



FORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNCIL BYLAWS

Article I: Name

A school council has been established at Ford Elementary School in the Cobb County School District on August 17, 2005. The name of this school council shall be the Ford Elementary School Council, hereinafter referred to as the school council, organized under the authority of state law. O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-85 and 20-2-86.

Article II: Purpose

The establishment of this local school council is intended to bring the community and school 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. Ford Elementary School Council was established to help the Cobb County Board 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. Ford Elementary School Council shall be reflective of the school community. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-85(a).

Article III: School Council Authority

The school council shall advise and make recommendations to the principal, Cobb County Board of Education, and local school superintendent on matters relating to school improvement and student achievement. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(s).

The school council shall participate in the selection of the school principal in accordance with the written policy of the local board of education. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(t). (See Administrative Rule CFD(A)(6) School Council Operations).

The school council shall review and approve the school strategic plan. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(s)(2). The school council shall review school site budget and expenditure information, and class sizes by grade.

The school council has the authority to appoint committees, study groups, or task forces for such purposes as it deems helpful and may utilize existing or new school advisory groups. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(o).

The school council shall have the same immunity as the local board of education in all matters directly related to the functions of the school council. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(i).

Article IV: Role of the School Council

Ford Elementary School Council is an advisory body. The school council provides advice and recommendations to the school principal and, when appropriate, the Cobb County 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 strategic plan;
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 school council to describe the academic performance, academic progress, services, awards, interventions, environment, and other such data as the school 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 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.

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(s).

Article V: Membership

A. Size and Composition

At a minimum, Ford Elementary School Council must consist of seven (7) members: four (4) parents/guardians (two of whom must be businesspersons), three (3) certificated teachers, and the school principal. Regardless of the size of the council, parent/guardian members, including elected parent-businesspersons, must comprise a majority of the council. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(d)(1).

Membership may be open to additional members from the above groups, students, staff members, other community business people such as Partners in Education, and/ or other interested school and community representatives as provided in these by-laws.

Taking into account Ford Elementary grade levels, total enrollment, number of various support and service organizations in the broader school community, size of the faculty and staff, and other factors, there shall be 8 members on the Ford Elementary School Council:

Members of the school council shall include:

1. Two parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, excluding parents or guardians who are also employees of the school;
2. Two parents who are businesspersons;

3. Two certificated teachers who are employed at least four of the six school segments at the school, excluding any personnel employed in administrative positions;
4. The school principal; and
5. One member from Partners in Education/business community.

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(d).

B. Accountability

The members of the school council are accountable to the constituents they serve and shall:

1. Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
2. Regularly participate in school council meetings;
3. Participate in information and training programs;
4. Act as a link between the school council and the community;
5. Encourage the participation of parents and others within the school community; and
6. Work to improve student achievement and performance. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(k).

Members of the school council shall not receive compensation to serve on a school council. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(f).

Each member of the council, as a community representative, shall be accorded the respect and attention deserving of such election. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-85(b).

Article VI: Terms

All council members, except the principal, shall be elected for two year terms. The principal shall serve continuously so long as he/she is the principal of Ford Elementary.

Terms of office of council members shall be staggered with the terms of half its members expiring each year. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(e). In order to achieve staggered terms, half of the initially-elected council members will only serve for one year. These council members can either volunteer or be selected at random to serve the initial, shorter term. Once staggering is achieved, all council members will serve full, two year terms.

Council members may serve more than one term.

Article VII: Elections

A. Electing Bodies.

The electing body of the parent members, including parent-businesspersons, shall consist of all parents and guardians who are eligible to serve as parent members on the Ford Elementary School Council. All parents, regardless of whether they are business-persons, shall vote on all parent council members, including business-person parent council members.

The electing body for the certificated teachers/instructional staff members shall consist of all certificated teachers/instructional staff members who are eligible to serve in that capacity on the Council.

B. Scheduling Elections.

The Ford Elementary School Council will hold general elections for new members during August. The term of office for council members shall commence on September 1st and conclude on August 31st.

On behalf of the Council, the principal will publicize the date(s) for the election and will coordinate the

nomination/election process. He/she will give at least two weeks' notice to the respective electing bodies of parents/guardians and certificated teachers/instructional staff members prior to the election date(s).

The principal will use one or more of the following basic communication channels to announce that nominations are being accepted and that elections will be held:

1. Post notices on the school public bulletin board;
2. Make announcements at various meetings involving parents and community members, and staff;
3. Provide message(s) on the school outdoor marquee;
4. Use the school automated phone dial-out system;
5. Email information and a timeline to parents and families;
6. Insert information items and announcements in staff daily bulletins, and school and organization newsletters, as the publication calendar permits.

