Furman Middle School Improvement Council (SIC) Bylaws <u>Proposal</u>

Article I – Name

The name of this organization shall be the Furman Middle School Improvement Council (SIC).

Article II – Purpose and Statutory Responsibilities

The purpose of the Furman Middle School Improvement Council is to serve as an advisory body to the school principal and school district in accordance with South Carolina state law (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-20-60). The SIC engages parents, educators, students, and community stakeholders in the continuous improvement of public education.

Specifically, the statutory responsibilities and primary objectives of the Council include:

1. School Improvement Planning: Assisting in the development, monitoring, evaluation, and periodic review of the school's Five-Year School Renewal/Improvement Plan.
2. Annual Report to Parents: Preparing, reviewing, and distributing the annual *SIC Report to Parents* no later than April 30 of each school year to inform the community of progress toward improvement goals.
3. School Report Card Narrative: Collaborating with the principal in drafting the narrative portion of the annual South Carolina School Report Card (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-900(E)).
4. Advisory Support: Advising the principal, faculty, and school board on school improvement priorities, academic programs, student achievement data, and positive school culture initiatives.
5. Community Liaison: Serving as a liaison between Furman Middle School, student families, and the surrounding community to promote meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Operational Scope and Financial Authority: The Council acts solely in an advisory capacity and does not possess authority over school administrative operations or personnel decisions. The Council does not independently hold or manage funds, collect dues, or maintain separate bank accounts. Any financial support for Council projects must be administered through authorized school or district accounts.

Article III – Membership Composition and Eligibility

Section 1. Composition Requirements

In accordance with South Carolina law, elected members must comprise at least two-thirds (66⅔%) of the total elected and appointed membership of the Council (excluding ex-officio members). The Council shall consist of the following categories:

1. Elected Parent Representatives: At least two (2) parents or legal guardians elected by the parents/guardians of students currently enrolled at Furman Middle School.
2. Elected Teacher Representatives: At least two (2) teachers elected by the school faculty.
3. Appointed Community Representatives: At least one (1) community member appointed by the principal. The total number of appointed community members shall not exceed half (50%) of the total number of elected members, ensuring compliance with the two-thirds elected majority mandate.
4. Ex-Officio Members: The principal of Furman Middle School serves as an ex-officio member by virtue of position. Additional ex-officio positions (such as PTO/PTA President or Teacher of the Year) may be designated by the Council.

(Optional Student Representation): Because Furman Middle School serves grades below 9th grade, student representation is optional under state law. If the Council elects to include student representatives, at least 1 (1) student currently enrolled at Furman Middle School shall be elected by the student body and shall serve as full voting members with equal standing.

Section 2. Eligibility Criteria

1. Parent Members: Must have at least one child currently enrolled in Furman Middle School throughout their term of service. School employees actively engaged in instruction at the school are ineligible to serve as parent representatives. If a parent member no longer has a child enrolled at the school, their seat is automatically vacated.
2. Teacher Members: Must hold a position requiring direct classroom instruction at Furman Middle School and be elected by the faculty. Administrative or non-instructional staff are ineligible for teacher seats.
3. Community Members: Must be individuals who reside or work within the school community and are not eligible to serve as parent, teacher, or student representatives.
4. Voting Rights: Every official member (elected, appointed, and ex-officio) has equal voting rights on official Council business. Non-members attending public meetings do not hold voting privileges.

Article IV – Elections and Appointments

Section 1. Annual Election Timeline

All elections for parent, teacher, and (if applicable) student representatives must be completed annually no later than October 15.

Section 2. Election Procedures

1. Parent Elections: The Council and school administration shall provide reasonable advance notice of open nominations and election dates using multiple communication channels (website, email, flyers). Nominations and voting must be open, transparent, and accessible to all eligible parents/guardians.
2. Teacher Elections: Nominations and elections for teacher representatives shall be conducted by the faculty prior to October 15 during a designated faculty assembly or balloting process.
3. Community Appointments: Community representative appointments shall be made by the principal following the conclusion of parent and teacher elections to ensure the final Council roster satisfies the statutory two-thirds elected majority requirement.

Section 3. Membership Reporting

The principal or designated administrator shall report the complete, updated Council membership roster to the online SC-SIC Member Network no later than November 15 of each school year.

Article V – Terms of Service and Vacancies

Section 1. Terms of Service

1. Elected Members: Elected parent, teacher, and student representatives serve two-year staggered terms. To establish or maintain staggered cycles, approximately half of the positions in each representative group shall be elected each year.
2. Appointed Community Members: Appointed community representatives serve one-year terms and may be reappointed annually by the principal, provided eligibility is maintained.
3. Term Limits: Members may serve up to two (2) consecutive two-year terms. Service beyond two consecutive terms requires a gap of at least one school year before re-election or re-appointment.

Section 2. Staggering Mechanism

When establishing staggered terms for a newly configured Council, newly elected representatives within each category shall draw lots to determine who receives an initial one-year term versus a full two-year term. Thereafter, all elected terms shall be two years.

