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To: Kathleen Smith, Interim Superintendent
From: Toby Romer, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education and Ayesha Farag, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education,
Date: 5/8/23
Subject: Update on School Councils and School Improvement Plans

We are excited to share with the School Committee some of the work being done by our School Councils in our elementary, middle and high schools. We will be joined by several school leaders, and school council members from each level, to talk about their work to support schools and help develop our School Improvement Plans.

As background, you should know that [Massachusetts statute](#) exists to facilitate school based decision making and leadership. State law requires the following:

- There should be a school council in each school consisting of the school principal, who shall co-chair the council, parents of students attending the school selected through parent teacher organization elections, teachers who shall be selected by the teachers in the school, other community members, and, in high schools, student(s).
- The school council should meet regularly and assist in the identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school, make recommendations to the principal for the development, implementation and assessment of the district's curriculum accommodation plan, assist in the review of the annual school budget, and assist in the formulation of an annual school improvement plan.
- The principal of each school should consult with the school council in the development of the annual school improvement plan and submit the plan to the superintendent. The superintendent should review and approve the plan, after consultation with the School Committee.

Over the past two years, school leaders, in collaboration with faculty and PTO leaders, have reconstituted their school councils (if they had taken a hiatus during the pandemic) and re-engaged in the important work charged to these groups. Presently, each of our schools has an active School Council with family and faculty representatives and have held regular meetings this school year. Our schools have also completed or are in the process of completing school improvement plans aligned with our district-wide goals, using the following templates:

- [Elementary School Improvement Plan Template 2022-23](#)
- [Secondary School Improvement Plan Template 2022-23](#)

We look forward to hearing from several of our schools on the work of our councils at this week's School Committee meeting and answering your questions regarding school councils.

¹The DESE [website](#) incorrectly states that school committees approve school improvement plans; this is not consistent with the [state law](#) on the matter. DESE spokesperson Jackie Reis has acknowledged this inconsistency and that the website needs to be corrected to match the statute.