

## **Community Relations**

### **School Governance Councils**

#### **Purpose**

Consistent with its adopted theory of action and commitment to create and maintain a system of high-performing, distinctive schools of choice, the Board of Education will authorize the formation of school-based governance councils to guide the development of its schools. The Board believes that the success of the school and the students it serves is the shared responsibility of school staff, parents or legal guardians, and community members.

The School Governance Council (SGC) is the primary, local school decision-making body of a school devoted to achieve its mission and vision. Toward this end, the SGC will focus on the analysis of student achievement, development of improvement plans, allocation of resources, programmatic and operational changes, and after being in place for three years, a council may vote to recommend that a school be reconstituted in order to improve the quality of the school and the achievement of its students. All members of the council will perform their duties with integrity, discretion and loyalty.

The principal is the chief executive officer of the school and accountable for school quality and student achievement. The principal shall be responsible for forming, developing and maintaining an effective and cohesive School Governance Council.

The councils are not intended to replace parent organizations.

#### **Scope of Policy**

All schools will have a School Governance Council.

#### **Membership and Election**

Members will be elected through a fair, open, widely publicized, recorded, and timely election process. The process for parent election shall be developed by the Principal in collaboration with the school's Parent-Teacher organization or a comparable parent organization. Any staff member employed within the school who has children attending the school where they are employed cannot serve as a parent member on the council; any staff member who lives in the community of the school in which they are employed cannot serve as the community representative on the council.

School Governance Councils shall be comprised of 14 voting duly elected members, plus up to three nonvoting members depending on the type of school involved. The following tables describe the category of membership, the number of members and how they are elected.

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### School Governance Councils (continued)

Member	Number	Election Process
Parents or guardians of students currently attending the school	7	Elected by the parents/guardians of students attending the school, each household with students attending the school will have one vote
Teachers at the school	5	Elected by the teachers of the school
Community leaders within the school district	2	Elected by the parent/guardian and teacher members of the council
School principal or designee (nonvoting)	1	Principal may participate directly or name a designee

Additional members and election process in high schools:

Member	Number	Election Process
Student members, high school councils only (nonvoting)	2	Elected by the school's student body

The Parent Chair of each School Governance Council shall be elected every two years by the 14 members of the council.

All members are equal partners in decision-making, and all decisions are made by consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, decisions are made by a two-thirds majority vote. When a vote is taken, it must be open and recorded; secret ballots are not permitted. Consensus is defined as all members being in agreement or members being able to support the general agreement of the group.

### Requirements

In order to continue to have a strong and effective council, any members that join the council must attend all required trainings provided by the District. Failure to meet training requirements will result in removal from the council. The trainings will provide SGC members with the necessary skills and tools to be active participants in the decision-making process.

Teacher representatives must be teachers in active service at the school and parent representatives must be parents of children currently attending the school.

School Governance Councils shall meet at least six times per year. Absence from two consecutive meetings or half of the meetings will result in removal from the council.

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### **School Governance Councils (continued)**

#### **Terms of Voting**

Voting members shall have a two-year term and no one member can serve more than two terms on a council, if re-elected for a second term. The nonvoting student members shall serve a one-year term, and no student member can serve more than two terms, if re-elected for a second term. After the two terms are completed, the council will have elections in the month of May following the requirements stated in the election process within this policy. This process also includes any vacancies throughout the year. (See Attachment A for Guidance on Election Procedures.) The year of each term shall be from July through June.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **A. Parent-Chairperson**

The Parent Chair shall:

1. Work with the Principal to prepare the agenda and ground rules for SGC meetings
2. Conduct the SGC meetings
3. Select a member to take attendance and minutes of a least six SGC meetings
4. Attend semi-annual district-wide meetings of SGC Chairs /Co-Chairs with the Superintendent
5. Attend annual meeting of SGC Chairs/Co-Chairs with the Board of Education
6. Maintain regular communication with Principal and SGC Coordinator.

##### **B. Principal or School Director**

The Principal shall:

1. Serve as the SGC Co-Chair
2. Work collaboratively with the Parent Chair to prepare the agenda and ground rules for the SGC meetings
3. Inform and provide school related information to the council in a timely fashion, make recommendations, and implement agreed-upon SGC decisions
4. Maintain on file all documentation related to SGC elections (parents, teachers, community members, students), meeting agenda, minutes, and attendance. Provide any of these documents to the Superintendent or his/her designee upon request.
5. Distribute approved SGC minutes to SGC members and school community via email, by posting them on the school's website, or by displaying them in an appropriate and visible space in the school building.
6. Submit a complete list of the elected SGC members to the Chief of Early Literacy and Parent Engagement no later than June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

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### School Governance Councils (continued)

In the exceptional case where the principal is in disagreement with the consensus or two-thirds vote of the SGC, the Deputy Chief Portfolio Officer shall review both recommendations and make a final determination.

