



## Principal Advisory Council

United Voices. Successful Schools.

# DeKalb County School District Principal Advisory Council Bylaws School Year 2025-2026

## Welcome Letter

Principal Advisory Council Members,

Thank you for volunteering your time and talent to the work of the Principal Advisory Council (PAC), formerly termed a School Council. The work you and your fellow Council members will accomplish over the next school year is appreciated by the DeKalb County School District and deeply valuable to the students in your school.

These bylaws have been designed through extensive community input. After surveys, focus groups, a public comment period and input from the DeKalb Board of Education members, we are happy to present them to you. We hope they will provide the PACs across the District the structure and support they need to succeed. We also look forward to the annual public review process which will allow the bylaws to be adapted annually to meet the developing needs of our students and communities.

Through sharing your insights, experiences and creativity with your principal, your PAC can improve both student achievement and school climate/culture. PAC suggestions over the years have led to academic improvements such as additional school programs, cultural enrichment opportunities, and increased levels of community involvement such as new business and university partnerships.

Again, we thank you for working for the betterment of the students of DeKalb County School District. We look forward to supporting you in your role.

Best Regards,

Kina M. Champion  
Director, School Innovation  
Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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## An Overview of the DeKalb County School District

DeKalb County School District (DCSD) was established in 1873 when the county residents raised \$4,200 to open three first through seventh grade public schools, Scottsdale, Bouldercrest and Southwest. The largely agrarian community was known for its granite quarries at Stone Mountain and Soapstone Ridge as well as the many dairy farms which dotted the landscape. By the 1970's the lush farmland had been replaced by a vibrant series of bedroom communities that supported the growing city of Atlanta as well as a number of smaller cities across the 270 square mile county.

Today, DeKalb County is one of the most diverse counties in the southeast and is home to over 700,000 residents who hail from over 155 nations. Primarily a suburban county, it has become the second-most-affluent county with an African-American majority in the United States, behind Prince George's County, Maryland.

The DeKalb County School District is Georgia's third largest school system. Under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Devon Horton and the Board of Education, we prepare students for college and careers through a laser focus on rigorous, relevant classroom instruction related to each child's needs.

The District serves over 93,000 students in 140+ schools and centers and employs over 15,500 faculty and staff. DCSD is a leader in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) curriculum with 10 STEM certified schools and over 90 schools with STEM programs. The District also offers over 40 school choice options to families to include theme, magnet, International Baccalaureate, charter, and Montessori options.

## DCSD Principal Advisory Councils (PAC) Introduction

The purpose of the Principal Advisory Council (PAC) is to bring parents, school employees, students and community members together to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other's perspectives and share ideas for increasing student achievement and performance.

Such councils were mandated by Georgia law in 1998 but the concept was not well defined. In the following decades, many Georgia school districts ceased supporting councils in meaningful ways. However, in 2016, the DeKalb Board of Education, as part of their flexibility contract with the Georgia Department of Education, authorized a re-invigoration of the advisory council concept. District staff conducted parent, staff and leadership surveys as well as numerous community and parent focus groups to determine how councils could be structured to best support student learning. National and state best practices in the areas of governance as well as learnings from the District's own charter schools were examined in the light of recent research on parent engagement and social capital.

The following frameworks represent over a year of work and discussion on the part of staff and District stakeholders. A living document, the processes and practices detailed here will be constantly revised to ensure that these avenues for stakeholder collaboration and learning will remain open and effective to the benefit of our students.

# Principal Advisory Council Bylaws

## Article I: Name

A Principal Advisory Council (PAC) has been established in the (Enter School Name) School in the DeKalb County School District (DCSD. The name of this Principal Advisory Council shall be the (Enter School Name) Principal Advisory Council, hereinafter referred to as the Principal Advisory Council.

## Article II: Purpose

The purpose of the Principal Advisory Council is to bring parents, school employees, students and community members together to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other's perspectives and share ideas for increasing student achievement and performance.

The members of the Principal Advisory Council are accountable to the constituents they serve and shall:

1. Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
2. Act as a link between the school and the community;
3. Encourage the engagement of parents and other stakeholders within the school community; and
4. Work to increase student achievement and performance through transparent operations and shared best practices.

## Article III: Principal Advisory Council Authority

The Principal Advisory Council operates under the control and management of the DeKalb County School District and will follow Board of Education policies and procedures. The Principal Advisory Council shall advise and make recommendations on matters relating to school improvement and student achievement.

The Principal Advisory Council shall:

- Support in the development of the Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and monitor progress toward goals,
- Work to increase student achievement and performance through transparent operations and shared best practices,
- Have the authority to create ad hoc committees of PAC members, parents, staff, and community members to provide input on school initiatives to improve school climate/culture, student achievement, and community partnerships,
- Participate in the selection of the school principal, in the case of a vacancy, in accordance with the written policy of the DeKalb County School District,
- Designate one Principal Advisory Council representative to participate in cross-council meetings, and
- Have the same immunity as the DeKalb Board of Education in all matters directly related to the functions of the Principal Advisory Council.

#### **Article IV: Responsibilities of the Principal Advisory Council**

The Principal Advisory Council provides advice and recommendations to the school principal, the local board of education and local school superintendent on matters related to school climate/culture, student achievement, and community partnerships. In addition to the authority outlined above, the Principal Advisory Council shall:

- Communicate Principal Advisory Council work to stakeholders, including students, parents, community members, faculty, and staff.
- Review the annual state of the school address prior to presentation to the school community.
- Participate in training and an annual evaluation of the Principal Advisory Council's performance and results which will include a self-assessment of the Principal Advisory Council. The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate how well the Principal Advisory Council is fulfilling its purpose, duties, and responsibilities.
- Participate in cluster meetings to discuss instructional and community engagement strategies across schools. The Principal Advisory Council cluster model (which has been implemented in multiple regions) includes collaboration of councils across feeder schools. Cluster meetings include PAC representatives from each feeder school, District family and community engagement facilitators, and the Area Superintendent. The following are examples of cluster meeting topics: progress monitoring/data analysis, instructional priorities and strategies, vertical alignment, grade and school transitions for students and families, and best practices for community engagement and outreach.
- Meet a minimum of four times each school year.
- Abide by Open Meetings and Open Records laws.

