

COBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Simpson Middle School Council Bylaws
April 17, 2013

Article I
Name

A school council has been established at Simpson Middle School since **2000** and organized under the authority of State Law. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-85-20-2-86). Hereinafter the Simpson Middle School Council shall be referred to as the School Council or the Council.

Article II
Purpose

School councils are intended to bring the schools, parents and community together to:

- Improve communication and the understanding of issues;
- Address difficult educational problems;
- Improve academic achievement;
- Provide support for teachers and administrators.

Local school councils are established to help the Cobb county Board of Education and the Administration create a better understanding and mutual respect for school and community concerns and promote ideas for school improvement.

Specifically, Cobb school councils are created as described in Sections 20-2-85 and 20-2-86 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) and for the purpose set forth therein. The Cobb County Board of Education and the Administration manage and control the local schools and the principal is the school leader. School councils operate as advisory bodies.

Article III
Authority, Accountability and Roles

Section 1. Advisory authority

As an advisory body, the Simpson Middle School Council may consider a wide range of issues related to student achievement and school improvement. The Council shall provide advice and recommendation to the school principal, and where appropriate, to the Cobb County Board of Education and the Superintendent on matters that include, but are not limited to:

- a) District and school curriculum;
- b) School priorities and academic program goals as outlined and monitored through the School Improvement Plan (SIP);
- c) Data on student progress in various areas such as academics, standardized test information, service, awards and other such data as the School Council deems appropriate.

- d) Programs and offerings, including the delivery of enrichment and intervention services;
- e) Results of school audits conducted by the GA Office of School Achievement or other external entities such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).
- f) School budget priorities, including capital improvement plans;
- g) District and school codes of conduct and discipline;
- h) Board policies and procedures;
- i) Other pertinent and timely topics, including any and all items enumerated in O.C.G.A. 20-2-86(s).

In addition to studying issues and providing advice and recommendations, the Simpson Middle School Council may:

- a) Appoint committees, study groups or task forces and/or utilize existing or new school advisory groups;
- b) Review and sign off on the School Improvement Plan (SIP);
- c) Participate in the selection of the school principal as outlined in the Board Policy and Regulations;
- d) Adopt Bylaws needed to conduct business, with a two thirds (2/3) majority vote.

Section 2. Accountability

School Council members are accountable to the constituents they serve; accordingly, members shall:

- a) Focus on the improvement of students achievement and performance;
- b) Maintain a school –wide perspective on issues;
- c) Regularly participate in School Council meetings;
- d) Participate in information and training programs;
- e) Act as a link between the Council and the community;
- f) Encourage the participation of parents and others within the school community.

Section 3. Relationship with the Cobb County Board of Education

- a) Information and support

In response to a request from the School Council, the Board of Education and the Administration shall make available information not specifically made confidential by law. This information may include but is not limited to school site budget and expenditures data and site average class size, by grade. Such information will be made available as requested or required by State law or State Board of Education rule.

On behalf of the Board, Central Administration will designate a District employee to attend Council meetings when requested by the Council to answer questions, to provide information, or to explain actions taken by the Board.

01. If requested to attend a Council meeting, this employee shall consult with the principal and the council chair to establish a mutually-satisfactory meeting date no later than sixty (60) working days from the date of the original request.
02. The principal or council chair may submit a request for information to the Board-designated employee on the District form (See Exhibit B). The request will be date/time stamped.
03. The school council coordinator shall provide the principal of the council chair the information within the 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 the council chair a reasonable projected date for providing the information.

b) Response to recommendation(s) and report(s)

The Board and Administration shall respond to each recommendation of the Council in a timely manner, within sixty (60) days after being notified in writing of the recommendation.

