

South Shore Charter Public School Parents Association Bylaws

MISSION STATEMENTS

- The South Shore Charter Public School (SSCPS) mission is “Inspiring every student to excel in academics, service, and life.” This is accomplished with an innovative curriculum that addresses the individual student's learning styles, 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 and students, and the school itself. It strives to create and maintain an environment wherein students, parents, faculty, administrators, trustees, and other stakeholders work together to pursue these common goals.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION (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 inter-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 among all the constituencies of the SSCPS community (students, parents, faculty, administrators, trustees, and other stakeholders, as appropriate.)

PARENTS ASSOCIATION (PA) GOALS

The guiding principles of the PA are realized through the following goals:

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 a meaningful change in the school.
- Recommend, appoint, or elect parent representatives to serve on SSCPS standing and ad hoc committees or other governance groups, as necessary (e.g., 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 the use of PA funds.
- Keep select PA media outlets regularly updated with important school and PA information.

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 educating parents on 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.
- Plan and execute fundraising events to support the PA's and the schools' initiatives.

Community-Building

- Welcome new families into the SSCPS community.
- Encourage greater parent involvement in the school by providing a wide array of parent engagement and participation opportunities.
- Aid in providing social opportunities for students, and support students' social committees.
- Assist the school in providing extracurricular and educational enrichment opportunities for students.
- Coordinate at least one (1) annual event.

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 they 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 five (5) Executive Officers. The Executive Board is composed of one (1) Chairperson (Chair), two (2) Co-Chairpersons (Co-Chairs), one (1) Secretary, and one (1) Treasurer. The three Chair/Co-Chair roles must be distributed evenly across the following levels: Levels I & II (Grades K-4), Levels III & IV (Grades 5-8), and Level V (Grades 9-12).
- The Elections Committee will request volunteers to serve on Committees for the upcoming school year during the spring election cycle. The elected officers will determine the leadership of each committee by the first meeting of the school year and solicit additional committee members where needed. If an ad hoc committee is established during the school year, volunteers will be solicited during regular PA meeting and the Executive Board will make the final decision of leadership.

- There will be a Student Representative to the PA. This High School student will be elected by their peers and serve a term similar to that of the PA Officials. The role of this position is to represent the interests of the Student Body to the PA.
- Terms of Office—The term for all officers of the Parents Association shall be two (2) years, commencing in June of the year elected, and continuing through June of the ensuing two years, until their term concludes (25 months).
- Implementation of these new terms of office will be done on a staggered basis to ensure continuity and stability of leadership as follows:

PA Position	Spring 2024 Election	Spring 2025 Election	Spring 2026 Election
Levels I & II Co-chair	Two-year term	No election	Two-year term
Levels III & IV Co-chair	One-year term	Two-year term	No election
Level V Co-chair	One-year term	Two-year term	No election
Secretary	One-year term	Two-year term	No election
Treasurer	Two-year term	No election	Two-year term

- PA Officials may serve two (2) consecutive two-year terms in the same position. A subsequent set of two (2) consecutive two-year terms may be served upon completion of a one-year hiatus from that position. Those elected mid-term may serve two terms in addition to the partial year in which they are elected.
- An 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 volunteers.
- PA Officials may be removed from office for failure to meet their responsibilities, or for behavior incompatible with the PA's mission and goals.

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.

Standing and Ad Hoc Committees

- Committee Chairs are requested to report the progress of their groups' work at monthly PA meetings. These reports should also be provided in writing to the PA Chairs and Secretary.
- Committee Chairs must consult with the SSCPS Executive Director before organizing any event.

School Council and Ad Hoc School Groups

- Parents serving on the 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 their group's tenure, whichever is more appropriate.

Executive Officers

- There will be a minimum of four (4) Executive Officer meetings during the year: early August, between mid-December and mid-January, before the election process begins in April/May, and toward the end of the academic year. Other meetings may be scheduled, as necessary.
- Executive Officers are collectively responsible for ensuring that the PA's and any individual PA members work is aligned with the PA's stated mission, guiding principles, and goals.
- Together with SSCPS Administrators, PA Executive Officers are responsible soliciting and appointing parents to ad hoc school groups as necessary (e.g., Charter Renewal, Strategic Planning, Capital Improvement Plan, etc.)
- Each June, Executive Officers are responsible for assisting newly elected Officers in their new roles. Current Officers should share any documents that may be helpful to the incoming Officers.
- Given that all three Chairs represent the different segments of the SSCPS student body, each Chair should communicate with their respective school principals and faculty to represent parent concerns and wishes.
- In addition, each Executive Officer has the following responsibilities:
 - **Chairperson**
 - The Chair will collaborate with Co-Chairs to plan the PA meeting schedule, set the agenda, and preside over the PA meetings.
 - The Chair will aim to email the parent body and post the PA meeting agenda on social media at least two (2) days before the PA meeting.
 - The Chair will meet with the Executive Director at least two (2) times per academic school year to discuss PA activities and initiatives.
 - The Chair will coordinate with the Co-Chairs the best way to communicate with the parent body through the SSCPS Weekly Update (and other communication methods, as appropriate) to ensure that all parents are informed about the significant activities and discussions of the PA.
 - The Chair will serve on the BOT for their entire term of office.
 - The Chair is the official spokesperson for the PA, and, as such, will provide a PA Report to the BOT at each meeting and vote on all motions with the interest of the PA membership.
 - The Chair will lead the year-end report in June, and submit it to the incoming PA Officials, the BOT, and the entire school community.
 - **Co-Chairs**
 - The Co-Chairs will assist the Chair with the PA meeting organization.
 - Co-Chairs are encouraged to regularly attend the School Council meetings, and act as liaisons between the two groups.
 - One of the Co-Chairs 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 Co-Chairs 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 Co-Chair will communicate these decisions to the parent(s) who first introduced the topics.
 - Should the Chair be unable to attend a BOT meeting, a Co-Chair will attend in place of the Chair, and present the PA Report to the BOT.
 - The Co-Chairs are encouraged, but not required, to attend BOT meetings as audience members.
 - The Co-Chairs will oversee all PA communication functions, including, but not limited to, weekly submissions to the SSCPS Weekly Update, as needed, and the