Section 3. Vacancies

A vacancy occurs when a member resigns, becomes ineligible (e.g., loss of student enrollment or staff reassignment), or is unable to fulfill their duties.

1. Elected Vacancies: Shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term by the candidate who received the next highest vote total in the most recent election, or through a special election called by the Council.
2. Appointed Vacancies: Shall be filled promptly by principal appointment for the remainder of the term.

Article VI – Officers and Leadership

Section 1. Required Officers

The officers of the Council shall be elected from among its active voting membership and shall consist of:

1. Chairperson
2. Vice-Chairperson
3. Secretary

Section 2. Eligibility Restrictions

- Only elected or appointed Council members are eligible to serve as officers.
- Ex-officio members, including the school principal, are strictly ineligible to serve as SIC officers.
- Prohibition of Treasurer: Because the SIC does not maintain independent financial accounts or handle funds, the office of Treasurer is strictly prohibited.

Section 3. Officer Selection and Term

Officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the Council at the first meeting following annual elections, and no later than November 15. Officers serve a one-year term and may be re-elected for subsequent terms while maintaining Council eligibility.

Section 4. Duties of Officers

1. Chairperson: Presides over all Council meetings; prepares meeting agendas in consultation with the principal; ensures public notice compliance under FOIA; serves as primary liaison between the Council, principal, and district coordinator; monitors progress toward Council goals.
2. Vice-Chairperson: Presides in the absence of the Chair; assists with leadership responsibilities and committee oversight; fulfills unexpired Chair duties if a vacancy occurs until an election is held.
3. Secretary: Maintains accurate written minutes of all meetings; records attendance; distributes draft minutes to members; ensures proper public notice statements and voting records are documented; preserves official Council records in a central school archive.

Article VII – Meetings, Quorum, and Public Notice Compliance

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The Furman Middle School Improvement Council shall schedule and hold at least eight (8) regular meetings per school year (typically four in the fall semester and four in the spring semester).

Section 2. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Compliance

As a statutory public body under the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-10 et seq.), the Council must conduct its business with full public transparency.

1. Annual Schedule Public Notice: At the beginning of each calendar year, the Council shall publish a written public notice detailing the dates, times, and physical/virtual locations of all regular meetings for the year.
2. 24-Hour Agenda Requirement: A detailed agenda for every regular or special meeting must be posted publicly at the school main office and on the school website at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the meeting.
3. Modifications to Posted Agendas:
    - Once posted, items may be added to the agenda prior to the meeting only if 24-hour public notice is provided.
    - After a meeting begins, new items may be added for discussion only by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present and voting.
    - No final binding vote or action may be taken on an added item unless the Council determines by a two-thirds vote that the matter constitutes an emergency or urgent circumstance requiring immediate action prior to reasonable public notice.

Section 3. Quorum and Decision Making

A simple majority of the current active voting Council membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Formal action, votes, or adoption of recommendations require a quorum and a majority vote of members present, except where a supermajority is required by law or these bylaws.

Section 4. Public Access and Recordkeeping

1. Open Meetings: All SIC meetings are open to the public. Non-member public comments shall follow established agenda guidelines.
2. Meeting Minutes: Written minutes must be recorded for every meeting, capturing the date, time, location, attendance, summary of discussions, formal motions, individual voting records (when requested), and public notice verification.
3. Public Inspection & Retention: Approved minutes for the preceding six (6) months must be readily accessible for public inspection at the school office and posted online. All official SIC records (agendas, minutes, rosters, reports) shall be retained in an accessible school archive for a minimum of five (5) years.

Article VIII – Committees

The Council may establish standing or ad hoc committees (such as *School Improvement/Data*, *Family & Community Engagement*, or *School Culture*) to examine specific issues and report findings to the full Council.

1. Advisory Authority: Committees function strictly in an advisory capacity. Committees cannot take final binding action on behalf of the SIC; all recommendations must be submitted to the full Council for deliberation and vote.
2. Composition: Committees may include non-SIC members (parents, staff, community members) to broaden participation. However, committee service does not grant voting rights on the full Council.
3. Public Transparency: SIC committee meetings are subject to FOIA public notice and open meeting guidelines.

Article IX – Bylaws Adoption, Amendments, and Maintenance

Section 1. Amendment Process

These bylaws may be amended at any regular Council meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of members present, provided that:

1. The proposed amendment is submitted in writing to all members at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

2. Public notice of the intent to amend bylaws is included on the meeting agenda posted at least 24 hours in advance in compliance with FOIA.

Section 2. Primacy of State Law

Local bylaws cannot conflict with or override South Carolina state law, State Board of Education regulations, or school district policies. In the event of a conflict, state statutory mandates shall govern.

Section 3. Digital Repository Submission

The adopted bylaws, bearing the date of adoption or revision, shall be preserved in the official school archives and uploaded to the online SC-SIC Member Network to fulfill state compliance tracking mandates.