

Middletown High School Governance Council 2014 - 2015 Review

The Middletown High School Governance Council met at 7pm in the Library Media Center on 11/18, 12/16, 1/20, 2/24, 3/17, 4/21 & 5/19. Each meeting we addressed any concerns brought forward by the membership, reviewed upcoming events, reviewed the School Improvement Plan, discussed new district and school initiatives and developed a MHS SGC Bylaw document.

The majority of each meeting involved revising and editing the Middletown (CT) High School SGC 2015 – 2016 Bylaws. The council believes that this will be a necessary document to abide by in future years to insure equity and consistency.

At the May 19, 2015 meeting, the membership of the SGC voted to adopt and implement the Bylaws for the 2015 -2016 school year. This change will provide greater structure and delineate the membership roles.

MIDDLETOWN (CT) HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL 2015 -2016 BYLAWS

Article I: Name

The name of this Committee is the Middletown (CT) High School Governance Council, hereinafter referred to as the "Council" organized under the authority of the state reform law, Public Act 10-111, as codified in Section 21(g).

Article II: Purpose

Recognizing the importance of communication and participation of parents, school staff, students and community leaders to improve student achievement in the efforts to educate our youth, the Council establishes as its purpose the support of Middletown High School. The Council shall work to support educational efforts of the school by working in a spirit of cooperation with school staff and administration to improve student achievement and performance, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents, staff, students and community leaders into the school based decision-making process by working on education issues. The Council shall endeavor to bring parents and the community together with teachers and school administrators to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other's concerns and role, and share ideas for continuous school improvement.

Article III: Membership

Section 1

Number and Qualifications

The Council shall represent the diverse interests of the families and staff that make up the local school community. Every effort, therefore, shall be made to engage broad participation in the

Council election process:

To meet statutory requirements, the Council will consist of 14 voting members plus up to 3 non-voting members. The following tables describe the members, the number of members and how members are selected.

Members of the Council shall include:

- a. 7 parents or guardians of students currently enrolled in Middletown High School as voting members. (excluding parents/guardians who are also employed at the school.) Parents or guardians who are employed by the Board of Education, but not assigned to Middletown High School are eligible to serve. Parents nominated for Council membership must have a child enrolled in the school for the current school year (or for the next school year in the case of May/June elections) to be included on the ballot.
- b. Five (5) teachers at the school as voting members.
- c. Two (2) community leaders within the school District as voting members.
- d. One (1) Principal of the school or his/her designee as a non-voting member.
- e. Two (2) student members as non-voting members.

Section 2

Term of Office/Tenure

- a. The term of office for all new Council members shall begin as of the first day of the new school year.
- b. In order to avoid having the terms of all Council members expire at the same time, the following term protocol will apply.
- c. Voting members shall serve for a term of two years. No voting member of the Council shall serve more than two terms.

Parents/Guardians:

1. Once elected, the five (5) parent/guardian members with the highest attendance record (at regular scheduled Council meetings) as a member will remain active for the duration of their child's enrollment. Not to exceed four years. (exceptions: resignation/removal)
2. If attendance is equal the member(s) with the longest remaining term will remain active (exceptions: resignation/removal). If a tie remains, those respective members must run for re-election.
3. The remaining parent members deemed inactive based on this protocol may once again run for re-election in the next regular election. Total term not to exceed four years.
4. No more than four (4) parent/guardian members may represent the same grade level.

Teachers :

1. Once elected, the three (3) teacher members with the highest attendance record (at regular scheduled Council meetings) as a member will remain active. (exceptions: resignation/removal)
2. If attendance is equal the member(s) with the longest remaining term will remain active (exceptions: resignation/removal). If a tie remains, those respective members must run for re-election.
3. The remaining teacher members deemed inactive based on this protocol may once again run for re-election in the next regular election. Total term not to exceed four years.

