

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCILS

(Background information for Policy Review Committee)

Update No. 2 January 15, 2011

The state education reform law (Public Act 10-111) includes provisions for School Governance Councils in Section 21(g). Former Commissioner McQuillan stated that School Governance Councils provide an unprecedented opportunity for stakeholders in Connecticut schools to craft a productive collaboration to support student success. The intent of councils is to enable parents, school staff, students (where appropriate) and community leaders to work together to improve student achievement in the state's lowest performing schools.

Impacted Schools and Timeline: The statute requires the following schools to establish School Governance Councils within the following timelines:

- Schools that are among the lowest five percent of the state's schools based on student achievement and failing to make adequate yearly progress in mathematics and reading at the whole school level prior to July 1, 2010, must establish councils no later than January 15, 2011. Fourteen schools located in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Windham, and Stamford Academy are impacted by this timeline. A list of the specific schools in each of the districts listed above was provided in the Commissioner's Circular Letter C-3; and
- Schools that have been identified as not making adequate yearly progress in mathematics and reading at the whole school level and are not among the lowest five percent of schools prior to July 1, 2010, must establish councils by November 1, 2011. This impacts a total of 184 schools in districts throughout Connecticut. The list of schools affected by this timeline is also provided in the aforementioned Circular Letter.

In addition to the schools mandated to establish councils, any board of education could voluntarily establish a council for any school this school year and use the model described in the statute or an alternate model. The law states a council is considered a component of parental involvement for purposes of federal funding under NCLB.

Membership, Voting Rights, and Terms

The school governance councils consist of 14 voting members plus non-voting members, as listed below.

Governance Council Membership and Selection Process

<i>Member</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Selection/Election Process</i>
Parents or guardians of students at the school	7	Elected by the parents or guardians of students attending the school, each household with a student attending the school will have one vote
Community leaders within the school district	2	Elected by the parent or guardian members and teacher members of the governance council
Teachers at the school	5	Elected by the teachers of the school
School principal or designee (non-voting)	1	Principal may name a designee
Student members, high school councils only (non-voting)	2	Elected by the school's student body

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCILS

(Background information for Policy Review Committee)

(continued)

Voting members have two-year terms, and no member can serve more than two terms on a council. The nonvoting student members serve a one-year term, and no student member can serve more than two terms.

Council Responsibilities

School Governance Councils serve in an *advisory* capacity and are responsible to assist the school administration in the areas listed below:

1. Analyze school achievement data and school needs as they relate to the school's improvement plan;
2. Review the fiscal objectives of the school's draft budget and advise the principal before the budget is submitted to the superintendent;
3. Participate in the hiring process of the school principal or other administrators for the school by conducting candidate interviews and reporting on them to the superintendent and the local and regional board of education;
4. Assisting the principal in making programmatic and operational changes to improve the school's achievement;
5. Develop and approve a written school parent involvement policy that outlines the role of parents and guardians (Note: Schools that receive federal Title I funds are required to have a parent involvement policy developed jointly with, approved by, and distributed to parents. A school's Title I parent involvement policy can serve the purpose of the policy required under this section if it is approved by the Council.); and
6. Work with school administrators in developing and approving a school compact for parents, legal guardians, and students that outlines the school's goals and academic focus identifying ways that parents and school personnel can build a partnership to improve student learning. (Note: Schools that receive federal Title I funds are required to have a school-parent compact, developed with parents. A school's Title I compact can serve the purpose of the compact required under this section, if approved by the Council.)

Additional Powers of a Governance Council

In addition to the responsibilities a council must address, the act authorizes councils to address other issues. A council may:

1. in those schools that require an improvement plan, review the annual draft report detailing the goals in the state accountability plan prepared under existing law for low-achieving schools and advise the principal before the report is submitted to the superintendent of schools;
2. in those schools where an improvement plan becomes required under state accountability law for low-achieving schools, assist the principal in developing the plan before it is submitted to the superintendent of schools;

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCILS

3. work with the principal to develop, conduct, and report the results of an annual survey of parents, guardians, and teachers on issues related to the school climate and conditions; and provide advice to the principal on any other major policy matters affecting the school, except on matters relating to collective bargaining agreements between the teachers and the board of education.

Limitations on the Responsibilities of the Council

In addition to the School Governance Council's responsibilities, it is also important to recognize the limits of their advisory function. The duties of these councils do not entail activities including, but not limited to:

- managing the school;
- supervising staff;
- entering into contracts or purchase agreements;
- discussing individual issues between teachers and students and/or parents;
- determining student eligibility for school admission; or
- determining class allocations or student assignments.

Reconstituting Schools

A governance council can vote to reconstitute a school under the act's provisions during the third year after the council was established. A council may not vote to reconstitute if (1) the school was already reconstituted as a result of receiving federal education grants that were contingent on reconstitution (Sec. 10003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 USC 6301 et seq.) or (2) a reconstitution was initiated by another source. A vote to reconstitute must recommend one of the following models for reconstitution:

1. turnaround;
2. restart;
3. transformation;
4. CommPACT school, pursuant to Connecticut statute;
5. an innovation school; or
6. any other model developed under federal law.

No later than 10 days after the council tells the local or regional board of education about its vote to reorganize, the board must hold a public hearing to discuss the vote. At the board's next regularly scheduled meeting or 10 days after the public hearing, whichever is later, it must vote on whether to (1) accept the model recommended by the council, (2) select an alternative model described in the act or (3) maintain the current school status. If the board selects an alternative model, it must meet with the governance council within 10 days of its vote to discuss which alternative to adopt.

If the board and council cannot agree, the Commissioner of Education must decide, no later than 45 days after the last meeting between the board and the council, which of the alternatives to implement.

If the board votes to maintain the current school status, no later than 45 days after the vote, the Commissioner must decide whether to implement the council's recommended model or to maintain the current school status.

