



Advisory Committee Handbook

A Guide to School Board Advisory Committees

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Thank you for volunteering to serve on an advisory committee for the Webster Groves School District (WGSD). Your work on the committee is an important opportunity for the District to get input from the community, to benefit from your knowledge and skills, and to form a shared vision that ensures the District's goal of "Success for Every Student." This document is designed as a tool to help guide you in your Board-appointed roles.

Board of Education, WGSD

WHAT IS THIS GUIDE?

In this guide, you will learn about the policies that govern the Webster Groves School District advisory committees. This includes committee member terms, the administrative responsibilities of the committee members, and the organization and rules for meetings. District Liaisons, Board Liaisons and students are resources to help the committees function to their highest potential.

MEMBERSHIP AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Each committee shall consider the broad range of knowledge, skills, interests and perspectives needed to accomplish the work of the advisory committee. When designing the membership outlined in the bylaws, the committee shall consider:

The different age groups served by the schools (e.g., pre-school, elementary, middle, high school).

A membership that reflects the schools and community in terms of diversity, ability and geography, including traditionally under-represented groups needed to bring perspective and/or inform the work of the committee.

A sufficient range of backgrounds and viewpoints, including students, parents, educators and other professionals or business representatives, who can inform the work.

General Members of the Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) and Building Advisory Committee (BAC) shall be residents of the district or parents/guardians of a student within the district and shall be appointed by the Board for a term of three years. Qualifications to be considered by the Board in appointing members of an Advisory Committee shall include the following:

- a. Professional training and proven expertise in finance, accounting, facilities management or construction.
- b. Dedication to serving the District and community;

- c. Willingness to serve as a community liaison;
- d. Commitment to complying with Board policies and Advisory Committee Guidelines, including regular attendance at scheduled meetings; and
- e. Ability to work as part of a team.

In addition to the General Members of an Advisory Committee, the following parties shall also be members of the Finance Advisory Committee (District Liaisons):

- a. The COO/CFO of the District; and
- b. The Director of Business Services of the District; and
- c. One building administrator of the District; and
- d. One current Board member as designated by the Board of Education.

In addition to the General Members of an Advisory Committee, the following parties shall also be members of the Building Advisory Committee (District Liaisons):

- a. The COO/CFO of the District; and
- b. The Director of Operations of the District; and
- c. The Construction Project Manager of the District; and
- d. One building administrator of the District; and
- e. One current Board member as designated by the Board of Education.

In addition to the General Members and the District Liaisons, Advisory Committees may also include as non-voting members, up to two (2) students enrolled in the District (Student Liaisons). Appointment of the Student Liaisons shall be for one-year terms as approved by the Board of Education. The Student Liaisons will be selected in collaboration with the Superintendent and High School Principal.

The FAC and BAC shall not exceed nine (9) members at any one time, exclusive of the Liaisons.

New members of an Advisory Committee shall begin their terms on July 1 of each year and serve for three consecutive years, unless terminated earlier as set forth in the bylaws. If a seat on an Advisory Committee becomes vacant before the completion of a member's three-year term,

the Board may, at its discretion, appoint a new member to complete the remaining term of such former Advisory Committee member. The terms of Advisory Committee members shall be staggered such that one-third of the terms end each year. Members shall not be permitted to serve on Advisory Committees for more than twelve (12) consecutive years. District Liaisons of Advisory Committees shall not be subject to the requirements regarding the length of time members are required or permitted to serve on Advisory Committees.

RECRUITING AND ATTENDANCE

A dynamic committee needs new people and an ability to incorporate those new people into the work. The Committee Chair is responsible for managing the recruitment effort and monitoring attendance to encourage and assist current members in their participation.

Recruitment

Throughout the school year, the advisory committees should analyze their membership, paying particular attention to the number of members, their participation and engagement, the needs of the District, the skill makeup of the members, and whether the current members represent the community in demographics and geography. Recruiting needs can be communicated through WGSD as well as existing committee members and calls for additional members should be communicated through regular district communication outlets and can be geographically targeted if needed in order to equitably represent the community. The Committee Chair and COO/CFO will facilitate the administrative work around recruiting and vetting applications. The COO/CFO's office will assist in advertising vacancies and in the processing of all applications.

