

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 junior kindergarten to grade 5 elementary school program and the overall school facility and the head of the upper school shall have primary responsibility for the management of the upper school program. 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 of the junior kindergarten to grade 5 elementary school and the head of the upper school in specific areas of school operation. The principal of the junior kindergarten to grade 5 elementary school or the head of upper school, 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. In those school buildings housing both an elementary school (junior kindergarten through grade 5) and an upper school (grades 6 through 8) there shall be two separate school councils. The school council for the elementary school (junior kindergarten through grade 5) shall be co-chaired by the principal and the school council for the upper school (grades 6 through 8) shall be co-chaired by the head of the upper school.

The Cambridge School Committee possesses certain legal powers and prerogatives that cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Therefore, the school council must adhere to the guidelines set forth below with respect to its role.

The following guidelines define the role of the school council:

The school council shall meet regularly with the principal of the school or head of the upper school, as appropriate, 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 and make recommendations to the principal/head of upper school for the development, implementation and assessment of the curriculum accommodation plan required by M.G.L.c. 71, §38Q½.
3. Review of the school building budget.
4. Formulation of a school improvement plan that may be implemented only after review and approval of the Superintendent

Additionally, as the School Committee values the importance of community input and School Councils, the School Committee notes that it welcomes School Councils to come before it with

concerns or support pertaining to educational policy, with the exception of personnel and collective bargaining issues.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L.c. 69, §1I, c. 71, §§38Q, 38Q½ & 59C

Adopted: September 16, 2014