

Stephens County 5th Grade Academy

School Governance Council Bylaws

[Revised September 2017]

Article I General

The Georgia Department of Education approved Stephens County Schools application for “charter system” status in August 2014. The application included the formation of School Governance Councils at each school within the district. The Stephens County 5th Grade Academy Governance Council operates under the authority of the charter contract between Stephens County Schools and the Georgia Department of Education.

Article II Purpose

The purpose of the School Governance Council shall be to improve communication and participation of parents and the community in the management and operation of Stephens County 5th Grade Academy. The School Governance Council shall work to bring the community and the school closer together in a spirit of cooperation to solve difficult education problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process. The School Governance Council may provide advice and recommendations to the Board of Education and the principal.

Article III Membership

Section 1. Number and Qualifications. The School Governance Council shall consist of seven (7) members. Members shall include:

- a. Two (2) parents or guardians of students enrolled in Stephens County 5th Grade Academy, excluding parents or guardians who are also employed at Stephens County 5th Grade Academy;
- b. Two (2) community members selected by the principal and approved by the School Governance Council;
- c. Two (2) staff members, one of which is a certified staff member; and
- d. The school principal.
- e. Stephens County Middle School and Stephens County High School will include two students on the School Governance Council. Student representatives will be appointed for a one year term by members of the Organizational Leadership Council of each school and recommended by the principal to the School Governance Council. The student representatives will be non-voting, non-officer members.

Section 2. Tenure. Members, except students, shall serve for a term of three (3) years, parents will serve 2 years at TES and 1 year at 5th Grade Academy. The term of office shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30. Parents serving as School Governance Council members must have a child enrolled in Stephens County 5th Grade Academy. For members chosen for the 2017-2020 cycle, the School Governance Council may designate by resolution a one-time set of terms in which positions are served for one, two, or three years in order to provide for staggered rotation of members. The election ballot for parents and staff as well as the appointment letter for community members must clearly specify the term for the individual members.

(Revised September 2017)

Section 3. Resignation. Any member may withdraw from the School Governance Council by delivering to the School Governance Council a written resignation and submitting a copy to the secretary of the School Governance Council or school principal.

Section 5. Removal. School Governance Council members can be removed from their duty to serve for lack of participation, conflict of interest issues, or lack of adherence to the bylaws. Removal requires an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the School Governance Council at any regular or called meeting. A member of the School Governance Council shall be deemed inactive if the member has missed annually more than 75% of the regularly scheduled meetings of the School Governance Council. The School Governance Council shall determine the effective date of the removal.

Section 6. Conflict of Interest. All School Governance Council members are required to sign a Conflict of Interest Statement.

Article IV Election of Members

Section 1. Electing Bodies. The electing body of the parent members shall consist of all parents and guardians of students enrolled at Stephens County 5th Grade Academy. The electing body for the staff members shall consist of all employees of Stephens County 5th Grade Academy.

Section 2. Elections. After providing public notice at least two (2) weeks before the election, the principal shall call for the election of the School Governance Council parent members. The election will be held during a designated, advertised window of time. Elections will be held in such a manner as to encourage high participation rates by the electing bodies. The principal will be responsible for making sure that parents are reasonably notified about the election procedures.

Section 3. Election Method for Parent and Teachers. Only members of the electing body shall be qualified to nominate and elect individuals to the School Governance Council. Any member of the electing body may make a written nomination for the School Governance Council by the advertised deadline. Voting shall be by secret ballot, and each electing member shall receive only one ballot. Members of the electing body must be present to vote. The assistant principal will be responsible for counting the ballots. Ballots shall be maintained at the school.

Article V Vacancy on the School Governance Council

The office of School Governance Council member shall be automatically vacated if a member resigns, is removed by action of the School Governance Council pursuant to Article III, Section 5 of these Bylaws, or no longer meets the qualifications for membership specified in the bylaws.

If the vacated position is a parent or staff representative, the School Governance Council will accept written statements of interest from candidates meeting the parent or staff member requirements as outlined in Article III, Section 1a. The School Governance Council will vote on the candidates. The candidate receiving the most votes will be appointed to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. If the vacated position is a community member or student member, the principal will bring a recommendation for the replacement before the School Governance Council for approval. Appointments shall be held within sixty (60) calendar days of the date of the resignation, removal, or disqualification, unless there are ninety (90) calendar days or less remaining in the term in which case the vacancy shall remain unfilled.

(Revised May 2015)

Article VI Officers

Section 1. Number and Term of Office. The officers of the School Governance Council shall be a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. Officers shall hold office for one (1) year.

Section 2. Election. Officers of the School Governance Council, shall be elected by the School Governance Council at the first meeting of the School Governance Council following the election of School Governance Council members. The current chairperson shall conduct the election of the officers. If the current chairperson is no longer a member of the School Governance Council, the school principal shall conduct the election.

