

BBFA-R Local School Councils

5/17/12

RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE:

The Cobb County School District (District) shall implement school councils with the provisions of the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000.

RULE:

The superintendent shall appoint an employee to assist in the creation, training and operation of the councils.

A. DEFINITION AND ROLE(S):

School councils are intended to "bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation to solve difficult educational problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process." (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-85)

A school council functions as an advisory body, offering recommendations and assistance to the local school principal and, where appropriate, the Superintendent and Cobb County Board of Education (Board) on any matter relating to student achievement and school improvement. The management and control of the local schools shall be the responsibility of the Board.

In its advisory role, a school council may address topics including, but not limited to the following:

1. School calendar;
2. School codes for conduct and dress;
3. Curriculum, program goals, and priorities;
4. The responses of the school to audits of the school as conducted by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement;
5. Preparation and distribution to the community of a school profile which shall contain data as identified by the council to describe the academic performance, academic council deems appropriate;
6. In the case of a vacancy in the position of school principal, the recommendation of characteristics of a person that would best fit the needs of the school;
7. School budget priorities, including school capital improvement plans;
8. School-community communication strategies;
9. Methods of reporting to parents and communities other than through the school profile;
10. Extracurricular activities in the school;
11. School-based and community services;
12. Community use of school facilities;
13. Recommendations concerning school board policies;
14. Receiving and reviewing 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
15. The method and specifications for the delivery of early intervention services.

In the event that the Cobb County Board of Education considers hiring or utilizing school administrative managers, it shall receive and give all due consideration to recommendations by the school council as to whether or not to utilize such position and as to selection of the manager.

B. COUNCIL PROCEDURES:

1. Implementation of Councils:

- a. Each regular Cobb school shall have a school council.
- b. Charter schools, Oakwood Digital Academy, and H.A.V.E.N. Academy are not required to implement a state school council. However, this exception is based on the condition that these sites must be able to show that parents/guardians, the business community, school staff, and where appropriate, students, have the opportunity through other advisory channels to provide input into school operations.

2. Council Membership:

See Form BBFA-1 (Model Bylaws) for additional information about council membership and election procedures:

- a. Each school council shall consist of a minimum of seven (7) representatives, to include the principal, two teachers, two parents/guardians and two business people who are also parents/guardians of students in the school. Specific requirements regarding these members are as follows:
 - (1) A number of parents/guardians, at least two of whom shall be business persons, who are not employed at the school and so that such parents/guardians make up a majority of the council ;
 - (2) At least two certificated teachers, excluding any personnel employed in administrative positions, who are employed at least four of the six segments at the school;
 - (3) Other business persons may be elected by the council from community businesses;
 - (4) The principal; and
 - (5) Other members as specified in the council's bylaws, such as, but not limited to, students, staff, and representatives of school related support organizations. Qualifying individuals selected under this provision may also count as parents/guardians for the purposes of Section (1) above.
- b. The number of parent/guardian members must constitute a majority of council members.
- c. The council chairperson shall be a parent.
- d. See Form BBFA-1 (Model Bylaws) for additional information about council membership and election procedure

C. BOARD/CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT FOR COUNCILS:

1. Model Bylaws:

The District will make available to each council a set of local bylaws (Form BBFA-1). A Superintendent-designated employee shall update these model bylaws regularly to reflect any changes made in the council statutes. Each school council may adopt this set of bylaws initially and then later amend the bylaws by a two-thirds vote of the membership.

2. Training:

The District shall provide an annual training program to support schools in forming school councils and to assist school council members in the performance of their duties. The training shall address the following aspects of school councils:

- a. Organization;
- b. Purpose and responsibilities;
- c. Applicable laws, rules, regulations and meeting procedures;
- d. State and local program requirements; and
- e. Shall provide a model school council organizational plan.

3. Support and Information:

a. Support:

In addition to the training described above, the District shall offer the following support to school councils. The District shall:

- (1) Designate an employee of the school system to attend council meetings as requested.
- (2) Provide the school council all information not specifically made confidential by law, including budget information, as requested.

b. Request for Information:

- (1) School councils may request information from the District utilizing Form BBFA-2 (School Council Request for Information). The council chairperson shall submit the request for information to the District-designated employee.
 - (2) When received by the District, the request will be date/time stamped. The school council coordinator shall provide the principal/council chairperson the information within twenty (20) working days of the receipt of the request; or, if the information is not readily available, provide the principal/council chairperson a reasonable estimate of the date for making the information available.
- c. **Response To Council Recommendations And Reports:**
- (1) After study and consultation with the school community, a school council may submit a recommendation or report to the Board and Central Administration for consideration.
 - (2) The council should submit its recommendation to the Superintendent's Office using Form BBFA -3 (Recommendation to the Board).
 - (3) When received by the District, the recommendation will be date/time stamped, and the school council coordinator will notify the Principal and council chairperson by e-mail within five (5) working days that the council recommendation has been officially received.
 - (4) **Board of Education:**
Board of Education Policy ABB (Board Powers and Duties) acknowledges the Board's intention to comply with applicable state law. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86 offers the following guidance to the Board as it considers recommendations it receives from school councils:
 - (a) The Board shall respond to recommendations of the school council within sixty (60) calendar days after being notified in writing of the recommendation. Public notice shall be given to the community of the Board's intent to consider a school council's reports, recommendations, or any other decision of the council. Written notice of intent to consider such council recommendations shall be given to the school council at least seven (7) days prior to the Board's review of the council decision or recommendation. Members of the school council shall be afforded an opportunity to present information in support of the school council's report or recommendation.
 - (b) Prior to Board review, the school council coordinator, after consulting with the Superintendent and the chief school leadership officer, will assign a council recommendation relating to a District procedure to the appropriate division/department head for study and disposition. The division/department head receiving the recommendation is responsible for responding to the principal/council chairperson and for informing the Superintendent, appropriate administrators, and the school council coordinator. The school council coordinator will then give any staff reports, suggestions or recommendations to the Board for their consideration.

4. **Principal Vacancy:**

In the case of a vacancy in the position of principal the council may be asked by the Chief Human Resources Officer to submit a list of characteristics that would best fit the profile of an ideal candidate to meet the needs of the school.

D. AREA AND DISTRICT COLLABORATION:

1. As needed, school councils within a designated geographic area or District attendance zone may meet as a large group so that councils might consider topics of mutual interest and concern. This session would count as a regular council meeting and would be appropriately posted to permit public participation.
2. The District may establish a District-wide school council body, comprised of the council chairperson and one or more council representatives. This system-wide body would meet at least once annually to facilitate communication and planning among councils. This meeting would not count as a regular council meeting.

Reviewed: 10/28/04

Revised: 7/14/05; 10/11/06; 8/8/07

Revised and Re-coded: 5/17/12 (previously coded as Administrative Rule CFD)

Legal Reference

O.C.G.A. 20-14-0035	Office of Student Achievement-Accountability assessment - office powers; on-site audits; reporting findings and recommendations; other school audits
O.C.G.A. 20-02-0167(e)	Submission of local budget to state board; provision of certain information by local boards to school councils and general public
O.C.G.A. 20-14-0036	Written procedures; training for on-site audits by Office of Student Achievement
O.C.G.A. 20-14-0041	Appropriate levels of intervention for failing schools; master or management team; school improvement team; annual reports; data revision; hearing
O.C.G.A. 20-02-0182(i)2	Maximum class size
O.C.G.A. 20-02-0271	RESA services
O.C.G.A. 20-02-0290	Organization of schools
O.C.G.A. 20-02-0086	Operation of school councils; training; membership; management; roles and responsibilities