

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS** **1000**

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It is the policy of the Salem School Committee that in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 59C that each elementary, middle and high school shall establish a school council. School councils should be broadly representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school building and community.

School councils shall consist of the principal, who shall co-chair the council, parents of students attending the school, teachers from the school, and community representatives. At Salem High School at least one student shall sit on the school council and shall be elected by the student council. Membership of the non-school members of the school council shall not be more than 50% of the makeup of the Council. Non-school members shall mean those members of the council other than parents, teachers, students and staff of the school.

The principal shall have the responsibility for defining the composition of and forming the council pursuant to a representative process approved by the superintendent of schools and the Salem School Committee. While state law provides local leeway in the election process it does affirm the principle of peer selection as follows:

Parent members are to be selected by parents of students attending the school in an election process held by the local recognized Parent Teacher Organization. The PTO responsible for holding elections for parent representatives to the school council is that PTO which is most representative of the entire parent constituency. The electing organization needs to be open to all parents of all school children in the school;

Teacher members are to be selected by the teachers in the school;

Student council elections or other representative processes should be used to select student members;

Non-school members may be recruited by the principal directly or selected by the organizations that are invited to send representatives to the council.

The election process is to be supervised by the principal of the school but he or she may not exert any influence over the nomination or election process. The School Committee and superintendent may choose to approve the election process once instead of on an annual basis. In the case of an election where the number of candidates equals the number of spots open, the principal will hold an election in any event. In the case of unexpected vacancies on the school council due to members declining appointment after being elected / selected, or failing to attend meetings regularly, the

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principal will hold a special election in order to fill that vacancy or offer the vacancy to the person who received the next highest number of votes or, if that person declines, offer the vacancy to any of the other unsuccessful candidates

It is strongly suggested that the principal utilize a number of possible options in order to advertise and generate interest for the school council. Several options may be considered, among them:

Posting recruitment notices in the school and local papers, posting notices on bulletin boards and web sites;

Gathering recommendations for community organizations and constituencies from which council members may be recruited. These groups may include higher education, cultural and human service agencies, local business, senior citizens groups etc;

Identify a pool of community partners and representative organizations with an interest in supporting school improvement;

Invite parents in the community to an informational meeting at which school council is explained and volunteer nominations are sought.

The first meeting of the school council shall convene not more than 40 days after the first day of school, at which meeting a co-chairperson shall be selected. Meetings of the school council shall be subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law and shall be required to post notice of such meetings with the Salem City Clerk at least 48 hours including Saturdays but not Sundays prior to the meeting.

Approved: 12/3/07

Reviewed December 2016