Reorganization Implementation

If the final decision is adoption of a model, the board must implement the model during the following school year in conformance with the state law and applicable regulations, federal regulations and guidelines for school restructuring under NCLB, or any other applicable federal laws or regulations. It is not clear if a reconstitution decision made in May or June would give a school district enough time to reorganize a school by September.

Training

The statute requires local boards of education to provide appropriate training and instruction to members of governance council to aid them in executing their duties. The State Department of Education is working with CAFE to provide this training. Districts could use their Title I parent involvement funding, where applicable, to support the work of the councils.

Evaluating School Governance Councils

The Commissioner must evaluate the councils established on or before January 15, 2011, based on the act's criteria for monitoring reconstituted schools. By October 1, 2014, the Commissioner must report to the Education Committee of the General Assembly on the evaluation. The report must include recommendations whether to continue to allow school governance councils to recommend reconstitution.

Policy Implications

Previously, upon the enactment of P.A. 10-111, a new policy was developed and codified as #5123.1, "Supervision/Actions Required for Schools Designated as Needing Improvement." A section of that policy contained language pertaining to School Governance Councils. That policy, published in the June 30th edition of the *Policy Update Service* publication is still applicable to this issue. It is available upon request.

A new policy, #1110.2, "School Governance Councils" has been developed and follows for your consideration and use. An appendix to this new policy contains sample bylaws for a School Governance Council. The bylaw details sections pertaining to membership, selection process and election of members, officers, duties of council members, subcommittees, responsibilities of the council, meetings, and other related material. It is provided as a sample to assist the school site School Governance Council in developing its own bylaws. Each School Governance Council can customize these bylaws for their school or use them as a general guide for developing their own bylaws. It is strongly recommended that the governing councils adopt bylaws to govern their activities.

Resources: (Recommended by State Department of Education)

- 1) <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/SCG>
- 2) <http://tinyurl.com/39yphrj> (Chicago Public Schools)
- 3) <http://tinyurl.com/348exsc> (Georgia School Council Institute)
- 4) <http://tinyurl.com/238pbzz> (Department of Education in Victoria, Australia)
- 5) <http://tinyurl.com/26jhg4p> (Ontario)

A sample policy to consider.

Community Relations

Communications with the Public

School Governance Council

It is the policy of the _____ Board of Education (Board) to endorse and support parent, staff, student and community involvement in school governance. It is the intent of the Board that every school will have a School Governance Council (Council) that enables parents, school staff, students (when appropriate), and community to work together in facilitating quality educational plans that engender continuous improvement of student achievement. It is the responsibility of the Principal to develop and maintain effective organizational structures and processes for advisement in the school in conjunction with the School Governance Council.

Schools identified by the State Department of Education that are among the lowest five percent of the state's schools based on student achievement and failing to make adequate yearly progress in mathematics and reading at the whole school level prior to July 1, 2010, must establish councils no later than January 15, 2011.

Fourteen schools located in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Windham, and Stamford Academy are impacted by this timeline. A list of the specific schools in each of the districts listed above was provided in the 2010-2011 Commissioner's Circular Letter C-3.

Schools that have been identified as not making adequate yearly progress in mathematics and reading at the whole school level and are not among the lowest five percent of schools prior to July 1, 2010, must establish councils by November 1, 2011.

This impacts a total of 184 schools in districts throughout Connecticut. The list of schools affected by this timeline is also provided in the aforementioned Circular Letter.

Optional: *(Any Board or school not subject by P.A. 10-111 may voluntarily establish a School Governance Council)*

In addition to the schools mandated to establish Councils, each school within the District shall establish a Council and use the model described in the statute or an alternate model. The Board recognizes that a Council is considered a component of parental involvement for purposes of federal funding under NCLB.

Community Relations

Communications with the Public

School Governance Council (continued)

Composition of School Governance Council

1. The School Governance Council for high schools shall consist of (a) seven members who shall be parents or guardians of students attending the school, (b) two members who shall be community leaders within the school District, (c) five members who shall be teachers at the school, (d) one nonvoting member who is the Principal of the school, or his or her designee, and (e) two nonvoting student members who shall be students at the school. The parent or guardian members shall be elected by the parents or guardians of students attending the school, provided, for purposes of the election, each household with a student attending the school shall have one vote. The community leader members shall be elected by the parent/guardian members and teacher members of the Council. The teacher members shall be elected by the teachers of the school. The nonvoting student members shall be elected by the student body of the school.
2. The School Governance Council for elementary and middle schools shall consist of (a) seven members who shall be parents or guardians of students attending the school, (b) two members who shall be community leaders within the school District, (c) five members who shall be teachers at the school, and (d) one nonvoting member who is the principal of the school, or his or her designee. The parent or guardian members shall be elected by the parents/guardians of students attending the school, provided, for purposes of the election, each household with a student attending the school shall have one vote. The community leader members shall be elected by the parent or guardian members and teacher members of the Council. The teacher members shall be elected by the teachers of the school.
3. Terms of voting members shall be for two years and no members shall serve more than two terms on the Council. The nonvoting student members shall serve one year and no student member shall serve more than two terms on the Council.

Responsibilities of School Governance Council

The School Governance Council serves in an advisory capacity and shall assist the school administration in the areas listed below:

- Analyze school achievement data and school needs relative to the improvement plan for the school;
- Review the fiscal objectives of the draft budget for the school and advise the Principal before the budget is submitted to the Superintendent of Schools;

Community Relations

Communications with the Public

School Governance Council

Responsibilities of School Governance Council (continued)

- Participate in the hiring process of the school Principal or other administrators of the school by conducting interviews of candidates and reporting on such interviews to the Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education;
- Assist the Principal in making programmatic and operational changes to improve the school's achievement;
- Develop and approve written school parent involvement policy that outlines the role of parents and guardians. (Note: A school's Title I parent involvement policy can serve the purpose of the policy required under this section.); and
- Work with school administrators in developing and approving a school compact for parents, legal guardians and students that outlines the school's goals and academic focus identifying ways that parents and school personnel can build a partnership to improve student learning. (Note: A school's Title I compact can serve the purpose of the compact required under this section.)

