



Book	New Policy Manual
Section	1000 - Community Relations
Title	School Governance Councils
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## 1012 - SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCILS

### I. Purpose

Consistent with the Board of Education's adopted theory of action and its commitment to create and maintain a system of high-performing schools, all schools in the Norwalk Public School system will maintain school-based governance councils to help guide the schools' development.<sup>[1]</sup> The Board believes that the success of the school and the students it serves is the shared responsibility of school staff, parents or legal guardians and community members.

### II. Definition

The School Governance Council (SGC or Council) is integral to local school decision-making and shall be devoted to helping the school achieve its mission and vision. Toward this end, the SGC will advise the school administration regarding various issues, including the analysis of student achievement, development of improvement plans, allocation of resources and programmatic and operational changes which enhance the quality of the school and the achievement of its students.

### III. Membership

School Governance Councils shall consist of 14 members plus up to three nonvoting members. The following tables describe the category of membership, the number of members and how they are elected.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Election Process</b>
Parents or guardians of students at the school who are not administrators or teachers employed by the Norwalk public schools	7	Elected by the parents or guardians of students attending the school, each household with a student attending the school will have one vote.
Teachers at the school	5	Elected by the teachers of the school.
Community leaders within the school attendance area or partner organization	2	Elected by the parent and teacher members of the Council.
School principal (nonvoting)	1	Principal

Additional members and election process in high schools:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Election Process</b>
Students, high school members only (nonvoting)	2	Elected by the school's student body, one from each of the junior and senior classes.

All members are equal partners in making recommendations to the school administration. All Council recommendations are made by majority vote of those voting Council members in attendance.

#### IV. Requirements

All members shall be required to participate in training sessions provided by the District and to remain in good standing in the groups they represent during the term of their service on the Council, e.g. teacher representatives must be teachers in active service at the school and parent representatives must be parents of children currently attending the school. School Governance Councils should meet regularly as needed throughout the year.

#### V. Election and Term of Members

Members of the Councils shall be elected as follows:

- Parents representatives shall be elected from parents or legal guardians of children enrolled in the school. The process for parent election shall be developed by the Principal in collaboration with the school's Parent-Teacher Organization or comparable parent organization, and shall be based generally on the "Guidance for School Governance Councils – Membership and Election Procedures" published by the CSDE in August 2013 (found here: <https://business.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/SGC/SGCElectionGuidance-rev2013.pdf>), and shall be subject to the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.
- Teachers shall be elected by the teachers of the school.
- Student members shall be elected by the student body.
- Members representing one or more partner organizations external to the school shall be elected by the parent and teacher members of the Council.
- The Council shall represent the diverse interests of the families and staff that make up the local school community. Every effort, therefore, shall be made to engage broad participation in the Council election process.

Voting members have a two-year term and no one member can serve more than four terms on a Council. The nonvoting student members serve a one-year term, and no student member can serve more than two terms. Elections at the high schools will be conducted in the month of September following the requirements stated in the election process within this policy. The year of each term on the high school councils shall be from October 1 through September 30. Elections at all other schools will be conducted in the month of May following the requirements stated in the election process within this policy. The year of each term on said other schools' councils shall be from June 1 through May 31. Vacancies that occur during the year will be filled by the Council for the unexpired portion of a term.

#### VI. Roles and Responsibilities

##### Parent Co-Chairperson

- A. A Parent Co-Chair of each School Governance Council shall be elected annually by the members. The Co-Chairs shall set meeting agendas, preside over meetings of the Council, attend bi-annual district-wide meetings of SGC Co-Chairs with the Superintendent and an annual meeting of SGC Co-Chairs with the Board of Education.

##### B. Principal or School Director

The Principal is the chief executive officer of the school and accountable for school quality and student achievement. The Principal shall be responsible for maintaining and supporting the School Governance Council at the school. The Principal shall:

1. serve as the Council Co-Chair;
2. confer with the Council and consider the Council's recommendations in making decisions on behalf of the school; and
3. be a non-voting member of the Council.

In the exceptional case where the Principal is in disagreement with the recommendation of the Council regarding items 1, 2, or 6 below, the Superintendent's designee shall review both recommendations and make a final determination.

### **C. Duties of Council Members**

The Council, collectively, shall serve in an advisory capacity to the school administration regarding:

1. Conducting at least four meeting per year to which all parents and teachers of the school are invited during with the topics of training, vision, budget and accountability shall be discussed and evaluated.
2. Analyzing student achievement data and school needs relative to the development and approval of the school's Accountability Plan, which shall be submitted to the Superintendent for approval each year during the month of June.
3. Reviewing the fiscal objectives of the draft budget for the school and providing advice to the Principal of the school before such budget is submitted to the Superintendent of Schools.
4. Participating in the hiring process for the school principal or other administrators of the school by conducting interviews of qualified candidates provided by the District and reporting on such interviews to the Superintendent of Schools.
5. Providing advice and assistance to the principal regarding programmatic and operational changes which foster the school's improvement goals, subject to Board policy and to contracts made by the Board.
6. Working with the administration to develop and approve a School Compact for parents or legal guardians and students outlining the criteria and responsibilities for enrollment and school membership consistent with the school's goals and academic focus and the ways that parents, guardians and school personnel can build a partnership to improve student learning.
7. Developing and approving a written parent involvement policy that outlines the role of parents and legal guardians in the school.
8. Utilizing records relating to information about parents and guardians of students maintained by the Board of Education for the sole purpose of the election of Council members. Such information shall be confidential and shall not be further disclosed.

### **D. Committees, Study Groups, Task Forces**

After consultation with the school administration, the Council may appoint committees, study groups, or task forces of parents, teachers and community members for such purposes as it deems helpful/necessary in order to carry out the responsibilities of the Council enumerated in these bylaws and to promote the vision, mission and goals of the school. No such committee, study group or task force may exercise the authority of the Council.

### **E. Other Provisions**

The Council may adopt Bylaws providing for selection of additional officers in addition to the Co-Chairs, and addressing such other matters as the Council desires (provided that such Bylaws shall not be inconsistent with the provisions of this Policy).

The Council shall comply with any applicable requirements of state law at schools where such Councils are mandated by such law.

The Council shall comply with Norwalk Board of Education policies, procedures, and contractual agreements.

School Governance Council meetings are open to all parents of the school and the public, and the School Governance Council shall comply with applicable provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

### **F. State Limitations**

The Board recognizes School Governance Councils are limited in their advisory functions; therefore the duties of the School Governance Councils do not entail the following activities, including but not limited to: [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/SGC/SGC\\_Responsibilities.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/SGC/SGC_Responsibilities.pdf)

1. Managing the school;
2. Supervising staff;
3. Entering into contracts or purchase agreements;
4. Discussing individual issues between teachers and students and/or parents;
5. Determining student eligibility for school admission; or
6. Determining class allocations or student assignments.

## **VII. Reporting and Oversight**

Each School Governance Council shall provide advice to the school administration so that it may report annually to the

school's stakeholders on the school's progress in meeting the goals of the school's Accountability Plan.

The Board of Education shall conduct an annual forum with School Governance Council Co-Chairs to assess the implementation of this policy.

The Superintendent will report annually to the Board on the effectiveness of School Governance Councils as an element of the Board's Strategic Operating Plan.

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