

# South Shore Charter Public School

## Parents Association Bylaws

### MISSION STATEMENTS

- The mission of the South Shore Charter Public School (SSCPS) is *“Inspiring every student to excel in academics, service, and life.”* This is accomplished with an innovative curriculum that addresses the learning styles of the individual student, complemented by a real-life experiential learning program, within a community that encourages service, leadership, and respect.
- The mission of the South Shore Charter Public School Parents Association (PA) is to serve the school community and participate in the governance and growth of SSCPS. The PA advocates for all parents, students, and the school itself, and strives to create and maintain an environment where trustees, administrators, faculty, parents, and other stakeholders work together to pursue common goals.

### PA GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In pursuit of its mission, the PA has identified the following guiding principles for its work:

- **Governance:** Ensure that the opinions of the parent community are incorporated in policy and strategy discussions within the school.
- **Communication:** Facilitate communication between the school and parents and provide communication vehicles for intra-parent dialogue and support.
- **Service:** Support the goals of the school in serving others and help to fill the service needs of the school.
- **Community-Building:** Foster a culture of inclusion, involvement, and mutual respect between all the constituencies of the SSCPS community (trustees, administrators, faculty, parents, students, and other stakeholders as appropriate).

*(See Appendix A for individual goals within each of these principles.)*

### PA MEMBERSHIP, COMPOSITION, AND STRUCTURE

- All parents and guardians of SSCPS students are members of the PA.
- School employees who are also parents of SSCPS students have always had a special place in the SSCPS community and enjoy the full benefits of PA membership. They may vote on motions at PA meetings and run for any elected PA position. It is left to the individual’s discretion to declare conflicts of interest if/when they arise.
- The work of the PA is coordinated by a group of elected PA Officials consisting of four Executive Officers, thirteen Grade Representatives (one each K-12), and the Chairs of the PA Standing and Ad Hoc Committees. *(See Appendix B for descriptions of Roles and Responsibilities of PA Officials.)*
- There will be a Student Representative to the PA. This High School student is elected by his/her peers and serves a similar term to PA Officials. The role of this position is to represent the interests of the HS students to the PA.
- The Executive Officers comprise of a Chairperson (Chair), Vice Chairperson (Vice Chair), Secretary, and Treasurer.
- Standing Committees are those that the PA must always maintain. PA Standing Committees are:
  - Technology & Communications Committee
  - Fundraising & Events Committee
  - Volunteer Committee
  - Community-Building Committee (formerly Welcoming)
  - Community Service Committee.
- Ad Hoc Committees (e.g. Arts & Music, Health & Safety, Library, Bylaws, etc.) can be activated and dissolved by majority vote of a PA meeting.

- PA Officials serve one-year terms, spanning a 13-month period from the second half of the June PA Meeting to the first half of the following year's June PA meeting. Chairs of Ad Hoc Committees may serve shorter terms if the committee is activated or dissolved during the course of a school year.
- PA Officials may serve in the same position for a maximum of four consecutive one-year terms. Those elected mid-term may serve four terms in addition to the partial year in which they are elected. A second set of four consecutive one-year terms may be served upon completion of a one-year hiatus from that position.
- Exception can be made to the four-year term limit for one additional year by vote at a full PA meeting, but only if a position is vacant and no one else can be recruited.
- A parent may hold a maximum of two (2) PA Official positions simultaneously as follows:
  - Executive Officer + 1 Grade Rep (but not Committee Chair or 2<sup>nd</sup> Executive Officer position)
  - Committee Chair + 1 Grade Rep (but not Executive Officer)
  - Two (2) Grade Rep positions
- PA Officials may be removed from office for failure to meet their responsibilities or for behavior incompatible with the PA's mission and goals. *(See Appendix B for Removal of PA Officials from Office.)*

### **PA ELECTIONS**

- Elections for all PA Official positions will take place in April of each year, with results announced no later than the May PA meeting. *(See Appendix C for PA Election procedures.)*
- Special Elections can be held at other times during the academic year if a PA Official position becomes vacant through resignation or removal from office. *(See Appendix C for Special Elections procedures.)*
- Should a PA Official position be vacated within one month of the next regular PA elections, the vacant position will be added to the ballot for the following year's PA Officials and the winning candidate will also serve the remainder of the current year.
- PA Officials already holding two positions may not be considered for a third position in the event of a Special Election.