The DeKalb County Board of Education and the Superintendent retain ultimate oversight and accountability for the District, its operations, and all student achievement results. The DeKalb County Board of Education and the Superintendent retain and exercise system-level governance and maintain responsibility for setting all system-wide policies, procedures, curriculum, adoption of required best practices, and the management of human resources and personnel decisions.

#### **Article V: Membership**

Membership on the Principal Advisory Council shall be open to principals, teachers, school employees, parents, community members and students (at high schools). The principal will be an ex officio, non-voting member. Members of the Principal Advisory Council shall not receive compensation to serve on the Principal Advisory Council. Councils may appoint additional members. The recommended maximum number of members is 11. Councils may create subcommittees and may establish the membership for those committees. The DCSD reserves the right to establish the protocols for the principal selection process and Construction Advisory Committees.

Elected Members of the Principal Advisory Council shall include the following two categories:

1. At least four (4) parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school, excluding parents who are also employees of the school, elected by the parents/guardians of the school,
2. At least two (2) teachers elected by the teachers of the school. An eligible teacher is defined as a classroom teacher in pre-kindergarten through grade 12, including special education, physical education, art, music, media specialists, and ROTC teachers. Educational Support

Personnel (not eligible) are defined as follows: Clerical Staff, Paraprofessionals, Food Service Employees, Maintenance (Custodians), Plant Engineers, Camp Supervisors, Public Safety Staff, Nurses, Information Technology Technicians (ITT), Assistant Principals, Counselors, Lead Teachers for Special Education, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Academic Coaches, Instructional Support Specialists, School Psychologists, Social Workers, Student Support Specialists, Student Engagement Coaches, etc.

Appointed Members of the Principal Advisory Council may include the following:

1. Additional parents, school employees, students (high school only) and/or community members nominated by the elected Principal Advisory Council members and approved by the elected Principal Advisory Council members in a public meeting.
2. Additional ex officio members nominated by the elected Principal Advisory Council members and approved by the elected Principal Advisory Council members in a public meeting.

#### **Article VI: Terms**

Elected Principal Advisory Council members shall serve two-year terms of office. Terms will be staggered so that at least two parents/guardians and one teacher are elected each year. The term of office will begin October 1 and end September 30.

Student representatives (high school only) will serve one-year terms, from October through May of the school year in which they are participating. Students may serve a maximum of two consecutive one-year terms.

Appointed Principal Advisory Council members shall serve one-year terms of office beginning on the date of the meeting at which the voting Principal Advisory Council approved their appointment and ending on September 30.

#### **Article VII: Elections**

Council elections will be conducted by the District in the fall before October 1. The electing body for the parent/guardian members (as verified through the District's Student Information System) shall consist of all parents/guardians eligible to serve as a parent/guardian member of the Principal Advisory Council. The electing body for teachers shall consist of teachers eligible to serve as a teacher member of the Principal Advisory Council. Paraprofessionals, school counselors, instructional support staff, etc. are not included in the electing body.

The voting period will be between five and ten workdays for elected parent/guardian and teacher positions. Notice of the voting period will be published in school publications, sent to non-supervisory instructional staff via e-mail, and posted on the school's website. The School Innovation Department will define the procedures for the elections process.

See the Principal Advisory Council elections procedures (updated annually on the District website) for additional information on terms of office, candidate eligibility, community member and student nomination procedures, elections procedures, and campaigning guidelines.

## **Article VIII: Vacancies, Resignations and Removals**

**Vacancies:** There may be vacancies in the elected member categories (parent or teacher) and these must be filled by a temporary replacement member. Vacancy replacements must be of the same category (parent or teacher) that was vacated and all rules for Council member participation must be followed. The replacement member will be nominated by the principal and approved by a majority vote of the Principal Advisory Council. The Principal Advisory Council must appoint a replacement member to fill the unexpired term of the removed/resigned member no later than the next regularly scheduled PAC meeting after the departing member's removal or resignation. The replacement member will fill the vacancy until the scheduled election of the position that is being filled, at which time the replacement must be elected as specified in these bylaws, or step down from the Council as soon as his or her successor is duly elected. If a vacancy occurs after the final meeting of the school year, the vacancy will be filled through the election process. The Principal Advisory Council must report the total number of vacancies by the end of the year as outlined in the compliance checklist.

If a vacancy takes place in an appointed member category, the Principal Advisory Council is not required to fill the vacancy. Should the Council vote to fill the vacancy, the replacement member must be nominated by the elected Principal Advisory Council members and approved by the elected Principal Advisory Council members in a public meeting. The replacement member will fill the vacancy until the end of the term, September 30.

**Resignations:** A Principal Advisory Council member may resign at any time. Such resignation must be expressed and submitted to the Principal Advisory Council Chair in writing unless waived by majority vote of the remaining Principal Advisory Council members. The Principal Advisory Council's acceptance of the resignation will not be necessary to make it effective.

**Removals:** Any voting member may be removed from the Council or his/her officer role for lack of attendance, not performing Council duties, loss of eligibility, or for being in violation of the Principal Advisory Council Code of Conduct.

**Process for Removal by the Principal Advisory Council:** A Principal Advisory Council member may be removed from the Principal Advisory Council or his/her officer role by a 2/3 vote of the Principal Advisory Council if the Principal Advisory Council member:

- Has missed two (2) consecutive regular meetings, or
- Has missed 50% of regular meetings within a 12-month period (emergency, special or committee meetings do not count).