Community Members (2):

1. Once elected, the one (1) community member with the highest attendance record (at regular scheduled Council meetings) as a member will remain active. (exceptions: resignation/removal)
 2. If attendance is equal the member with the longest remaining term will remain active (exceptions: resignation/removal). If a tie remains, those respective members must run for re-election.
 3. The remaining community member deemed inactive based on this protocol may once again run for re-election in the next regular election. Total term not to exceed four years.
- c. Non-voting student members shall serve a one year term, and no student members may serve more than two terms.

Students :

1. Once elected, both student members will remain active. Not to exceed two years. (exceptions: resignation/removal)

Section 3

Resignation

Any Council member may withdraw from the Council by delivering to the Principal or the Chairperson or Secretary of the Council a written resignation, or by giving verbal resignation during a regular meeting of the Council. Such verbal or written notice of the resignation shall be recorded in the official meeting minutes.

Section 4

Removal

Any member of the Council, who is no longer active, excluding the Principal, may be removed by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Council's voting members at a regular or called meeting of the Council. A member of the Council shall be deemed to be inactive if the member has missed three (3) originally scheduled meetings during the same school year. The Council shall determine the effective date of the removal. Furthermore, any member of the Council who has violated the Council's "Code of Conduct" may be removed from the Council. Such removal shall be by an affirmative vote of membership of the Council at any regular or called meeting of the Council.

Section 5

Compensation

Council members shall not receive any remuneration to serve on the Council or its committees.

Section 6

Vacancy

The office of Council member shall be automatically vacated:

- If a member resigns,
- If a member is removed by action of the Council pursuant to Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws, or
- If a member no longer meets the qualifications for membership specified by these bylaws.

Any vacancy on the Council will be filled for the remainder of the un-expired term utilizing the election process. An election within the electing body for a replacement to fill the remainder of an unexpired term shall be held within sixty (60) days of the date of the resignation, removal, or disqualification ; unless there are ninety (90) days or less remaining in the term in which case the vacancy will remain unfilled until a replacement is selected by normal election/appointment processes as stated in these Bylaws.

Article IV: Selection Process/Election of Members

Section 1

Selection Process

a. The parent/guardian members (7) of the Council shall be elected by the parents or guardians of students attending the school. Each household with a student attending the school will have one vote.

1. The school Principal may enlist an election committee to assist in conducting the election. The committee would:

- Schedule dates,
- Post announcements,
- Collect nominations,
- Set up, administer in, and oversee the election process, and
- Formally announce the results.

2. The teacher members of the Council shall be elected by the teachers of the school.

3. The community leaders of the Council shall be elected by the parent/guardian members and teacher members of the Council.

4. Student members for a high school council shall be elected by the school's student body.

Section 2

Election Process

A valid election process should include the following activities:

1. Election Committee

- The Principal may enlist an election committee to assist in conducting the election – schedule dates, post announcements, collect nominations, set up and administer the voting itself and formally announce the results.
- The election committee should represent the diversity of the school and be unaffiliated with any potential candidates.
- The final decision shall be made by the Principal.

2. Call for Nominations for Parents and Teachers

- A call for nominations should be sent to all parents or guardians in the school to nominate themselves or other parents or guardians for up to the seven available positions on the Council. Every effort shall be made to provide nomination and election material in a language they understand.
- A parent is a person who is the natural, adoptive or stepparent of a child enrolled in the school and includes those people acting as legal guardian or register custodian of the child, such as grandparents.
- A call for nominations should also be sent to all teachers to nominate themselves or others for up to 5 positions on the Council. (The teachers at a given school shall be responsible for selecting their representatives to the Council. A nomination process should be conducted followed by a ballot. Teachers are those certified staff who perform the majority of their duties in a teaching capacity at that school. Paraprofessionals are not eligible to serve as teacher members of the Council.)

- The election committee shall verify that those nominated are eligible and willing to serve.