01. 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 chair will use the District recommendation form (See Exhibit C.)
02. The recommendation will be date/time stamped. The school council coordinator will notify the principal or the council chair by e-mail within five (5) working days that the council recommendation has been received.
03. The school council coordinator will begin the process by consulting with the Superintendent and the Deputy 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.
04. Board members will be advised of the Council recommendation, and a time and date shall be scheduled for the Board's review of the recommendation. The time and date shall be no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the receipt of the recommendation form. (See Board Policy BCFA and Regulations.)
05. The division/department head receiving the recommendations 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.
06. Public notice shall be given to the community of the Board's intent to consider the School Council recommendation or report.
07. 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.

c) Training sessions

The administration and the Board shall ensure that training is provided periodically, at least annually, and scheduled conveniently, with regard to time and location. The training will support schools in forming councils and will assist council members in performing their duties. The orientation shall address the organization of councils and provide a model organizational plan. The training will explain council purposes and responsibilities, applicable laws, rules, and regulations and meeting procedures, as well as important state and District program requirements.

The District will offer additional training on council requests; whenever possible, the training offered will reflect the need and/or interest of a group of schools by area, grade level or other configuration.

Article IV Membership

Section 1. Numbers and Qualifications

The **Simpson Middle School** Council shall consist of at least seven (7) members, to include the following at a minimum:

- a) Two (2) parents or guardians of students enrolled in **Simpson Middle School**, excluding parents or guardians who are also employed at the school.

An individual employed by the Cobb County School District at a location other than **Simpson Middle School** is eligible to serve as a parent/guardian representative on the council of the school in which his or her child is enrolled.

If the Council votes to increase the number of total members beyond the minimum of the seven (7), the council must assure that the number of parent/guardian members equals the number of certificated teacher/instructional staff members. Also, any additional parent or guardian members must meet the same basic qualifications as those set for the standard two (2) representatives.

- b) A minimum of two (2) business persons, chosen from among all businesses that are designated Partners in Education or other community businesses. A business partner is defined as one listed on the official list of Partners in Education (PIE), the program coordinated by the Cobb Chamber of Commerce. This list includes partners at large and friends of partners.

If there are no Partners in Education, the business representative may be a parent of a child enrolled in the school, if that parent or guardian is employed in a business that would meet the general definition of a business in the Cobb Chamber Partners in Education program. Or, the council may select its business members from among neighborhood businesses or from a community business association.

The School Council is solely responsible for identifying at least two (2) business representatives and for describing in its local Bylaws its procedures for selecting business representatives.

- c) At least two (2) certificated teachers/instructional staff members who are employed four (4) or more instructional segments at **Simpson Middle School**. These members must not be employed full or part-time in administrative positions.

A certificated teacher/instructor employed is defined as a regular education or special room teacher, an Instructional Lead Teacher (ILT), a guidance counselor, or a media specialist. Itinerant teachers and social workers who serve more than one school are excluded from service on the **Simpson Middle School**.

Further definition of the teacher

A teacher is considered to be employed at the school if he or she is under direct supervision of the building administrator or subject to evaluation by that person. A teacher who has announced intentions to resign or retire at a future date may be elected to council service while he/she remains activity employed. Upon the effective date of the resignation, the teacher is disqualified from council service.

Possible additional certificated teacher members

If the Council votes to increase the number of total members beyond the minimum of seven (7), the Council must assure that the number of certificated teacher/instructional staff members equals the number of parent or guardian members. Also, any additional certificated teacher members must meet the same basic qualifications as those prescribed for the standard two (2) representatives.

- d) The school principal; and

Other members, such as but not limited to, students, other school staff members, and representatives of school-related organizations. Each Council must specify the number, the type and the qualifications of any other member(s) in its local Bylaws and describe the process for selecting such members.

- e) The PTSA may provide an ex-officio member to attend the Simpson School Council Meetings.

Section 2. Tenure

School Council members shall serve a term of two (2) years, or for a period to be specified in the Bylaws.

Effective with membership terms that expire July 2004, a council shall begin staggering its members' terms. Half of all members shall have initial terms of one (1) year and the remainder

shall have initial terms two (2) years. Whether elected by constituents or selected by the Council, all Council members may serve more than one term.