### **PA MEETINGS**

- The PA is required to meet monthly during the academic school year. Summer planning meetings may also be scheduled at the discretion of the Executive Officers, but are not required.
- All PA meetings are open to members of the SSCPS community.
- At each academic year meeting, the agenda will allow time for reports from Executive Officers, Committee Chairs, Grade Representatives, SSCPS Trustees, SSCPS Administrators, the Student Representative, and any non-PA parent school groups (e.g. SEPAC, Library, etc.).
- Any PA Official, parent, student, faculty member, administrator, or trustee may contact the Chair at least one week in advance of a PA meeting to request a topic for discussion.
- The Chair has final discretion on the content of PA meeting agendas.
- It is at the discretion of the presiding Executive Officer to end any discussion at a PA meeting. Such "Paused" issues must be tracked by the Vice Chair so that they are referred to the appropriate school group, the SSCPS Administration, or rescheduled for a future PA meeting. The parent(s) who first introduced the topic should be informed of these decisions.
- Meetings will be no more than two hours in length unless a majority of those present votes to extend the meeting.
- Robert's Rules of Order, as amended by these bylaws or by a majority vote of the PA, will be the primary guidelines for the conduct of the meetings.

- Votes will be taken on all motions. Once a motion has been proposed and seconded, discussion of the motion can proceed. Parents may offer amendments which can be voted on by the members present. Any amendments passed would become part of the proposal. The Chair will then call for a show-of-hands vote, counting “Votes in Favor,” “Votes Against,” and “Abstentions.” Each parent present at the meeting will have one vote. No absentee votes are permitted. Motions pass or fail by a simple majority of votes cast.
- The June PA meeting will be split into two halves. The outgoing PA Officials will preside over the first half. The incoming PA Officials for the subsequent academic year will preside over the second half of the meeting.

### **MAJOR ISSUES**

- The Executive Officers may decide at any time that an issue impacting the school should be considered a major issue by the PA.
- Any major issue will be placed on the agenda for the next PA meeting and submitted to the SSCPS Update.
- At the PA meeting, the issue will be discussed. This should include input from school administrators.
- If a motion is proposed, it will be voted on at the following meeting. Alternatively, the PA may decide during the discussion to survey all PA members or mail ballots to all PA members, at the PA’s expense.
- The results of major issue votes or surveys will be disseminated to SSCPS parents, students, faculty, administrators, trustees, and other stakeholders as appropriate by means of the SSCPS Update, SSCPS website, parent Google Groups, and/or other communications methods available.

### **PA FINANCES**

- The PA Finances are overseen by the PA Treasurer.
- The PA may vote to appropriate only money in its accounts.
- The PA may not borrow money.
- The PA distributes funds in its account according to the Annual Budget, Grant Review, and Emergency Expenditures procedures. *(See Appendix D for Disbursement procedures.)*

### **PA BYLAWS**

- The PA Bylaws must be reviewed annually by the Executive Officers, who will decide whether the bylaws should be rewritten.
- The PA Bylaws must be rewritten or amended at least once every five years. *(See Appendix E for Bylaws Amendment procedures.)*
- In the period between amendments, the Executive Officers may choose to submit addenda to the PA for attachment to the Bylaws. *(See Appendix E for Attachment of Addenda to the Bylaws.)*

# APPENDIX A

## PA GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Governance

- Represent the interests of the parent community and make formal recommendations on behalf of all parents to the SSCPS Administration and SSCPS Board of Trustees (BOT).
- Provide a forum for consultation and discussion between parents and the Executive Director prior to significant change in the school.
- Organize balloted school-wide parent voting on important issues.
- Recommend, appoint, or elect parent representatives to serve on SSCPS standing and ad hoc committees or other governance groups as necessary (e.g. School Council, Education Committee, Charter Renewal, Strategic Planning, etc.).

