

BYLAWS

SOUTH KINGSTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

ARTICLE 1. MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the South Kingstown School Committee is to educate all of our children as described in the district's strategic plan.

In order to be successful, the South Kingstown School Committee is committed to insuring its leadership role by:

- Insuring a clear focus on the district mission, goals and priorities for student achievement in all deliberations and communications
- Providing guidance and direction to accomplish the district's goals and priorities through policy, planning, and accountability
- Monitoring, measuring, and communicating effectiveness and efficiency of teaching and learning programs to ensure progress toward achieving district goals and priorities
- Advocating for the district goals and priorities through communication with students, staff, parents, community, business, and public officials
- Working in collaboration with the superintendent to provide team leadership for the school district

ARTICLE 2. SCOPE OF BY-LAWS:

These bylaws set forth the responsibilities and authority of the South Kingstown School Committee. The bylaws also set the standards of conduct expected from each member. Rhode Island General Laws (RIGL) are cited where applicable.
(<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/Statutes.html>)

ARTICLE 3. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES

Under Rhode Island law, the entire care, control, and management of the South Kingstown public schools is vested in the School Committee. The Committee has, in addition to others, enumerated by statute, the following powers and duties::

- (1) To identify educational needs in the Community;
- (2) To develop education policies to meet the needs of the Community;
- (3) To provide for and assure the implementation of federal and State laws, the regulations of the Board of Regents for elementary and secondary education, and of local school policies, programs, and directives;
- (4) To provide for the evaluation of the performance of the school system;
- (5) To have responsibility for the care and control of the schools;

- (6) To have overall policy responsibility for the employment and discipline of school department personnel;
- (7) To approve a master plan defining goals and objectives of the school system. These goals and objectives shall be expressed in terms of what men and women should know and be able to do as a result of their educational experience. The Committee shall periodically evaluate the efforts and results of education in light of these objectives;
- (8) To provide for the location, care, control, and management of school facilities and equipment;
- (9) To adopt a school budget to submit to the Town Council;
- (10) To adopt any changes in the school budget during the course of the school year;
- (11) To approve expenditures in the absence of a budget, consistent with state law;
- (12) To employ a superintendent of schools and assign any compensation and other terms and conditions as the School Committee and Superintendent shall agree, provided that in no event shall the term of employment of the Superintendent exceed three (3) years;
- (13) To give advice and consent on the appointment by the Superintendent of all school department personnel;
- (14) To establish minimum standards for personnel, to adopt personnel policies, and to approve a table of organization;
- (15) To establish standards for the evaluation of personnel;
- (16) To establish standards for conduct in the schools and for disciplinary actions;
- (17) To hear appeals from disciplinary actions;
- (18) To enter into contracts;
- (19) To publish policy manuals which shall include all School Committee policies;
- (20) To establish policies governing curriculum, courses of instruction and text books;
- (21) To provide for transportation services which meet or exceed standards of the Board of Regents for elementary and secondary education;
- (22) To make any reports to the Department of Education as are required by the Board of Regents for elementary and secondary education; and
- (23) To delegate, consistent with law, any responsibilities to the Superintendent as the Committee may deem appropriate.

ARTICLE 4. ORGANIZATION

SECTION 4.1: ORGANIZATION MEETING and ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The name of the school district is the South Kingstown School Department. By December of each municipal election year, the School Committee shall hold its organizational meeting

when it shall elect its officers of Chair and Vice-chair. The superintendent shall serve as the clerk.

SECTION 4.2: FILLING VACANCIES

If the office of Chair becomes vacant, the Vice Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair until a new Chair is elected at a special election. If the Vice Chair is unable to serve, the Chair shall appoint a Vice-chair until a new Vice-Chair is elected at a special election, which shall occur within thirty days of the vacancy occurring.

SECTION 4.3 REMOVAL OF ELECTED OFFICERS

The Chair and Vice-chair shall serve at the pleasure of the committee and may be removed from office by a majority vote of the full committee. (RIGL 16-2)

SECTION 4.4: APPOINTMENTS

At the Organizational Meeting, the Chair will appoint members as liaisons to organizations such as: Special Education Local Advisory Committee, The Southern Rhode Island Collaborative, Chariho Career and Technical School, and The Rhode Island State Legislature. Liaisons are expected to provide regular reports to the full committee about their assigned organizations to share knowledge and communicate with the community.

SECTION 4.5: SUB-COMMITTEES

The School Committee may establish subcommittees to assist in the completion of its business. The Chair shall appoint up to three members to each subcommittee. Subcommittees shall post and conduct their meetings in accordance with RIGL 42-46. Subcommittees will be charged by the full committee for a specific purpose such as fact-finding, studying issues and/or making recommendations to the full committee. Other school committee members may attend subcommittee meetings as community members.