Attendance

Attendance and minutes must be taken and kept for each meeting and will typically be taken by the Committee Secretary. Each member (as well as District Liaisons) is expected to attend at least 75% of the scheduled, regular meetings throughout one school year. If a member's attendance falls short of 75% over the course of a year, the Committee Chair will notify that member and formally remind the member of the expectations and needs of the committee. Members who do not attend meetings and do not have excused absences may be removed from the committee by the School Board. The COO/CFO will assist with placing the issue on the School Board agenda and the Advisory Committee Chair will communicate with the member.

If a committee has been unable to produce a quorum after three meetings due to lack of attendance, the Committee Chair must report this to the COO/CFO. At that time, the Board of Educations may need to assist in the development of the advisory committee or disband and reform it.

MEETINGS AND COMMITTEE WORK

Committee Meetings

Committee meeting dates and times will be set by the Committee Chair, in consultation with the CFO/COO, who will utilize District communication to notify the public at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Meetings of the BAC and FAC are subject to the provisions of the Missouri Sunshine Law.

Committee Members may not meet to discuss committee business, formally or informally, without following all other meeting requirements such as public announcement of the meeting and keeping meeting minutes.

Committee Work

All committee work is to be transparent and is a record for the public and the archives. Therefore, it is important to make sure that all records are timely and complete. The Committee Chair, in collaboration with the COO/CFO, and with the input of the full committee, is responsible for developing the following documents throughout the year:

Agendas

Agendas, presentations and any documents for distribution at a meeting must be posted to the public 24 hours before the advisory committee meeting. If any new documents are introduced at the meeting, they must be sent the next day to the Committee Secretary and office of COO/CFO to be included with the agenda for future reference. Agendas should be sent to advisory committee members two business days prior to the meeting. (See Agenda Template in the Appendix.)

Minutes

Minutes record the decisions and business of the advisory committee and will be taken by the Committee Secretary or another member if the Committee Secretary is not present. Minutes include, but are not limited to the date, time, and location of the meeting, the members recorded as present and absent, a summary of the discussion on matters proposed, deliberated or decided and a record of any votes taken as it relates to the agenda.

Minutes need to be approved by the membership at the following meeting. The member who takes the minutes must prepare them and submit them to the Chair and COO/CFO for review. If there is no quorum, the minutes cannot be approved. In this case, the copy of the draft minutes will be posted online and marked as draft until they can be approved.

Scope of Work

The Scope of Work guides the committee throughout the school year. Each advisory committee must develop a Scope of Work with the COO/CFO. The items in the Scope of Work should be cited in the agenda documents throughout the year, so the committee and the public are clear on how they are moving to accomplish the goals in the Scope of Work. If there are issues that prevent a committee from pursuing an item in the Scope of Work, the District Liaisons can assist in solutions. The Committee Chair will also be a resource to resolve administrative issues or to escalate any issues to the School Board.

LIAISONS

Board Liaisons

Each committee has a Board Liaison to help it navigate the administrative process. Board Liaisons are designed to act as resources during committee discussions and in attaining the goals of the advisory committees. Liaisons are non-voting members and should not participate in debates unless asked, or unless they observe a potential violation of School Board policies. Liaisons should request a place on the School Board agenda to report staff or School Board items that directly relate to the mission of the advisory committee.

The Board Liaison is assigned to the committee by the Board of Education and acts as an advisor to both the committee and the School Board regarding the committee's Scope of Work. Board Liaisons must attend 75% of advisory committee meetings, unless the Liaison has a work-related conflict or Board meeting. In the instances where the Board Liaison cannot attend the meeting, he/she shall endeavor to secure a replacement.

District Liaisons

Staff Liaisons must be assigned to the committees by the Superintendent. The staff acts in an advisory role regarding the committee's Scope of Work to both the committee and the School Board through the Superintendent. The staff liaisons also work with the advisory committee to develop its Scope of Work and help obtain information or data for the advisory committee by scheduling through his/her direct report and the Superintendent. Staff can also assist the advisory committee in pursuing its Scope of Work by providing resources, advocating for budgetary goals to advance the committee's work, and helping to set monthly agendas.

Staff liaisons should attend at least 75% of the committee meetings, unless participating in a work-related event.

Student Liaisons

In addition to the above, the Superintendent of the Webster Groves School District and Principal of Webster Groves High School, may select up to two (2) Junior Class high school students to serve as a Student Liaison. The Student Liaison shall serve for a term of one year and may not be reappointed. The Student Liaison shall be entitled to participate in all advisory committee meetings but shall not have a vote and shall not be counted towards a quorum.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Each agenda provides an opportunity for members of the public to speak for up to three minutes. Members of the public who are not appointed to the committee are not encouraged to participate in the committee work or discussion during the formal meeting unless previously arranged by the Committee Chair or District Liaison as part of an agenda item.