### Communication

- Provide information to parents about school and PA events.
- Facilitate communication between parents and faculty/administrators.
- Provide opportunities for parent networking.
- Provide a forum for parental concerns about school-wide issues or policies.
- Provide a forum to discuss use of PA funds.

### Service

- Identify service opportunities within SSCPS and in the community-at-large to encourage parents, students, and teachers to pursue regular service to others.
- Support the school's fundraising efforts.
- Assist the school in providing education for parents about parenting and education issues.
- Identify SSCPS volunteer needs and recruit parents to fulfill those needs.
- Support the training of parent volunteers.
- Expend PA funds for the benefit of the school community.

### Community-Building

- Welcome new families into the SSCPS community.
- Encourage greater parent involvement in the school by providing a wide array of opportunities for parent engagement and participation.
- Aid in providing social opportunities for students and support student social committees.
- Assist the school in providing extracurricular and educational enrichment opportunities for students.
- Express parent appreciation to the faculty.
- Help maintain an attractive and safe campus.

## APPENDIX B

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PA OFFICIALS

#### All PA Officials

- PA Officials are individually and collectively responsible for upholding the Bylaws of the PA, holding fellow PA Officials accountable for infractions, and furthering the mission and goals of the PA.
- PA Officials are required to attend a minimum of eight of the ten monthly meetings of the PA during the academic year. Attendance at summer planning meetings, if scheduled, is strongly encouraged, but not required.
- The PA Chair or Secretary should be notified of any absence prior to the meeting. Absent PA Officials should delegate their reporting duties to the same-level Grade Representative or a Committee Co-Chair and inform the PA Chair or Secretary of these changes. If this proves impossible, the absent PA Official should submit a written report to the PA Chair or Secretary prior to the meeting.

#### Grade Representatives

- Grade Representatives are required to liaise with same-level counterparts and produce a Level Report at each monthly PA meeting. The exceptions are Kindergarten, which should be reported out separately from Grades 1 and 2; and the High School, where per-grade reports should be given. These reports should also be provided in writing to the PA Chair or Secretary and should be kept as short as possible (e.g. 140 words).
- Same-level Grade Representatives should decide which of them will deliver the Level Report at each PA meeting, but all Grade Representatives are required to communicate with Level Coordinators, teachers, and parents to inform their reports.
- Grade Representatives should include in their reports details of upcoming Level happenings, rather than updates on past events. They should liaise with the Level Coordinator to pass on important messages.
- Grade Representatives should communicate important information with the parents in their grade and act as first points of contact for parents with questions or concerns. They should then direct parents to the appropriate person or group in the school.
- Should Grade Representatives become aware of an issue that may be relevant to the PA, they should discuss it with the PA Chair for possible inclusion in a future PA meeting agenda. New Business should not be introduced at meetings without prior consultation with the PA Chair.

#### Standing and Ad Hoc Committee Chairs

- Committee Chairs should identify specific goals for their group. These goals should be closely tied to the PA mission, guiding principles, and goals.
- Committee Chairs are required to report the progress of their group's work at each monthly PA meeting. These reports should also be provided in writing to the PA Chair or Secretary.
- Committee Chairs must consult with PA Executive Officers and the SSCPS Executive Director prior to organizing any event. No date for an event is final without the approval of the Executive Director.
- Committee Chairs will write a hand-off report in May and submit it to the outgoing and incoming Executive Officers.

#### Education Committee, School Council, and Ad Hoc School Groups

- Parents serving on the Education Committee, School Council, Charter Renewal, Strategic Planning or other school governance groups are required to report to PA meetings. They should do so at least once per academic quarter or at the end of the group's tenure, whichever is more appropriate.