3. Voting

- The ballot for the parent election will be available at parent teacher conferences.
- Voting procedures that will maximize participation shall be determined by the election committee.
- Parents/guardians are eligible to vote for parent representatives. A household can cast a vote for each open parent seat on the Council.
- The official ballot shall be duplicated on school letterhead, with the ballots numbered sequentially.
- To ensure maximum participation, parents and teachers should be given sufficient time and multiple opportunities to cast their ballot – whether through dropping the ballot off at the school office or another community location or through the U.S. mail.
- If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the voting process must still be followed. The full membership of the Council shall be completed by repeating the process of soliciting nominations and holding a second election.

4. Results

- Immediately following the election, ballots should be counted with supervision by the election committee or at least a school administrator, one parent and one teacher who are unaffiliated with any candidates.
- The Principal should announce the results and post the new membership of the council on the school's website.

5. Community Members of the Council

- After the parent and teacher members are elected by their representative groups, they shall then elect the community members who will serve on the Council.
- A community member shall be anyone who resides in the school district or has a business or civic interest in the area. The parent and teacher representatives shall determine a process for soliciting interest from community members. (The aforementioned Election Committee could be utilized to also assist in the selection of the nominees for consideration by the Council members. Community representatives interested in participating on the Council could make their interest known at an open meeting of the Council.)
- Community members are defined as community leaders of influence in each community, including, but not limited to, religious leaders, non-profit leaders and business leaders.

6. Student Representatives

- High school student representatives to the Council shall be elected by the student body through existing student government procedures.
- In the absence of a student government, students shall be permitted to campaign for the position of Council representative at a general assembly of the student body and the student body shall make their selection by ballot.

7. Principal

- The Principal shall participate directly as a nonvoting member of the Council or name a designee to the Council.
- The role of the Principal in terms of authority and responsibility for school management is not changed by the institution of this Council. Ultimately, the Principal is responsible and accountable to the Superintendent of Schools.

Article V: Officers/Responsibilities/Election/Term of Office

Section 1:

Officers

1. The officers of the school site Council shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and other officers the Council may deem desirable.
2. The Chairperson shall:
 - Prepare an agenda for each meeting and publicly post the agenda at the school site (and on the school's website) 72 hours in advance of each meeting of the School Governance Council.
 - Preside at all meetings of the Council.
 - Sign all letters, reports and other communications of the Council.
 - Perform all duties incident to the office of the Chairperson.
 - Have other such duties as are prescribed by the Council.
3. The Vice-Chairperson shall:
 - Maintain order and enforce proper conduct of all in attendance at Council meetings.
 - Represent the Chairperson in assigned duties.
 - Substitute for the Chairperson in his or her absence.
 - Perform such other duties as to be assigned by the Chairperson or the Council.
4. The Secretary shall:
 - Act as clerk of the Council.
 - Keep minutes of all regular and special meetings of the school site Council, including attendance, summary reports, and all votes in a book to be kept for that purpose.
 - Transmit true and correct copies of the minutes of such meetings to members of the Council and to the web master.
 - Provide all notices in accordance with these bylaws. (give or cause to be given notice of all meetings of the Council.)
 - Be custodian of the records of the Council.
 - Keep a register of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of each member of the Council and others with whom the Council has regular dealings, as furnished by those persons.
 - Perform other such duties as are assigned by the Chairperson or the Council.

Section 2

Election of Officers and Terms of Office

1. The officers shall be elected annually, at the November meeting of the Council and shall serve for one year, or until each successor has been elected.
2. Officers may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the Council.

Section 3

Executive Committee

The officers of the Council (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary) shall comprise the Executive Committee of the Council.

Article VI: Duties of Council Members

The members of the Council are accountable to their constituents and shall:

- Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.
- Regularly attend and participate in Council meetings.
- Participate in information and training programs.
- Act as a link between the Council and the community.
- Encourage participation of parents and others in the school community.

The Council is made up of parents, teachers, students, (where appropriate) community members and the Principal or his/her designee. Each constituency represented shall have a corresponding set of responsibilities.

a. Parents: Council parents are responsible for soliciting input from the school's parental community with respect to issues of concern to the Council. Parent members shall relay council activities to the parent community as well as to the school's parent organizations.