Section 3. Vacancies. A vacancy in any office at any time and from any cause may be filled for the unexpired term at any meeting of the School Governance Council.

Section 4. Chairperson. Chairperson of the School Governance Council shall perform all of the duties required by law and the Bylaws of the School Governance Council. The Chairperson works with the Council to develop the agenda and manages discussions at the meetings. The Chairperson calls for votes on action items.

Section 5. Vice Chairperson. The vice chairperson shall, in the absence or disability of the chairperson, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as shall be required by the School Governance Council.

Section 6. Secretary. The secretary shall attend all meetings, act as clerk of the School Governance Council, and be responsible for arranging the recording of all votes and minutes. The secretary shall give or cause to be given public notice of all meetings of the School

Governance Council. The secretary will be responsible for posting or giving cause to be posted meeting summaries and meeting minutes according to timelines established in Article XII Section 7 of the Bylaws. The secretary shall perform other duties as may be prescribed by the School Governance Council.

Article VII Meetings of the School Governance Council

Section 1. Regular Meetings. The School Governance Council shall meet as decided by the members. The School Governance Council shall prescribe the time, place, and dates of its regular meetings for the year at its first meeting. The schedule of the regular meetings shall be available to the general public, including being posted on the school web-site, and being posted in a conspicuous place available to the public at the school. The School Governance Council will meet monthly. Regular meetings may be cancelled or postponed without notice.

Section 2. Called Meetings. The School Governance Council shall meet at the call of the chairperson or at the request of a majority of the members of the School Governance Council.

Section 3. Notice. Notice shall be sent by the secretary to School Governance Council members at least seven (7) days prior to any and all meetings of the School Governance Council and shall include the date, time, and location of the meeting. The secretary shall also post a written notice at the school of any called meeting.

Section 4. Agenda. The school principal shall set the initial agenda, meeting time, and location of the School Governance Council and notify all School Governance Council members. Thereafter, the chairperson shall develop, with the aid of the school principal, an agenda for each meeting of the School Governance Council after taking into consideration suggestions of School Governance Council members and the urgency of school matters. An item may be added to the agenda at the request of three (3) or more School Governance Council members. The agenda shall be available to the public upon request, and the chairperson shall post the agenda at the meeting site and on the school web-site no more than two weeks in advance of the meeting date.

Section 5. Quorum. At meetings of the School Governance Council, a majority of the voting members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Members may participate by phone or video.

Section 6. Vote Required for Action. At all meetings of the School Governance Council, every action item shall be determined by a majority vote of members present, representing a quorum. Each member of the School Governance Council is authorized to exercise one vote. Council members must be present to vote. Members participating by phone or video can vote. There shall be no representation by proxy of any member of the School Governance Council at any meeting.

Section 7. Minutes. The secretary shall be responsible for arranging the recording all votes and minutes of all meeting. The minutes shall include the names of the members present and a description of each motion or proposal made. In recording votes, the minutes shall state the

name of each person voting for or against a proposal if a roll-call vote is taken. In all other votes, it shall be presumed that the action taken was approved by each person in attendance unless the minutes reflect the name of the person voting against the proposal or abstaining. The secretary shall provide a draft copy of the minutes to each School Governance Council member within twenty (20) days following each School Governance Council meeting. The minutes will be approved at the next regular meeting of the Council. The minutes shall be open to public inspection once approved as official by the School Governance Council. Minutes shall become permanent records of the School Governance Council and shall be in the custody of the school principal and maintained in the school office. A summary of all actions taken at the School Governance Council meeting will be posted at the school and on the school web-site within 2 business days of the meeting.

Section 8. Public Access. All meetings of the School Governance Council shall be open to the public unless specifically exempt in the Open Meetings Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1, et seq.

Section 9. Public Participation. The School Governance Council may elect to add an opportunity for public participation to the agenda. In an effort to ensure that public participation in School Governance Council meetings is orderly and meaningful, the School Governance Council has put procedures in place. These procedures are outlined on the Public Participation Opportunity Agreement (Appendix A). Participants wishing to speak must submit a signed Public Participation Opportunity Agreement to The School Governance Council prior to the beginning of the public participation session.

