advise the Principal in specific areas of school operation. The Principal, except as specifically defined in the law, shall have the responsibility for defining the composition of and forming the group pursuant to a representative process approved by the Superintendent and School Committee.

**The following guidelines define the role of the school council:**

**The School Council shall meet regularly with the Principal of the school and shall assist in:**

- 1. Adoption of educational goals for the school that are consistent with state and local policies and standards.**
- 2. Identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school.**
- 3. Review of the school building budget.**
- 4. Formulation of a school improvement plan that may be implemented only after review and approval by the School Committee.**

SOURCE: MASC LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [71:38Q](#), [71:59C](#)

**File: BDFa-E-1 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Principal, in conjunction with the school council, shall be responsible for preparing a written school improvement plan annually. This plan shall be written with the advice of the school council and submitted for approval to the Superintendent and the School Committee. The plan should be drafted with the following in mind:

1. The educational goals for the school consistent with the goals and standards, including student performance standards, as adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education and by the School Committee.
2. An assessment of the needs of the school in light of the proposed educational goals.
3. The means to address student performance.
4. Professional development for the school's professional staff.
5. The enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school, safety, and discipline.
6. The development of means for meeting the diverse learning needs of every child.
7. Any further subjects as the Principal, in consultation with the school council, shall consider appropriate, except that:
  - a. The council shall have no authority over matters that are subject to Chapter 150E, the collective bargaining law, and
  - b. The council may not expand the scope of its authority beyond that established in law or expressly granted by School Committee policy.

SOURCE: MASC Policy

**File: BDFA-E-2 SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The written school improvement plan shall be submitted by the Principal to the Superintendent and the School Committee for review and approval by February 1st of each year.

Because the implementation of the plan is dependent on School Committee approval, it is important that the school council be aware of certain expectations of the School Committee regarding the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan should:

1. Focus on improvement of student learning.
2. Specify expected student outcomes and measurable/observable results.
3. Align with the mission of the School District and any goals and policies of the School District.
4. Be consistent with state and federal law, School District policy, established curriculum and negotiated agreements.
5. Clearly identify actions to be taken on how changes will be implemented.
6. Include a plan on how to solicit community support for the changes being developed.
7. Indicate anticipated costs and available funding sources.
8. Delineate the method of evaluating and reporting progress and results.

If the school improvement plan is not approved by the Superintendent and School Committee, it shall be returned to the Principal with specific comments as to the reason(s). The Principal shall revise the plan in cooperation with the school council, and resubmit it for approval. If the School Committee does not review the school improvement plan within 30 days of its receipt by the Committee, the plan shall be deemed to have been approved.

SOURCE: MASC

**File: BDFA-E-3 CONDUCT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL BUSINESS**

The Principal shall, by law, serve as co-chair of the council. The second co-chair will be elected annually by the council members at its first meeting of the school year subsequent to the elections of new council members. The co-chairs will be responsible for the preparation of the agenda for the council meetings.

The school council shall meet at least once monthly during the school year. Meetings will be held outside of school hours. At its first meeting of the school year, the council will set its calendar of regular meetings for the year. Where circumstances warrant, the council may choose to call additional meetings.

School councils shall use consensus as the primary method to resolve issues and to formulate recommendations. Votes by majority may be taken at the discretion of the Principal and Roberts Rules of Order shall prevail if there are questions of procedure.

All meetings of the school council shall conform to the Open Meeting Law, Sections 23 A, B, and C, which stipulate that all meetings be open to the public, that meetings be posted at least 48 hours in advance, and that minutes of the meeting shall be maintained as required. The scope of the school council does not require, and therefore does not qualify for, executive session.

The Superintendent shall receive agendas and minutes of all school council meetings. The Superintendent shall provide copies of these materials to members of the School Committee for information.

SOURCE: MASC