SECTION 4.6: CHANGES TO BYLAWS

Amendments to these By-Laws may be proposed by any School Committee member during the annual review of bylaws at the Organizational Meeting. All revisions or additions may be approved by the School Committee after two readings.

ARTICLE 5. DUTIES OF MEMBERS

SECTION 5.1. CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Chair presides at all regular meetings of the committee. The duties of the Chair shall include the following:

- Prepare meeting agendas with the assistance of the superintendent;
- Maintain order in meetings, and keep discussions relevant to the issue being discussed;

- Unless otherwise restricted by these bylaws or other committee established regulations, the Chair shall have the authority to appoint members to subcommittees;
- The Chair will have the right to entertain motions and to vote on all matters;
- The Chair, as well as the Vice-Chair, will be the authorized signatories to all legal documents;
- The Chair may call for a special meeting of the School Committee.

The duties of the Vice-Chair shall include the following:

- In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair;
- Assist the Chair and the Superintendent in the preparation of meeting agendas;
- Develop a professional development plan for the Committee;
- Provide a written synopsis of all business meetings for distribution to the community;

SECTION 5.2. CLERK

The Superintendent shall act as the clerk of the school committee and will be responsible for keeping a record of all meetings in accordance with RIGL 42-46-7

SECTION 5.3. INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

School committee members have legal authority only during meetings convened in accordance with these bylaws and Rhode Island law. Members fulfill their obligations by participating in meetings. The method of participation is discussion, deliberation, debate and voting.

Expectations for member conduct, both individually and collectively are consistent with RIGL 16-2-9.1, the code of basic management principles and ethical standards and other provisions of State law, including but not limited to:

1. Formulate written policy for the administration of schools, to be reviewed regularly and revised as necessary.
2. Exercise legislative, policy making, planning, and appraising functions, and delegate administrative functions.
3. Recognize their critical responsibility for selecting the Superintendent, defining his or her role, and evaluating his or her performance.
4. Accept and encourage a variety of opinions from and communicate with the community.
5. Make public relevant information to promote communication and understanding between the school and the community.
6. Act on matters only after reviewing pertinent information and the Superintendent's recommendation.
7. Conduct meetings with planned and published agendas.
8. Encourage and promote professional development of school staff.

9. Establish and maintain procedural steps for resolving complaints and criticisms of school affairs.
10. Act only through public meetings, since individual members have no authority to bind the committee.
11. Recognize that the first and foremost concern must be the educational welfare of the students.
12. Work with other committee members to establish effective committee policies.
13. Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using committee position for personal gain.
14. Attend all regularly scheduled committee meetings, and become informed on issues to be considered.
15. Regularly participate in professional development opportunities.

The committee may convene a duly posted meeting, under the provisions of RIGL 42-46-2 (a) and 42-46-5 (a) (1), to sanction a member who does not comply with the individual limits, responsibilities and ethical standards set forth in this article.

SECTION 5.4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

School Committee members are expected to understand and comply with the language and spirit of the Rhode Island Code of Ethics in Government Act and disclose any personal interests or ties prior to discussion or to voting. Specific attention should be paid to items involving personnel, purchasing, or votes requiring expenditure of funds. School Committee members are expected to recuse themselves from all real or potential conflicts, as required by RI law.

School Committee members are expected to avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using the committee position for personal gain. If the committee member is in doubt about a possible conflict, an advisory opinion may be requested from the Ethics Commission.

SECTION 5.5: REMUNERATION

Each School Committee member shall receive a stipend set as follows: 5 members at \$2,000 each, the Vice-chair at \$2,500, and the Chair at \$3,000 per year.

Members of the School Committee are not reimbursed for additional expenditures incurred except for; beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, a total of \$8,000 will be available for professional development. Each reimbursement shall be approved by the School Committee in accordance with the committee's professional development plan.

ARTICLE 6. MEETINGS

All School Committee meetings shall be posted and conducted in accordance with applicable sections of the state's open meetings act, RIGL Title 42, Chapter 46. Unless otherwise specified in these bylaws, all meetings will be conducted in accordance with the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order (revised).

SECTION 6.1. QUORUM

A majority of the entire committee shall constitute a quorum. In the event that the chair determines that a quorum will not be present, the chair shall have the responsibility to postpone the meeting.