After a member of the public speaks, it is at the Committee Chair's discretion as to whether he/she wants to allow the committee members to interact with the speaker. If it is not germane to the current agenda or might consume time that would be best served discussing established agenda items, it is good for the Committee Chair to offer to the members of the public that he/she will consider their issues and report back any progress to them. Another option is to ask the member of the public to leave contact information so that members of the committee or a District Liaison can contact them to continue the discussion.

The COO/CFO is available to assist Committee Chairs, as well as District Liaisons, in posting materials to the public and assisting with broad committee communications, such as advertising openings. Any committee work outside of these parameters needs to be coordinated through the Superintendent or Board of Education.

APPENDIX

Agenda Template

- I. Call to Order
- II. Adoption of Meeting Agenda
- III. Approval of Meeting Minutes from previous meeting
- IV. Communications and Addresses to the Advisory Committee (recognition of any citizen or delegation of citizens wishing to address the committee)
- V. Old Business and Action Items
- VI. New Business and Reports
- VII. Chair's Report
- VIII. Announcements by Members
- IX. Future Business
- X. Adjournment

Board Policies

Policy BCE: BOARD COMMITTEES/ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE BOARD

The Board shall act as a committee-of-the-whole on all matters pertaining to the business and educational policies of the district. The Board may appoint standing committees; however, no individual member or group comprised of less than the full membership of the Board shall exercise the powers of the full Board unless otherwise authorized by law and Board policy.

Temporary Ad Hoc and/or Special Lay Committees

With the approval or at the direction of the Board, the president of the Board may appoint temporary ad hoc and/or special lay committees to assist the Board.

Committees must follow the instructions given to them by the Board and may be terminated at any time by a majority vote of the membership of the Board. If the committee is required by state or federal law, its composition and appointment shall meet all guidelines established for that purpose. Committees shall be advised of the:

1. Purpose to be served. Committees shall be appointed for a specific and well-defined purpose. Their authority shall be limited to that assigned to them by the Board.
2. Length of time each member is being asked to serve.
3. Resources the Board will provide, including a suitable meeting place and administrative assistance.
4. Date a report should be made to the Board or superintendent.

The following additional guidelines shall apply to all temporary ad hoc or special committees:

1. All committees shall be fact-finding or advisory in nature and not executive. Committees and committee members shall not have the power to make monetary or other decisions for the Board of Education.
2. The superintendent or his or her designee shall be a member of all committees.
3. All committee meetings shall be open to the public.
4. Committees shall be dissolved upon the completion of their assigned tasks.
5. Final authority in the decision-making process will reside with the Board.

Any committee appointed by or at the direction of the Board and that is authorized to report to the Board or any advisory committee appointed by or at the direction of the Board for the specific purpose of recommending directly to the Board or the superintendent any policies, policy revisions or expenditure of public funds, will follow the Missouri Open Meetings and Records Act. The custodian of records (secretary of the Board of Education) will maintain a list of all such committees.

Policy DA: FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

(Management Goals)

The Board acknowledges its fiduciary responsibility for funds received by the district. Board members, staff and others who have a business relationship with the Webster Groves School District will act with integrity, diligence and professionalism in matters involving the fiscal resources of the district. This policy applies to any irregularity involving employees, consultants, vendors, contractors or any other parties who have a business relationship with the district.

Finance Advisory Committee

The Board will establish a Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) in accordance with Board policy on the establishment of committees and annually appoint members to the committee. The committee will consist of school district residents **or parents/guardians of a student within the district**, the COO and the director of business services. One of the purposes of the FAC is to serve as a liaison between the Board/administration and the auditor. The audit duties of the committee include:

1. Making recommendations to the Board regarding the selection of an accounting firm to conduct the annual district audit.
2. Ensuring that fraud prevention practices are in place and effective.
3. Reviewing Board-adopted ethics and conflict of interest policies and monitoring Board member and staff adherence to those policies as they relate to fiscal matters.
4. Reviewing administrative procedures relating to purchasing, payment, management of funds received through grants, and control of receipts from student activities and fundraisers. Any recommendations for improving these procedures will be forwarded to the superintendent or designee.
5. Working with auditors and any state or federal officials to facilitate all audits.

The FAC will operate in accordance with the Missouri Sunshine Law.