In addition to its required responsibilities, a Council may:

- Assist in developing and reviewing the school improvement plan and advise the Principal before the report is submitted to the Superintendent of Schools.
- Work with the Principal to develop, conduct and report the results of an annual survey of parents, guardians, and teachers on issues related to the school climate and conditions.
- Provide advice to the Principal on any other major policy matters affecting the school, except on matters relating to collective bargaining agreements between the teachers and the Board of Education.
- Utilize records relating to information about parents and guardians of students maintained by the Board of Education for the sole purpose of the election to the Council. Such information shall be confidential and shall only be disclosed as provided in the statute and shall not be further disclosed.

The Council, after being in place for three years, may vote to recommend that a school be reconstituted, in accordance with the provisions of law. The Council may not vote to reconstitute if the school was already reconstituted. Such reconstitution, determined by an affirmative vote, shall be to one of the following models: (a) Turnaround model, (b) Restart model, (c) Transformation model, (d) CommPACT School, (e) Innovation School, or (f) any other model that may be developed under federal law.

Community Relations

Communications with the Public

School Governance Council

Responsibilities of School Governance Council (continued)

Note: *Within 10 days of receiving a recommendation for reconstitution the Board must hold a public hearing to discuss the vote and at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting or ten days after the public hearing, whichever is later, conduct a vote to accept the model recommended by the Governing Council, select an alternate model or maintain the current school status. Other timelines are established in the statute regarding an alternative model chosen by the Board and required discussions and role of the Commissioner of Education.*

The Board of Education recognizes its statutory responsibility and will provide appropriate training and instruction to members of the School Governance Council to aid them in the execution of their duties. *(Districts should consider using Title I parent involvement funding, where applicable, to support the work of the Councils.)*

In addition to School Governance Councils' responsibilities, the Board believes it is also important to recognize the limits of their advisory function. The duties of School Governance Councils do not entail activities including, but not limited to:

- Managing the school;
- Supervising staff;
- Entering into contracts or purchase agreements;
- Discussing individual issues between teachers and students and/or parents;
- Determining student eligibility for school admission; or
- Determining class allocations or student assignments.

The Board recognizes that School Governance Councils shall be subject to an evaluation by the Commissioner of Education. In addition, a School Governance Council shall be considered a component of parental involvement for purposes of federal funding pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110.

Community Relations

Communications with the Public

School Governance Council

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-14n Statewide mastery examination, Certification of mastery. Limitations on use of test results. Examinations in accordance with federal NCLB Act; funding. Kindergarten assessment tool.

10-265g Summer reading programs required for priority school districts. Evaluation of student reading level. Personal reading plans. (as amended by PA 01-173)

10-265l Requirements for additional instruction for poor performing students in priority school districts; exemption. Summer school required; exemption (as amended by PA 99-288, PA 01-173, and PA 03-174)

PA 10-111 An Act Concerning Education Reform in Connecticut.

P.L. 107-110 The No Child Left Behind Act

Policy adopted:

cps 1/11

The following outline is provided as a sample to assist the school site School Governance Council in developing its own bylaws. Each School Governance Council can customize these bylaws for their school or use them as a general guide for developing their own bylaws.

School Governance Council: Outline of Sample Bylaws

Preamble

It is the policy of the _____ Board of Education (Board) to endorse and support parent, staff, student and community involvement in school governance. It is the intent of the Board that every school will have a School Governance Council that enables parents, school staff, students (when appropriate), and community to work together in facilitating quality educational plans that engender continuous improvement of student achievement. It is the responsibility of the Principal to develop and maintain effective organizational structures and processes for advisement in the school in conjunction with the School Governance Council.

Article I: Name

The name of this Committee is the *(name of school)* School Governance Council, hereinafter referred to as the “Council” organized under the authority of the state reform law, Public Act 10-111, as codified in Section 21(g).

Article II: Purpose

Recognizing the importance of communication and participation of parents, school staff, students (where appropriate) and community leaders to improve student achievement in the efforts to educate our children, the Council establishes as its purpose the support of _____ School. The Council shall work to support educational efforts of the school by working in a spirit of cooperation with school staff and administration to improve student achievement and performance, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents, staff, students and community leaders into the school based decision-making process by working on education issues. The Council shall endeavor to bring 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 role, and share ideas for continuous school improvement.

Alternate language/options to consider

1. The School Governance Council provides an opportunity for stakeholders in the school to craft a productive collaboration to support student success. The intent of the Council is to enable parents, school staff, students (where appropriate) and community leaders to work together to improve student achievement in the local school setting/site.

Article II: Purpose (continued)

Alternate language/options to consider (continued)

The management and control of _____ School shall be the responsibility of the Board of Education and the school leader shall be the Principal. The Council shall provide advice, recommendations, endorsements, and assistance; and represent the community of parents, school staff, students (where appropriate) and community leaders in support of continuous school improvement designed to improve student achievement. Each member of the Council, as a representative, shall be accorded the respect and attention deserving such election or appointment.

2. The purpose of the School Governance Council is to assist, advise and provide the building Principal with a broad base of input to improve school and student performance and to help design, develop and implement a school improvement plan that is aligned with the state and district standards.
3. The purpose of the School Governance Council is to provide a forum for parents, teachers, community members, and students (high school level) to counsel/advise the school Principal regarding all matters related to the operation of the school with the exception of those matters such as personnel performance which are regulated by statute exclusively to administrative personnel.