#### C. Council Members

The council collectively, shall establish an effective timeline for the following functions:

1. Analyze school achievement data and school needs as they relate to the school's improvement plan.
2. Assist in developing and reviewing the School Accountability Plan (SAP) and advise the Principal before the report is submitted to the Superintendent of Schools. The council as a whole must approve SAP before the Parent Chair and Principal sign the consent form and submit it to the School Governance Council Coordinator by the end of October.
3. Review fiscal objectives of the school's draft budget and advise the Principal before the budget is submitted to the superintendent. The council as a whole must approve the school budget before the Parent Chair and Principal sign the consent form and submit it to the School Governance Council Coordinator by the end of February.
4. Participate in the Executive Search Committee for the hiring of the school principal or other administrators of the school by conducting interviews of candidates and reporting on such interviews to the superintendent of schools for the district and the local and regional board of education. The SGC will complete the Office of Talent Management form stating recommendations and comments of at least two candidates for the superintendent's consideration
5. Assist the Principal in making programmatic and operational changes to improve the school's achievement.
6. Develop and approve a written school parent involvement policy that outlines the role of parents and guardians. Schools that receive federal Title 1 funds are required to have a parent involvement policy developed jointly with, approved by, and distributed to parents. Note: A district Title 1 policy can serve this purpose.
7. Work with the Principal in the promotion of the school as a parental choice relative to its enrollment goals.
8. Work with school administrators in developing and approving a school compact for parents, legal guardians, and students that outlines the school's goals and academic focus identifying ways that parents and school personnel can build a partnership to improve student learning. The council as a whole must approve the school compact before the Parent Chair and Principal sign the consent form and submit it to the Chief of Early Literacy and Parent Engagement.  
  
Schools that receive federal Title I funds are required to have a school-parent compact, developed with parents.
9. Work with the Principal in reviewing data around partnership impact and viability of new school partnerships. Review and approve an after-school program.

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### School Governance Councils (continued)

10. Advise and assist the Principal in the analysis of the school survey data and creation of programs to improve school climate.
11. For those schools mandated by state law, after being in place for three years, a council may vote to recommend that a school be reconstituted using one of the following models for reconstitution: (1) turnaround; (2) restart; (3) transformation; (4) CommPact school; (5) innovation school; and (6) any other model developed under federal law. However, a council cannot vote to reconstitute a school if it was already reconstituted for another purpose. The statute provides a process whereby the council's recommendation for reconstitution must be heard by the local board of education which must accept, modify or reject the proposal. In a case where the council and the local board of education cannot agree on reconstitution, the Commissioner of Education must decide. The State Board of Education cannot allow more than 25 schools per year to be reconstituted under state law (Public Act 10-111).

### Reporting and Oversight

All schools are expected to adhere to all provisions of this policy regarding school governance councils with regard to the manner of representation and conduct of elections.

Each School Governance Council shall report annually to the school's stakeholders on their progress in meeting the goals of the School Accountability Plan (SAP).

The Board of Education shall conduct an annual forum with School Governance Council Chairs and Co-Chairs to assess the implementation of this policy.

Within available resources, the Superintendent shall maintain one website with information about all School Governance Councils that includes an updated schedule of meetings, a link to the minutes of each past meeting, and resources for parents, including, but not limited to, staff contact information and informational materials.

The Superintendent will report annually to the Board on the effectiveness of School Governance Councils as an element of the Board's strategy to close the achievement gap for Hartford students and recommend revision of the policy as warranted.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Education annually to make any changes deemed necessary and make sure the requirements of the policy are met.

Legal Reference: Substitute Senate Bill No. 438 Public Act No. 10-111 An Act Concerning Education Reform in Connecticut

Policy adopted: May 19, 2009  
Policy Revised: November 15, 2011  
Policy Revised: October 15, 2013

HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Hartford, Connecticut

## (Attachment A)

**Process and Checklist for School Governance Council Elections**

The table below presents the process for conducting School Governance Council elections. This process must be conducted in collaboration with the PTO/PTA/PO.

<b>Parent Process</b>	<b>Insert Date</b>	
1. Notice of election and call for nominations distributed to all parents.		✓
2. Closing date for nominations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once the nomination forms come back, notify the persons(s) and determine if they are eligible and if they accept or decline.</li> </ul>		✓
3. Date by which the list of candidates will be displayed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare your ballot with all names of nominees.</li> </ul>		✓
4. Provide an opportunity for parents to meet the candidates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates must be present to accept nomination.</li> </ul>		✓
5. Date by which voting ballots will be prepared and distributed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send out ballots to every household with deadline for return.</li> </ul>		✓
6. Close of ballot. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide various times and methods for parents to cast their ballots.</li> </ul>		✓
7. Vote count. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once ballots are returned, determine election results.</li> </ul>		✓
8. Announcement of new council members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send election results out to school community and to SGC Coordinator.</li> </ul>		✓
9. Schedule first council meeting to elect community members and parent co-chair (principal will preside as a non-voting member). Introduce new members at the council meeting and document in minutes.		✓
<b>Teacher Process</b>		
1. Teachers are in charge of their own election process. Process must be documented.		✓
<b>Community Process</b>		
1. Parents and teachers elect community members.		✓