The Principal Advisory Council will follow due process in cases of removal. A Principal Advisory Council's vote to remove a member is valid only if the Principal Advisory Council member:

- Is notified of the Principal Advisory Council's intent to remove him/her at least seven (7) days prior to the vote,
- Is notified personally, by email, or by certified mail to his/her last known address,
- Is given an opportunity to explain his/her actions in a meeting of the Principal Advisory Council, and
- Is given the opportunity to vote on the question of his/her removal from the Principal Advisory Council.

Procedure for Removal by the DeKalb County School District Due to Noncompliance with District Policies: A Principal Advisory Council member may be removed by the DeKalb County School District if:

- A challenge to a member's eligibility is filed by a stakeholder with the School Innovation Department and found to be valid, or
- The member becomes ineligible to serve and does not voluntarily resign, or
- The member fails to complete the required training, or
- The member is found to have violated the Principal Advisory Council Code of Ethics. (See Appendix B.)

The DeKalb County School District will follow due process in cases of removal. A DeKalb County School District decision to remove a member is valid only if the Principal Advisory Council member:

- Is notified of the DCSD's intent to remove him/her at least seven (7) days prior to removal,
- Is notified personally, by email, or by certified mail to his/her last known address,
- Is given an opportunity to explain his/her actions in a meeting with the PAC Chair, the school principal, and a District representative.

**Article IX: Meetings** (See Appendix A: Open Meetings Act Summary)

The Principal Advisory Council shall meet at least four (4) times. The council shall also meet at the call of the chairperson, or at the request of a majority of the members of the Principal Advisory Council. Regular meetings may be cancelled or postponed without notice. All meetings are open unless otherwise provided by law (OCGA 20-2-86(f) and OCGA 50-14-1).

The Council must:

- Be subject to the Open Meetings Act in the same manner as local boards of education;
- Post a public announcement of the times, dates and place of all regular meetings for the school year in a conspicuous location at the school and on the Principal Advisory Council webpage located on the school's District-provided website;
- Give written or electronic notice of the time, place, and date of a specific Council meeting to the Council members at least seven days prior to a regular meeting;
- Post a public announcement of the time, date and place of called, emergency meetings per the Open Meetings Act in a conspicuous location at the school and on the Principal Advisory Council webpage located on the school's District-provided website.

Council meeting agendas must:

- Include the time, date, and place as well as all matters expected to come before the Council; and
- Be posted at least seven days prior to the regular meeting and at least 24 hours prior to called emergency meeting in a conspicuous location at the school and on the Principal Advisory Council webpage located on the school's District-provided website.

Note: Failure to include an item on the agenda that becomes necessary to address during the meeting does not prohibit the Council from amending the agenda and considering and acting upon the item.

Council meeting summaries must:

- Include the subjects acted on and the members present at the meeting,
- Be written, and

- Be posted on the Principal Advisory Council webpage located on the school's District-provided website within two business days of the adjournment of the meeting.

#### **Article X: Minutes** (See Appendix A: Open Meetings Act Summary)

Principal Advisory Councils shall be subject to the Open Records Act, relating to the inspection of public records, in the same manner as local boards of education.

Council meeting minutes must, at a minimum, include:

- The names of Council members present, the description of each motion or other proposal made during the meeting, names of those individuals making and seconding each motion or proposal, and a record of all votes taken;
- The name of each person voting for or against each motion or proposal, or abstaining from voting on each motion or proposal;
- Be sent to Council members within 20 days following each Council meeting;
- Be approved by the Council no later than the next regular Council meeting and be posted on the Principal Advisory Council webpage located on the school's District-provided website within two business days of the adjournment of the meeting; and
- Be kept on file at the school office for anyone to request to review.

#### **Article XI: Officers of the Principal Advisory Council**

The Officers of the Principal Advisory Council shall be a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. Only elected members of the Council may serve in officer roles. Officers shall be elected at the first meeting of the Principal Advisory Council following the fall election of Principal Advisory Council members. The chairperson shall be an elected parent member. If an elected parent is not able to serve as chairperson, an interim chair shall be appointed from among the remaining voting members of the PAC to serve temporarily. Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year. Non-voting members may not serve in any officer position. Each officer will serve until a successor is elected, or until said officer resigns or is removed from office. If a vacancy occurs, the Principal Advisory Council shall conduct an officer election at the next public meeting to fill the vacancy. No officer may hold more than one position at the same time. Only one Principal Advisory Council member may occupy an officer position at any time.

The chairperson shall develop the agenda for all meetings, preside over all meetings of the Principal Advisory Council, and serve as the primary point of contact to the Principal.

The vice-chairperson shall, in the absence of the chairperson, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the chairperson.

The secretary shall attend all meetings, act as the clerk of the Principal Advisory Council, record all votes, summary of meetings and minutes of all proceedings, and maintain all required documentation of the Principal Advisory Council per these Bylaws.

#### **Article XII: Role of the Principal**

The school principal shall have the following duties as it relates to Principal Advisory Council:

- In the case of the opening of a new school, the principal shall cause to be created a Principal Advisory Council by convening the appropriate bodies to select Principal Advisory Council officers and assist in the development of the first agenda, first meeting time and location, and in notifying all Principal Advisory Council members of the first meeting.
- Attend all Principal Advisory Council meetings.
- Assist in development of the meeting agendas,
- Direct staff to post required meeting documents, per Open Meetings laws, on the District-provided Principal Advisory Council webpage.
- Communicate all Principal Advisory Council requests for information and assistance to the Area Superintendent and related District personnel, if necessary, and inform the Principal Advisory Council of the responses or actions.
- Develop the Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and submit it to the Principal Advisory Council for its review.
- Provide supporting data and documentation regarding the school's student achievement goals, budget, and federal programs to assist the Council in developing recommendations to support student achievement.
- Co-facilitate an annual community address on progress toward CSIP goals with the Principal Advisory Council Chair.

#### **Article XIII: Bylaws**

Amendment or suspension of these Bylaws must be authorized by DeKalb County School District. These bylaws shall remain in effect until amended or rescinded by DeKalb County School District.