The Council will provide input to the Principal regarding major decisions or recommendations as it relates to school improvement. Areas included are budgeting, curriculum and instruction, facilities, student assessments, remedial and school-support services, school-community relations/communications, and student assessments.

4. The School Governance Council shall counsel the Principal regarding all matters related to the operation of the school with the exception of those matters such as personnel performance which are relegated by statute exclusively to administrative personnel.

Article III: Membership

Section 1

Number and Qualifications

The Council shall represent the diverse interests of the families and staff that make up the local school community. Every effort, therefore, shall be made to engage broad participation in the Council election process.

To meet statutory requirements, the Council will consist of fourteen (14) voting members plus up to three nonvoting members (depending on the type of school involved.) The following tables describe the members, the number of members and how members are selected.

Article III: Membership

Section 1 (continued)

Number and Qualifications (continued)

Members of the Council shall include:

- a. Seven (7) parents or guardians of students currently enrolled in _____ School as voting members. (excluding parents/guardians who are also employed at the school.) Parents or guardians who are employed by the Board of Education, but not assigned to _____ School are eligible to serve. Parents nominated for Council membership must have a child enrolled in the school for the current school year (or for the next school year in the case of May/June elections) to be included on the ballot.
- b. Five (5) teachers at the school as voting members.
- c. Two (2) community leaders within the school District as voting members.
- d. One (1) Principal of the school or his/her designee as a non-voting member.
- e. Two (2) student members (*High School Council only*) as non-voting members.

Section 2

Term of Office/Tenure

- a. Voting members shall serve for a term of two years. No voting member of the Council shall serve more than two terms.
- b. Non-voting student members shall serve a one year term, and no student members may serve more than two terms.
- c. The term of office for all Council members shall begin as of January 15, 2011/November 1, 2011/_____.
- d. In order to avoid having the terms of all Council members expire at the same time, the first elections shall create staggered terms of office.
 - Council members receiving the most votes in their category shall serve two-year terms.
 - Those receiving fewer votes shall serve one-year terms.
 - For example: the four parents, three teachers and one community member receiving the most votes shall serve two-year terms and the remaining three parents, two teachers, and community member would serve a one-year term.
 - Regular elections will continue each school year.

Option: Another strategy is to use a lottery system, such as drawing straws to establish two-year terms for half of the council and one-year terms for the other half. For example, the four parents, three teachers and one community member who drew a long straw would serve two-year terms, and the remaining three parents, two teachers and community member who drew short straws would serve a one-year term. Under this example, an election process would then continue each year.

Article III: Membership (continued)

Section 2

Term of Office/Tenure (continued)

Alternate wording

School Governing Council members shall be elected for two (2) year terms. Half, or the nearest approximation thereof, of each representative group shall be elected during odd years, and the remaining number elected during even years. At the first regular meeting of the Council, each member's current term of office shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Section 3

Resignation

Any Council member may withdraw from the Council by delivering to the Principal or the Chairperson or Secretary of the Council a written resignation, or by giving verbal resignation during a regular meeting of the Council. Such verbal or written notice of the resignation shall be recorded in the official meeting minutes.

Section 4

Removal

Any member of the Council, who is no longer active, excluding the Principal, may be removed by an affirmative vote of a majority of the Council's voting members at a regular or called meeting of the Council. A member of the Council shall be deemed to be inactive if the member has missed three (3) consecutive meetings of the Council. The Council shall determine the effective date of the removal. Furthermore, any member of the Council who has violated the Council's "Code of Conduct" may be removed from the Council. Such removal shall be by an affirmative vote of membership of the Council at any regular or called meeting of the Council.

Alternate language

The Council may, by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of all its members, suspend or expel a member. Any elected member may terminate his or her membership by submitting a written letter of resignation to the Council Chairperson.

Section 5

Compensation

Council members shall not receive any remuneration to serve on the Council or its committees.

Article III: Membership (continued)

Section 6

Vacancy

The office of Council member shall be automatically vacated:

- If a member resigns,
- If a member is removed by action of the Council pursuant to Article III, Section 4 of these Bylaws, or
- If a member no longer meets the qualifications for membership specified by these bylaws.

Any vacancy on the Council will be filled for the remainder of the un-expired term utilizing the election process. An election within the electing body for a replacement to fill the remainder of an unexpired term shall be held within sixty (60) days of the date of the resignation, removal, or disqualification; unless there are ninety (90) days or less remaining in the term in which case the vacancy will remain unfilled until a replacement is selected by normal election/appointment processes as stated in these Bylaws.

Article IV: Selection Process/Election of Members

Section 1

Selection Process

- a. The parent/guardian members (7) of the Council shall be elected by the parents or guardians of students attending the school. Each household with a student attending the school will have one vote.
 1. The school Principal may enlist an **election committee** to assist in conducting the election. The committee would:
 - Schedule dates,
 - Post announcements,
 - Collect nominations,
 - Set up, administer in, and oversee the election process, and
 - Formally announce the results.
 - Representatives of existing groups shall be enlisted to help with the election process. (Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the Teachers' Union.)
 2. The teacher members (5) of the Council shall be elected by the teachers of the school.
 3. The community leaders (2) of the Council shall be elected by the parent/guardian members and teacher members of the Council.
 4. Student members (2) for a high school council shall be elected by the school's student body.