Section 3. Resignation

A Council member, other than the principal, may withdraw from service by delivering to the membership a written resignation and by submitting a copy to the Council secretary or the school principal. (Refer to Article VI “Vacancy on the School Council”)

Section 4. Removal

Council members determine that a member is no longer active, according to those established standards, the other members, through a majority vote, may withdraw that person’s membership. Any **Simpson Middle School** council member may be removed if three consecutive council meetings are missed. Once Council members determine that a member is no longer active, according to this established standard, the other members, through a majority vote, may withdraw that person’s membership.

The **Simpson Middle School** Council shall determine the effective date of the withdrawal of membership. The Council Chair and the secretary should ensure that a written notice of removal is provided to the member.

Section 5. Compensation

Council members shall not receive any remuneration to serve on the Council or its committees. Reimbursement for travel expenses is not permitted. Teacher/instructional staff representatives may receive staff development unit (SDUs) and a professional development stipend for completing required Council training that would otherwise meet state and local guidelines for awarding of SDUs and stipends.

Section 6. Immunity

The School Council shall have the same immunity as the Cobb County Board of Education in all matters directly related to the functions of the School Council.

**Article V
Election/Selection of Members**

Section 1. Electing Bodies

The electing body of the parent members shall consist of all parents and guardians who are eligible to serve in the capacity on the **Simpson Middle School Council**.

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.

Section 2. Scheduling Elections

The **Simpson Middle School** Council will hold general elections for new members during August.

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 the 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:

- a) Post notices on the public bulletin board;
- b) Make announcements at various meetings involving parents and community members, and staff;
- c) Provide messages(s) on the school outdoor marquee;
- d) Use the school automated phone dial-out system;
- e) Email information and a timeline to parents and families;
- f) 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:

- g) Send informational mailings to parents/families;
- h) Add information to the school Internet home page.

Section 3. Nomination/Election Procedures

Candidates may submit their names for nominations to one of the “two specified term” positions available consistent with qualifying rules in these bylaws. The individual receiving the highest vote count within the one-year and the two-year categories will be elected with a total of two representatives. However, if there is a tie vote, within a category, the principal must conduct a subsequent vote(s) between the two highest count candidates, until one nominee receives the higher number of votes. The principal shall appoint individuals who are not members of the electing body to count and record the votes-listed below. Ballots shall be retained for a minimum of one month after the election results are made public.

- a) The principal shall accept nomination for the Council members in advance of the election date(s) and shall verify that those nominated are qualified for Council service. Information about the names/qualifications of nominees will be provided to the members of the electing bodies.
- b) The **Simpson Middle School** 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 and certificated teacher Council representatives will be equal.
- c) 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.

- d) Any member of the electing body must physically present at the school during the publicized election date(s) to cast a vote for Council representatives. No member of an electing body may cast a proxy for another member.
- e) The election of School Council members shall be determined by plurality.
- f) Each qualifying 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.
- g) 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.
- h) 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.

Section 4. Selection of members

- a) Business members

The **Simpson Middle School** council will choose at least two (2) business members starting first by considering 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. The Council may also invite the parent or guardian of a currently-enrolled student, as long as the parent is employed in a business that meets the general definition used in the Cobb Chamber Partners in Education program.

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 chair may contact the prospective representative to determine his/her interest and availability.

In deciding whether to increase the size of the Council, members will take into account the:

- School grade levels;
- Total enrollment;
- Number of various support and service organizations in the broader school community;
- Size of the faculty and staff;
- Other factors.

The **Simpson Middle School** Council **will not** increase the size of the voting members within the Council beyond the standard seven (7).

Article VI Vacancy on the School Council

The office of School Council member shall be automatically vacated if a member:

- Resigns through oral or written notice;
- Is removed by Council action as outlined in Article IV, Section 5 of these Bylaws;
- No longer meets the qualifications for membership specified by law.

The Chair and the Secretary should ensure that a written notice of removal is provided to the council member.