(Consider use of website and/or a newsletter of Council activities)

- b. Teachers: School staff Council members are responsible for soliciting input from the faculty and support staff with respect to issues of concern to the Council. Teacher members of the Council shall report to faculty and support staff.
- c. Students: Student members shall report Council activities to the student body and shall solicit student input and areas of concern for presentation to the Council.
- d. Principal: The Principal is responsible for keeping the Council informed of all relevant school information. He/She shall take the lead role in promoting new programs at the school. The Principal shall seek the active participation of the Council in those areas listed under "Council Responsibilities."
- e. Community : Community members are responsible for soliciting input from the Middletown community at large with respect to issues of concern to the Council. Community members shall relay council activities to the Middletown community at large as they see fit.

Article VII: Subcommittees, Study Groups, Task Forces

The Council may appoint subcommittees, study groups, or task forces for such purposes as it deems helpful/necessary in order to carry out the responsibilities of the Council enumerated in these bylaws. No such subcommittee, study group or task force may exercise the authority of the Council.

Section 1

Selection of Subcommittee Members

The Chairperson of the subcommittee and members of the subcommittees will be appointed by the Council Chairperson, subject to the ratification of the Council.

Section 2

Terms of Office

The Council shall determine the terms of office for members of a subcommittee, study groups, task forces.

Section 3

Subcommittee Membership

The Council may establish and abolish subcommittees of its own membership to perform duties as shall be prescribed by Council. At least one member representing teachers and one member representing parents shall make up the subcommittee. No subcommittee may exercise the authority of the Council.

Section 4

Quorum

A majority of the members of the subcommittee shall constitute a quorum, unless otherwise determined by the Council. The act of a majority of the members present shall be the act of the subcommittee, provided a quorum is in attendance.

Section 5

Subcommittee Rules

Each subcommittee may adopt rules for its own government not inconsistent with these bylaws or rules adopted by the Council or Board of Education policies.

All subcommittees of the Council shall follow the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act as required by statute.

Section 6

Record Keeping

All subcommittees shall keep records of business conducted at meetings. The minutes will be kept on file in the Principal's office and available at all times to the Council members. The minutes shall include the names of subcommittee members in attendance, listing of topics discussed and subcommittee recommendations.

Section 7

Reporting Responsibilities

Subcommittee Chairpersons will present work plans and recommendation to the Council for approval. Each subcommittee may make a report through its Chairperson at each regular meeting of the Council.

Article VIII: Council Responsibilities

Section 1

Mandatory Advisory Capacity Responsibilities by Statute

School Governance Councils serve in an advisory capacity and shall assist the school administration in the areas listed below:

- analyze school achievement data and school needs as they relate to the school's improvement plan;
- review the fiscal objectives of the school's draft budget and advise the Principal before the budget is submitted to the Superintendent;
- participate in the hiring process of the school Principal or other administrators of the school by conducting interviews of candidates and reporting on such interviews to the Superintendent of Schools for the school district and the local and regional Board of Education;
- assist the Principal in making programmatic and operational changes to improve the school's achievement;
- develop and approve a written school parent involvement policy that outlines the role of parents and guardians (Note: Schools that receive federal Title 1 funds are required to have a parent involvement policy developed jointly with, approved by, and distributed to parents. A school's Title 1 parent involvement policy can serve the purpose of the policy required under this section.); and
- work with school administrators in developing and approving a school compact for parents, legal guardians, and students that outlines the school's goals and academic focus identifying ways that parents and school personnel can build a partnership to improve student learning. (Note: Schools that receive federal Title 1 funds are required to have a school-parent compact, developed with parents. A school's Title 1 compact can serve the purpose of the compact required under this section.)

Section 2

Optional Additional Responsibilities

In addition to its statutory required responsibilities, the Council may:

- assist in developing and reviewing the school improvement plan and advise the Principal before the report is submitted to the Superintendent of Schools;
 - work with the Principal to develop, conduct, and report the results of an annual survey of parents, guardians, and teachers on issues related to the school climate and conditions;
- and
- provide advice to the Principal on any other major policy matters affecting the school, except on matters relating to collective bargaining agreements between the teachers and the Board of Education.