Article IV: Selection Process/Election of Members

Section 2

Election Process

A valid election process should include the following activities:

1. Election Committee

- The Principal may enlist an election committee to assist in conducting the election schedule dates, post announcements, collect nominations, set up and administer the voting itself and formally announce the results.
- The election committee should represent the diversity of the school and be unaffiliated with any potential candidates.
- The final decision shall be made by _____.
(date)

2. Call for Nominations for Parents and Teachers

- A call for nominations should be sent to all parents or guardians in the school to nominate themselves or other parents or guardians for the seven available positions on the Council. Every effort shall be made to provide nomination and election material in a language they understand.
- A parent is a person who is the natural, adoptive or stepparent of a child enrolled in the school and includes those people acting as legal guardian or register custodian of the child, such as grandparents.
- A call for nominations should also be sent to all teachers to nominate themselves or others for the five positions on the Council. *(The teachers at a given school shall be responsible for selecting their representatives to the Council. A nomination process should be conducted followed by a ballot. Teachers are those certified staff who perform the majority of their duties in a teaching capacity at that school. Paraprofessionals are not eligible to serve as teacher members of the Council.)*
- The election committee shall verify that those nominated are eligible and willing to serve.

3. Voting

- The ballot for the parent election should be distributed to each household. Each household of students enrolled in the school for the current school year (or for the next school year in the case of May/June elections) will receive one ballot. The ballot for the teacher election shall be distributed to all teachers.
- The ballot for the parent election shall be sent to each household via U.S. mail or by another reliable distribution method. *(or: Voting procedures that will maximize participation shall be determined by the election committee.)*

Article IV: Selection Process/Election of Members

Section 2

Election Process

3. Voting (continued)

- If more than one family resides at the same location, each family should be sent their own ballot.
- Parents/guardians are eligible to vote for parent representatives. A household can cast a vote for each open parent seat on the Council. In the first election, all seven seats are open.
- The official ballot shall be duplicated on school letterhead, with the ballots numbered sequentially.
- To ensure maximum participation, parents and teachers should be given sufficient time and multiple opportunities to cast their ballot – whether through dropping the ballot off at the school office or another community location or through the U.S. mail.
- If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the voting process must still be followed. The full membership of the Council shall be completed by repeating the process of soliciting nominations and holding a second election.

4. Results

- Immediately following the election, ballots should be counted with supervision by the election committee or at least a school administrator, one parent and one teacher who are unaffiliated with any candidates.
- The Principal should announce the results and post the new membership of the council on the school's website.
- To avoid having the terms of all Council members expire at the same time, the first elections may/shall create staggered terms of office, using a lottery system. Drawing straws shall be used to establish two-year terms for half of the Council and one-year terms for the other half. Then an election process shall continue each year.

5. Community Members of the Council

- After the parent and teacher members are elected by their representative groups, they shall then elect the community members who will serve on the Council.
- A community member shall be anyone who resides in the school district or has a business or civic interest in the area. The parent and teacher representatives shall determine a process for soliciting interest from community members. *(The aforementioned Election Committee could be utilized to also assist in the selection of the nominees for consideration by the Council members. Community representatives interested in participating on the Council could make their interest known at an open meeting of the Council.)*

Article IV: Selection Process/Election of Members

Section 2

Election Process

5. Community Members of the Council (continued)

- Community members are defined as community leaders of influence in each community, including, but not limited to, religious leaders, non-profit leaders and business leaders.

6. Student Representatives

- High school student representatives to the Council shall be elected by the student body through existing student government procedures.
- In the absence of a student government, students shall be permitted to campaign for the position of Council representative at a general assembly of the student body and the student body shall make their selection by ballot. (or voice vote)

7. Principal

- The Principal shall participate directly as a nonvoting member of the Council or name a designee to the Council.
- The role of the Principal in terms of authority and responsibility for school management is not changed by the institution of this Council. Ultimately, the Principal is responsible and accountable to the Superintendent of Schools.

Article V: Officers/Responsibilities/Election/Term of Office

Section 1

Officers

1. The officers of the school site Council shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and other officers the Council may deem desirable.
2. The **Chairperson** shall:
 - Prepare an agenda for each meeting and publically post the agenda at the school site (and on the school's website) 72 hours in advance of each meeting of the School Governance Council.
 - Preside at all meetings of the Council.

Article V: Officers/Responsibilities/Election/Term of Office

Section 1

Officers (continued)

- Sign all letters, reports and other communications of the Council.
- Perform all duties incident to the office of the Chairperson.
- Have other such duties as are prescribed by the Council.

3. The **Vice-Chairperson** shall:

- Represent the Chairperson in assigned duties.
- Substitute for the Chairperson in his or her absence.
- Perform such other duties as to be assigned by the Chairperson or the School Governance Council.

4. The **Secretary** shall:

- Act as clerk of the Council.
- Keep minutes of all regular and special meetings of the school site Council, including attendance, summary reports, and all votes in a book to be kept for that purpose.
- Transmit true and correct copies of the minutes of such meetings to members of the Council and to the following other persons: _____.
- Provide all notices in accordance with these bylaws. (give or cause to be given notice of all meetings of the Council.)
- Be custodian of the records of the Council.
- Keep a register of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of each member of the Council and others with whom the Council has regular dealings, as furnished by those persons.
- Perform other such duties as are assigned by the Chairperson or the Council.

Section 2

Election of Officers and Terms of Office

1. The officers shall be elected annually, at the _____ meeting of the school site Council and shall serve for one year, or until each successor has been elected.

Alternate language:

- The officers of the Council shall be a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. Officers shall hold office concurrently with their terms of membership on the Council.

Article V: Officers/Responsibilities/Election/Term of Office

Section 2

Election of Officers and Terms of Office (continued)

Alternate language: (continued)

- The officers of the Council shall be elected at a meeting of the Council following the annual election of Council members, as needed. The Principal shall conduct the process of election of officers, as needed.
- 2. A vacancy in any office at any time and from any cause shall be filled for the unexpired term at the next meeting of the Council. A Council member does not have to be present at a meeting in order to be elected as an officer. (or: *A vacancy in any office shall be filled at the earliest opportunity by a special election of the Council, for the remaining portion of the term of office.*)
- 3. Officers may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of all the members of the Council.