Fraud Prevention

For the purpose of this policy, fraud (or fraudulent act or activity) is the intentional, false representation or concealment of a material fact for the purpose of inducing another to act upon it to his or her injury. Fraudulent activity includes misappropriation and other fiscal irregularities, examples of which include, but are not limited to:

1. Any dishonest or fraudulent act.
2. Misappropriation of funds, supplies or other assets.
3. Impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions.
4. Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of district activities.
5. Violation of applicable conflict of interest policies.
6. Accepting or seeking anything of material value from contractors, vendors or persons providing services or materials to the district except as allowed in the applicable conflict of interest policy.
7. Destruction, removal or inappropriate use of records, furniture, fixtures or equipment.
8. Any similar or related irregularity.

Reporting Suspected Fraud

Any person who has reasonable cause to suspect fraud should report that suspicion to the superintendent immediately. Employees or district volunteers who have reasonable cause to suspect fraud are required to report it and may be disciplined or dismissed for not doing so.

The superintendent may designate another administrator to receive such reports. If the allegation of fraud involves the superintendent or the designated administrator, the report should be made to the Board president. Reports will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. The person filing the report must not contact the suspected individual in an effort to determine facts or demand restitution and must not discuss the case, facts, suspicions or allegations with anyone until the investigation is complete unless specifically authorized to do so.

Investigating Suspected Fraud

The superintendent has the primary responsibility for the investigation of all suspected fraudulent acts as defined in this policy and the authority to delegate that responsibility to another appropriate entity. During an investigation, the superintendent or designee will have access to all district

records pertinent to the investigation and the authority to examine, copy or remove all or any portion of the contents of files, desks, cabinets and other storage facilities on the premises without the prior knowledge or consent of any individual who might use or have custody of any such items. The superintendent or designee will maintain a record of any property or files removed. No person will be permitted to alter, destroy, mutilate, conceal, cover up or falsify any record or document with the intent to impede, obstruct or influence an investigation.

If the investigation substantiates allegations that fraudulent activities have occurred, the superintendent or designee will issue reports to the Board of Education and any personnel deemed appropriate by the superintendent or designee. After consultation with the superintendent and legal counsel, the Board will decide whether to prosecute or refer the investigation results to appropriate law enforcement.

If the superintendent is the subject of the investigation, the Board president will designate an appropriate person to conduct the investigation.

Prohibited Activity

Employees who violate any portion of this policy are subject to discipline, including termination and referral for prosecution when appropriate.

No Board member or employee of the district will take adverse employment action against any individual who, in good faith, reports suspected fraud in accordance with this policy. No Board member or employee of the district will retaliate against any individual for providing truthful information to law enforcement in conjunction with an investigation regarding alleged financial misconduct.

Students who, in good faith, report suspected fraud or financial misconduct will not be disciplined or penalized for making such a report. Staff members who receive such a report are obligated to notify the superintendent or designee.

Policy FB: FACILITIES PLANNING

The Board of Education will make the necessary provisions to carry out the goals and objectives of the school district through careful facilities planning.

The Board shall periodically review the long-range school facilities plan. This review will provide guidance for capital outlay expenditures and will ensure that the school district has well-planned school buildings at proper locations when needed and at reasonable costs. The superintendent shall report to the Board annually the status of facilities needed, based on enrollment projections and other factors. Enrollment projections may cover three years, may include current registration

figures, community population trends, local birth rates, and may include a review of proposed land development in the community, including residential construction rates.

The Board or superintendent will generally initiate facility planning; however, the Board and superintendent will consider suggestions from staff, patrons or the Building Advisory Committee. Principals, staff, the Building Advisory Committee and patrons shall be consulted during the planning stage through final layout. The superintendent will present a detailed summary of this consultation to the Board prior to the approval of any building plan. The summary may include recommendations based on activities that will take place in the building; organization of instruction and curriculum to be housed in the building; specific architectural characteristics desired; equipment required; the spatial relationship to other district facilities; and other pertinent factors. Building plans for new construction or major structural renovation will be designed in accordance with seismic design standards if required by law and will comply with access requirements for persons with disabilities as required by law. All building plans for new construction and/or renovation will be required to undergo review by the Building Advisory Committee in context of U.S. Green Building Council LEED Certification or Energy Star Guidelines for Schools to include possible applications of energy and environmental design.

The district may acquire real property necessary for facility improvement or expansion through eminent domain only in accordance with law. The district will provide for the relocation of any persons displaced by the acquisition of property through eminent domain as required by and in accordance with law.