Thornwell School for the Arts

Embracing Excellence, Crafting a Legacy of Distinction

Unite. Thrive. Roar

School Improvement Council By-Laws

Article I – Name

The name of this organization shall be the School Improvement Council of Thornwell School for the Arts, hereafter called the "Council."

Article II – Authority and Purpose

Section 1. Authority. The Council is established under the South Carolina Education Accountability Act and operates in accordance with state law, the policies of the Board of Darlington County School District, and these Bylaws.

Section 2. Purpose. The Council exists to support continuous improvement of student learning and school quality at Thornwell School for the Arts. It serves in an advisory and collaborative capacity and does not hold administrative or governing authority over the school.

Section 3. Duties. The Council shall:

1. Assist the principal in developing and reviewing the school's strategic plan and annual renewal plan.
2. Review the annual school report card and help communicate its results to families and the community.
3. Advise the principal on the use of school improvement resources and priorities, including the arts-focused mission of the school.
4. Encourage parent, family, and community engagement and partnership.
5. Advise on school climate, safety, and student well-being.
6. Assist in the review of surveys of parents, teachers, and students as required by law.
7. Make recommendations to the principal as appropriate.
8. Prepare and submit an annual report of Council activities as required by law and district policy.

Article III – Membership

Section 1. Composition. The Council shall consist of at least the following members, in accordance with state law:

1. The principal (ex officio).
2. At least [two] parents or legal guardians of students enrolled at the school, elected by parents/guardians.
3. At least [two] teachers, elected by the school's teaching faculty.
4. At least [one] student representative, where grade levels served make this appropriate, selected by the student body or school administration.
5. At least [one] community or business representative, appointed by the principal.
6. Other members as the Council may add, such as a non-teaching staff representative or arts-partner representative, provided parents and guardians are not outnumbered in a way that violates state requirements.

Section 2. Term of Office. Elected and appointed members serve a term of 1 year.. Terms shall be staggered where possible. Members may serve consecutive terms as permitted by law and these Bylaws.

Section 3. Elections. Parent and teacher elections shall be held each fall under procedures publicized to all eligible voters at least [ten] school days in advance. All parents and guardians of enrolled students and all full-time faculty are eligible to vote and to be nominated.

Section 4. Vacancies. A vacancy in an elected seat shall be filled by the Council for the remainder of the term, from nominees within the same constituency group. A vacancy in an appointed seat shall be filled by the principal.

Section 5. Removal. A member who is absent from three consecutive regular meetings without excuse, or who ceases to belong to the constituency they represent, may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Council.

Section 6. Non-voting Participants. Any member of the public, staff, or district may attend open meetings. The Council may invite guests to provide information, but guests do not vote.

Article IV – Officers

Section 1. Officers. The officers shall be a Chair, a Vice Chair, and a Secretary.

Section 2. Eligibility and Election. Officers shall be elected by the Council from among its voting members at the first meeting of the school year. The Chair should be a parent or guardian, unless the Council determines otherwise. The principal shall not serve as Chair.

Section 3. Term. Officers serve one-year terms and may serve up to two consecutive terms in the same office.

Section 4. Duties.

- **Chair:** Presides at meetings, sets the agenda in consultation with the principal, appoints committees, and serves as the Council's spokesperson.
- **Vice Chair:** Performs the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence and assists as assigned.
- **Secretary:** Keeps accurate minutes, maintains Council records, distributes notices and agendas, and ensures required reports are filed.

Section 5. Vacancies. A vacancy in any office shall be filled by election at the next regular meeting.

Article V – Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings. The Council shall meet at least six times per school year, on a schedule adopted at the first meeting of the year. Meetings shall be held at the school or by virtual means at times that accommodate working families.

Section 2. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Chair, by the principal, or by written request of two members, with at least 72 hours notice.

Section 3. Open Meetings. All meetings shall comply with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Notices and agendas shall be posted publicly at least 24 hours before each meeting, and meetings shall be open to the public except for any executive session permitted by law.

Section 4. Quorum. A majority of the voting members constitutes a quorum. No action may be taken without a quorum.

Section 5. Voting. Each voting member has one vote. Decisions are made by a majority of members present and voting, except as otherwise stated in these Bylaws. Proxy voting is not permitted. Members may participate and vote remotely when permitted by the Council and consistent with law.

Section 6. Minutes. Minutes shall record attendance, motions, votes, and actions taken. Approved minutes shall be kept on file at the school and made available to the public on request.

Article VI – Committees

The Council may establish standing or additional committees as needed, such as Strategic Planning, Parent and Community Engagement, Arts Partnerships, Safety and Climate, and Nominations. Committees shall report to the Council and may not act on its behalf without authorization. Non-members of the Council may serve on committees.

Article VII – Relationship to the School and District

Section 1. The principal shall provide the Council with timely information needed to carry out its duties, including school data, the report card, and survey results.

Section 2. The Council shall work cooperatively with the Parent Teacher Organization, the arts programs' booster or support groups, and any other school organizations, while remaining independent of them.

Section 3. The Council shall have no authority over personnel decisions, individual student matters, or the day-to-day management of the school. Confidential information about students or staff shall not be discussed in open meetings.

Article VIII – Finances

The Council does not generally collect or manage funds. If it receives any funds or grants, they shall be held and accounted for through the school or district's accounting procedures, in accordance with district policy.

Article IX – Conflict of Interest and Conduct

Members shall act in the best interest of students and the school as a whole. A member with a personal or financial interest in a matter before the Council shall disclose it and abstain from voting on that matter. Members shall treat one another, staff, students, and families with respect.

Article X – Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present at a regular meeting, provided that written notice of the proposed amendment was given to all members at least ten days before the meeting. Amendments must be consistent with state law and district policy. The Bylaws shall be reviewed annually.

Article XI – Adoption

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These Bylaws were adopted by the School Improvement Council of Thornwell School for the Arts on October 26, 2026.

Chair: _____ Date: _____

Secretary: _____ Date: _____

Principal: _____ Date: _____