SECTION 6.2. POSTING OF MEETINGS

The Superintendent shall be responsible for posting all School Committee Meetings in accordance with RIGL 42-46-6 (<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE42/42-46/42-46-6.HTM>) and these bylaws. Written notice of dates, times and places of regularly scheduled meetings shall be provided at the beginning of each calendar year on the district's website, to public members upon request and electronically transmitted to the R. I. Secretary of State. Every regular meeting agenda shall be made available at least 48 hours before the meeting and shall be posted in all schools and administrative offices, and shall be advertised in a newspaper with general circulation in the community.

SECTION 6.3. ADJOURNMENT

Meetings shall be adjourned upon a motion, seconded and approved by the members present.

SECTION 6.4. TYPES OF MEETINGS

SECTION 6.4.1 Regular Meetings;

The regular meetings of the School Committee will normally be held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the high school. All regular meetings will be posted and advertised.

SECTION 6.4.2 Special Meetings;

A special meeting shall be called whenever the Chair considers such a meeting necessary or at the request of four members. The notice shall state the special matter or matters to be considered, and be posted in the manner that regular meetings are posted. At such meetings only the business for which the meeting was called will be in order. All special meetings will be posted and advertised.

SECTION 6.4.3 Public Hearings;

The School Committee may convene a public hearing to solicit opinions and information from the community on a specific topic. All school committee public hearings will be posted and advertised.

SECTION 6.4.4 Executive Sessions;

An Executive Session (closed meeting) may be called by the Chair provided that such is listed on the posted agenda for one or more of the following purposes:

- (1) Any discussions of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons provided that such person or persons affected shall have been notified in advance in writing and advised that they may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting.
- (2) Failure to provide such notification shall render any action taken against the person or persons affected null and void. Before going into a closed meeting pursuant to this subsection, the Committee shall state for the record that any persons to be discussed have been so notified and this statement shall be noted in the minutes of the meeting.
- (3) Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation, or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation.
- (4) Discussion regarding the matter of security including but not limited to the deployment of security personnel or devices.
- (5) Any investigative proceedings regarding allegations of misconduct, either civil or criminal.
- (6) Any discussions or considerations related to the acquisition or lease of real property for public purposes, or of the disposition of publicly held property wherein advanced public information would be detrimental to the interest of the public.
- (7) Any discussions related to or concerning a prospective business or industry locating in the state of Rhode Island when an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the interest of the public.
- (8) A matter related to the question of the investment of public funds where the premature disclosure would adversely affect the public interest. Public funds shall include any investment plan or matter related thereto, including but not limited to state lottery plans for new promotions.
- (9) Any executive sessions exclusively for the purposes (a) of conducting student disciplinary hearings or (b) of reviewing other matters which relate to the privacy of students and their records, provided, however, that any affected student shall have been notified in advance in writing and advised that he or she may require that the discussion be held in an open meeting;

Failure to provide such notification shall render any action taken against the student or students affected null and void. Before going into a closed meeting pursuant to this subsection, the public body shall state for the record that any students to be discussed have been so notified and this statement shall be noted in the minutes of the meeting:

- (10) Any hearings on, or discussions of, a grievance filed pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement.

The motion shall include the reason (s) to hold the Executive Session and the Chair shall cite the applicable subsection of RIGL 42-46-5 (http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE_42/42-46/42-46.5.HTM) which authorizes the exception to open session. There shall be a

majority vote by members to convene in Executive Session and the vote of each member shall be recorded in the open meeting minutes. All discussions shall be considered confidential, except when the committee as a whole has agreed to publication of the matters discussed. Any action taken at this meeting will be reported in open session. All executive sessions will be posted and advertised.

SECTION 6.4.5 Emergency Meetings;

The Chair may call an emergency meeting on less than 48 hours notice to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action to protect the public. Reasonable effort shall be made to notify all members of the committee. In accordance with RIGL 42-46-6 (c), the holding of such meeting shall be approved by a majority vote of the members at the time and place that the committee assembles to meet, provided there is a quorum present. The vote of each member and the reason for holding the meeting in less than 48 hours shall be recorded in the minutes. As soon as practical, the meeting notice and agenda shall be posted in the manner that regular meetings are posted and shall be electronically filed with the secretary of state.

SECTION 6.4.6 Work sessions;

Work sessions may be held to provide School Committee members with opportunities for discussion, knowledge sharing and planning without any formal action requiring a vote. Workshops shall be posted in the same manner as regular meetings. The posting shall include the topics for discussion and only those topics shall be discussed in accordance with RIGL 42-46. All work sessions are posted and advertised.

SECTION 6.4.7 Subcommittee Meetings;

Subcommittee meetings may be held to conduct the work charged to them by the full School Committee. Such meetings are posted but not necessarily advertised.