The Council may also choose to:

7. Send informational mailings to parents/families;
8. Add information to the school Internet home page.

C. Nomination/Election Procedures

1. The principal shall accept nominations for Council members in advance of the election date(s) and shall verify that those nominated are qualified for Council service. Information about the names and qualifications of nominees, including which parent candidates are parent-businesspersons, will be provided to the members of the electing bodies.
2. The Ford Elementary Council will conduct the nomination and election process in accordance with the number of parent/guardian and teacher/instructional staff representative positions it has authorized for Council service. In all cases, the number of elected parent/guardian members must constitute a majority of the Council. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(d)(1).
3. Only parents/guardians who are eligible for membership on the School Council may nominate and vote for their parent/guardian representatives on the School Council. Similarly, only certificated teacher/instructional personnel who are eligible for membership on the School Council may nominate and vote for certificated teacher/instructional staff representatives on the Council.
4. Voting by the electing body will be done electronically during the publicized election date(s) for Council representatives. No member of the electing body may cast a proxy vote for another member.
5. The election of School Council members shall be determined by plurality.
6. Each qualified member of the electing body has one vote and shall be issued one official ballot form to vote for two (2) or more Council representatives.
7. If two (2) or more Council positions are open, then the nominees receiving the highest vote totals will serve; if two (2) nominees tie and two (2) positions are open, then both may serve.
9. However, if only one (1) position is open and a tie vote results, then the principal must conduct subsequent votes until one (1) nominee receives the highest number of votes. The principal shall appoint individuals who are not members of the electing body to count and record the votes in a public place.

D. Optional Selection of Other Members

While parent council members constitute a majority of members of the Ford Elementary School Council, the council will also have 1 additional member selected as follows:

The Ford Elementary School Council will choose one community business member. The selected community business member is in addition to the required minimum of two elected business-person parents.

The School Council will first consider its formal Partners in Education. Should one or more of the Partners be unable to provide a representative to serve, the Council would approach a neighborhood business or an informal business supporter to participate on the Council. Both the principal and the non-business members of the Council may propose names of potential business representatives for consideration. The principal or the Council chairperson may contact the prospective representative to determine his/her interest and availability.

Article VIII: Vacancies

The position of a Ford Elementary School Council member shall be automatically vacated if:

1. A member resigns by delivering a written resignation to the school council;
2. A member no longer meets the qualifications specified by law; or
3. A member is removed by an action of the school council.

The school council may by a majority vote determine a position vacant if it finds that a member of the council is no longer active in the council. A member will be considered no longer active if he/she fails to attend 50% of the meetings of the Council, including trainings. The effective date of a vacancy shall be determined by the Council.

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. O.C.G.A. 20-2-86(e).

Article IX: Meetings

All meetings of the council shall be open to the public. The school council shall meet at least four (4) times annually. The council shall also meet at the call of the chairperson, or at the request of a majority of the members of the school council.

Notice by mail shall be sent to school council members at least seven days prior to a meeting and shall include the date, time and location of the meeting. School councils shall be subject to the Open Meetings Act in the same manner as local boards of education.

The school council secretary shall be responsible for notifying, in writing, the Marietta Daily Journal (legal organ of Cobb County) of any and all meetings of the school council at least twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting.

A quorum must be present in order to conduct official school council business. A quorum is comprised of a majority of school council members. Every question shall be determined by a majority vote of members present. Each member of the school council is authorized to exercise one vote. Proxy votes are not allowed. Members must be present in order to vote. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(f).

An item may be added to the meeting agenda at the request of three or more council members. O.C.G.A. 20-2-86(r)(5).

Article X: Minutes

The Ford Elementary School Council shall be subject to the Opens Records Act, relating to the inspection of public records, in the same manner as local boards of education. A summary of the subjects acted on and the members present at the meeting of the school council shall be made available to the public for inspection at the school office within two business days of the meeting. The minutes shall be provided to the school council members, each of whom shall receive a copy of such minutes, within 20 days following each school council meeting. The official minutes shall be open to public inspection once approved by the school council immediately following the next regular meeting of the school council.

Minutes at a minimum shall include the names of the school council members present at the meeting, a description of each motion or other proposal made, and a record of all votes. 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. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(l).

Article XI: Officers of the School Council

The officers of the Ford Elementary School Council shall be a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. Officers of the school council shall be elected at the first meeting of the school council following the election of school council members. The term of the officers of the school council shall be two year(s).

The chairperson, which shall be a parent, shall develop the agenda for all meetings, preside at all meetings of the school council, and perform such other duties as required by law or as shall be requested by the school council.