#### **Article XIV: Parliamentary Authority**

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the governing parliamentary authority for Principal Advisory Councils in all cases applicable but not inconsistent with these bylaws.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Open Meetings/Open Records Act

The Principal Advisory Council is subject to Georgia's Open Meetings Act. A meeting for the purposes of the Open Meetings Act is defined as a quorum of the voting members of the Council at which any public matter, official business, or policy is to be formulated, discussed, presented, or voted upon. A committee which is comprised of a majority of the voting members of the Council is also subject to the Open Meetings Act.

All meetings are open unless otherwise provided by law (OCGA 20-2-86(f) and OCGA 50-14-1). Regular meetings may be cancelled or postponed without notice. The Council must:

- Post a public announcement of the times, dates and place of all regular meetings for the school year in a conspicuous location at the school and on the Principal Advisory Council webpage located on the school's District-provided school website;
- Give written or electronic notice of the time, place, and date of a specific Council meeting to the Council members at least seven days prior to a regular meeting.

Council meeting agendas must:

- Include the time, date, and place as well as all matters expected to come before the Council; and
- Be posted at least seven days prior to the meeting, at the meeting site, and on the Principal Advisory Council webpage located on the school's District-provided school website.

*Note: Failure to include an item on the agenda that becomes necessary to address during the meeting does not prohibit the Council from amending the agenda and considering and acting upon the item.*

Council meeting summaries must:

- Include the subjects acted on and the members present at the meeting,
- Be written, and
- Be posted on the Principal Advisory Council webpage located on the school's District-provided school website within two business days of the adjournment of the meeting.

Council meeting minutes must:

- The names of Council members present, the description of each motion or other proposal made during the meeting, names of those individuals making and seconding each motion or proposal, and a record of all votes taken;
- The name of each person voting for or against each motion or proposal, or abstaining from voting on each motion or proposal;
- Be sent to Council members within 20 days following each Council meeting;
- Be approved by the Council no later than the next regular Council meeting and be posted on the Principal Advisory Council webpage located on the school's District-provided website within two business days of the adjournment of the meeting; and
- Be kept on file at the school office for anyone to request to review.

*Note: Visual and/or sound recording of Open Meetings will be permitted.*

## Executive Session (Closed Meeting)

Meetings, or a portion of a meeting, may be closed to the public (an “executive session”) ONLY if the Superintendent or his or her designee requests an executive session for matters related to the purchase, disposition or lease of property or real estate; personnel matters except for the receipt of evidence or when hearing argument on personnel matters including imposing disciplinary action or to dismiss an employee or discussing matters of policy regarding employment or hiring practices; or any other matter covered by attorney-client privilege.

In the unlikely event that the Superintendent requests an Executive Session of the Council, the following procedures must be followed:

- A majority vote of a quorum present for a Council meeting is necessary to close the meeting.
- One of the above listed reasons must be specified for closing the meeting and recorded in the minutes.
- Minutes must reflect the names of the Council members present and the names of those voting to close the meeting which should be posted on the Principal Advisory Council webpage located on the school’s District-provided school website.
- Only the portion of the meeting that deals with the above listed reasons will be closed; other portions of the meeting must be open, and minutes shall be taken, recorded and open for public inspection as detailed above.
- When a meeting or portion of a meeting is closed, the Council Chair will execute and file with the minutes of the meeting a notarized affidavit stating under oath that the closed portion of the meeting dealt with the above listed reasons.
- If one or more persons in Executive Session starts a discussion not authorized under the Open Meetings exceptions, the Council Chair shall immediately rule the discussion out of order.
- If one or more persons continues the discussion, Council Chair shall immediately adjourn the Executive Session.

## Violation of Open Meetings Act

- Superior courts have jurisdiction to enforce the Open Meetings law; the attorney general has the authority to bring law enforcement actions, criminal or civil.
- If a superior court determines that a Council has not complied with the act, the court will—unless special circumstances exist—assess in favor of the complaining party reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs.
- Any individual knowingly and willfully conducting or participating in a meeting in violation of the Open Meetings act is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, may be punished by a fine not to exceed \$1000.00. Alternatively, a civil penalty may be imposed by the court in any civil action brought pursuant to this chapter against any person who negligently violates the terms of this chapter in an amount not to exceed \$1,000.00 for the first violation.
- A civil penalty or criminal fine not to exceed \$2,500.00 per violation may be imposed for each additional violation that the violator commits within a 12-month period from the date that the first penalty or fine was imposed.

## References

[Georgia’s Sunshine Laws: A Citizen’s Guide to Open Government](#)  
[GA Public Schools and the Open Records Act](#)

## **Appendix B: Principal Advisory Council Code of Ethics**

Principal Advisory Council members shall operate in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible and, to that end, Council members shall adhere to this Code of Ethics. Each member of the Principal Advisory Council agrees that he or she will:

### **Domain I: Governance Structure**

1. Recognize that the authority of the Principal Advisory Council rests only with the Principal Advisory Council as a whole and not with individual Principal Advisory Council members and act accordingly.
2. Support the delegation of authority for the day-to-day management of the school to the Principal and act accordingly.
3. Honor the established DeKalb County School District chain of command and refer problems or complaints to the Principal, Area Superintendent, School Innovation Department, or other office as appropriate and consistent with the established DeKalb County School District chain of command.
4. Recognize that the Principal serves as an ex officio (non-voting) member of the Principal Advisory Council and shall be present at all meetings of the Principal Advisory Council.
5. Not undermine the authority of the school's Principal or intrude into responsibilities that properly belong to the Principal or school administration, including such functions as hiring, transferring or dismissing employees, or any other personnel management matters.
6. Use reasonable efforts to keep the Principal informed of concerns or specific recommendations that any member of the Principal Advisory Council may bring to the Principal Advisory Council.