SECTION 6.5. Minutes

The school committee shall keep written minutes. Minutes shall include, but not be limited to:

1. The type of meeting, time and place, members present, approval of the minutes of any preceding meeting or meetings.
2. A record of all actions taken; the motion, the name of the member making the motion and seconding it; the record of the vote, with the vote of each member recorded.
3. Members may request to have their reasons for particular votes recorded in the minutes.
4. A record of all business that comes before the school committee through reports of the superintendent.
5. A record that an executive session was held and the reason for the session.

6. The record of adjournment.

ARTICLE 7. Agenda

SECTION 7.1. Agenda Development

The Chair and the Vice-Chair, with the assistance of the superintendent, shall prepare the agenda for all meetings of the School Committee. The agenda shall specify all items to be discussed. In developing the agenda, determinations of what items to include, including those requested by members of the School Committee, shall be based on the following criteria:

- Items requiring action by the School Committee (per RIGL or other requirement),
- Data updates requested by the School Committee to support Committee goals and decision making,
- Items reflected in the School Committee's annual work calendar,
- Information updates brought to the School Committee by the Superintendent as needed, and
- Resolution of issues that could not be resolved through other appropriate District channels.

SECTION 7.2. Agenda

The order of business at regular meetings may include: Call to Order, Delegations, Superintendent's Report, Community Comments, the Consent Agenda, School Committee Business, Action Items, data Updates, Planning, Comments from Committee Members, and Adjournment. The order of business for any meeting may be altered with the consent of the members present. Under provisions of RIGL 42-46, items may be added to a published agenda up to 48 hours before the meeting.

In accordance the Open Meeting Act, RIGL 42-46, the School Committee is prohibited from discussing items that are not listed on the posted agenda. It will be the responsibility of the Chair to focus discussion on posted agenda topics, clarify issues, keep discussion relevant, and maintain reasonable time limitations.

Each agenda item shall include a reference to related policies, if applicable.

Any action item shall include a resolution which may be accepted, rejected or amended by the committee.

Data updates shall include a narrative interpretation and context as well as providing reference to the committee's goals.

Business meeting agendas may include:

SECTION 7.2.1 Delegations and Presentations

Delegations shall appear before to the School Committee to highlight accomplishments and interests of the District.

SECTION 7.2.2 Superintendent's Report

The Superintendent's Report shall provide district news and informational updates.

SECTION 7.2.3 Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda shall consist of routine items which require action by the School Committee. Members may ask for clarification of items on the consent agenda, or they may ask to have an item removed from the consent agenda for discussion at a later part of the meeting. Approval of the Consent Agenda shall be fully equivalent to approval of each item within the Consent Agenda as if they had been acted upon individually.

SECTION 7.2.4 Community Comments

Each regular business meeting of the School Committee shall include a public comment period of up to 30 minutes. During this time, any person may make a statement regarding any item or a matter of general policy over which the School Committee has jurisdiction. The School Committee may extend the comment period beyond 30 minutes or continue it to a latter portion of the meeting. Additional public comments may be elicited by the Chair prior to School Committee action on any item.

The RIGL (<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE42/42-46/42-46-6.HTM>) prohibits discussion of items not on the agenda.

All speakers shall introduce themselves and, unless waived by the Chair, limit their comments to three minutes per issue and speak only once on an item. If the speaker is in agreement with a previous commenter, the speaker will indicate agreement without repeating previous statements. Committee members are not allowed to respond to public speakers. The Chair and Superintendent are responsible to respond to any items requiring such action.

SECTION 7.2.5 School Committee Business

Each regular meeting of the School Committee shall include a period for School Committee Business. This period shall include (but shall not be limited to): items requiring action by the School Committee, data updates requested by the committee to support School Committee goals, and planning and monitoring activities of the School Committee.

SECTION 7.2.6 Comments from Committee Members

Comments from Committee Members provide an opportunity for Committee members to recognize accomplishments of members of the school community, bring forward announcements of interest to the school community, assess meeting expectations and process, and request information to bring back to the Committee for future discussion.

ARTICLE 8 SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of professional development is to insure that school committee members develop and improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities to enhance their leadership role in the district.

SECTION 8.1 EXPECTATIONS

All members of the South Kingstown school committee are expected to engage in continuous professional development to insure maximum service to the community.

Professional development shall include:

- Orientation Sessions
- Annual Retreat with the Superintendent
- Continuing Education
- Chair Leadership
- School Committee Self-Evaluation

Section 8.2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The school committee shall have a professional development subcommittee chaired by the vice-chair. Subcommittee membership will include a maximum of three professionals from the community to broaden perspective. The subcommittee will be charged with the responsibility to design, initiate, and evaluate professional development plans and practices including coaching and mentoring.

