



Superintendent's Circular

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SCHOOL PARENT COUNCILS

This Circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded by a subsequent version.

Boston Public Schools values the voices of families and seeks to engage families in both school governance and in an advisory capacity at all levels throughout the district. School Parent Councils (SPCs) serve as advocates and advisors to principals/heads of school, school superintendents, the superintendent, and the School Committee.

SPCs provide an opportunity for families to be more deeply engaged at the school level, partnering with the principal/head of school to improve school culture and outcomes for all students. In addition to the school-based SPC, there are districtwide parent advisory councils that bring together parents across schools to serve as advisors to district leadership. The Citywide Parent Council (CPC) serves as the districtwide voice for parents and is composed of representatives from each school. The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SPED PAC) represents the families of students with disabilities who receive special education services. The District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) works to ensure that parents are informed about all aspects of BPS that affect English learners and provide recommendations to the Office of English Learners. These groups serve to empower parents and partner with BPS to improve

outcomes for all students. This circular focuses on the role and function of the SPC.

SCHOOL PARENT COUNCILS

The SPC is the independently established "voice" of *all* parents in the school community. The SPC advocates for students and the school, meets frequently and consistently, elects representatives to sit on the School Site Council (SSC), and promotes an environment of understanding and common purpose among parents, students, and school staff, with a focus on student learning and school improvement. For the purposes of this circular, the term "parent" includes a legal guardian or other person standing *in loco parentis* (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare)." Sect. 9101(31) ESEA.

The roles and responsibilities of the SPC are as follows:

Roles:

- Collaborate with school staff to create a welcoming school climate for all students and families.
- Coordinate school-wide activities and events that engage families in student learning.
- Raise funds to support school-based initiatives, activities, and events.

Responsibilities:

- Provide a safe forum for families to express concerns.
- Contribute to school-based initiatives related to school improvement, school climate, and student learning.

All parents or legal guardians of a child attending a particular

school are automatically members of that school's SPC.

The SPC Executive Committee is the elected leadership of the SPC. Schools must adhere to the following guidelines for the election of the Executive Committee:

- OFCA recommends that the school's Family Liaison is either the facilitator, co-facilitator, or observer of the election.
- Elections for SSC and SPC parent reps must happen in the fall of the new school year. Spring elections will no longer be accepted. This is to help make opportunities for engagement in the councils more equitable.
- Elections for the 2024-2025 school year may be conducted in person, virtually, or through a hybrid system, providing for equitable access to voting.
- Parents/legal guardians who wish to become members of the Executive Committee must have a child enrolled at the school in which they are running.
- Co-chairs and officers should be representative of the school community.
- Any parent/legal guardian who is present at an SPC election (held in person or virtually) may be nominated for the SPC Executive Committee (a parent may nominate themselves).
- Within one school, elected members can serve more than one role only if there is an insufficient number of candidates to fill all roles.
- Parents/legal guardians who are not present (in-person or virtually) at the time of the election may not be nominated.
- Parents/legal guardians who work at their child's school may not be elected to the SPC Executive Committee, except for extenuating circumstances.
- Each family is allowed one vote per family.

- Each candidate should be allowed one minute to introduce themselves.
- Elections may be carried out by secret ballot or can be approved by a majority vote of the present group.
- Nominations and elections are held during the same meeting; therefore, voters must be present, virtually or in person, to participate in the election.

SPC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The role of the SPC Executive Committee is to:

- Provide leadership and to organize the work of the SPC .
- Maintain ongoing communication with all parents to ensure that they are connected to what is happening at school.
- Maintain ongoing communication and a collaborative working relationship with the principal/head of school, teachers, school staff, and community partners.
- Create an inclusive environment on the SPC and in the whole school community that welcomes the active participation of all parents.
- Set a schedule and format of meetings that invites maximum participation of families.

The composition of the SPC Executive Committee should:

- Reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the student body.
- Include parents of students who are English Learners
- Include parents of students who receive special education services.
- Include parents of students in a range of grade levels.
- Include a mix of newly elected and experienced parent leaders.

Parents may serve in more than one SPC Executive Committee role simultaneously at the same school if no other candidates come forward. However, SPCs are encouraged to elect as many parents as possible for the various roles for the purposes of sharing responsibility and building leadership capacity. The SPC Executive Committee consists of the following roles:

Co-Chair

- Number elected: 2
- Schedule and facilitate SPC meetings
- Create agendas
- Maintain ongoing two-way communication with principal/head of school

Treasurer

- Number elected: 1-2
- Maintain clear and accurate financial records for the SPC
- Provide monthly expense reports
- Lead or manage SPC fundraising efforts

Secretary

- Number elected: 1-2
- Conduct outreach to the parent community
- Record and share meeting notes with the school community