### **Domain II: Continuous Improvement Planning**

1. Consider the needs of all students in the school in deliberations and decision-making. Principal Advisory Council members will not advocate for the needs of individual students or student groups in conflict with the overall needs of the school.
2. Participate in all required training programs developed for Principal Advisory Council members by the DeKalb County School District or the State Board of Education.
3. Work with the Principal to ensure prudent and accountable uses of school resources.
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 abide by all applicable laws, all rules and regulations of the State Board of Education and the DeKalb Board of Education and all court orders pertaining to the District.

### **Domain III. School and Community Relations**

1. Seek regular and open communications among the Principal Advisory Council and students, school employees, and the community.
2. Communicate to the Principal expressions of public reaction to school procedures and school programs.

3. Refrain from making statements, providing information for distribution, or providing background information to any media source as representative of the PAC unless specifically directed to do so by the Principal and/or a representative of DeKalb County School District.

#### Domain IV. Advisory Role

1. Work with other Principal Advisory Council members to abide by the Principal Advisory Council governance guidance and procedures.
2. Make recommendations on matters before the Principal Advisory Council only after discussion at publicly held Principal Advisory Council meetings.

#### Domain V. Principal Advisory Council Meetings

1. Attend and participate in regularly scheduled and called Principal Advisory Council meetings.
2. Be informed and prepared to discuss issues to be considered on the Principal Advisory Council agenda.
3. Work with other Principal Advisory 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 Principal Advisory Council meetings.
4. Vote for a closed executive session of the Principal Advisory Council only if the Superintendent or his or her designee requests an executive session.
5. Maintain appropriate confidentiality of discussions and other matters pertaining to the Principal Advisory Council and the school, in the unlikely event that the Superintendent requests an executive session of the Council.
6. Make recommendations in accordance with the interests of the school as a whole and not any particular segment thereof.
7. Express opinions before votes are cast, but after the Principal Advisory Council votes, abide by and support all majority decisions of the Principal Advisory Council.

#### Domain VI. Relationship with Principal and District

1. Use reasonable efforts to keep the Principal informed of concerns or specific recommendations that any member of the Principal Advisory Council may bring to the Principal Advisory Council.
2. Provide fair and honest feedback on the performance of the Principal Advisory Council to the School Innovation Department within established district procedures.
3. Participate in the selection of the school principal, in the case of a vacancy, in accordance with the written policy of the DeKalb County School District.

#### Domain VII: Financial Governance

1. Refrain from using the position of Principal Advisory Council member for personal or partisan gain or to benefit any person or entity over the interest of the school.

#### Domain VIII: Conduct as Principal Advisory Council Member

1. Devote sufficient time, thought and study to the performance of the duties and responsibilities of a member of the Principal Advisory Council.

2. Become informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing education and training.
3. Communicate in a respectful, professional manner with and about fellow Principal Advisory Council members.
4. Take no private action that will compromise the Principal Advisory Council, school administration, school or DeKalb County School District.
5. Participate in all required training programs developed for Principal Advisory Council members by DeKalb County School District or the State Board of Education.
6. Abide by Georgia law and DeKalb County School District practices for mandatory reporting of child abuse. If a Principal Advisory Council member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused, the member will report that abuse to the Principal within 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause.
7. File annually with DeKalb County School District a written statement certifying that he or she is in compliance with this Code of Ethics.

### Confidentiality

Any information regarding economic status, academic program or service participation, achievement or behavior of individual students is federally protected, deemed confidential, and under no circumstances is such student information accessible to any Principal Advisory Council member. Any information regarding individual employee performance or personnel action is considered confidential and under no circumstances is such personnel information accessible to any Principal Advisory Council member.

Principal Advisory Council members may be privy to confidential information not outlined above as a result of their position on the Principal Advisory Council. Members may not disclose, divulge, or make accessible confidential information belonging to, or obtained through their affiliation with the school system or the school to any person, including relatives, friends, and business and professional associates, other than to persons who have a legitimate need for such information and to whom DeKalb County School District has authorized disclosure. Principal Advisory Council members will use confidential information solely for the purpose of performing services as a Principal Advisory Council member. This procedure is not intended to prevent disclosure where disclosure is required by law.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, information pertaining to individual students, contractual relationships, prospective employees, future land purchases, or any other information the District deems confidential. Confidential information does not include any information that:

1. was rightfully within a Principal Advisory Council member's possession prior to it being revealed as part of his/her affiliation as a member of the Principal Advisory Council;
2. is or becomes generally known to the public at a later date by rightful means;
3. is released for disclosure by DeKalb County School District; or
4. is received in good faith by the Principal Advisory Council member through a source other than DeKalb County School District.

Principal Advisory Council members acknowledge that all confidential information is owned solely by DeKalb County School District and that the unauthorized disclosure or use of such confidential information could cause irreparable harm and significant injury to DeKalb County School District and/or individual schools, the degree of which may be difficult to ascertain. Accordingly, Principal Advisory

Council members will agree in writing that DeKalb County School District has the right to obtain an immediate injunction enjoining any breach of this section, as well as the right to pursue any and all other rights and remedies available at law for such a breach. Principal Advisory Council members must exercise good judgment and care at all times to avoid unauthorized or improper disclosures of confidential information. Conversations in public places, such as restaurants, elevators, and airplanes should be limited to matters that do not pertain to information of a sensitive or confidential nature.

In addition, Principal Advisory Council members should be sensitive to the risk of inadvertent disclosure and should, for example, refrain from leaving confidential information on desks or otherwise in plain view and refrain from the use of speakerphones to discuss confidential information if the conversation could be heard by unauthorized persons. At the end of a Principal Advisory Council member's term in office, he or she will return, at the request of DeKalb County School District, all documents, papers, and other materials, regardless of medium, that may contain or be derived from confidential information in his or her possession.

#### Ethics Oath

As a member of the Principal Advisory Council, I hereby swear or affirm my commitment to comply with the Principal Advisory Council Code of Ethics, and all requirements set forth in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Georgia law, and DeKalb County School District policies and practices.

