

HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOLS

SYSTEM SCHOOL COUNCIL BYLAWS AND GUIDELINES

Adopted May 2001
Revised September 2004, May 2007



School Council Code of Ethics

School Council members shall follow Georgia's Professional Standards Commission Code of Ethics for Educators, as modified. A copy of the code of ethics, as modified, is provided below.

THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATORS and HOUSTON COUNTY SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Introduction

The Code of Ethics for Educators defines the professional behavior of educators in Georgia and serves as a guide to ethical conduct. The Professional Standards Commission has adopted standards which represent the conduct generally accepted by the education profession. The Code protects the health, safety, and general welfare of students and educators, ensures the citizens of Georgia a degree of accountability within the education profession, and defines unethical conduct justifying disciplinary sanction.

Definitions

“Educator” is a teacher, school or school system administrator, or other education personnel who holds a certificate issued by the Professional Standards Commission and persons who have applied for but have not yet received a certificate. For the purposes of the Code of Ethics for Educators, “educator” also refers to local school council members, paraprofessionals, aides, and substitute teachers.

“Student” is any individual enrolled in the state’s public or private schools from preschool through grade twelve or any individual between and including the ages of 3 and 17.

Standards

Standard 1: Criminal Acts – An educator should abide by federal, state, and local laws and statutes. Unethical conduct includes the commission or conviction of a felony or misdemeanor offense, including DUI/BUI, but excluding minor traffic violations such as speeding, following too closely, improper lane change, etc. As used herein, “conviction” includes a finding or verdict of guilt, a plea of guilty, or a plea of *nolo contendere*.

Standard 6: Improper Remunerative Conduct – An educator should maintain integrity with students, colleagues, parents, patrons, or businesses when accepting gifts, gratuities, favors, and additional compensation. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to accepting gifts from vendors or potential vendors for personal use or gain where there may be the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Standard 7: Confidential Information – An educator should comply with state and federal laws and local school board policies relating to the confidentiality of student records, unless disclosure is required or permitted by law. Unethical conduct includes but is not limited to unauthorized sharing of confidential information concerning student academic and disciplinary records, personal confidences, health and medical information, family status and/or income, and assessment/testing results.

Standard 8: Abandonment of Contract – An educator should fulfill all of the terms and obligations of service as a member of the local school council. Unethical conduct includes failure of a Council member to meet the requirements of accountability. See Article XIII, Accountability.

Standard 9: Failure to Make a Required Report – An educator should file reports of a breach of one or more of the standards in the Code of Ethics for Educators, child abuse (O.C.G.A. 19-7-5), or any other required report. Unethical conduct includes the failure to make a required report as soon as possible but no later than ninety (90) days from the date the educator became aware of an alleged breach unless the law or local procedures require reporting sooner.

Standard 10: Professional Conduct – An educator should demonstrate conduct that follows generally recognized professional standards. Unethical conduct is any conduct that seriously impairs the Council member's ability to function in his or her Council position or conduct that is detrimental to the health, welfare, discipline, or morals of students (inappropriate language, physical altercations, etc.).

Reporting

School Council members are required to report to the local school council a breach of one or more of the Standards in the Code of Ethics by members of the Council.

Disciplinary Action

The local school council is empowered to remove council members. Specifically, see: Article IV, School Council Membership.

BYLAWS AND GUIDELINES

O.C.G.A 20-2-85

Westside Elem. SCHOOL COUNCIL

Article I

Name

A school council has been established in Westside Elementary School in the Houston County School System on (date) Dec. 7, 2021. The name of this school council shall be the Westside Elem. Local School Council hereinafter referred to as the school council organized under the authority of the state law and the Houston County Board of Education.

Article II

Preamble and Purpose

Recognizing the need to improve communication and participation of parents and the community in the management and operation of local schools, the General Assembly of Georgia and the Houston County Board of Education believes parent and community support is critical to the success of students and schools. The intent of these bylaws and guidelines is to bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation to solve difficult education problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process.

The establishment of school councils is intended to help local boards of education develop and nurture participation, bring parents and the community together with teachers and school administrators to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other's concerns, and share ideas for school improvement. School councils shall be reflective of the school community.

The management and control of public schools shall be the responsibility of local boards of education, and the school leader shall be the principal. School councils shall provide advice, recommendations, and assistance and represent the community of parents and businesses. Each member of the council, as a community representative, shall be accorded the respect and attention deserving of such election.

Article III

Operational Date

By October 1, 2003, a school council shall be operational in each of the schools in the Houston County School System.

The local board of education shall provide a training program to assist schools in forming a school council and to assist school councilmembers in the performance of their duties. Such program shall address:

- (1) the organization of councils;
- (2) their purpose and responsibilities
- (3) applicable laws, rules, regulations, and meeting procedures;
- (4) important state and local school system program requirements; and
- (5) shall provide a model school council organization plan.

Additional training programs shall be offered to school councilmembers annually. The State Board of Education shall develop and make available a model school council training program.