The vice chairperson shall, in the absence of the chairperson, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as shall be requested by the school council.

The secretary shall act as the clerk of the school council, record all votes and minutes of all proceedings, give notice of all meetings of the school council, and shall perform such other duties as may be required by law or as shall be requested by the school council.

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(j).

Article XII: Duties of the Principal

The school principal shall have the following duties pertaining to school councils:

1. Cause to be created a school council by convening the appropriate bodies to select school council members; setting the initial agenda, meeting time, and location; and notifying all school council members of the same;
2. Call meetings of the electing bodies after providing public notice at least two weeks before such meetings;
3. Communicate all school council requests for information and assistance to the local school superintendent and inform the school council of responses or actions of the local school superintendent;
4. Develop the school strategic plan and school operation plan and submit the plans to the school council for its review, comments, recommendations, and approval;
5. Provide progress reports regarding the school's student achievement goals;
6. Aid in development of the agenda for each meeting of the council after taking into consideration suggestions of council members and the urgency of school matters;
7. Perform all of the duties required by law and the bylaws of the council.

Article XIII: Board of Education Responsibilities

A. Information.

The Cobb County Board of Education shall provide all information not specifically made confidential by law, including but not limited to, school site budget and expenditure information and class sizes by grade, to the school council as requested or as required by state law or state board rule.

B. School Council Coordinator

The Cobb County Board of Education shall designate an employee of the school system to attend school council meetings as requested by a school council for the purpose of responding to questions the school council may have concerning information provided to it by the local board or actions taken by the local board. The central administration shall respond to requests for information from a school council. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(p).

If requested to attend a Council meeting, this employee shall consult with the principal and the council chairperson to establish a mutually-satisfactory meeting date no later than sixty (60) working days from the date of the original request.

The principal or council chairperson may submit a request for information to the Board- designated employee on the District form (See Form CFD-2 [Request for Information]).The request will be date/time stamped.

The school council coordinator shall provide the principal or the council chairperson the information within twenty (20) working days of the receipt of the request. However, if the information is not readily available in the format requested, the council coordinator will give the principal or council chairperson a reasonable projected date for providing the information.

C. Recommendations

The Cobb County Board of Education shall receive and consider all recommendations of the school council, including the annual report, as follows:

1. Public notice shall be given to the community of the local board's intent to consider school council reports or recommendations;
2. Written notice shall be given to the members of the school council at least seven days prior to such local board meeting, along with a notice of intent to consider a school council report or recommendation;
3. The members of the school council shall be afforded an opportunity to present information in support of the school council's report or recommendation; and
4. The local board of education shall respond to each recommendation of the school council within 60 calendar days after being notified in writing of the recommendation. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(q).

The Council shall meet the notification requirement by filing its written recommendation(s) in the Office of the Superintendent, who is the Executive Secretary of the Board. The principal or the council chairperson will use the District recommendation form. (See Form CFD-3 Council Recommendation to Board.)

The recommendation will be date/time-stamped. The school council coordinator will notify the principal or council chairperson by email within five (5) working days that the council recommendation has been received.

The school council coordinator will begin the process by consulting with the Superintendent and the Chief School Leadership Officer regarding initiating the process. Then, the coordinator will assign a council recommendation relating to a District procedure to the appropriate division/department head for study and disposition.

The Board of Education shall respond to recommendations of the school council within sixty (60) calendar days after being notified in writing of the recommendation. (See Administrative Rule CFD School Council Operations.)

The division/department head receiving the recommendation is responsible for responding to the principal and the council chair and for informing the Superintendent, appropriate administrators and the school council coordinator, who in turn, will inform Board members of the response or suggested actions.

Public notice shall be given to the community of the Board's intent to consider the School Council recommendation or report.

Written notice shall be given to the members of the School Council at least seven (7) days prior to the Board meeting, in which the Board intends to consider the Council recommendation or report. Council members shall be afforded an opportunity to present information in support of the Council recommendation or report.

D. Training

The Cobb County Board of Education shall provide a training program to assist schools in forming a school council and to assist school council members in the performance of their duties. Such program shall address the organization of school councils; their purpose and responsibilities; applicable laws, rules, regulations and meeting procedures; important state and local school system program requirements; and a model school council organization plan. Additional training programs shall be offered to school council members annually. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(b).

Article XIV: Bylaws

The Ford Elementary School Council shall adopt the bylaws as it deems appropriate to conduct the business of the school council. The adoption of bylaws or changes thereto requires two-thirds affirmative votes. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86(h).

Article XV: Parliamentary Authority

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