

Jasper County Charter System Governance Council Bylaws

Article I: Name

A school governance council has been established in **Washington Park Elementary School** in the **Jasper County School District**. The name of this school governance council shall be the **Washington Park Elementary School Governance Council**.

Article II: Purpose

The establishment of school governance councils is intended to help local boards of education by bringing parents and the community together with teachers and school administrators to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other's concerns and share ideas for school improvement. School governance councils shall represent the community of parents and businesses. The members of the school governance council are accountable to the constituents they serve and shall:

1. Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
2. Regularly participate in school council meetings;
3. Participate in information and training programs;
4. Act as a link between the school council and the community;
5. Encourage the participation of parents and others within the school community; and
6. Work to improve student achievement and performance.

Article III: School Governance Council Authority

The school governance council shall advise and make recommendations to the principal, local board of education and local school superintendent on matters relating to school improvement and student achievement. The school governance council shall participate in the selection of the school principal in accordance with the written policy of the local board of education and as stated in the charter contract. The school governance council shall review and approve the school improvement plan. The school governance council shall review school site budget and expenditure information, and site average class sizes by grade. The school governance council has the authority to appoint committees, study groups, or task forces for such purposes as it deems helpful and may utilize existing or new school advisory groups. The school council shall have the same immunity as the local board of education in all matters directly related to the functions of the school governance council.

Article IV: Role of the School Governance Council

The school governance council provides advice and recommendations to the school principal and, when appropriate, the local board of education and local school superintendent, on any matter related to student achievement and school improvement, including but not limited to, the following:

1. Actively participate in the development of and approval of the School Improvement Plan;
2. Review and monitor assessment data for the purpose of improving student achievement;
3. Actively participate in the district accreditation process;
4. Work with the principal to make decisions and recommendations for the use of personnel based on the system allotments;
5. Actively participate in the hiring process for administrative personnel at the school;
6. Recommend school needs to the Jasper County Board of Education during the budget process;
7. Reach consensus in approving the school budget for instructional materials, technology, textbooks, and pupil services;
8. Review and reach consensus in approving textbooks, curriculum and instructional focus of the school;
9. Create a process and communication strategies for involving parents and the community;
10. Review and recommend actions to improve the overall operations and learning environment of the school (examples: school behavior code, dress code, attendance policy, schedule, extra-curricular activities, community service, school calendar, promotion and retention policy).

Article V: Membership

Membership on the school governance council shall be open to principals, teachers, parents, business representatives and other such members as the school governance council may specify in these bylaws. Members of the school governance council shall not receive compensation to serve on a school governance council. Members of the school governance council shall include:

1. Two parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, excluding parents or guardians who are also employees of the school;
2. A minimum of two representatives from the business community whose business is located in Jasper County;

3. One certified teacher who is nominated and elected by the teachers;
4. One certified teacher who is appointed by the principal;
5. The school principal who will serve as a non-voting member
6. A minimum of one student at the middle and high school level who is selected through a nomination at the student body process.

Article VI: Terms

Council members shall be elected for a two-year term. The present School Council format will be maintained to insure that staggered terms are implemented. Council members may serve more than one term but not more than two consecutive terms on any school governance council.

Article VII: Elections

Elections shall take place between April 1 and May 31 of each year. The electing body for the parent members shall consist of all parents and guardians eligible to serve as a parent member of the school council. The electing body for the teacher members shall consist of all certificated personnel eligible to serve as a teacher member of the school council. The businesspersons shall be selected in the following manner: The Principal and Council Chair shall seek prospective business representatives from the community. Names will be submitted to the Council for Council vote and approval. Article VIII: Vacancies The position of a school council member shall be automatically vacated if:

1. A member resigns by delivering a written resignation to the school council;
2. A member no longer meets the qualifications specified by law; or
3. A member is removed by an action of the school council.

The school council may by a majority vote determine a position vacant if it finds that a member of the council is no longer active in the council due to inactivity including not meeting the requirement to attend one local board of education meeting, defined as missing six out of ten scheduled meetings, and the lack of communication with the principal or School Governance Chair or unwillingness to follow Council rules and procedures. School Governance Council members will adhere to the Professional Standards Commission Code of Ethics. The effective date of a vacancy shall be determined by the school governance council.

An election within the electing body for a replacement to fill the remainder of an unexpired term shall be held within 30 days, unless there are 90 calendar days or less remaining in the term in which case the vacancy shall remain unfilled.