School Site Council Reps

- Number elected: 5-8 (based on the number of staff in the BTU bargaining unit)
- Represent the parent community as a member of the SPC
- Participate in school-based decision-making

- Attend SPC meetings to report out on SSC business and receive information to bring back to the SSC
- Facilitate communication between the SPC and SSC

Citywide Parent Council Rep

- Number elected: 1-2*
- Participate in a districtwide parent group designed to advocate for BPS families and students and influence BPS policy

Special Education Parent Advisory Council Rep

- Number elected: 1-2*
- Participate in a citywide parent organization designed to provide information and resources to families of students with disabilities who receive special education services

District English Learners Advisory Committee

- Number elected: 1-2*
- Participate in a citywide committee tasked with providing recommendations to school and district officials regarding programs and services provided to EL students

Total # of Parents Elected to SPC Executive Committee: 12-20

**If vacant, this position should be revisited throughout the school year, and families should be reminded of the opportunity and the benefit of representation on these citywide councils.*

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL AND SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL

The School Parent Council (SPC) elects parent members to represent the parent voice on the School Site Council (SSC). SSC representatives are members of the SPC Executive Committee and should attend SPC meetings to provide regular updates on SSC proceedings to ensure opportunities for parent input and feedback. All SSC meetings are open to the public; therefore, any parent, staff person, or community member can attend. However, only the elected representatives can vote on SSC decisions.

SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL BY-LAWS

All SPCs must develop by-laws for their council to provide structure and guidance for SPC operations. SPCs must annually review and approve their by-laws at their first meeting following the election. The by-laws are a public document and should be made available to all parents and members of the school community, upon request. The SPC by-laws should be submitted to the Office of Family and Community Advancement (OFCA) upon approval by the SPC.

SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL MEETINGS

The SPC should meet at least once monthly. The first meeting of the year should include a presentation from the principal/head of school on the school's goals for the year and election of representatives to the Executive Committee and School Site Council (see Superintendent's Circular FAM-02 for more details). The following meeting should focus on sharing the work that the SPC is doing and provide the opportunity for feedback from parents. **SPCs are encouraged to meet monthly, in keeping with the SSC frequency, to ensure that the parent body is kept**

abreast of SSC activity. Meeting frequency and purpose should be detailed in the SPC By-laws.

SPC GUIDELINES FOR PRINCIPALS, HEADS OF SCHOOL, AND ADMINISTRATORS

- The principal/head of school must work with the SPC to host an annual Title I meeting to share with families (1) how the school is investing its Title I allocation, (2) rights and responsibilities of Title I parents, and (3) to seek feedback and/or input from parents on the Home-School Compact and Family Engagement Plan.
- The principal/head of school should meet with the SPC on a regular basis to provide updates on school policies, the instructional focus, school data, other pertinent information, and to address school-wide parent concerns.
- The principal/head of school should provide families with periodic updates on overall student/school progress, sharing data at SPC meetings.
- The principal/head of school should meet with the SPC co-chairs for ongoing communication regarding family and student engagement practices, student learning, and school improvement.
- The principal/head of school should work with the SPC co-chairs to have information translated into the home languages represented at their school and ensure that arrangements for translation and interpretation have been negotiated and agreed upon by the SPC and school staff (this includes election night).
- The principal/head of school or designee should assist the SPC in notifying families of all SPC and/or Executive

Committee meetings, by providing access to a computer, paper, copying machine, and postage; and by working with the SPC for timely dissemination of notices for the entire community using a range of communication methods, including School Messenger, email, the school's website, and school media.

The SPC works collaboratively with the principal/head of school and school staff to solve problems and develop plans to improve the engagement of families and students. The commitment to partnering with families reflects the value that BPS has placed on the engagement of families and is grounded in decades of family engagement research.

ALIGNMENT WITH PRINCIPAL/HEAD OF SCHOOL EVALUATION

Effective implementation and the authentic engagement of parent, teacher, and student voice align with the following standards of the Massachusetts Administrator Evaluation rubric:

- Indicator III-A1. Family Engagement
 - Engages parents, students, and teachers in creating a welcoming school environment and fostering a shared responsibility engagement.
- Indicator IV-B1. Policies and Practices
 - Creates opportunities for authentic parent, student, and teacher voice in school-based decision-making.
- Indicator IV-E-1. Shared Vision Development
 - Parents, students, and teachers have an opportunity to shape the vision for the school as it pertains to instruction and school climate.
- Indicator IV-F-3. Consensus Building

- Decisions are made using a consensus model, in which all members of the SSC (including SPC members) have an equal voice.
- Resolves conflicts among members of the school community.

IMPORTANT DATES

Date	Activity
September 15	Election dates submitted to OFCA
October 31	Deadline for completing SPC elections of all parent reps, including SSC representatives; and submitting rosters to OFCA.

For more information about this circular, contact:

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