## **Executive Officers**

- There will be a minimum of four Executive Officer meetings during the year: early August, between mid-December and mid-January, before the election process begins in March/April, and towards the end of the academic year. Other meetings may be scheduled as necessary.
- Executive Officers are required to attend at least one of the school's Open House events, typically held in November and January of each academic year.
- Executive Officers are collectively responsible for ensuring that the work of the PA, and of individual PA Officials, is in keeping with the PA's stated mission, guiding principles, and goals.
- Executive Officers are responsible for ensuring that PA activities and events are approved by the SSCPS Executive Director before they are organized or announced.
- Together with SSCPS Administrators, Executive Officers are responsible for appointing parents to the Education Committee (two parents), School Council (six parents; one from each level, plus one extra), and other ad hoc school groups as necessary (e.g. Charter Renewal, Strategic Planning, etc.).
- Each May/June, Executive Officers are responsible for assisting newly elected Executive Officers in developing an Annual Budget for PA operations for the subsequent year.
- Executive Officers are responsible for reviewing the PA Bylaws every year and undertaking a full PA Bylaws rewriting process at intervals of no less than five academic years.
- In addition, each Executive Officer has the following responsibilities:

### **Chairperson**

- The Chair will plan the agenda for and preside over the PA meetings.
- The Chair will publicize the PA meeting agenda to the parent body prior to the PA meeting.
- The Chair will have a minimum of one meeting per month with the Executive Director to discuss PA activities and initiatives.
- The Chair will coordinate with the Vice Chair to communicate with the parent body through the SSCPS Update (and other communication methods as appropriate) to ensure that all parents are informed about the major activities and discussions of the PA.
- The Chair is the official spokesperson for the PA and as such will make reports to the SSCPS Board of Trustees (BOT).
- The Chair will serve on the BOT for his/her full term of office.
- The Chair will write a year-end report in May and submit it to the incoming PA Officials, the BOT, and the entire school community.

### **Vice Chair**

- The Vice Chair will assist the Chair with PA meeting organization.
- The Vice Chair will preside over PA meetings in the absence of the Chair or if the Chair decides to participate in a PA meeting discussion as a parent only.
- The Vice Chair will track any "Paused" or tabled discussion topics from PA meetings and ensure that they are referred to the appropriate group/person within the school or rescheduled for a future PA meeting. The Vice Chair will communicate these decisions to the parent(s) who first introduced the topics.
- Should the Chair be unable to attend a BOT meeting, the Vice Chair will attend the meeting in place of the Chair and present the PA report to the BOT.
- The Vice Chair is encouraged, but not required, to attend BOT meetings as an audience member.
- The Vice Chair will oversee all PA communication functions, including, but not limited to, weekly submissions to the SSCPS Update and the dissemination of information to parents through appropriate channels (e.g. parent Google Groups, PA and school websites, and all-parent email blasts).
- The Vice Chair is responsible for the creation and dissemination of a PA Newsletter at a minimum of once per academic quarter.

- The Vice Chair will write a hand-off report in May and submit it to the outgoing and incoming Executive Officers of the PA.

### **Secretary**

- The Secretary will take minutes of the PA meetings (to be approved at the subsequent PA meeting) and coordinate with the Chair and Vice Chair to ensure that the PA meeting times, agendas, and minutes are communicated to the parent body.
- The Secretary will maintain a PA secure archive (paper and/or electronic) consisting of all PA important documents (e.g. Bylaws, minutes, how-to guides for PA Officials).
- The Secretary will maintain a separate electronic, searchable list of important motions passed at PA meetings.
- The Secretary will ensure that the archive and list of motions are transferred to the incoming Executive Officers in May/June.

### **Treasurer**

- The Treasurer will maintain detailed and accurate records of PA finances and will liaise with the SSCPS Business Manager to ensure that revenue and expenditure transactions are properly handled.
- The Treasurer will make financial reports to the PA at least once per academic quarter.
- The incoming Treasurer will work with other incoming and outgoing Executive Officers to create an Annual Budget for the PA and will present it during the second half of the June PA meeting. (*See Appendix D for Annual Budget procedures.*)
- The Treasurer will coordinate and oversee the Grant Review process for the distribution of funds in support of school programs. This should typically occur twice per academic year, but must be undertaken at least once during that timeframe. (*See Appendix D for Grant Review procedures.*)
- The Treasurer will oversee the disbursement of funds for Emergency Expenditures approved by the Executive Officers and report these expenditures to the PA in a timely fashion. (*See Appendix D for Emergency Expenditure procedures.*)
- The Treasurer will write a hand-off report in May and submit it to the outgoing and incoming Executive Officers.

