Ballentine Elementary School
Improvement Council By-Laws

The South Carolina Education Finance Act of 1977 and the Amendment by the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act of 1993 directs each school board of trustees to establish an advisory council at each school in the district. Pursuant to this Act, the following are By-Laws of the Ballentine Elementary School Improvement Council.

ARTICLE I: Goals and Activities

Section 1. The mission of Ballentine Elementary School Improvement Council is to make recommendations to the principal to assist her/him on school related issues, programs, goals and activities. In order to accomplish this task, the council shall:

- Assist in preparation, implementation and evaluation of a five-year school improvement plan.
- Determine public opinion of specific school goals and activities and serve as a liaison between school and community.
- Assist with development and monitoring of school improvement and innovations.
- Assist in the preparation of school reporting as required by law.
- Make recommendations for accomplishing goals, objectives and courses of action.
- Provide assistance as principal may request including input to school budget expenditures or other items as required.

Section 2. These By-Laws shall not be interpreted to usurp the authority of the board of trustees or the principal but shall be limited to activities prescribed by the Act and Lexington County School District Five.

ARTICLE II: Membership

Section 1. The Improvement Council will operate in accordance with South Carolina School Improvement Council guidelines. These guidelines require that the number of elected members (parents and teachers) be exactly twice the number of appointed community members. The council must include at least two elected parents, at least two elected teachers, appointed community members equal to half the total number of elected members, and at least one ex-officio member serving as the current school principal.

The council shall not consist of more than twenty (20) members to ensure it is able to effectively support the mission and goals of the school.

Section 2. Term of office. Elected members shall serve two-year terms, and appointed members shall serve one-year terms. Terms begin at the first SIC meeting of the new school year, which must be held within four (4) weeks of the first day faculty report to school.

State law requires that elected members' terms be staggered so that approximately half are elected each year. This ensures continuity and allows experienced members to guide those newly elected. There is no limit on the number of terms an elected member may serve.

If Ballentine Elementary School is significantly impacted by redistricting or rezoning, the following provision will apply:

Any School Improvement Council member who is reassigned from another school to Ballentine Elementary and has one year remaining in their elected term, or who chooses to extend their term for one additional year, may have the option to remain on the Ballentine Elementary School Improvement Council to support continuity and a smooth transition process, provided the membership limit is not exceeded. Any members serving beyond the 20-member limit will be designated as ex officio and will serve in a non-voting capacity.

Section 3. Voting rights. Each voting member is entitled to one vote on all matters brought before the council. Voting is limited to members who are present at the meeting. Ex officio members serve in a non-voting capacity.

Section 4. Ex Officio Members - The principal, assistant principal, and PTO president (or designated PTO Board representative) shall serve as ex officio members of the Council and shall not have voting rights. Their input and perspectives are valued and considered an important part of Council discussions.

Section 5. Eligibility and termination of membership. A member shall meet the following requirements:

- Parents (elected) will have children attending that particular school for the next academic year; i.e., parents of matriculating students will be eligible only at the school their children will attend the coming year.
- Teachers (elected) must be employed in the school.
- Community appointees must work or reside in the attendance area of the school.
- Membership is terminated by failure to meet eligibility requirements or by voluntary resignation.

Section 6: Replacement of members. If an elected or appointed member resigns or is removed, the committee shall continue to operate with the remaining members, provided the minimum membership requirement is met. If the committee falls below the required number of members, the vacancy shall be filled as follows: for an appointed position, the principal shall designate a replacement; for an elected position, a special election may be held. Any replacement shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

Section 7. **Elections -** In accordance with state law, Ballentine Elementary School will complete School Improvement Council (SIC) elections no later than October 15 each year. Provided this deadline is met, Ballentine Elementary may choose to conduct elections either at the beginning of the new school year or during the preceding spring (May–June).

If elections are held in the spring, the newly elected SIC may begin meeting during the summer and will be prepared to begin its work at the start of the school year. In this case, Ballentine Elementary will ensure that parents and families of students who will be enrolling in the fall have an opportunity to participate in the election process.

ARTICLE III: Officers

Section 1. Officers. The officers shall consist of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and other officers that are deemed necessary.

Section 2. Election and term of office. The officers shall be elected annually by the members of the council and shall serve for one year.

Section 3. Removal of officers. Any officer elected may be removed by a two-thirds vote of all members when the best interests of the council would be served.

Section 4: **Chairperson.** The Chairperson shall preside at all SIC meetings and perform all duties associated with the office, as outlined in Section IV. The Chair serves as the primary liaison between the SIC and the principal and works in close partnership with the principal to support the Council's work. Responsibilities include leading all SIC meetings; collaborating with the principal to prepare meeting agendas and ensuring they are distributed and publicly posted at least 24 hours prior to each meeting; appointing committee chairs and members; and monitoring the Council's compliance with applicable state law requirements.

Section 5. **Vice-Chairperson.** The Vice-Chairperson shall support and collaborate with the Chairperson in carrying out the duties of the office and shall serve in the Chair's absence. Responsibilities include assisting the Chair during meetings; presiding over meetings when the Chair is unavailable; supporting the preparation of meeting agendas; serving on or assisting with SIC committees; and performing other duties as assigned by the Chairperson to advance the work and initiatives of the School Improvement Council.

Section 6. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings, file a copy with the Council's permanent records, and transmit a true and correct copy to members and other individuals as deemed appropriate by the Council. The Secretary shall ensure that all required notices are duly given in accordance with the By-Laws and shall serve as custodian of the Council's records. Responsibilities also include maintaining a current register of members' addresses and telephone numbers; recording attendance at each meeting; preparing and distributing meeting minutes to members in a timely manner prior to the next SIC meeting; and ensuring that the annual schedule of regular meetings is posted on the school's website, included on the school calendar, and/or posted at the entrance to the main school office. The Secretary shall maintain a complete and organized set of SIC records in a file located in the school office or other central location, serve on or assist with SIC committees as needed, and perform all other duties incident to the office or assigned by the Chairperson.

ARTICLE IV: Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings. The Improvement Council should schedule no fewer than six (6) meetings during each academic year.

Section 2. Special Meetings. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson or by a majority vote.

Section 3. Agenda. Agendas for regular meetings shall be prepared by the chairperson, in cooperation with the principal, and shall be distributed prior to the meeting.

Section 4. **Place.** The principal shall provide a meeting place.

Section 5. **Quorum.** A majority of the voting members of the council shall constitute a quorum necessary for the transaction of business provided that at least one parent representative is present.

Section 6. Open meetings. All regular and special meetings shall be open to the public and representatives of the school district. Other attendees are not voting members, nor can they be involved in discussions without the council's permission.

ARTICLE V: Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members. Notice of time, place and purpose of proposed amendment(s) to By-Laws shall be given in writing not less than ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting at which such proposed amendment(s) are to be considered. The By-Laws will be reviewed every two (2) years to ensure that the council remains in compliance or if revisions are needed.

Date Revised: January 2026 - February 2026
Date Approved: April 29, 2026

SIC Members 2025-2026
Jason Pawlak - Elected Parent
Grady Martin - Elected Parent
Joshua Standridge - Elected Parent
Laura Bryant - Elected Parent
Jessica Alspach - Elected Teacher
Kate Cahill - Elected Teacher
Madelyn Bowers - Community Member
Jennifer Riddle - Community Member
Angie MacQueen - Appointed Parent / PTO President - Ex-Officio
Robin Bright - Principal - Ex-Officio
Zach Keister - Asst Principal - Ex-Officio
Allison Babb - Asst Administrator - Ex-Officio