

R277. Education, Administration.

R277-491. School Community Councils.

R277-491-1. Definitions.

- A. "Board" means the Utah State Board of Education.
- B. "Candidate" means a parent or school employee who has filed for election to the school community council.
- C. "Contested race" means the election of members to a school community council when there are more candidates than open positions.
- D. "Days" means calendar days unless otherwise specifically designated.
- E. "Educator" means a person employed by the school district where the person's child attends school and who holds a current educator license.
- F. "Parent" means the parent or legal guardian of a student attending a school district public school.
- G. "Parent or legal guardian member":
 - (1) means a member of a school community council who is a parent of a student who will be enrolled at the school at any time during the parent's or legal guardian's term of office; and
 - (2) may not include an educator that the school employs.
- H. "School principal" means the principal of the school or designee as assigned by the principal.
- I. "School community" means the geographic area the school district designates as the attendance area, with reasonable inclusion of the parents and legal guardians of additional students who currently attend the school.
- J. "School community council" means the council organized at each school district public school consistent with Section 53A-1a-108 and R277-491. The council includes the principal, school employee members and parent members. Each council shall have at least a two parent member majority.
- K. "School employee member" means a member of a school community council that the school or school district employs at a school, including the principal.
- L. "Student" means a child in public school grades kindergarten through twelve counted on the audited October 1 Fall Enrollment Report.
- M. "USDB" means the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.
- N. "USOE" means the Utah State Office of Education.

R277-491-2. Authority and Purpose.

- A. This rule is authorized by Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3 which vests general control and supervision of public education in the Board, and by Section 53A-1-401(3) which permits the Board to adopt rules in accordance with its responsibilities.
- B. Local boards of education are responsible for school community council operations, plan approval, oversight, and training.
- C. The purpose of this rule is to:
 - (1) provide procedures and clarifying information to school community councils to assist them in fulfilling school community council responsibilities consistent with Section 53A-1a-108(3);
 - (2) provide direction to school districts and schools in establishing and maintaining school community councils whose primary focus is to develop, approve, and assist in implementing school plans, and advising school/school district administrators consistent with

Sections 53A-1a-108(3) and 53A-16-101.5;

(3) provide a framework and support for improved academic achievement of students that is locally driven from within individual schools, through critical review of assessments and other indicators of student success, by establishing meaningful, measurable goals and implementing research-based programs and processes to reach the goals;

(4) encourage increased participation of the parents, school employees and others that support the purposes of the school community councils;

(5) encourage compliance with the law; and

(6) increase public awareness of:

(a) school trust lands and related land policies;

(b) management of the permanent State School Fund established in Utah Constitution Article X, Section 5; and

(c) educational excellence.

R277-491-3. School Community Council Member Election Provisions.

A. Each school shall establish a timeline for the election of parent or legal guardian members of a school community council; the timeline shall remain consistent for at least a four-year period.

B. A school shall hold the election for the parent or legal guardian members of a school community council near the beginning of the school year or in the spring and completed before the last week of school.

C. If a school holds the election in the spring, the school community council shall attempt to notify parents of incoming students about the opportunity to run for the council, and provide those parents with the opportunity to vote in the election.

D. A school community council member's term lasts two years.

A school community council shall stagger terms so that approximately half of the council positions are elected each year.

E. A public school that is a secure facility, juvenile detention facility, hospital program school, or other small special program may receive School LAND Trust Program funds without having a school community council if the school demonstrates and documents a good faith effort to recruit members, have meetings and publicize results.

The local board of education shall make this determination.

F. Each school community council shall determine the size of the council by a majority vote of a quorum of council members, provided that the resulting council has at least one employee member, the principal, and a two person majority of parents.

G. The principal shall provide notice of the school community council elections to the school community at least 10 days prior to the elections. The principal shall include in the notice the dates, times, and location of the election, the positions up for election, and information about becoming a candidate.

H. Parents and guardians may stand for election as parent or guardian members of a school community council at a school consistent with the definition of parent member in R277-491-1G.

I. The USOE encourages school community councils to establish clear and written timelines and procedures for school community council elections that may include receiving information from applicants in a timely manner.

J. A school need only conduct an election if the school community

council position(s) are contested.

K. Parents may vote for the school community council parent members if their child(ren) are enrolled at the school, or to the extent possible consistent with R277-491-3C.

L. School community councils may establish procedures that allow for ballots to be clearly marked and mailed to the school in the case of distances that would otherwise discourage parent participation. Hand-delivered or mailed ballots shall meet the same timelines for voters voting in person.

M. Entire school districts or schools may allow parents to vote by electronic ballot. The school district or school shall clearly explain on its website the opportunity to vote by electronic means, if allowed by the school district or school.