Article VIII School Governance Council Responsibilities

Section 1. Duties. The School Governance Council directs the school towards achieving its mission and makes sure the school's efforts and resources are properly focused towards that goal. The School Governance Council will render decisions regarding various aspects of the school program. The School Governance Council shall provide advice and recommendations to the school principal and, where appropriate, to the Stephens County Board of Education and the Superintendent on any matter related to student achievement and school improvement including, but not limited to, the following:

a. School policies; b. School improvement plans; c. Curriculum and state assessments; d. Accountability Reports; e. School budget priorities, including school capital improvement plans; g. School-community relations; h. Parental Involvement; i. School programs

Section 2. Accountability. The members of the School Governance Council are accountable to the constituents they serve and shall:

a. Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;

b. Regularly participate in School Governance Council meetings; c. Participate in information and training programs; d. Act as a link between the School Governance Council and the community; e. Encourage the participation of parents and others within the school community; and f. Work to improve student achievement and performance.

Section 3. Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest. All School Governance Council members understand and acknowledge that no person shall be eligible to serve as a member of the School Governance Council unless he or she has read and understands the Code of Ethics and the Conflict of Interest Statement (Appendix B) and has provided a signature agreeing to abide by them.

Article IX Committees, Study Groups, Task Forces

The School Governance Council may appoint committees, study groups, or task forces for such purposes as it deems helpful and may utilize existing or new school advisory groups. Committees, study groups and task forces are formed on an as needed basis. These groups do not act in lieu of the governance Councils. They are to carefully consider information and bring recommendations to the governance Council for action.

Article X Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the School Governance Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws or state law.

Article XI Amendment of Bylaws

These Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the School Governance Council, provided that the amendments have been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting and are not inconsistent with applicable federal and state law or Stephens County Board of Education policy. Action by the School Governance Council with respect to the Bylaws shall be taken by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members.

APPENDIX A

Public Participation Opportunity Agreement

The Stephens County 5th Grade Academy Governance Council is providing the public with an opportunity to communicate with members of the School Governance Council prior to the regularly scheduled Board meetings. In requesting to speak to the School Governance Council, the following should be noted:

- 1. Concerns about specific employees cannot be discussed. These matters should be discussed with the Superintendent and/or principal to determine the best means for addressing the concerns.*
- 2. Specific student discipline concerns cannot be discussed. Concerns of this nature will need to go through the proper channels.*
- 3. The time allotted for the session will be no more than ten minutes.*
- 4. The time allotted for each individual to speak will be determined by the number of requests received. Speakers will be allowed up to two minutes. If more than five individuals wish to speak, the time will be reduced accordingly.*
- 5. Members of the Council may or may not respond to the remarks made by individuals.*
- 6. The chairman reserves the right to stop the proceedings at any time to maintain order or for other purposes.*
- 7. The School Governance Council cannot take any official action during these sessions.*

I have read and understand and will abide by the guidelines as stated above.

Signature _____

Print Name _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

CODE OF ETHICS

The Stephens County 5th Grade Academy School Governance Council desires to operate in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible and to that end the Council adopts this Code of Ethics and each member of the Council agrees that he or she will:

Governance Structure

1. Recognize that the authority of the Council rests only with the Council as a whole and not with individual Council members and act accordingly.
2. Support the delegation of authority for the day-to-day administration of the school to the principal and act accordingly.
3. Honor the chain of command and refer problems or complaints consistent with the chain of command.
5. Do not provide direction to staff or influence staffing decisions, with the exception of the principal.
6. Use reasonable efforts to keep the principal informed of concerns or specific recommendations that any member of the Council or community may bring to the Council.

Strategic Planning

1. Reflect through actions that his or her first and foremost concern is for the educational welfare of all children.
2. Participate in all planning activities to develop the vision and goals of the Council and the school system.
3. Work with the Council and the principal to ensure prudent and accountable uses of the resources of the school.
4. Render all decisions based on available facts and his or her independent judgment and refuse to surrender his or her judgment to individuals or special interest groups.
5. Uphold and enforce all applicable laws, all rules and regulations of the State Department of Education and all court orders pertaining to the school system.

Meetings

1. Attend and participate in regularly scheduled and called meetings.
2. Be informed and prepared to discuss issues to be considered on the agenda.
3. Work with other Council members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during the discussion and resolution of issues at meetings.

Conflict of Interest

1. No governance Council member shall use or attempt to use his or her official position to secure personal gain, unwarranted privileges, advantages, or employment for himself or herself, his or her immediate family member, or others.
2. Council members are to represent the interest all students.
3. Council members are not to receive fees for speaking to groups or organization.
4. Council members should announce potential conflicts of interest before Council action is taken and recuse themselves from voting or discussion for any agenda item in which they have a personal conflict.
5. Council members shall not directly or indirectly accept, solicit, receive or agree to receive any gift, rebate, benefit, favor, service or other thing of value from any vendor or prospective vendor. Exceptions include meals at activities, awards, items for all employees, gifts under \$25, gifts intended for the school.

I have read and understand and will abide by the code of ethics as stated above.

Member Signature

Member Signature

Member Signature

Member Signature

Member Signature

Member Signature

Member Signature

Date