Section 3

Executive Committee

The officers of the Council (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary) shall comprise the Executive Committee of the Council.

Article VI: Duties of Council Members

The members of the Council are accountable to their constituents and shall:

- Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.
- Regularly attend and participate in Council meetings.
- Participate in information and training programs.
- Act as a link between the Council and the community.
- Encourage participation of parents and others in the school community.

Alternate language to consider:

The Council is made up of parents, teachers, students, (where appropriate) community members and the Principal or his/her designee. Each constituency represented shall have a corresponding set of responsibilities.

Article VI: Duties of Council Members (continued)

Alternate language to consider: (continued)

- a. **Parents:** Council parents are responsible for soliciting input from the school's parental community with respect to issues of concern to the Council. Parent members shall relay council activities to the parent community as well as to the school's parent organizations. *(Consider use of website and/or a newsletter of Council activities)*
- b. **Teachers:** School staff Council members are responsible for soliciting input from the faculty and support staff with respect to issues of concern to the Council. Teacher members of the Council shall report to faculty and support staff.
- c. **Students:** Student members shall report Council activities to the student body and shall solicit student input and areas of concern for presentation to the Council.
- d. **Principal:** The Principal is responsible for keeping the Council informed of all relevant school information. He/She shall take the lead role in promoting new programs at the school. The Principal shall seek the active participation of the Council in those areas listed under "Council Responsibilities."

Article VII: Committees, Study Groups, Task Forces

The Council may appoint committees, study groups, or task forces for such purposes as it deems helpful/necessary in order to carry out the responsibilities of the Council enumerated in these bylaws. No such committee, study group or task force may exercise the authority of the Council.

Section 1

Selection of Committee Members

The Chairperson of the committee and members of the committees will be appointed by the Council Chairperson, subject to the ratification of the Council.

Alternate language: Unless otherwise determined by the Council, the Council Chairperson shall appoint members of standing or special committees. A vacancy on a committee shall be filled by appointment made by the Chairperson.

Section 2

Terms of Office

The Council shall determine the terms of office for members of a committee.

Article VII: Committees, Study Groups, Task Forces

Section 3

Committee Membership

The Council may establish and abolish subcommittees of its own membership to perform duties as shall be prescribed by Council. At least one member representing teachers and one member representing parents shall make up the subcommittee. No subcommittee may exercise the authority of the Council.

Section 4

Quorum

A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum, unless otherwise determined by the Council. The act of a majority of the members present shall be the act of the committee, provided a quorum is in attendance.

Section 5

Committee Rules

Each committee may adopt rules for its own government not inconsistent with these bylaws or rules adopted by the Council or Board of Education policies.

All committees of the Council shall follow the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act as required by statute.

Section 6

Record Keeping

All committees shall keep records of business conducted at meetings. The minutes will be kept on file in the Principal's office and available at all times to the Council members. The minutes shall include the names of committee members in attendance, listing of topics discussed and committee recommendations.

Section 7

Reporting Responsibilities

Committee Chairpersons will present work plans and recommendation to the Council for approval. Each committee may make a report through its Chairperson at each regular meeting of the Council.

Article VIII: Council Responsibilities

Section 1

Mandatory Advisory Capacity Responsibilities by Statute

School Governance Councils serve in an **advisory** capacity and shall assist the school administration in the areas listed below:

- analyze school achievement data and school needs as they relate to the school's improvement plan;
- review the fiscal objectives of the school's draft budget and advise the Principal before the budget is submitted to the Superintendent;
- participate in the hiring process of the school Principal or other administrators of the school by conducting interviews of candidates and reporting on such interviews to the Superintendent of Schools for the school district and the local and regional Board of Education;
- assist the Principal in making programmatic and operational changes to improve the school's achievement;
- develop and approve a written school parent involvement policy that outlines the role of parents and guardians (Note: *Schools that receive federal Title 1 funds are required to have a parent involvement policy developed jointly with, approved by, and distributed to parents. A school's Title 1 parent involvement policy can serve the purpose of the policy required under this section.*); and
- work with school administrators in developing and approving a school compact for parents, legal guardians, and students that outlines the school's goals and academic focus identifying ways that parents and school personnel can build a partnership to improve student learning. (Note: *Schools that receive federal Title 1 funds are required to have a school-parent compact, developed with parents. A school's Title 1 compact can serve the purpose of the compact required under this section.*)

Section 2

Optional Additional Responsibilities

In addition to its statutory required responsibilities, the Council may:

- assist in developing and reviewing the school improvement plan and advise the Principal before the report is submitted to the Superintendent of Schools;
- work with the Principal to develop, conduct, and report the results of an annual survey of parents, guardians, and teachers on issues related to the school climate and conditions; and
- provide advice to the Principal on any other major policy matters affecting the school, except on matters relating to collective bargaining agreements between the teachers and the Board of Education.

Article VIII: Council Responsibilities (continued)

Section 3

Limitations Placed on the Advisory Function

In addition to School Governance Councils' responsibilities, it is also important to recognize the limits of its advisory function. The duties of School Governance Councils do not entail activities including, but not limited to:

- managing the school;
- supervising staff;
- entering into contracts or purchase agreements;
- discussing individual issues between teachers and students and/or parents;
- determining student eligibility for school admission; or
- determining class allocations or student assignments.

Additional language to consider:

Apart from their function as part of the Council, members have no individual authority. Individually, voting members of the Council may not commit the school to any policy, act, practice or expenditure. No individual member of the Council, by virtue of holding office, shall exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the school, or as an individual command the services of any school employee.

All powers of the School Governance Council lie in its action as a committee of the whole. Individual Council members exercise their advisory authority/responsibilities only as they vote to take action at a legal meeting of the Council.

