

The board places a high value on the establishment of effective communication with parents, community leaders and the public. By establishing school based advisory councils, the board creates a method for obtaining pertinent information concerning curricular, budgetary and personnel needs and the maintenance and care of school facilities.

The service of school advisory council members is entirely voluntary and the board expresses sincere appreciation to those whose interest leads them to serve in this important capacity. The organization, terms, composition and regulations governing operation of the advisory councils shall be determined by the board as authorized by state law.

A. ORGANIZATION

Each school will have an advisory council consisting of a minimum of eight persons who are parents of students in that school during that term of office. The council will also include a community representative, who resides within the school's attendance zone but who does not have children attending that school. The president of each school's Parent Teacher Organization (P.T.O.) and a parent member of the site based management team, selected by the team of the school, will also be appointees to the school advisory council. Board employees are not eligible to serve on school advisory councils.

Advisory council members are appointed by the board for one-year terms commencing on September 1 and ending on August 31. Individuals may only serve on one school's advisory council at a time. Advisory council members may not serve more than three consecutive years at the same school. After a break of one year of service, former council members are eligible for another appointment at the same school. If both parents from the same household are appointed to the same school's advisory council, they represent only one board appointment and represent only one vote during an advisory council meeting.

Principals are expected to schedule monthly meetings of school advisory councils and to keep members informed of the various facets of the school program in operation. Advisory council members can render valuable assistance to the principal in his role as an educational leader. Each council, in concert with the school principal, may organize and conduct meetings at convenient times. The school principal and the council chairperson shall make any necessary decisions governing the agenda for meetings.

School advisory councils are public bodies within the meaning of the North Carolina Open Meetings Law and are subject to all requirements of that law pertaining to notice, closed sessions, minutes, voting and penalties. All meetings shall be open to the public. Minutes shall be kept of the meetings and nine copies shall be submitted to the superintendent's office following each meeting. The principal shall cooperate as needed in this process.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

The school advisory council has an unusual opportunity to influence the quality of the school program. Council members share in the decision-making process in many ways. The councils' primary tasks are as follows:

1. to advise and counsel with the principal and/or superintendent and board concerning curriculum and activities of the schools;
2. to assist the principal and his or her staff in interpreting to the school community the school program and the needs of the professional staff;
3. to assist the principal, his staff and other groups on the care and beautification of the school buildings and grounds;
4. to have the chairman from each school's advisory council meet regularly with the board, at the board's discretion, to receive information and to have dialogue important to the enhancement of effective operation of the schools;
5. to help the P.T.O. and other groups within the community create an environment that will attract and retain good teachers and other school staff members;
6. to assist the school staff in creating a community atmosphere of pride and concern in regard to the school and its program, by encouraging the participation of parents and other citizens in the various activities of the school and by assisting school personnel in recruiting volunteers for the primary reading program, health clinic or other school needs;
7. to serve as a sounding board;
8. to receive suggestions from parents for improving the school;
9. to hear complaints of parents who feel their concerns or problems have not been properly handled by the teacher or principal;
10. to assist the principal in formulating policies and procedures governing the use of school facilities subject to the approval and rules and regulations of the board;
11. to establish a time for regular monthly meetings with the principal, in order to keep itself well informed of the progress and problems of the school so that it may be an effective channel to and from the school community;
12. to assist the principal in handling problems and complaints, when requested by parents or the principal (These problems may be discussed in private conferences or may be taken up at regular council meetings);

13. to advise and counsel with the principal and/or superintendent in articulating the needs of the school for budgetary or bond referendum purposes.

Advisory councils do not handle internal staff grievances and complaints, which are handled through administrative procedures. The councils may advise the principal and/or superintendent regarding community reaction or concern about school problems when there is reason to do so.

Whenever, in its judgment, there are conditions which should be called to the attention of the principal, superintendent or board, the advisory council should avail itself of the opportunity to do so. No individual member should assume the right to speak for the entire council without authorization, although he may speak in an individual capacity, if his opinion varies from that of the group.

C. FUNCTION

The function of the advisory council is to counsel and recommend. The administrative, supervisory and instructional functions are the responsibility of the professional staff. The board is the legally authorized authority to operate the public schools and has final jurisdiction in all matters.

School advisory councils serve as an important communication link to the community, the school and the board. Every effort should be made to enhance the vitality and effectiveness of this appointed arm of the board. Thus, the following guidelines govern appointments to and operation of each council.

1. Individuals or groups may submit to school principals by May of each year names of persons interested in serving as advisory council members. Principals shall then make recommendations to the board by mid-August of each year. Those recommendations for appointment should include statements indicating the nominee's ability to address the needs of the school and school system. The superintendent's office shall provide a recommendation form to principals. Board members may also recommend individuals to principals for appointment.
2. Advisory council appointments will be made at or by the September meeting of the board. Every effort shall be made to create boards that are diverse in their membership.
3. Before they commit, nominees should be asked if they would be willing to serve for one year and should be informed of their duties.
4. Each school is responsible for preparing a packet of materials for each new advisory council member and the principal shall conduct an awareness workshop each year for new and returning members.

5. Efforts should be made to assure that no school has a completely new slate of council members in one year.
6. If a member misses more than three meetings, he or she will be removed from the council. The principal shall then recommend an individual to the board to replace the former member.
7. A brief description of the role of the advisory council and the names and phone numbers of current council members should be published by the school each school year.
8. Advisory council members should be introduced with a brief description of their duties at the first P.T.O. meeting, where applicable.
9. Advisory council meetings should be announced in each school's monthly calendar and an announcement should be sent to the local paper(s).
10. The chairman from each school's advisory council shall meet regularly with the board at the board's discretion, to receive information and to have dialogue important to the enhancement of effective operation of the schools.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -47, -55; 143, art. 33C

Cross References: Compliance with the Open Meetings Law (policy 2320), Closed Sessions (policy 2321)

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