N. Following the election, if those taking part in the election elect to the council more parent members who are educators in that district than parents who are not educators in that district, the parents on that council shall appoint additional parent members until the number of parent members who are not educators exceeds the number of parent educators in that district.

O. School community council members who were duly elected or appointed prior to a subsequent change in law or Board rule may complete the term for which they were elected. All school community council members shall satisfy requirements of Utah law and Board rule in subsequent terms.

R277-491-4. Local School Board and School District Responsibilities Relating to School Community Councils.

A. Local boards of education may ask school community councils to address local issues at the school community council level for discussion before bringing the issues to local boards of education.

Local boards of education may ask school community councils for information to inform local board decisions.

B. A local school board, in compliance with Section 53A-1a-108, shall ensure that all council members receive annual training, including training for the chair and vice chair about their specific responsibilities, and about the school community council requirements of Sections 53A-1a-108, 53A-1a-108.1, 53A-16-108.5, and 53A-16-101.5.

C. A school or school district administrator shall not prohibit or discourage a school community council from discussing any issue or concern not prohibited by law and raised by any school community council member.

R277-491-5. School Community Council Principal Responsibilities.

A. Following the election, the principal shall enter and electronically sign on the School LAND Trust website a Principal's Assurance Form affirming the school community council's election, that vacancies were filled after the elections, as necessary, and that the school community council's bylaws or procedures comply with Section 53A-1a-108 and R277-477 and R277-491.

B. A principal may not serve as chair or vice-chair of the school community council.

C. Annually, on or before October 20, the principal shall provide the following information on the school website, in the school office, and if needed, through a method that the council decides is

best for the parents at the school who do not have internet access, and as provided in Section 53A-1a-108 and 53A-1a-108.1:

(1) A list of the members of the school community council and each member's direct email or phone number, or both;

(2) The school community council meeting schedule; and

(3) A summary of the annual report describing how the school used the School LAND Trust Program funds consistent with Section 53A-1a-108.1(5)(b) and R277-477-4C.

D. Principals shall ensure that school websites fully communicate the opportunities provided to parents to serve on the school community council and how parents can directly influence the expenditure of the School LAND Trust Program funds. Principals shall include on the website each school's dollar amount received each year through the program.

R277-491-6. School Community Council Chair Responsibilities.

A. After the council is seated each year, the council shall elect a chair from the parent members and a vice-chair from the parent or school employee members.

B. The school community council chair or designee shall:

(1) post the school community council meeting information (time, place and date of meeting; meeting agenda; and previous meeting draft minutes) on the school's website at least one week prior to each meeting;

(2) set the agenda for every meeting;

(3) conduct every meeting;

(4) assure that written minutes are kept consistent with Section 53A-1a-108.1(8);

(5) inform council members on resources available on the School LAND Trust website;

(6) assure that the council adopts a set of rules of order and procedures, including procedures for electing the chair and vice-chair, that the chair follows to conduct each meeting. The principal shall post these rules on the school website and make them available at each meeting; and

(7) welcome and encourage public participation.

C. School community council responsibilities do not allow for closed meetings, consistent with Section 53A-1a-108.1.

R277-491-7. School Community Council Business.

A. School community councils shall report on plans, programs, and expenditures at least annually to local boards of education and cooperate with USOE monitoring and audits.

B. School community councils shall encourage participation on the school community council and may recruit potential applicants to apply for open positions on the council.

C. The USOE encourages:

(1) school community councils to establish clear and written procedures governing the removal from office of a member who moves away or consistently does not attend meetings, and additional clarifications to assist in the efficient operation of school community councils, consistent with the law and Board rules; and

(2) school principals to attend all school community council meetings.

R277-491-8. Development of Plans.

A. School community council members shall participate fully in the development of various school plans described in Section 53A-1a-108(3) including, at a minimum:

- (1) The School Improvement Plan;
- (2) The School LAND Trust Plan;
- (3) The Reading Achievement Plan (for elementary schools); and
- (4) The Professional Development Plan.

B. The USOE encourages school community councils to advise and inform elected local school board members and other interested community members regarding the uses of these funds.

R277-491-9. Failure to Comply with Rule.

A. If a school district, school, or school community council fails to comply with the provisions of this rule, the School Children's Trust Director appointed under Section 53A-16-101.6 may report such failure to the Audit Committee of the Utah State Board of Education.

B. The Audit Committee of the Utah State Board of Education may recommend to the Board a reduction or elimination of School LAND Trust funds for a school district or school if the Audit Committee finds that the school district, school, or school community council has failed to comply with Utah law or Board rule.

KEY: school community councils

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Authorizing, and Implemented or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3; 53A-1-401(3)