

<p><b>Lawrence School Site Council</b>  2023-2024  Meeting #1: Thursday, October 26, 2023  VIA ZOOM:  Lawrence School Council: Zoom link: <a href="https://psbma-org.zoom.us/j/4807989970">https://psbma-org.zoom.us/j/4807989970</a>;</p>	
Norms	Start on time; Use “I” Statements; Be Fully Present; Consider Other Perspectives; End on Time
Members	<b>Staff:</b> Dominique Ferdinand, Laura Horst, Kirsten Alper <b>Parents:</b> Alice Wong Tucker, Sally Madsen, Jessica Ullian <b>Principal:</b> Vanessa Bilello <b>Community Members: Need to Post Positions &amp; Pursue</b>
Attendees	

Time	Topic	Notes & Discussion Points
8:15-8:20	Introductions	
8:20-8:35	Principal Updates: Start of '23-'24 School Year	
8:35-8:50	Current School Improvement Plan:  <a href="#">Review SIP feedback sheet</a>  <a href="#">Update from Spring '22</a> (Lawrence’s 21-23 SIP)  <a href="#">'22-'24 SIP</a>	<p>Want the new multi-year SIP to be mindful of where we are now as a school- and where we want Lawrence to be several years down the road.</p> <p>Each school is charged with its own site council to create its own SIP by the state <i>and</i> schools often have similar goals but no structure in place to leverage the work each school does to help one another</p> <p>Current SIP is for 22-24, so this year will be a progress monitoring year.</p> <p>For next meeting, School staff “to dos”: Review of progress on SIP 21-23, highlighting:  Green = done  Yellow = getting there  Red = not yet</p>
8:50-9:00	SIP: Next step action planning	Thoughts for adjustments to SIP & next step priorities (initial impressions of Principal from entry plan work & first several months) & group

		discussion about school “big picture” needs
9:00-9:15	Open Comment:	Topics meriting closer examination (brainstorm): Feedback on school opening, beginning of year, Open House (open discussion), communication

**Laws and guidelines that govern School Council<sup>1</sup>**

*“A school council is a representative, school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers, community members, and, at the secondary level, students, required to be established by each school pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 59C.”<sup>1</sup>*

*PSB School Committee Policy states that School Councils, by law, shall meet regularly with the principal of the school, and “**shall assist and make recommendations to the principal**” on the identification of the educational needs of students attending the school, in the review of the annual school budget, and in the formation of a school improvement plan.<sup>2</sup>*

**Selecting members:**

- The law explicitly gives the school principal responsibility for defining the composition and overseeing the formation of the council pursuant to a representative process approved by the superintendent and school committee.
- School council should vote on a co-chair at the first meeting of each year, who serves alongside the principal (other co-chair).
- Regardless of the size of the council, the number of parent representatives must be equal to the number of teachers who serve on the council plus the principal.
- "Not more than fifty percent of the council shall be non-school members."
  - Non-school members may be recruited by principals directly or selected by the organizations that are invited to send representatives to the council. They may serve indefinitely.
- The membership of school councils "should be broadly representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school building and community."
  - Parent members are to be selected by the parents of students attending the school, in elections held by the local recognized parent-teacher organization.
  - Teacher members are to be selected by the teachers in the school.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/advisory/schoolcouncils/default.html>

- There is no term of office for members, leaving it up to the individual principals to make this determination. (Brookline School Committee seems to recommend 2 year terms - last updated 2006, with the state recommending 3 year terms. It seems that SC can not legally mandate a 2 year term.)
  - Establishing staggered terms for teachers and parent members of councils will help to accommodate the desire for continuity and expanded access. To create staggered terms, one third of each membership category is elected for terms of one, two, and three years in the initial year of the council. These members can be re-elected for a full term when their term expires. Non-school members that formally represent community organizations can continue to serve at the pleasure of the sending organization.

### **Statutory Role of School Council**

- The law outlines four major areas of responsibility for councils. School councils are to assist principals in:
  - Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards
  - Identifying the educational needs of students attending the school
  - Reviewing the annual school building budget
  - Formulating a school improvement plan
- Councils may also take on other responsibilities, including policymaking, as granted by the local school committee.
- Councils' school improvement plans are submitted to the local school committee for review and approval. Deadlines for this are set by school committee.