

ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Arlington School Committee recognizes the advantages to the School Committee, the school department and the community of establishing advisory committees for specific purposes. The School Committee shall seek the advice of the Superintendent before establishing any advisory committee.

Types and Function

Advisory committees shall serve primarily as fact-finding groups to assist the School Committee and staff.

This policy describes the procedure which will apply to the composition, appointment, governance, and operations of advisory committees, unless otherwise specified by School Committee policy or applicable state or federal law.

The composition of task forces and any other advisory committees will be broadly representative and take into consideration the specific tasks assigned to the committee. Members of the professional staff may be appointed to the committee as members or consultants, as found desirable.

The specific purpose for which each committee is established shall be clearly defined by the School Committee. An approximate or definite date shall be set for completion of the committee's objectives.

Method of Appointment

The method of appointment of advisory committees should be flexible and appropriate to the reason for which the committee is being created. However, the following shall be applied where appropriate:

1. Appropriate groups should be involved in recommending members.
2. The advisory committee should be broadly representative of the appropriate group(s) to be involved in or affected by the recommendations of the committee.
3. All appointments of citizens shall be confirmed by the School Committee, following a procedure to be specified and implemented by the Community Relations Subcommittee.
4. All appointments of staff members should be made by the Superintendent with the approval of the School Committee. When staff members are appointed to a citizens' advisory committee, they shall constitute a minority of such committee.
5. All vacancies occurring on an advisory committee should be filled as soon as possible, using the procedures stated herein.

Organization

1. Elect officers: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.
2. Comply with the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

3. Conduct meetings on a regular schedule, sending notices of all meeting to all committee members, the School Committee, and Superintendent.
4. Meet at a convenient location provided by the school department.
5. Keep written records of meetings and communications.
6. Conduct its business within the guidelines of this policy on advisory committees and according to any additional instructions from the School Committee and/or the Superintendent. When appointed, each member shall receive a copy of this and any other relevant policies, as well as standard advisories for public bodies regarding compliance with the Open Meeting Law.
7. Tenure of committee members will be up to one year, unless the member is reappointed.
8. Each committee will be clearly instructed as to:
 - a. The length of time each member is being asked to serve.
 - b. The assignment the School Committee wishes the committee to fulfill and the extent and limitations of its responsibilities.
 - c. The resources the School Committee will provide.
 - d. The approximate dates on which the School Committee wishes to receive major reports.
 - e. School Committee policies governing citizens, committees and the relationship of these committees to the School Committee as a whole, individual School Committee members, the Superintendent, and other members of the professional staff.
 - f. Responsibilities for the release of information to the press.
9. Recommendations of committees will be based upon research and fact.

Resources

Advisory committees shall be encouraged to draw upon a wide variety of resources both inside and outside the school system.

Requests for staff time to perform analysis or to satisfy major information inquiries shall be channeled through the School Committee liaison.

Personnel

Clerical and professional staff assistance shall be made available in keeping with the ability of the School Committee to provide it, as determined by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall designate a staff member to process requests for materials and clerical assistance for each advisory committee.

Material

Material necessary for notices, records, and reports shall be provided under the direction of the Superintendent or his designee insofar as the School Committee is able to provide the same.

Financial

After appropriation by the School Committee, the expenditure of any funds by an advisory committee shall be made only after approval by the Superintendent and under his/her direction.

Liaison

Liaison with the School Committee and administration shall be accomplished by attendance of a member of the School Committee and/or the Superintendent or his/her designee, at advisory committee meetings. A person designated to attend in place of the Superintendent shall report concerning all business of the committee, according to instructions from the Superintendent.

Reports and Correspondence

1. An advisory committee shall provide written timely progress reports to the School Committee.
2. At the end of the committee's assignment, a preliminary report shall be presented in writing to the School Committee Chairperson and the Superintendent, prior to preparation of the final report.
3. The final report shall be received by all School Committee members and appropriate administrators at least one week prior to the meeting at which the report is to be discussed for any possible action.
4. Any reports or publicity releases to the community or other concerned groups shall be made only through the Superintendent or his/her designee.
5. Any correspondence between the advisory committee and the School Committee which requires action shall be delivered through the School Committee liaison for presentation to the School Committee at least one week prior to a regular meeting.

Dissolution

The life of an advisory committee shall be for the school year in which it is appointed, unless its final report is accepted by the School Committee prior to the end of that school year or unless the School Committee, by majority vote at a regular meeting, continues the committee beyond either time.

The School Committee may, by majority vote at a regular meeting, dissolve an advisory committee at any time during the life of the committee. However, the Committee shall seek the advice of the Superintendent before taking any such action.

All current advisory committees shall be reviewed annually at the first meeting in June.

CROSS REF.: *JIB, Student Involvement in Decision-making*
BDEA, School Committee Standing Committees

Approved by School Committee, January 12, 2012