Section 3

Limitations Placed on the Advisory Function

In addition to School Governance Councils' responsibilities, it is also important to recognize the limits of its advisory function. The duties of School Governance Councils do not entail activities including, but not limited to:

- managing the school;
- supervising staff;
- entering into contracts or purchase agreements;
- discussing individual issues between teachers and students and/or parents;
- determining student eligibility for school admission; or
- determining class allocations or student assignments.

Article IX: Meetings of the Council

Section 1

Meetings

The Council shall prescribe the time, place and dates of its regular meetings. The schedule of the regular meetings shall be available to the general public and shall be posted in a manner available to the public at the school which should in addition include posting on the school web site.) The annual schedule of regular meetings shall be established at the Council's meeting held in September.

All required notices of meetings shall be adhered to for all called meetings.

The meetings of the Council are subject to the provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act, Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-200 et. seq.

Section 2

Place of Meetings

The Council shall hold its regular meetings at a facility provided within the school, unless such a facility accessible to the public, including disabled persons, is unavailable. Alternate meeting places may be determined by the Chairperson or by majority vote of the Council.

Training meetings provided by the Board of Education may be held at any location designated by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

All meetings of the Council shall be open to the public unless specifically exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 3

Notice of Meetings

Written public notice shall be given of all meetings at least 72 hours (3 days) in advance of the meeting.

Changes in the established date, time or location shall be given special notice. All meetings shall be publicized in the following venues: school flyers and the MHS web site.

All required notices shall be delivered to Council and subcommittee members no less than 72 hours, and no more than 7 days in advance of the by e-mail.

Section 4

Quorum

A majority of the voting members of the Council members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business.

Section 5

Agendas

The Council shall establish procedures by which parents, community members and teachers can have items placed on the agendas of Council meetings. These procedures shall not present any unreasonable hindrances for parents, community members or teachers who wish to place items on the agendas.

Section 6

Conduct of Meetings

Meetings of the Council shall be conducted in an orderly fashion in all cases and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws or state law, or an adaptation thereof approved by the Council. Mutual respect will be fostered and required.

Section 7

Meetings Open to the Public/Public Participation

All meetings of the Council, and of subcommittees established by Council, shall be open to the public. Notice of such meetings shall be provided in accordance with Section 3 of this article.

Comments by parents/guardians, community members or staff not on the Council will be permitted concerning any subject that lies within the jurisdiction of the Council shall be as follows:

1. Two minutes may be allotted to each speaker and a maximum of ten minutes to each subject matter.
2. The Vice-Chairperson shall not permit actions which disrupt or interrupt the orderly conduct of the Council meeting.
3. The Council, by a majority vote, decides to cancel or extend the 10 minutes allotted per item of the agenda.
4. No speaker making an oral presentation shall include charges or complaints of a personal nature against any individual Council member or individual employee of the Board of Education, whether named or not.

Section 8

Voting Rights

Each voting member of the Council is entitled to one vote and may cast that vote on any matter submitted to a vote of the Council. Absentee ballots shall not be permitted. All ties will be decided by the Principal of the school or his/her designee.

Section 9

Minutes/Documents

The minutes of each Council meeting shall be recorded by the Secretary and shall include the names of the members present, a description of each motion or other proposal made, and a record of all votes. Each Council member shall receive a copy of the Minutes with the agenda for the next regular meeting, at which the Minutes shall be approved.

Minutes shall be made available to the public on the MHS web site. All votes taken at any meeting of the Council must be recorded and made available for public inspection within 72 hours of the meeting. The Minutes of any emergency special meeting shall specify the nature of the emergency and shall be available within 72 hours of the meeting.

All documents created or maintained by the Council are subject to the provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of information Act.

Article X: Amendments

An amendment of these bylaws (provided that the amendments are not inconsistent with applicable federal or state law, or Board of Education policy) may be made at any regular meeting of the School Governance Council by a vote of two-thirds of the members present. Written notice of the proposed amendment must be submitted to Council members at least 14 days prior to the meeting at which the amendment is to be considered for adoption.