## **Appendix C: Conflict of Interest**

Each member of the Principal Advisory Council agrees that he or she will adhere to the following Conflict of Interest provisions.

1. No Principal Advisory Council member shall use or attempt to use his or her official position to secure unwarranted privileges, advantages, or employment for himself or herself, for any member of his or her immediate family, for any business organization with which the Council member is associated, or for any others.
2. No Principal Advisory Council member, or any member of his or her immediate family, or any business organization with which he or she is associated shall sell supplies or equipment used, consumed, or necessary in the operation of the DeKalb County School District.
3. No Principal Advisory Council member shall act in his or her official capacity in any matter in which he or she, any member of his or her immediate family, or any business organization with which he or she is associated has a material financial interest, if such interest would reasonably be expected to impair his or her objectivity or independence of judgment.
4. No Principal Advisory Council member or any member of his or her immediate family may be an officer of or have any financial interest in any for-profit organization that sells or leases goods or services to the District.
5. No Principal Advisory Council member shall solicit or accept, or knowingly allow any member of his or her immediate family or any business organization in which he or she is associated to solicit or accept, any gift, favor, loan, political contribution, service, promise of future employment, or other thing of value based upon an understanding that the gift, favor, loan, contribution, service, promise, or other thing of value was given or offered for the purpose of influencing that Council member in the discharge of his or her official duties.
6. No Principal Advisory Council member shall use, or knowingly allow to be used, his or her official position or any information not generally available to the public which he or she receives or acquires in his or her capacity as a Council member for the purpose of securing financial gain for himself or herself, any member of his or her immediate family, or any business organization with which he or she is associated.
7. No Principal Advisory Council member shall accept a monetary fee or honorarium for a speaking engagement or for participation in a seminar, discussion panel, or other activity which directly relates to the Committee member's official duties.
8. Principal Advisory Council members shall disclose immediately to the Principal Advisory Council and School Innovation Department any conflict of which he or she becomes aware.

## **Appendix D: Ad Hoc Construction Advisory Committees (CAC)**

**Principal Advisory Council (PAC) Ad Hoc Committees.** An ad hoc committee is a committee formed for a specific task or objective. It is dissolved after the completion of the task or achievement of the objective. PACs may create, at their discretion, ad hoc committees of Council members, parents/guardians, staff, and community members to assist in developing and reviewing school initiatives in support of the school's Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

- The PAC shall establish such ad hoc committees by a majority of the vote of its members in an open meeting.
- No committee will perform the full duties and responsibilities, or stand in the place of, the PAC.
- No committee may include a quorum of PAC members.
- The principal or his/her designee shall be an ex officio member of all committees.
- PAC committees are subject to the requirements of Georgia's Open Meetings Laws.
- Committees neither have decision-making authority nor take action but do report their work to the PAC.
- Ad hoc committees shall operate for a finite time frame.

**Construction Advisory Committee.** Construction Advisory Committees (CAC) are ad hoc committees established at the discretion of the PAC.

**CAC Goal.** To increase stakeholder and community engagement in the design, planning, and construction phases of significant capital improvement projects and/or E-SPLOST projects such as additions (e.g., classroom, auditorium) or renovations.

**CAC Purpose.** To attend Operations' Design Team meetings and advise Operations staff on matters related to: parking, core spaces, the impact of improvement options on school climate and culture, the impact of the construction phase, the balance of the competing need for land amongst athletic fields, and other school design features, etc. Instructional programming is not within the purview of the CAC; input to the District can be shared via the principal.

**Composition.** The CAC shall be composed of up to nine members with at least two being from the PAC (not including the principal). The CAC may include non-PAC members and/or parents/guardians and community members of feeder schools. Membership of the CAC may not represent a quorum of the PAC. Individuals may serve on no more than one CAC at a given time.

The Chair of the CAC must be a member of the PAC. The CAC Chair shall be nominated by the PAC and approved by the remaining voting Council members in an open meeting. The PAC shall also designate a Recording Secretary to record the minutes of each CAC meeting. The Recording Secretary shall provide minutes for each CAC meeting to the full Council at the next regularly scheduled PAC meeting.

The PAC whose school is the recipient of the significant capital improvement project shall select each member of the CAC. To select a CAC member, the PAC nominates an individual parent/guardian or community member in an open meeting. The nomination must be seconded and approved by a majority vote of the PAC members.

A call for candidates should be initiated shortly after the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the architect. The District will post the DCSD-created CAC announcement and electronic candidate interest form to the school website at least three weeks prior to the PAC meeting at which CAC member selection will occur. As a best practice, the announcement and a link to the candidate interest form should be sent to the feeder schools for posting on those schools' websites.

**Commitment.** Participation in the CAC will vary based on the task(s), length, and scope of the project as determined by Operations. CAC members should be available to attend Operations' Design Team meetings, as necessary.

**Vacancies.** A CAC member may resign at any time. Such resignation must be expressed and submitted to the PAC Chair in writing unless waived by majority vote of the Council. The PAC's acceptance of the resignation will not be necessary to make it effective. Any CAC member may be removed from the CAC by a 2/3 vote of the PAC for lack of attendance, not performing CAC duties, loss of eligibility, not following the Design Team meeting behavioral and operational standards, or being in violation of Conflict of Interest provisions. CAC vacancies should be filled no later than 30 days from the departing member's removal or resignation. The replacement member will be nominated and approved by a majority vote of the PAC using the same process described in the "Composition" section above.

**Training.** Principals, PAC Chairs, and CAC members must complete mandatory training facilitated by the Operations Division and School Innovation Department prior to the first CAC meeting. All CAC members must complete a Conflict of Interest form and submit the form to the School Innovation Department before the first CAC meeting.

