

COBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT Smyrna Elementary School Council Bylaws

Article I Name

A school council has been established at Smyrna Elementary and organized in 2013 under the authority of State law. (O.C.G.A. 20-2-85-20-2-86). Hereinafter the Smyrna Elementary School Council shall be referred 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 purposes 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 School Council may consider a wide range of issues related to student achievement and school improvement. The Council shall provide advice and recommendations 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 Strategic Plan (SSP);
- 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 Student 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 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 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 student 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 other within the school community.

Section 3. Relationship with the Cobb County Board of Education

- a) Information and support

In response to a request from a 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 expenditure data and site average class sizes, 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 or the council chair 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 chair a reasonable projected date for providing the information.

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

01. The Council shall meet the notification requirement by filling 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 council chair by email 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 receipt of the recommendation form. (See Board Policy BCFA and Regulations.)
05. 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.
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 based on council requests; whenever possible, the training offered will reflect the needs and/or interests of a group of schools by Area, grade level or other configuration.

Article IV Membership

Section 1. Numbers and Qualifications.

The School Council shall consist of at least eight (8) members, to include the following:

1. **3 to 6** parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, excluding parents or guardians who are also employees of the school;
2. **At least 1** certificated teacher or counselor appointed by the principal or staff.
3. **Minimum of 2** school administrators.
4. **Minimum of 2** Partners in Education appointed by the principal to serve on the council.

Section 2. Tenure.

School Council members who are:

- √ Parents of children at Smyrna Elementary shall serve a term of two (2) years.
- √ Parents of children at Smyrna Elementary may serve for consecutive terms.
- √ Certified Teachers at Smyrna Elementary will be appointed by administration and may serve for consecutive years.
- √ Principal and Assistant Principal shall serve as long as they are administrators of the school.
- √ Partners in Education shall be appointed by the principal to serve as members of the council and may serve for consecutive years.

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.

Section 4. Removal.

Each Council must set a standard for active participation and membership, and define that standard in the Bylaws. If Council members determine that a member is no longer active, according to those established standard, the other members, thorough a majority vote, may withdraw that person's membership. The School Council shall decide if the standard for active membership applies to all members, including any members added by the Council.

The 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 professional learning units (PLUs) and a professional

development stipend for completing required Council training that would otherwise meet state and local guidelines for the 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
Selection of Members**

Section 1. Nominations

The School Council will take nominations during spring (March-May) for the upcoming school year.

On behalf of the Council, the principal will send nomination information to parents through school communication. Nomination forms should be returned to the local school.

Section 2. Nomination/election Procedures

- a) The principal shall accept nominations for Council members and shall verify that those nominated are qualified for Council service.
- b) Parents nominated to the council will serve a minimum term of (2) two years.
- c) If the number of nominees submitted to the principal does not exceed the number of parent council positions available, the nominees will automatically serve on the council without a formal voting process.
- d) If a formal voting process is needed, it will take place in the spring (March-May).

Section 4. Selection of members

- a) Partners in Education will be appointed by the school principal.

The Principal will choose at least two (2) Partners in Education to serve.

- b) Additional representatives
- Other factors.

The School Council **may** increase the size of the Council beyond the standard eight (8).

**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.

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 new members are seated. These officers shall hold a term of office as specified in the local Council Bylaws. 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) Works with the principal in developing the agenda for all meetings, with input from Council members.
- b) Presides over Council meetings;
- c) Performs other duties as requested by the Council.
- d) Must be the parent of a child enrolled at the school.

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 Meeting Act;
- d) Perform other duties as may be prescribed by the Council.

Section 6. Principal.

The school principal may assist the Council Chairperson with 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) Provide progress reports on achievements goals;
- f) Assist the Council chair with developing the agenda
- g) Perform other duties on behalf of the Council as required by law and Council Bylaws.

Article VIII Meetings 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.

It is recommended that Cobb County School District Councils meet at least four (4) times during the calendar year.

The School Council will hold a minimum of four (4) meetings. At its first official session, the Council shall prescribe the time, place, and dates of its regular meetings 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 US Mail, and in addition thereto, may also use email or fax to ensure that each member is notified of the meeting. For any called meetings, the secretary shall contact the Marietta Daily Journal in writing or by telephone at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. The secretary shall be sure that a written notice of the called meeting is posted at the school at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Section 5. Training sessions.

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

Section 6. Agenda.

The Council chair shall work with the Principal to 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 for in advance as is reasonably possible.

Section 7. Parliamentary Authority.

The School Council 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 Bylaws or State law.

Section 8. Quorum.

At any and all Council meetings, a majority of the membership must be present to transact official business. If the Council membership is seven (7), four (4) members constitute a quorum; if the Council has opted to increase the 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 question. Each member:

- Shall exercise one vote;
- Must be present to vote;
- 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:

- Have a minutes summary available within two (2) business days following the meeting;
- Provide copies of unofficial minutes to each member within twenty (20) days following the meeting;
- Open the minutes for public inspection once approved as official, but no later than immediately following the next Council meeting.

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

Section 11. Public Access.

- a) All meetings of the School Council shall be open to the public unless specifically exempt in the Open Meetings 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 the 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 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 issue(s) being discussed, the Council may vote to increase the amount of public comment time.
 - The Council may vote to place an issued identified during the public comment period on the agenda for a 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 a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote.