Section 4

Reconstitution of School

1. After being in place for three years, the Council may vote to recommend that a school be reconstituted using one of the following models for reconstitution:
 - Turnaround
 - Restart
 - Transformation
 - CommPact School
 - Innovation School
 - Any other model developed under federal law
2. However, the Council cannot vote to reconstitute a school if it was already reconstituted for another purpose, such as (1) the school was already reconstituted as a result of receiving a federal school improvement grant that was contingent on reconstitution; or (2) a reconstitution of the school was initiated by another source, such as the State Board of Education or the local or regional Board of Education.

Article VIII: Council Responsibilities

Section 4

Reconstitution of School (continued)

3. The Board of Education shall within ten (10) days of receiving a recommendation from the Council for reconstitution hold a public hearing to discuss the vote of the Council. At the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education or ten days after the public hearing, whichever is later, the Board shall conduct a vote to accept the model recommended by the Council, select an alternate model or maintain the current school status. *(Other time lines are established in the statute regarding an alternative model chosen by the Board of Education and required discussions and the role of the Commissioner of Education.)*

Article IX: Meetings of the Council

Section 1

Meetings

The Council shall meet regularly on the _____ school day of each month. *(Alternate language: The Council shall meet every other month.)* Special meetings of the Council may be called by the Chairperson, the Principal, or by a majority vote of the Council. *(Alternate language: The Council shall meet monthly. The Council shall hold nine meetings each school year.)* The Council shall prescribe the time, place and dates of its regular meetings. The schedule of the regular meetings shall be available to the general public and shall be posted in a manner available to the public at the school which should in addition include posting on the school web site.) The annual schedule of regular meetings shall be established at the Council's meeting held in (month).

All required notices of meetings shall be adhered to for all called meetings.

The meetings of the Council are subject to the provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act, Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-200 et. seq.

Section 2

Place of Meetings

The Council shall hold its regular meetings at a facility provided within the school, unless such a facility accessible to the public, including disabled persons, is unavailable. Alternate meeting places may be determined by the Chairperson or by majority vote of the Council. *(Alternate language: All official meetings of the Council shall be held at _____ School in a location determined by the Principal.)*

Training meetings provided by the Board of Education may be held at any location designated by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

All meetings of the Council shall be open to the public unless specifically exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.

Article IX: Meetings of the Council (continued)

Section 3

Notice of Meetings

Written public notice shall be given of all meetings at least 72 hours (3 days) in advance of the meeting. Changes in the established date, time or location shall be given special notice. All meetings shall be publicized in the following venues: _____, _____, and _____.

All required notices shall be delivered to Council and committee members no less than 72 hours, and no more than ___ days in advance of the meeting, personally or by mail (or by e-mail).

Section 4

Quorum

The act of a majority of the members present shall be the act of Council, provided a quorum is in attendance, and no decision may otherwise be attributed to the Council. A majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum. (*Alternate language: A majority of the voting members of the Council members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business.*)

Section 5

Agendas

The Council shall establish procedures by which parents, community members and teachers can have items placed on the agendas of Council meetings. These procedures shall not present any unreasonable hindrances for parents, community members or teachers who wish to place items on the agendas.

Section 6

Conduct of Meetings

Meetings of the Council shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws or state law, or an adaptation thereof approved by the Council.

Article IX: Meetings of the Council (continued)

Section 7

Meetings Open to the Public/Public Participation

All meetings of the Council, and of committees established by Council, shall be open to the public. Notice of such meetings shall be provided in accordance with Section 3 of this article.

Comments by parents/guardians, community members or staff not on the Council will be permitted concerning any subject that lies within the jurisdiction of the Council shall be as follows:

1. Five (Three) minutes may be allotted to each speaker and a maximum of twenty minutes to each subject matter.
2. The Chairperson shall not permit actions which disrupt or interrupt the orderly conduct of the Council meeting.
3. The Council, by a majority vote, decides to cancel or extend the 20 minutes allotted per item of the agenda.
4. No speaker making an oral presentation shall include charges or complaints of a personal nature against any individual Council member or individual employee of the Board of Education, whether named or not.

Section 8

Voting Rights

Each voting member of the Council is entitled to one vote and may cast that vote on any matter submitted to a vote of the Council. Absentee ballots shall not be permitted.

Section 9

Minutes/Documents

The minutes of each Council meeting shall be recorded by the Secretary and shall include the names of the members present, a description of each motion or other proposal made, and a record of all votes. Each Council member shall receive a copy of the Minutes with the agenda for the next regular meeting, at which the Minutes shall be approved.

Minutes shall be made available to the public at the School office. A draft version of the Minutes shall be available at the school office within seven days after each meeting, excluding any Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday. All votes taken at any meeting of the Council must be recorded and made available for public inspection within 48 hours of the meeting. The Minutes of any emergency special meeting shall specify the nature of the emergency and shall be available within 72 hours of the meeting.

Article IX: Meetings of the Council

Section 9

Minutes/Documents (continued)

All documents created or maintained by the Council are subject to the provisions of the Connecticut Freedom of information Act.

Article X: Amendments

An amendment of these bylaws may be made at any regular meeting of the School Governance Council by a vote of two-thirds of the members present. Written notice of the proposed amendment must be submitted to Council members at least ____ days prior to the meeting at which the amendment is to be considered for adoption.

Alternate language: These Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Council, provided that the amendments have been submitted in writing at the previous council meeting and are not inconsistent with applicable federal or state law, or Board of Education policy.

Article XI: Immunity

The Council shall have the same immunity as the Board of Education in all matters directly related to the function of the Council.

Article XII: Conflict of Interest

No member of the Council or officer shall have an interest in any contract with the school district, affiliated with the school district unless such interest is specifically permitted by statute.

“Interest” shall mean pecuniary or material benefit accruing to a Board of Education member, officer or employee or their relatives resulting from a contractual relationship with the school system.