Section 8.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Section 8.3.1 Orientation

Access to orientation sessions shall be available within the first 30 days of service for all newly elected members. The initial orientation shall include:

- Overview of District Goals and Priorities
- Overview of School Committee By-laws and Policies
- Overview of RIGL and Legal Obligations
 - Title 16 Education Code
 - Title 42 Open Meetings Act

- Title 36, ch. 14 Rhode Island Code of Ethics in Government Act
- Overview of Parliamentary Procedures

Additional orientations shall be provided as needs are identified during the first year of service.

SECTION 8.3.2 Annual Retreat

In May of each year, the committee shall determine the date, or dates, of its annual retreat for all members and the superintendent.

The annual retreat work session shall include team building, goal setting as well as the development and review of the annual work calendar.

SECTION 8.3.3 Continuing Education

Professional development for members shall be provided through an array of continuing education opportunities such as:

- District Work Sessions
- Regional, State, and National Training Sessions
- College/University or Online Courses
- Coaching and Mentoring Opportunities

Professional development of members is required

Continuing education shall also be scheduled in conjunction with the regular business meeting.

School committee members are encouraged to attend regional, state, and national workshops, conventions, and conferences. Any discussion of public business shall be merely incidental to the convention or workshop.

SECTION 8.4 CHAIR LEADERSHIP

The school committee Chair is expected to engage in continuing education specifically related to the leadership duties of the Chair.

SECTION 8.5 SELF-EVALUATION

Effective, efficient, and ethical school committee operations are an integral part of creating a successful educational program. In order to measure progress towards meeting school committee goals, the school committee will annually schedule a time and place at which all members shall participate in a formal self-evaluation. The self-evaluation process shall be used to inform professional development needs and improve the internal operations and performance of the School Committee

SECTION 8.6 RECOGNITION & COMMENDATION

The school committee will annually recognize its members and the superintendent for engagement in leadership training. Special commendation shall be provided to members who design and/or lead training for local, regional, state, and/or national professional development.

ARTICLE 9 POLICY PROCESS

Among the powers and duties of school committees is the responsibility to develop education policies to meet the needs of the community. The goal of such policy is to ensure that each learner receives an education of the highest quality in a positive environment with caring, dedicated, and effective teaching and administrative staff.

Policies are principles adopted by the school committee to chart a course of action. Written policy is the means by which the school committee informs the community of these principles.

Adopted policies serve as a guide for the administration and help to promote common understanding and uniformity in the basic procedures and operations for all district personnel. Within the context of current law, the School Department shall be guided by the adopted written policies that are given appropriate distribution and are accessible to staff members, parents, students, and community residents.

Effective policies:

- Clarify the operation of the school system
- Create understanding and good will
- Give clear and coherent direction
- Facilitate control and efficiency

SECTION 9.1 POLICY DEVELOPMENT & ANALYSIS

A new policy or policy amendment may be proposed by school committee members or the superintendent.

All policy development shall require an analysis that includes:

- Clear identification of the problem, issue, or need for new policy or policy amendment
- Relevant data to support new policy or policy amendment as appropriate
- Information and input from multiple sources within the school district and community at-large
- Statement of financial implications (if appropriate)
- Alignment with district's stated philosophy, mission, and goals
- Coherence with state and federal law, local and district policies and regulations

Public comment shall be invited on all new policy and policy amendments via oral, written, and/or electronic formats.

SECTION 9.2 POLICY REVIEW

The policy review process shall be based on guiding questions:

- Did we do what we said we would do?
- Did it work?
- How do we know?
- What is the evidence?
- If it did not work, what should be changed?

A policy review shall be considered with the introduction of new programs and/or revisions to established programs.

All new and revised policies shall include a monitoring and evaluation schedule as appropriate for policy review.

SECTION 9.3 POLICY ADOPTION

A new policy or a policy amendment shall be considered at two separate meetings before adoption. Official school committee action may be taken at the second meeting.

Unless otherwise specified, a new policy or policy amendment will be effective upon the date of adoption by the school committee and will supersede all previous policies in that area. Unless otherwise specified, the repeal of a policy will be effective on the date the school committee takes such action.

The school committee shall make exceptions to the above requirements when the immediate adoption, amendment or repeal of a policy is in the best interest of the district.

The school committee shall suspend its rules by a vote of four members and bring up a proposal for immediate action.

SECTION 9.4 POLICY DISTRIBUTION

An official policy manual shall be accessible for all district staff and all members of the public. The historical record of the policy manual shall be maintained in the superintendent's office.