dissemination of information to parents through appropriate channels (e.g., PA and school websites and all-parent email blasts).

- **Secretary**
 - The Secretary will take minutes of the PA meetings (to be approved at a subsequent PA meeting), and coordinate with the Chair and Co-Chairs to ensure that the PA meeting times, agendas, and draft meeting minutes are communicated to the parent body through email and social media posts within one week of meeting completion.
 - Revisions to the draft minutes should be emailed to the Secretary. They will be compiled and distributed a week before the next meeting.
 - The Secretary will maintain a PA record (paper or electronic) consisting of all PA essential documents (e.g., Bylaws, minutes, agendas, and how-to guides for PA Officials).
 - The Secretary will transfer the records to the incoming Executive Officers in June.
 - The Secretary will manage the PA social media accounts and tools to update them regularly with necessary school announcements and PA information.

- **Treasurer**
 - The Treasurer will maintain detailed and accurate records of PA finances and liaise with the SSCPS Director of Finance to ensure that grant transactions are appropriately handled.
 - The Treasurer will coordinate and oversee funding requests in consultation with the Co-Chairs and Secretary.
 - The incoming Treasurer will work with other incoming and outgoing Executive Officers to create an annual budget for the PA to be presented at the school year's first meeting.
 - The Treasurer will prepare and distribute a year-end report in June to the outgoing and incoming Executive Officers.

PA Committees

- Standing Committees are those that the PA consistently maintains. The responsibilities of the PA Standing Committees will change from year to year, based on the school's and PA's needs, but are generally outlined as follows:
 - **Fundraising Committee**
 - Raise funds for the PA and South Shore Charter Education Foundation as needed.
 - Partner with other PA committees to implement fundraising efforts.
 - **Outreach Committee**
 - Serve as parent ambassadors by promoting PA initiatives such as important school announcements, Parent Directory, volunteer event sign-ups, SSCPS Connect, etc.
 - Manage the Family Mentoring program in partnership with the school Vice Principals.
 - Serve as a source of information to school administrators regarding improvements to school communication mechanisms, including the Weekly Newsletter.
 - **Events Committee**
 - Partner with school event leaders for event planning.

- Solicit and share volunteer opportunities at PA meetings and on PA social media platforms.
- Coordinate with the Outreach and Fundraising Committees for fundraising/ community-building events.
- Ad Hoc Committees and School Support Requests (e.g., Wellness, Transportation, Diversity & Inclusion, Library, Bylaws, and Community Service, etc.) can be activated as determined by the Executive Committee.

REMOVAL OF PA OFFICIALS FROM OFFICE

- PA Executive Officers can be removed from a position in exceptional situations wherein their behavior or circumstances conflict with the mission and goals of the school or the PA or reflect negatively on the school's or the PA's image. Examples of such instances include, but are not limited to, criminal behavior, inappropriate communications, or misappropriation of funds.
- Executive Officers may be removed from office for cause by a majority vote from elected PA Executive Officers, followed by a majority vote of the PA members in attendance.
- Once an Executive Officer has been removed from office, the position may be filled by a Special Election within two weeks of the vacancy.
- A Committee Chair may be removed from their position for failing to fulfill the duties of the role as defined by the Committee's responsibilities and a majority vote of the Executive Officers.

PA ELECTIONS

- Elections for PA Executive Officers will occur from April to June each year, with results announced no later than the June PA meeting.
- Special Elections can be held at other times during the academic year if a PA Executive Officer position becomes vacant through resignation or removal from office.
- Should a PA Executive Officer position be vacated within one month of the next regular PA elections, the vacant position will be added to the ballot for the upcoming election.
- Elections for the three Chair roles will determine one (1) Chair for each of the following groups: Levels I & II (Grades K-4), Levels III & IV (Grades 5-8), and Level V (Grades 9-12). Once election results have been certified, the three elected Co-Chairs will select amongst themselves the lead Chair, who will be referred to as the Chair of the PA.
- During the annual spring elections cycle the Elections Task Force will manage the self-nomination and parent voting procedures for the (6) six parent voting representatives to serve on the School Council.

