

# 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, nine Level Representatives (one each level 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 Student Body to the PA.
- The Executive Board is comprised 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
  - Volunteer Committee

- Community-Building Committee (formerly Welcoming)
- Ad Hoc Committees (e.g. Arts & Music, Health & Safety, Library, Bylaws, Fundraising & Events, and Community Service, etc.) can be activated and dissolved by majority vote of a PA meeting. Should an Ad Hoc Committee remain vacant for two terms it will be dissolved without a vote should no one run the third empty term.
- 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 two (2) consecutive one-year terms. Those elected mid-term may serve two terms in addition to the partial year in which they are elected. A subsequent set of two (2) consecutive one-year terms may be served upon completion of a one-year hiatus from that position.
- Exception can be made to the two-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 such as:
  - 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.
- 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.
- To the extent any PA positions become vacant, notwithstanding anything in these bylaws to the contrary, the PA may seek to fill such vacant position(s) by soliciting volunteers via email, weekly update, at PA meetings, and any other means, then confirming them with at least a week's notice to the community by simple majority vote at a PA meeting.

#### **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.
- Agendas will be made public a minimum of 1 week prior to the meeting including any impact speakers and items. The agenda will allow time for any new business to be brought up to the PA as a whole.
- At each academic year meeting, reports should be sent to the PA President and Secretary from Executive Officers, Committee Chairs, Level Representatives, SSCPS Trustees, SSCPS Administrators, the Student

Representative, and any non-PA parent school groups (e.g. SEPAC, Library, etc.). There will be a handout at each meeting with the reports provided to each person in attendance. Anyone needing to add to their report should alert the PA Chair prior to the meeting starting to allow for time.

- 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. If there is new business not reasonably anticipated it should be discussed in “new business” on the agenda. Deliberation may take place but no action may be taken.
- The Executive Board has final discretion on the content of PA meeting agendas. To be decided by a simple majority.
- 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. However, Roberts Rules of Order shall not replace or otherwise take precedence.
- Votes will be taken on all motions. Once a motion has been proposed and seconded, discussion of the motion can proceed. PA Members 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 voice, 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. Should a voice vote not be clear who ever made the motion may request a show of hands vote take place.
- 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.

#### **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 accordance with the review of submitted funding requests. *(See Appendix D for Disbursement procedures.)*

#### **PA BYLAWS**

- The PA Bylaws must be reviewed annually by the Executive Board, 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 Board 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. Upon a majority of a quorum at a PA meeting. All ballots must be available in an online format and hard copy.
- 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.
- 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.

## 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.
- If a PA official is unable to make a meeting a written report/update should be submitted to the Chair and Secretary to be distributed at the meeting.

#### Level Representatives

- Level Representatives shall produce a Level Report at each monthly PA meeting. The exceptions are Kindergarten, which should be reported out separately from Level 1; 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
- Level Representatives should include in their reports details of upcoming Level happenings, and positive events that have occurred since the prior PA meeting. They should liaise with the Level Coordinator to pass on important messages.
- Level Representatives should communicate important information with the parents in their level. Level Representatives should send reports to all parents in the level after every PA meeting with what occurred.
- Should Level Representatives become aware of an issue that may be relevant to the PA, they should discuss it with the PA Chair for inclusion in a future PA meeting agenda.

#### Standing and Ad Hoc Committee Chairs

- These bylaws should determine the scope of goals for committees.
- 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 the SSCPS Executive Director prior to organizing any event. No date for an event is final without the approval of the Executive Director.

#### 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 should be invited 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 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.

- 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.
- 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 email the agenda and post to social media the PA meeting agenda to the parent body a minimum of 1 week 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 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 as needed and the dissemination of information to parents through appropriate channels (e.g. parent Google Groups, PA and school websites, and all-parent email blasts).

#### **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 thru email and social media posts within 1 week of meeting completion.
- The Secretary will maintain a PA record (paper and/or electronic) consisting of all PA important documents (e.g. Bylaws, minutes, how-to guides for PA Officials).

- o The Secretary will ensure that the records are transferred to the incoming Executive Officers in May/June.

**Treasurer**

- o The Treasurer will maintain detailed and accurate records of PA finances and will liaise with the SSCPS Director of Finance, to ensure that revenue and expenditure transactions are properly handled.
- o The Treasurer will make financial reports to the PA at least once per academic quarter.
- o 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.*)
- o The Treasurer, in consultation with the Executive Board, will coordinate and oversee any requests for funding (*See Appendix D for Finance Procedures.*)
- o The Treasurer will oversee the disbursement of funds approved by the PA and report these expenditures to the PA in a timely fashion.
- o 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**

- 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.
- Level 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, the position may be filled by a majority of the executive board within 1 week of vacancy.

## APPENDIX C

### PA ELECTION PROCEDURES

- Instructions to retrieve Election ballots for PA Executive Officers, Grade Representatives, and Committee Chairs will be distributed through the SSCPS Update.
- 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).
- Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in these Bylaws, nothing contained herein shall constrain or otherwise prevent the PA from establishing an alternative means (e.g. publishing in the Weekly Update, posting to social media, sending a global email to the entire parent community list-serv) to carry out elections for PA positions upon a vote of a simple majority of the PA.

## 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.
- The Annual Budget must be presented to the PA at the June PA meeting and approved by a show-of-hands vote at the June PA meeting. Academic year closing budget should be voted on at the first half of the meeting (outgoing officials), Upcoming academic year will be voted on at the second half of the meeting (incoming officials). A minimum of 50% of the funds allocated to the PA by the SSCPS Educational fund must be allocated to the Grant Review Procedures.
- 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.
- If at the end of the academic year 100% of the funds allocated to the PA by the SSCPS Educational fund have not been dispersed they will be returned to the Educational Fund.

### FINANCE PROCEDURES

- The Treasurer and Parents Association as a whole may solicit requests for funding 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 their discretion.
- Nothing contained in these procedures shall prevent a member of the PA submitting a request for funds for any purpose.
- The Executive Board of the PA are empowered to receive and review grant requests.
- The requests may then be sent to the Director of Finance and the Principals for review and whether the requests should be funded by the school's budget or whether the request is more appropriately funded by the PA
- Any PA member may submit a request for funding at any point during the year.
- Requests may submitted in paper form to the front desk or by sending an electronic copy to the Treasurer, or in the absence of the Treasurer, the Secretary or Chairperson.
- Nothing contained in these bylaws shall constrain the PA from taking up the request for funding at the next meeting of the Parents Association at which time the members in attendance shall have the discretion as to what, if any, action to take with respect to such funding request(s).
- Funding requests may be adopted by a simple majority of votes cast of those members in attendance at the PA meeting.
- Any PA member submitting a request for a grant from the PA may vote upon the request.

## APPENDIX E

### BYLAWS AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

- The existing language of the Bylaws can only be changed through the Bylaws Amendment procedures.
  - The Bylaws must be reviewed by committee 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.