Article IX: Meetings

All meetings of the council shall be open to the public. The school governance council shall meet monthly. The council shall also meet at the call of the chairperson, or at the request of a majority of the members of the school governance council. Notice by mail shall be sent to school governance council members at least seven days prior to a meeting and shall include the date, time and location of the meeting. School governance councils shall be subject to the Open Meetings Act in the same manner as local boards of education. The school governance council secretary, who will be the principal, may choose a staff member to assist him or her in notifying, in writing, the local newspaper designated as the legal organ of the county of any and all meetings of the school governance council at least twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting. A quorum must be present in order to conduct official school council business. A quorum is comprised of a majority of school council members. Every question shall be determined by a majority vote of members present. Each member of the school council is authorized to exercise one vote. Proxy votes are not allowed. Members must be present in order to vote.

Article X: Minutes

School governance 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. A summary of the subjects acted on and the members present at the meeting of the school governance council shall be made available to the public for inspection at the school office within two business days of the meeting. The minutes shall be provided to the school governance council members, each of whom shall receive a copy of such minutes, within 20 days following each school governance council meeting. The official minutes shall be open to public inspection once approved by the school governance council immediately following the next regular meeting of the school governance council.

Minutes at a minimum shall include the names of the school governance council members present at the meeting, a description of each motion or other proposal made, and a record of all votes. In the case of a roll-call vote, the name of each school governance council member voting for or against a proposal or abstaining shall be recorded. 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 persons voting against the proposal or abstaining.

Article XI: Officers of the School Governance Council

The officers of the school governance council shall be a chairperson and a vice chairperson. The principal will serve as the secretary/parliamentarian. Officers of the school governance council shall be elected at the first meeting of the school governance council following the election of school governance council members.

The chairperson, who shall be a parent, will work with the principal to develop the agenda for all meetings, preside at all meetings of the school governance council, and perform such other duties as required by law or as shall be requested by the school governance council.

The vice chairperson shall, in the absence of the chairperson, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as shall be requested by the school governance council.

The secretary, who shall be the principal, will act as the clerk of the school governance council, record all votes and minutes of all proceedings, give notice of all meetings of the school governance council, and shall perform such other duties as may be required by law or as shall be requested by the school governance council. The principal may assign a staff member to assist the council as clerk and be responsible for recording all votes and minutes of all proceedings.

Article XII: Duties of the Principal

The school principal shall have the following duties pertaining to school governance councils:

1. Cause to be created a school governance council by convening the appropriate bodies to select school governance council members; setting the initial agenda, meeting time, and location; and notifying all school governance council members of the same;
2. Call meetings of the electing bodies after providing public notice at least two weeks before such meetings;
3. Communicate all school governance council requests for information and assistance to the local school superintendent and inform the school governance council of responses or actions of the local school superintendent;
4. Work with staff and the school governance council to develop the school improvement plan and school operation plan and submit the plans to the school governance council for its review;
5. Provide progress reports regarding the school's student achievement goals; and
6. Perform all of the duties required by law and the bylaws of the council.

Article XIII: Board of Education Responsibilities

The local board of education shall provide all information not specifically made confidential by law, including but not limited to, school site budget and expenditure information and site average class sizes by grade, to the school governance council as requested or as required by state law or state board rule.

The local board shall designate an employee of the school system to attend school governance council meetings as requested by a school governance council for the purpose of responding to questions the school governance council may have concerning information provided to it by the local board or actions taken by the local board. The central administration shall respond to requests for information from a school governance council.

The local board of education shall receive and consider all recommendations of the school governance council, including the annual report, after a review by the system governance committee:

1. Public notice shall be given to the community of the local board's intent to consider school governance council reports or recommendations;
2. Written notice shall be given to the members of the school governance council at least seven days prior to such local board meeting, along with a notice of intent to consider a school governance council report or recommendation;
3. The members of the school governance council shall be afforded an opportunity to present information in support of the school governance council's report or recommendation; and
4. The local board of education shall respond to each recommendation of the school governance council within 60 calendar days after being notified in writing of the recommendation.

The local board of education shall provide a training program to assist schools in forming a school council and to assist school council members in the performance of their duties. Such program shall address the organization of school councils; their purpose and responsibilities; applicable laws, rules, regulations and meeting procedures; important state and local school system program requirements; and a model school governance council organization plan. Additional training programs shall be offered to school governance council members annually.

Article XIV: Bylaws

The school governance council shall adopt the bylaws as it deems appropriate to conduct the business of the school council. The adoption of bylaws or changes thereto requires two-thirds affirmative votes.

Article XV: Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall be the governing parliamentary authority for school governance councils in all cases applicable but not inconsistent with these bylaws.