Article XI: Immunity

The Council shall have the same immunity as the Board of Education in all matters directly related to the function of the Council.

Article XII: Conflict of Interest

No member of the Council or officer shall have an interest in any contract with the school district, affiliated with the school district unless such interest is specifically permitted by statute.

“Interest” shall mean pecuniary or material benefit accruing to a Board of Education member, officer or employee or their relatives resulting from a contractual relationship with the school system.

Article XIII: Training

The statute (P.A. 10-111, Section 21(g)) requires the Board of Education to provide appropriate training and instruction to members of the Council to aid them in the execution of their duties, as described in these bylaws. The Board of Education and the School Principal shall assist each new Council member to become familiar with and to understand the Council’s functions, bylaws, and procedures.

The Council shall be responsible for the training of individuals elected and/or chosen to a subsequent Council.

Article XIV: Relationship to Parent Organizations

The Council shall establish procedures by which there shall be close and continual communication with the school's parent organization (PTA/PTO)

Only Boards of Education with a low achieving school due to failing to make adequate yearly progress in mathematics and reading at the whole school level are required to have a Council.

Current law does not contain any provision for ceasing the operation of a Council.

Middletown (CT) High School Governance Council Code of Conduct

The underlying principles of the Council Code of Conduct include the promotion of:

- A. Respectful partnerships
- B. Clear and honest two-way communication
- C. Transparent processes
- D. Democratic, informed decision making
- E. Personal and professional integrity

The members of the School Governance Council agree to the following Code of Conduct in such as:

- ◆ The best interest of students, embodied by the school's values, is the primary consideration of this Council.
- ◆ The Council is accountable to and must report to, both its local school community and the State Department of Education.
- ◆ Council members will abide by and uphold all legal requirements, rules, regulations, and court orders pertaining to public schools.
- ◆ Council members will actively participate in subcommittees, when requested.
- ◆ Arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issue at hand with my fellow Council members in a meeting. Respect the opinions of others, and abide by the principle of majority-rule. Use independent judgment and actions and to take all reasonable steps to be satisfied about the soundness of all decisions taken by the Council.
- ◆ Conflict between Council members needs to be dealt with respectfully and fairly and in a manner that both reflects this and is seen to reflect this.
- ◆ Council members should observe the need for orderly Council meetings and that the Council needs to "speak as one voice" in the public arena, once a position has been reached or a decision has been made.
- ◆ Insist that all school business transactions be open and ethical.
- ◆ Strive to ensure that the community is fully and accurately informed about our school, and will try to interpret community aspirations to the school staff.
- ◆ Members of the school community should feel welcome to attend Council meetings as observers, except when the meeting is not open to the public. Meetings should be "closed" when the majority of Council members vote to do so because the issue under discussion is sensitive and requires confidentiality as permitted under the Freedom of Information Act or for the reporting back of a principal selection panel process.
- ◆ Recognize that authority rests only with the whole Council assembled in a meeting, and will make no personal promises nor take any private action which may compromise the Council.
- ◆ Understand that confidential information received in the course of Council responsibilities will remain the property of the person or group from which it was obtained. Council members must recognize that it is improper to disclose it or allow it to be disclosed, unless disclosure has been authorized by that person or group, or the person from whom the information was provided, or if it is required by law.
- ◆ Declare any conflict of interest when it arises.
- ◆ Never use the position on the Council for personal gain.
- ◆ Do not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit upon the school.

- ◆ Strive to assist in the appointment of the best professional leader available when a vacancy exists in an administrative position at the school. Ensure that all personnel have not only the requisite responsibilities, but the necessary authority to perform effectively.
- ◆ The Council is not an appropriate forum for the discussion of individual school staff, students, parents, or other individuals of the school community. Confine Council action to its advisory role as detailed in statute, Board of Education policy and Council bylaws.
- ◆ Comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the law and with the principles of this code.