If an elected representative resigns before the Council has participated in orientation training or has held its first official meeting, then the principal on behalf of the Council may invite the nominee who received the next highest vote total to assume the vacated position. Otherwise, within thirty (30) days of the resignation, removal or disqualification, the principal must call an election within the electing body to fill the remainder of the unexpired term. However, if fewer than ninety (90) remain in the member's term, the vacancy shall remain unfilled until the time of the next regular election.

Article VII Council Officers and the Principal

Section 1. Number/Term of Office/Election

Each School Council shall elect officers—a chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary—at its first official meeting once members are elected. These officers shall hold a term of office of one year or duration of their term on the School Council. Any member, elected or selected, may hold a Council office.

Section 2. Vacancies in officer positions

A vacancy in any Council office at any time and from any cause may be filled for the unexpired term at any regular Council meeting.

Section 3. Chairperson

The elected chairperson shall perform all duties required by law and School Council Bylaws. Chiefly, the chair:

- a) Develops the agenda for all meetings, with input from Council members and assisted by the school principal;
- b) Presides over Council meetings;
- c) Performs other duties as requested by the Council.

Section 4. Vice Chairperson

In the absence or disability of the chairperson, the vice chair shall:

- a) Perform the chair's duties and exercise the chair's powers
- b) Carry out such other duties as shall from time to time be imposed by the School Council, such as serving as Council parliamentarian.

Section 5. Secretary

The secretary shall:

- a) Attend all Council meetings;
- b) Act as Council clerk, which means being responsible for recording all votes and the minutes of all proceedings in a format to be decided upon by the Council;
- c) Ensure that public meetings of the Council are posted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act;
- d) Perform other duties as may be prescribed by the Council.

Section 6. Principal

The school principal may be elected as a Council officer and perform the duties outlined for those offices. The principal shall have the following duties pertaining to school councils:

- a) Cause a council to be created by setting the dates and convening the appropriate bodies to elect members;
- b) Set the initial agenda, meeting time and location, and notify all School Council members of the same;
- c) Communicate all Council requests for information and assistance to the Superintendent or his designee;
- d) Inform the School Council of the responses or actions of the Superintendent;
- e) Develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and school operation plan and submit the plans to the School Council for member review, comments and recommendations;
- f) Provide progress reports on achievement goals;
- g) Assist the Council chair with developing the agenda;
- h) Perform other duties on behalf of the Council as required by law and the Council Bylaws.

Article VIII Meeting of the School Council

Section 1. Place of meetings

All School Council meetings shall be held at the school, except for one (1) or more official training sessions and possibly one Area-wide or feeder pattern meeting each year. Council meetings will be held in a space that is accessible to the public.

Section 2. Regular meetings

All School Councils shall meet a minimum of four (4) times during the calendar year. It is recommended that Cobb County School District Councils meet at least six (6) times during the calendar year.

The **Simpson Middle School** Council will hold **at least six (6)** meetings. At its first official session, the Council shall prescribe the time place, and dates of its regular meeting for the next twelve (12) months. The Council may meet before, during or after normal school hours.

The Council secretary shall ensure that the regular meeting schedule is posted in a conspicuous place at the school that is available to the public. The meeting schedule may be displayed on office or hallway bulletin boards and on the school Internet home page. The secretary shall also ensure that the annual meeting schedule is made available to the general public, including the Marietta Daily Journal, as the legal organ of Cobb County.

Section 3. Called Meetings

The School Council shall meet at the call of the chairperson or at the request of a majority of Council members.

Section 4. Notice

At least seven (7) days before any and all meetings, the Council secretary shall use email, text, or phone to ensure that each member is notified of the meeting. -The Secretary shall use the school electronic newsletter to give notice of a called meeting at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Section 5. Training sessions

If the District arrangements are published in sufficient time, each Council shall include the dates, times and locations of such session in its meeting schedule. Appropriate notices should be posted for training sessions held off-campus.