PA ELECTION PROCEDURES

- The election process for PA Executive Officers, and the timeline for the process, will be distributed through the SSCPS Weekly Update.
- Executive Officers will appoint an Elections Task Force to conduct elections. Elected PA Officials and candidates running for election may serve on this task force. However, at least one (1) person on the task force must be a PA member not running for office in the election. This person (or these persons) 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 the votes 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.

PA MEETINGS

- The PA aims to meet monthly but is required to meet at least once every other month 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.
- All PA meetings will be conducted in person (when possible) and virtually (via Zoom or other similar applications).
- Agendas, including any impact speakers and items, are to be made public at least two days before the meeting. The agendas will include time for any new business to be brought to the PA.
- At the end of each academic year, and no later than the last day of school, Treasurer and Committee reports should be prepared and submitted to the PA Chairs and Secretary. The PA Chairs and Secretary will create a single PA report to be shared with the SSCPS Trustees, SSCPS Administrators, Student Representative, and any non-PA parent-school groups (e.g., SEPAC, ELPAC, etc.), as needed.
- Any PA Executive Officer, parent, student, faculty member, administrator, or trustee may contact the Chair at least one week before a PA meeting to request a topic for discussion. If new business is not reasonably anticipated, it should be discussed as “new business” on the agenda. Deliberation may take place, but no action is allowed.
- The Executive Officers have final discretion on the content of PA meeting agendas, which a simple majority will decide upon.
- Meetings will generally be no more than two hours long.
- 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. The Chair can then call for a voice vote, counting “Votes in Favor,” “Votes Against,” and “Abstentions” or call for votes to be made via an online survey tool. 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, whoever made the motion may request a show-of-hands vote (virtual attendees will be counted on chat or online survey tool).
- If an emergency vote is needed before the next scheduled PA meeting, emergency requests may be approved by a unanimous vote of the PA Executive Officers.
- The June PA meeting will be split into two (2) 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 Treasurer oversees the Finances of all parent lead groups.
- The PA may not borrow money.
- The PA may raise and hold funds through an online money collection tool, which may be used at the PA officials' discretion to fund PA-sponsored events, activities, additional fundraisers, etc.

ANNUAL BUDGET PROCEDURES

- Appropriate Annual Budget expenditures are those necessary for PA Officials to successfully meet their responsibilities and pursue 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 income and the recipients of disbursements.
- The Annual Budget must be presented to the PA at the first PA meeting of the school year and approved by a majority vote at the second PA meeting of the year. A minimum of 50% of the funds allocated to the PA by the SSCPS Educational fund must be assigned to the Grant Review Procedures.
- The academic year closing budget should be voted on by the executive officers and leaders of all official parent groups contributing to those funds.
- 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.
- If, at the end of the academic year, 100% of the funds allocated to the PA by the SSCPS Educational Foundation (SSCEF) have not been disbursed, the balance will be returned to SSCEF.

FINANCE PROCEDURES

- The Treasurer and PA may solicit funding requests from the school community (parents, students, faculty, and staff) by advertising the grant process at PA meetings, in the SSCPS Weekly Update, and through other channels, at their discretion.
- Nothing contained in these procedures shall prevent a member of the PA from submitting a request for funds for any purpose.
- Grant requests must first be sent to the Director of Finance and the Principals for review and determination of whether the school's budget should fund the requests, or whether the PA more appropriately supports the request.
- Any PA member may submit a request for funding at any point during the year.
- Requests must be submitted electronically to the Treasurer or, in the absence of a Treasurer, the Secretary or a Chairperson.
- These Bylaws shall not constrain the PA from discussing 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 from 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.

PA BYLAWS REVIEW

- The PA Bylaws must be reviewed annually by the Executive Board, which decides whether to rewrite them and must be rewritten or amended at least once every five years.
- In the period between amendments, the Executive Board may submit addenda to the PA for attachment to the Bylaws.
- The existing language of the Bylaws can only be changed through the Bylaws Amendment procedures.

BYLAWS AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

- 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.

- 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 sufficient 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 the input received should be discussed, and decisions should be 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 the discretion to amend the draft, based on the meeting discussion.
 - The final draft must be shared with the parent community, and a vote must be 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.
 - The Bylaws will pass by a simple majority of the votes cast, and 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 the 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

- To propose attaching an addendum to the PA Bylaws, three (3) executive officers must agree.
- An addendum may only augment the current PA Bylaws. It may not supersede the current language in any way.
- The Executive Officers must present the proposed addendum at a PA meeting for discussion. Changes can be made following the discussion.
- The vote to attach the addendum will pass by a simple majority of votes cast by a show-of-hands at that PA meeting or by online voting procedure.
- The final addendum must be shared with the parent community, and a vote announced at the following PA meeting.
- Once approved, the addendum is immediately active, unless otherwise stated in the addendum language.