Article IV School Council Membership

Any member may withdraw from the council by delivering to the council a written resignation and submitting a copy to the secretary of the council or school principal. Should school councilmembers determine that a member of the council is no longer active in the council as defined by the bylaws of the council, the council may, by a majority vote, withdraw such person's membership status, effective as of a date determined by the council.

The property and business of the council shall be managed by a minimum of seven school councilmembers of whom a majority shall constitute a quorum. The number of councilmembers shall be specified in the council's bylaws. Members of the school council shall include:

- (1) A number of parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, excluding employees who are parents or guardians of such students, so that such parents or guardians make up a majority of the council and at least two of whom shall be businesspersons. Parent or guardian council members shall be elected by, and from among, the group they represent.

Note A: An employee of the local school system may serve as a parent representative on the council of a school in which his or her child is enrolled if such employee works at a different school.

Note B: While terms of office are staggered, parents or guardians of any grade-level child enrolled in the school are eligible to vote and hold office, as long as the student is enrolled in that school.

Note C: School Board Members, as parents or businesspersons, are disqualified from serving on school councils but are allowed to vote as a parent from an electing body.

Note D: There is no prohibition in the law for a qualifying person to serve on two or more school councils, where qualified.

Article V
Term of Office

Members of the council shall serve for a term of two years or for such other term as may be specified in the council's bylaws, except as provided in the law. The terms of the councilmembers shall be staggered. Upon the expiration of the terms of the two businessperson councilmembers in office on July 1, 2007, these member positions shall subsequently be filled by parent councilmembers; provided, however, that additional businesspersons may serve on the council if provided for in the council's bylaws in accordance with paragraph (4) of subsections (d) of this Code section.

Councilmembers may serve more than one term.

The term of office of all councilmembers shall begin and end on the dates specified in the council's bylaws.

Article VI
Vacancy on Council

The office of school councilmember shall be automatically vacated:

- (1) If a member shall resign;
- (2) If the person holding the office is removed as a member by an action of the council;
or
- (3) If a member no longer meets the qualifications specified in the law.

An election within the electing body for a replacement to fill the remainder of an unexpired term shall be held within 30 days, unless there are 90 calendar days or less remaining in the term in which case the vacancy shall remain unfilled.

If a school council member misses more than 2 meetings and training sessions of the school council or more than 50 % of meetings and training sessions of the school council, without a valid reason as determined by the school council, the chairperson of the school council shall contact the school council member and inquire as to their intent to remain active in the school council. The chairperson shall report to the school council at its next meeting regarding the school council member's intention to remain active.

**Article VIII
Quorum and Voting Requirement**

Each member of the council is authorized to exercise one vote. *Proxy votes are not allowed. Voting members must be present in order to vote in school council matters.*

A quorum must be present in order to conduct official council business.

At all meetings of the council every question shall be determined by a majority vote of members present, representing a quorum.

The adoption of bylaws or changes thereto requires a two-thirds affirmative vote.

**Article IX
Remuneration**

Members of the council shall not receive remuneration to serve on the council or its committees.

**Article X
Electing Bodies, Election Method, Ballots
and
Posting of Elections and Meetings**

After providing public notice at least two weeks before the meeting of each electing body, the principal of each school shall call a meeting of electing bodies for the purpose of selecting members of the school council.

Note A: Public notice must be provided for School Council Elections at least two weeks prior to the election of each electing body. The School Council Secretary will notify the Director of Community and School Relations who in turn will notify the media of election date and time. Please submit the meeting date and time for public notification to the Director of Community and School Relations at least ten (10) days prior to when the notice is to appear in the legal organ.

The electing body for the parent members shall consist of all parents and guardians eligible to serve as a parent member of the school council.

The electing body for the teacher members shall consist of all certificated personnel eligible to serve as a teacher member of the school council.

The school council shall specify in its bylaws the month in which elections are to be held and shall specify a nomination and election process.

The School Council Secretary should be present to record the minutes of the election. If not, the principal should appoint someone to record the minutes of the meeting. This person may be a part of the electing body.

Once the meeting is convened, the following procedures should be followed:

1. The presiding officer will conduct the nominations and elections.
2. The presiding officer will explain the procedures that will be followed during the election. The Roles & Responsibilities of School Council Members should be distributed. The position(s) available on the council along with the term length should be shared with the electing body. If more than one position is available on the school council, separate election procedures should be followed for each position unless positions and term lengths are the same.
3. The presiding officer will call for nominations from the floor. Nominations from the floor shall be accepted at the meeting of the electing body, provided that the nominee has given prior consent for their name to be placed in nomination. An individual who is not present at the election may be nominated. If not present, the nominee must provide signed written documentation to the presiding officer of the school council election, via the nominator, indicating their acceptance of the nomination and their consent to serve as a member of the school council, if elected. A second is not required according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.
4. The presiding officer will accept nominations until there appears to be no further nominations. The names of those nominated from the floor should be written on a flip chart or displayed on a projector for all to see.
5. The presiding officer will then ask for a motion to close nominations. This motion requires a second and a majority vote of the electing body.
6. Once the nominations have been closed, the presiding officer will instruct the electing body in the voting procedures:
 - A. The electing body will write in the name of the nominee on the ballot for whom they wish to vote.
 - B. The presiding officer should explain that teacher and parent election meetings shall use the plurality method of election. One vote shall be taken with the two highest vote recipients being elected to serve on the school council. Where two individuals tie with the highest number of votes, both shall serve on the council, provided two council positions are open. If only one position on the council is open, then subsequent votes are required until one single individual emerges with the highest vote.
7. The tellers will collect and immediately count the ballots.
8. The tellers will inform the presiding officer of the elected person(s).
9. The presiding officer will immediately inform the electing body, introducing the newly elected representative(s).
10. The presiding officer will collect the used and unused ballots and declare the meeting adjourned.