Section 6. Agenda

The Council chair shall develop a meeting agenda with due consideration for Council member input and the timeliness and urgency of school matters. If three (3) or more Council members so request, the chairperson shall place the requested item on the meeting agenda.

Agenda topics shall be made available to the public upon request. The Council chair shall post agenda topics or a formal agenda at the meeting site as far in advance as is reasonably possible.

Section 7. Parliamentary Authority

The **Simpson Middle School** shall consistently follow either Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised or another recognized parliamentary authority in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaw or State laws.

Section 8. Quorum

At any and all Council meetings, a majority of the membership must be present to transact official business either in person or via teleconference or video-conference. If the Council membership is seven (7), four (4) members constitute a quorum; If the Council has opted to increase its membership, a quorum is defined as a number one-half (1/2) of the total membership plus one (1).

Section 9. Vote Required for Action

At all Council meetings, a majority vote of the members present, representing a quorum, shall determine the questions. Each member:

- Shall exercise one vote;
- Must be present in person, via teleconference, or via video-conference;
- Has no proxy rights to represent another member.

Section 10. Minutes

The secretary shall be responsible for recording the minutes and votes of all Council meetings. All minutes shall:

- Reflect the names of the members present;
- Include a description of each motion or proposal made;
- Indicate a unanimous vote; or
- State the name of persons voting for, against, or abstaining from voting on a proposal if a roll-call vote is taken.

The secretary shall:

- Provide copies of unofficial minutes to each member within prior to or at following the meeting;
- Open the minutes for public inspection once approved as official.

The principal shall maintain custody of the minutes as the permanent record of School Council business, according the district schedule for permanent files.

Section 11. Public Access

- a) All meetings of the **Simpson Middle School Council** shall be open to the public unless specifically exempt in the Opens meeting Act, O.C.G.A. 50-14-1, et seq. If a meeting or portion thereof is closed to the public, all Council members present shall sign the Affidavit required by the Act.
- b) The School Council values input from school staff, parents and the school community on matters related to its advisory role, as outlined in the District Model Bylaws, Article III, Section 1, and in Board Policy BCFA and its Regulations. Anyone having an individual question or concern is urged to address it at school through normal staff and administrative channels.

The Council may offer the school community opportunities to comment on agenda items and/or to identify issues for Council consideration. These opportunities can include but are not limited to:

01. Mailbox(es) physically located in or nearby the school office;
02. An email link to the Council from the School Web page, as feasible.
03. A designated period for public comment at the beginning of each regularly-scheduled Council meeting.

- District students, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a District student, other Cobb citizens or property owners, and/or School District employees may address the Council.
- Speakers would be asked to sign in on a first-come, first-served basis. The Council Chair may give priority to speakers who wish to discuss items listed on the Council meeting agenda.
- No speaker may discuss items that are excluded under the Open Meetings Act, including certain land, legal, personnel or student information items. A speaker may not make obscene, derogatory, or slanderous remarks while addressing the Council.
- The Council Chair or secretary should advise any speaker wishing to share materials of the number of Council members.
- At a minimum, the Council would devote five (5) minutes to public comment. Each speaker would be allotted from two (2) to five (5) minutes, with the Council Chair determining the amount of time based upon the number of speakers.
- If warranted by the number of speakers and the timeliness of the issues(s) being discussed, the Council may vote to increase the amount of public comment time.
- The Council may vote to place an issue identified during the public comment period on the agenda for future meeting. Or, the Council may take other actions to research the topic and to gauge school and community opinions. These actions may include appointing study committees, conducting focus groups, administering surveys or holding public forums.

Article IX Bylaws

The School Council may use these bylaws as a guide in developing the Bylaws it deems appropriate to conduct Council business. Local council Bylaws must be consistent with Federal and State law and Cobb County Board of Education policy. Adopting or amending Bylaws requires five (5) affirmative votes of the Council members. Proposed amendments should be presented in a meeting prior to the meeting in which the vote occurs.

Revised from By-laws adopted August 2004.