### **REMOVAL OF PA OFFICIALS FROM OFFICE**

- Once a PA Official has failed to attend three PA meetings, the Executive Officers can decide to vacate the position. Executive Officers should consider any exceptional circumstances in each case (e.g. prolonged family illness or travel for work) and may choose not to vacate the position for failure to attend if the person is otherwise meeting all of the responsibilities of the position.
- PA Officials are required to inform the PA Chair of extenuating circumstances that affect their ability to attend PA meetings or otherwise fulfill their responsibilities as PA Officials. The PA Chair and the affected PA Official can then work together to determine an appropriate solution.
- PA Officials can be removed from a position in exceptional situations whereby their behavior or circumstances conflict with the mission and goals of the school or the PA or reflect negatively on the image of the school or the PA. Examples of such instances include, but are not limited to, criminal behavior, inappropriate communications, or misappropriation of funds.
- Grade Representatives and Committee Chairs may be removed from office for cause by a unanimous vote of the Executive Officers.
- Executive Officers may be removed from office for cause by a unanimous vote of the remaining three Executive Officers, followed by a majority vote of all other elected PA Officials.
- Once a PA Official has been removed from office, a Special Election must be called to fill the vacant position. (*See Appendix C for Special Election procedures.*)

## APPENDIX C

### PA ELECTION PROCEDURES

- Election ballots for PA Executive Officers, Grade Representatives, and Committee Chairs will be distributed through the SSCPS Update.
- The PA may choose to conduct balloting and voting by other means to supplement the balloting through the SSCPS Update, but not to replace such balloting.
- Executive Officers will appoint an Elections Task Force to carry out elections. Elected PA Officials and candidates running for election may serve on this task force. However, at least one person on the task force must be a PA member not running for office in the election. This person(s) will certify the election results.
- Each PA member may only cast one ballot in PA elections. All reasonable efforts will be made to verify that ballots cast are valid.
- Elections will be decided by a simple majority of all the valid votes cast.
- Parents running for election should provide a short biography, stating who their SSCPS students are and a rationale for why they wish to serve on the PA. This information should appear on the ballot.
- Parents may not run for more positions than they are eligible to hold at any one time (see PA Officials section).
- Candidates for PA Chair will have held another PA Official position or have attended most of the prior year's PA meetings.
- Candidates for Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary will have held another PA Official position or have attended at least half of the year's prior PA meetings.

### SPECIAL ELECTION PROCEDURES

- Executive Officers will announce a Special Election for a vacant position and call for nominations.
- At the next PA meeting, nominees should be announced and a vote scheduled for the following PA meeting.
- Executive Officers must make all PA members aware of the upcoming Special Election vote.
- At the following PA meeting, the Chair will call for a show-of-hands vote for each candidate.
- Each parent present at the meeting will have one vote. No absentee votes are permitted. A candidate is elected by a simple majority of votes cast.
- The parent elected to a PA Official position by Special Election will only serve until the end of the term in which they are elected.



## APPENDIX D

### ANNUAL BUDGET PROCEDURES

- Appropriate Annual Budget expenditures are those which are necessary in order for PA Officials to successfully meet their responsibilities in pursuit of the PA mission and goals.
- The Annual Budget should include all expected revenue and expenditures for the academic year, including information on the source(s) of revenue and the recipients of disbursements.
- Any Emergency Expenditures from the previous academic year should be reviewed and incorporated into the Annual Budget as necessary.
- The Annual Budget must be presented to the PA at the June PA meeting and approved by a show-of-hands vote at the September PA meeting.
- The Annual Budget is valid only for the academic year in which it is approved by PA vote, but may include summer expenditures if necessary. It must be reviewed and resubmitted for a PA vote each academic year.