**Meetings.** The CAC may convene outside of Operations' Design Team meetings.

- Operations may choose to invite additional stakeholders to attend Design Team meetings or to gather input from additional stakeholders through other community forums or PAC meetings. This may include parents and community members of feeder schools.
- The CAC may convene CAC meetings as often as necessary to conduct its business.
- CAC meetings are subject to Open Meetings laws, and CAC members shall adhere to all provisions therein to include agendas, meeting notifications, etc.
- The CAC may choose to invite representatives from Operations' Design Team, Area Office staff, or stakeholders from feeder pattern schools to regularly scheduled CAC meetings.
- The CAC Recording Secretary shall record minutes for CAC meetings and present those minutes to the full Principal Advisory Council at the next regularly scheduled PAC meeting.

## **Appendix E: Principal Selection Process**

### **DeKalb Board of Education Policy BBFA: Local School Councils**

*Each school in the DeKalb County School District will have a local school council, called the Principal Advisory Council, that meets state law requirements and advises in a manner consistent with the Principal Advisory Council bylaws. The school council's role in the principal selection process is advisory as specified in regulation [BBFA-R \(1\): Local School Councils](#). Each charter school will have a nonprofit governing board, which fulfills the local school council requirement.*

Click [here](#) to access regulation BBFA-R(1): Local School Councils – Principal Selection Process.

## Appendix E: Guidelines for Non-Traditional Schools

The following non-traditional schools will abide by the guidelines of this appendix:

1. Margaret Harris Comprehensive School
2. Warren Tech High School
3. Eagle Woods Academy and Shadow Rock Center
4. DeKalb Alternative School
5. Elizabeth Andrews High School
6. International Student Center
7. DeKalb School of Technology South

**PAC Composition.** Membership on non-traditional schools' Principal Advisory Councils shall be open to principals, teachers, school employees, parents, community members, and students (at high schools). The principal will be an ex officio, non-voting member. Members of the Principal Advisory Council shall not receive compensation to serve on the Principal Advisory Council. Councils may appoint additional members. The recommended maximum number of members is 11. Councils may create subcommittees and may establish the membership for those committees. The DCSD reserves the right to establish the protocols for the principal selection process and the Construction Advisory Committee.

Elected Members of the Principal Advisory Council shall include the following two categories:

1. At least two (2) parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school, excluding parents who are also employees of the school, elected by the parents/guardians of the school,
2. At least two (2) teachers and/or certified personnel elected by the full-time non-supervisory instructional staff of the school,

Appointed Members of the Principal Advisory Council may include the following:

1. Additional parents, school employees, students (high school only) and/or community members nominated by the elected Principal Advisory Council members and approved by the elected Principal Advisory Council members in a public meeting.
2. Additional ex officio members nominated by the elected Principal Advisory Council members and approved by the elected Principal Advisory Council members in a public meeting.

Terms

1. Elected Principal Advisory Council members shall serve two-year terms of office. The term of office will begin October 1 and end September 30.
2. Student representatives (high school only) will serve one-year terms, from October through May of the school year in which they are participating. Students may serve a maximum of two consecutive one-year terms.
3. Appointed Principal Advisory Council members shall serve one-year terms of office beginning on the date of the meeting at which the voting Principal Advisory Council approved their appointment and ending on September 30.

**Note:** *Except for the specific flexibility granted in this appendix for PAC composition, non-traditional schools shall follow all other compliance guidelines, legal requirements, and articles/appendices outlined in the PAC bylaws.*

## **Appendix F: Best Practice Recommendations**

The diversity of DCSD is one of its many strengths. To capitalize on that strength, there are many different best practices PACs may choose to employ. These are not required and may be employed in addition to the minimum expectations outlined in these Bylaws. While not a comprehensive list, these alternatives are merely included to foster a discussion on the PAC. As the PACs in the District continue to share best practices via the Cluster Councils, this list will grow.

### Organizational Best Practices

- Targeted Member Appointment Process: Using the CSIP as a basis, the PAC identifies those member skills or characteristics which would best support the school. A self-assessment of sitting members then determines which skills sets might be better represented and the appointed members are recruited based on those lagging skills or characteristics.
- Balanced Membership Processes: Employing a combination of committee leadership, term limits and broad marketing of open seats, these three approaches can encourage a steady supply of fresh but informed volunteers to compliment the experienced members on the PAC.
- Goal Setting: Although the school will have a sets of goals and targets in the CSIP, PACs can also set goals and targets for themselves to help focus the work and improve operations. Using SMART goals, the PACs can work toward improving community engagement levels, acquiring business partners or improving climate survey scores. The required self-assessment can point the way to development goals for the PAC itself.
- Leadership Development: Avoid having the same members in leadership positions for more than one term. Giving new members the opportunity to learn the leadership roles is a great way to encourage new ideas, prevent that “clique” feeling which can discourage participation from new families or teachers, and allow experienced leaders to provide support to new leaders before students matriculate out of the school.
- Development of Committees and Taskforces: Using these less intensive structures to address specific issues can be a great vehicle to bring in new parents, teachers or business partners who might want to participate in smaller ways. It will also broaden the set of insights that can be offered to the principal.
- Regular Communication: Setting a regular weekly or bi-weekly time for the Principal/Chair to coordinate before the actual PAC meeting will make sure that the agendas are aligned with school needs and the principal comes prepared with the information that PAC might need to see.

### Community Engagement Best Practices

- Support a Welcoming Climate: Gathering a set of ‘welcome materials’ to for members to use when in the community to ensure the “good news” about the school is readily available and widely distributed in the general community can go a long way to build good will and support of the school. Sending out “thank you” notes from the PAC to people who have supported the school, everyone from the mail delivery person to the neighbors who always have cars parked on the street during Open House night will garnish good will for the school.
- Document School Supporters: To avoid always going to the same vendor or volunteer team, keep a running list of those people and organizations who support the school and rotate requests for support. Recognize the more outstanding partners with certificates of appreciation to hang in their business and ask the principal to mention them in the school newsletter or on

the website. Don't forget the PTA, PTO, boosters or other parent organizations who work in the school. They need support and encouragement from the PAC as well.