**Article XII
Immunity**

The school council shall have the same immunity as the local board of education in all matters directly related to the functions of the council.

**Article XIII
Officers and Duties**

The officers of the school council shall be a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. Officers of the council shall be elected by the council at the first meeting of the council following the election of school councilmembers; provided, however, that the chairperson shall be a parent member. The officers of the council shall hold office for the term specified in the council's bylaws.

Officers shall be elected for a term of 1 year(s) and may serve more than one term. (Please fill in the blank with 1 or 2).

The School Principal

The school principal shall have the following duties pertaining to school council activities:

- (1) Cause to be created a school council by convening the appropriate bodies to select school councilmembers; setting the initial agenda, meeting time, and location; and notifying all school councilmembers of the same;
- (2) Perform all of the duties required by law and the bylaws of the council;
- (3) Communicate all council requests for information and assistance to the local school superintendent and inform the council of responses or actions of the local school superintendent;
- (4) Develop the school improvement plan and school operation plan and submit the plans to the school council for its review, comments, recommendations, and approval; and
- (5) Aid in the development of the agenda for each meeting of the council after taking into consideration suggestions of councilmembers and the urgency of school matters. An item may be added to the agenda at the request of three or more councilmembers.

School Council Meeting Minutes from previous school years may also be maintained in this notebook or they may be filed by school year in your archives, provided they are accessible to the public if requested.

A copy of the School Council Meeting Minutes and a copy of any affidavit shall be forwarded to the Director of Professional Learning within three working days (Monday-Friday) after each meeting.

Minutes, at a minimum, shall include the names of the school council members present, a description of each motion or other proposal, a record of all votes, and topics of discussion. In the case of a roll-call vote, the name of each school council member voting for or against a proposal or abstaining shall be recorded. In all other votes, it shall be presumed that the action taken was approved by each person in attendance unless the minutes reflect the name of the persons voting against the proposal or abstaining.

All school councils shall be subject to Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50, relating to the inspection of public records, in the same manner as local boards of education.

At all meetings of the council every question shall be determined by a majority vote of members present, representing a quorum.

Article XVI Committees, Study Groups, and Task Forces

The council may appoint committees, study groups, or task forces for such purposes as it deems helpful and may utilize existing or new school advisory groups.

Article XVII Board of Education and School Council Operational Agreement

The local board of education shall provide all information not specifically made confidential by law, including school site budget and expenditure information and site average class sizes by grade, to the council as requested or as required by state law or state board rule. The local board shall also designate an employee of the school system to attend council meetings as requested by a school council for the purpose of responding to questions the council may have concerning information provided to it by the local board or actions taken by the local board. The central administration shall be responsive to requests for information from a school council.

Article XVIII
Scope of Council Responsibilities

School councils are advisory bodies. The councils shall provide advice and recommendations to the school principal and, where appropriate, the local board of education and local school superintendent on any matter related to student achievement and school improvement, including, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) School board policies;
- (2) School improvement plans;
- (3) Curriculum and assessments;
- (4) Report cards issued or audits of the school conducted by the Office of Student Achievement;
- (5) Development of a school profile which shall contain data as identified by the council to describe the academic performance, academic progress, services, awards, interventions, environment, and other such data as the council deems appropriate;
- (6) School budget priorities, including school capital improvement plans;
- (7) School-community communication strategies;
- (8) Methods of involving parents and the community;
- (9) Extracurricular activities in the school;
- (10) School-based and community services;
- (11) Community use of school facilities;
- (12) Student discipline and attendance;
- (13) Reports from the school principal regarding progress toward the school's student achievement goals, including progress within specific grade levels and subject areas and by school personnel; and
- (14) The method and specifications for the delivery of early intervention services or other appropriate services for underachieving students.

Article XX
Student Information

School councils are not entitled to student information, which is not considered directory information pursuant to FERPA.

Article XXI
Parliamentary Authority

Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the governing parliamentary authority for school councils in all cases applicable but not inconsistent with these bylaws.

Article XXII
Reports to the Board of Education

All school councils are required to submit the following information to the Office of Professional Learning:

- *Adopted School Council Bylaws, using the revised 2007 System School Council Bylaws
- *School Council Agendas and Minutes submitted within three (3) working days following each school council meeting
- *School Council Meeting schedule submitted annually to the Director of Community and School Relations and Professional Learning
- *School Council Member Information and list of School Council Officers