### GRANT REVIEW PROCEDURES

- The Treasurer will solicit grant requests from the school community (parents, students, faculty, and staff) by advertising the process at PA meetings, in the SSCPS Update, and through other channels at his/her discretion.
- Grant requests must be received by the Treasurer before the stated deadline and must contain all information needed to make an informed decision about the merits of the request.
- The Treasurer will assemble a Grant Review Task Force. This Task Force must include one parent from each Level I, II, III, and IV, and two parents from the High School.
- The Task Force will review all of the grant requests and determine a proposed budget to present at the next PA meeting.
- The Task Force will solicit input from SSCPS Administrators regarding the grant requests, but the Task Force will be free to make autonomous decisions.
- The Treasurer will present the budget at the next PA meeting, answering questions and allowing discussion of the merits of individual proposals.
- The Treasurer and the Task Force together may decide to amend the budget based on the meeting discussion.
- The Treasurer will present the final budget at the next PA meeting, at which time it will be subject to an up-or-down vote in its entirety.
- The budget will pass by a simple majority of votes cast in a show-of-hands vote.
- If the budget is approved by PA vote, the Treasurer will oversee the disbursements.
- If the budget is not approved, the Treasurer and the Task Force together have discretion to reconvene to determine an alternative budget or may choose to close the process without making any disbursements.

### EMERGENCY EXPENDITURE PROCEDURES

- Expenditures that cannot be approved through the Annual Budget or the Grant Review process because they require immediate disbursement are considered Emergency Expenditures.
- Appropriate Emergency Expenditures are those that arise during the course of the academic year and are unforeseen at the time that the Annual Budget is approved.
- Emergency Expenditures must be reviewed by the Executive Officers. The Treasurer and at least two other Executive Officers must be in agreement in order for the disbursement to be made.
- Emergency Expenditures should be rare and should be kept to minimum amounts in each case.
- Emergency Expenditures must be reported to the PA at the next PA meeting.

## APPENDIX E

### BYLAWS AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

- The existing language of the Bylaws can only be changed through the Bylaws Amendment procedures.
- The Bylaws must be amended at least once every five years or more frequently at the discretion of the Executive Officers.
- An ad hoc PA Bylaws Committee must be activated to oversee the Bylaws Amendment procedures. At least one Executive Officer should serve on the committee but not chair the process.
- The Bylaws Committee Chair and volunteer members will proceed as follows:
  - The process will be announced and input will be solicited from all PA members over a period of time sufficiently long to allow for outreach and meetings with parents who have suggestions.
  - Any current addenda to the Bylaws should be reviewed and incorporated within the new Bylaws draft document and its appendices.
  - All of the input received should be discussed and decisions made about how to proceed with the rewrite.
  - Once a draft has been produced, it must be shared with the parent community and presented at a PA meeting for review and discussion.
  - The Bylaws Committee has discretion to make changes to the draft based on the meeting discussion.
  - The final draft must be shared with the entire parent community and a vote announced for the following PA meeting. There will be no further changes to the document before a vote.
  - At the following PA meeting, the Bylaws draft will be voted up or down in its entirety by a show-of-hands vote.
  - The Bylaws will pass by a simple majority of the votes cast and will take effect immediately unless otherwise stated in the document or the motion before the vote.
  - If the Bylaws do not pass the vote, the Bylaws Committee has discretion to reconvene and make further changes to the document before bringing it to another PA meeting for a vote or to close the entire process.

### ATTACHMENT OF ADDENDA TO THE BYLAWS

- The agreement of three Executive Officers is required to propose the attachment of an addendum to the PA Bylaws.
- An addendum may only augment the current PA Bylaws. It may not supersede the current language in any way.
- Attachment of addenda should be a rare occurrence.
- Executive Officers must submit the proposed addendum and present it at a PA meeting for discussion. Changes can be made following the discussion.
- The final addendum must be shared with the entire parent community, with an announcement of a vote at the following PA meeting.
- The vote to attach the addendum will pass by a simple majority of votes cast by a show-of-hands vote at that PA meeting.
- If passed, the addendum will be numbered, attached to the Bylaws, and appropriately labeled (e.g. ADDENDUM 1 – attached MM/DD/CCYY).
- Once attached, an addendum is immediately active unless otherwise stated in the addendum language.