- **Open the School to the Community:** The PACs can arrange to bring in outside training resources for staff, parents, or their own members. The District has a wealth of departments who are happy to present. Community contacts are often eager and excited to play a role in the public school. Everything from fun, "team building" training for the PAC, staff or volunteers to more intensive academic or instructional resources can be of value to the school in support of the CSIP.
- **Communicate with the Parents and Broader Community:** Make sure the PAC is mentioned in the State of the School Address and plays a role in the any well-attended events. It can be something small like having the Chair introduce the principal at the spring band concert or more significant like speaking on behalf of the school at the local chamber of commerce or city council meeting. When the community know the PAC exists, it is much easier to engage them in the school.

## Appendix G: Public Comment Guidance

The meetings of the Principal Advisory Council are open to the public. School and community stakeholders are welcome to attend Principal Advisory Council meetings to remain abreast of the work of the Council, but they can only participate in the meeting during the scheduled periods for public comment. Principal Advisory Councils are encouraged to reserve time for public comment at some of their meetings and visibly indicate on the agenda if public comment will be allowed. Here are some tips for public comment:

- The Principal Advisory Council is not required to schedule time for public comment at every meeting. Public comment should be scheduled for major action items (items that need a Principal Advisory Council vote) that will require public input or need public buy-in. Councils should determine their meeting schedules for the year and decide which meetings will allow public comment (i.e.--the Council could decide to have public comment once a quarter or once a semester, etc.).
- Consider the schedule of the school community for those meetings that do allow public comment in order to give your community the chance to participate. This will help the Council determine whether to place time for public comment at the beginning of the agenda or at the end.
- Set a specific time for your public comment period. For example, you could allot a 20-minute segment on the agenda for public comment and allow each member of the public to have 2 minutes to speak during that segment. At the end of the public comment period, the Chair should close public comment and move on to the next agenda item.
- Principal Advisory Council members should not respond during the public comment period. The public comment period is designed to gain input from the public – not for immediate responses by the Council to the public comment presented. The Council should listen attentively to all comment and take the summation of the comment into consideration when making decisions.
- Remind the public that a scheduled public comment period on the agenda is not the only means for providing input. The Principal Advisory Council should encourage the public to contact them via the email address linked on the district-provided Principal Advisory Council webpage. Emails sent to Council members about school-related issues are also considered public comment. If there are urgent matters that need the Council's attention, an ad hoc committee of the Council may organize information sessions or separate public comment meetings to gather that information from stakeholders and share with the full Council.

## Appendix G – Definitions/Acronyms

1. **Ad Hoc Committee** – committee appointed for a special, temporary function (i.e. principal selection)
2. **Cluster**- regional elementary schools, middle schools, and the high school into which they feed
3. **Cross-Council Meeting** – A meeting of representatives from all the Principal Advisory Councils
4. **Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP)**
5. **District Leadership** -The board of education members, together with the superintendent, who set the strategic direction, review financial objectives, and establish a high ethical tone for management and leadership
6. **Ex Officio Member** – a member of the Principal Advisory Council by virtue of holding another role (i.e. Student Body President).
7. **Goal** – Specific objective that is measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) which is often documented in the CSIP
8. **Guideline** – an administrative general framework within which staff will implement policy
9. **Immunity** - The Georgia Supreme Court has held that a local board of education, the governing body of the school district, is not a legal entity capable of being sued under Georgia law. PACs are extended this same level of immunity. Note, however, this only protects the members when they are acting within these bylaws and as a whole. Actions taken outside the bylaws or by individuals are not protected.
10. **Local Board of Education** –This elected board has the fundamental responsibility to establish policy for the school system. Individual members do not have authority as independent elected officials but are only authorized to take action as members of the board as a whole.
11. **Management and Control** – The board of education exercises control and management of a local school system pursuant to Article VIII, Section V, and Paragraph II of the Georgia Constitution.
12. **Meeting** - a gathering of a quorum of Principal Advisory Council members that is subject to the Georgia Open Meetings Act, O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1, et. seq.
13. **Non-Voting Members** – members who participate in the functions of the Council but may not vote on any council items (i.e., school principal)
14. **Parent/Guardian** – a parent/guardian of students enrolled in the school as verified through the District’s Student Information System
15. **Policy** - a formal, brief and high-level set of statements that express a deliberate system of principles to guide organizational decisions

16. **Principal** – the school leader who is selected and evaluated by the superintendent or his/her designee
17. **Quorum** – a majority of the elected and appointed members of the Parent Advisory Council
18. **School Climate** – the perceived norms, values and expectations of individuals in a school related to physical and emotional safety, relationships between all stakeholders, and the physical environment of the school. This school characteristic is measured and included on the CCRPI score.
19. **School Culture** – the shared assumptions, meanings and beliefs of a school organization which impact school climate
20. **Stakeholder Communications** - The Superintendent's Office shall be responsible for collecting and organizing communications from stakeholders. If communications are unrelated to Board policy or its oversight function, the communication will be referred to the Superintendent. If the communication relates to Board policy or its oversight function, absent a conflict of interest, the Chair is responsible for evaluating the materiality of each stakeholder's communication, determining whether further distribution to the full Board is proper, and the appropriate response.
21. **Standard Operating Procedure** – a set of specific actions and responsibilities that is the official or accepted way of implementing a policy within certain guidelines and/or policies
22. **Standing Committee** – committee appointed for a permanent or continuing function (i.e. community partnerships)
23. **Superintendent** – an employee of the board of education and member of the District Leadership team whose fundamental role is to implement the policy established by the board of education and is held accountable in the performance of his/her duties.
24. **Teacher** - non-supervisory instructional individual, including paraprofessionals, assigned to the school on a full-time basis
25. **Vacancy** – a position on a Principal Advisory Council that is unoccupied and there is no incumbent who has a lawful right to the position