Article XIII: Training

The statute (P.A. 10-111, Section 21(g)) requires the Board of Education to provide appropriate training and instruction to members of the Council to aid them in the execution of their duties, as described in these bylaws. (An option open to boards of education is the utilization of Title I parent involvement funding, where applicable, to support the work of the Council.)

The Board of Education and the School Principal shall assist each new Council member to become familiar with and to understand the Council’s functions, bylaws, and procedures.

The Council shall be responsible for the training of individuals elected and/or chosen to a subsequent Council.

Article XIV: Relationship to Parent Organization

The Council shall establish procedures by which there shall be close and continual communication with the school's parent organization (PTA/PTO). This procedure shall be developed in cooperation with the parent organization.

Article XV: Termination of Council

Only Boards of Education with a low achieving school due to failing to make adequate yearly progress in mathematics and reading at the whole school level are required to have a Council. Current law does not contain any provision for ceasing the operation of a Council.

School Governing Council Code of Conduct

(The following code of conduct is intended as a guide only. Schools may wish to develop their own school governing council code of conduct or school council protocols.)

Members of the School Governance Council (Council) agree to observe the following principles:

1. The primary considerations in making a decision are the school's values and what is in the best interest of students.
2. The Council is accountable to and must report to, both its local school community and the State Department of Education.
3. Council members will abide by all legal requirements, regulations, District policies and regulations.
4. Council members will at all times behave in a civil and respectful manner.
5. The underlying principles of the Council code of conduct include the promotion of:
 - a. Respectful partnerships
 - b. Clear and honest two-way communication
 - c. Transparent processes
 - d. Democratic, informed decision making
 - e. Personal and professional integrity
6. Conflict between Council members needs to be dealt with respectfully and fairly and in a manner that both reflects this and is seen to reflect this.
7. Council members are expected to represent all members of the school community. Members are there to represent multiple viewpoints. Council members will therefore regularly seek the views and opinions of the whole school community.
8. The Council is not an appropriate forum for the discussion of individual school staff, students, parents, or other individuals of the school community.
9. A Council member who is approached by a parent with a concern relating to an individual is in a privileged position and must treat such discussion with discretion, protecting the confidentiality and privacy of the people involved. If the issue relates to an operational matter of the school, the parent should be encouraged to speak with the Principal or the classroom teacher. However, if the issue relates to a school policy or procedure, it should be placed on the agenda for discussion at a Council meeting, where it will be dealt with in a generic sense to protect the privacy of individuals involved.
10. Council members should observe the need for orderly Council meetings and that the Council needs to "speak as one voice" in the public arena, once a position has been reached or a decision has been made.

School Governing Council Code of Conduct
(continued)

11. Council members must declare any conflict of interest when it arises.
12. Council members will actively participate in subcommittees and meetings. If members are unable to attend a meeting, they are requested to notify the Secretary of the Council prior to the meeting.
13. Members of the school community should feel welcome to attend Council meetings as observers, except when the meeting is not open to the public. Meetings should be “closed” when the majority of Council members vote to do so because the issue under discussion is sensitive and requires confidentiality as permitted under the Freedom of Information Act or for the reporting back of a principal selection panel process.

Other language to consider:

The members of the School Governance Council agree to the following code of Conduct:

- To act honestly, in good faith and in the interests of the school as a whole.
- To use due care and diligence in fulfilling the functions of the position and in exercising the responsibilities of the office.
- To use the powers of the position for a proper purpose in the best interests of the school as a whole, but also, where appropriate, have regard for the interests of all stakeholders of the school.
- To not make improper use of information acquired as a Council member.
- To not allow personal interests or the interest of any associated person to conflict with the interests of the school.
- To use independent judgment and actions and to take all reasonable steps to be satisfied about the soundness of all decisions taken by the Council.
- To understand that confidential information received in the course of Council responsibilities will remain the property of the person or group from which it was obtained. Council members must recognize that it is improper to disclose it or allow it to be disclosed, unless disclosure has been authorized by that person or group, or the person from whom the information was provided, or if it is required by law.
- To not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit upon the school.
- To comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the law and with the principles of this code.

School Governing Council Code of Conduct

(The following code of conduct is intended as a guide only. Schools may wish to develop their own school governing council code of conduct or school council protocols.)

As a member of the School Governing Council (Council):

1. I will be a staunch advocate of high quality free public education for all Connecticut children. In fulfilling my responsibilities, I will think of “children first”.
2. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules, regulations and court orders pertaining to public schools. I will strive to bring any needed change only through legal and ethical procedures.
3. I will strive to help create a public school which meets the individual educational needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, physical condition or social standing.
4. I will work unremittingly to help my community understand the importance of proper support for public education, whether it be in providing adequate finances, optimum facilities, staffing and resources, or better educational programs for children.
5. I will become fully informed about the nature, value and direction of contemporary education in our society. I will support needed change in the school.
6. I will strive to ensure that the community is fully and accurately informed about our school, and will try to interpret community aspirations to the school staff.
7. I will recognize that my responsibility is not to “run the school” through administration, but together with my fellow Council members, to see that they are well-run through the implementation of effective Board policies.
8. I will arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issue at hand with my fellow Council members in a meeting. I will respect the opinions of others, and abide by the principle of majority-rule.
9. I will recognize that authority rests only with the whole Council assembled in a meeting, and will make no personal promises nor take any private action which may compromise the Council.
10. I will acknowledge that the Council represents the entire school community, and will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interests or partisan political groups. I will never use my position on the Council for gain of myself or my friends.
11. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to schools which, if disclosed, might needlessly injure individuals or the school.
12. I will insist that all school business transactions be open and ethical.
13. I will strive to assist in the appointment of the best professional leader available when a vacancy exists in an administrative position at the school.

School Governing Council Code of Conduct
(continued)

14. I will support and protect school personnel in the proper performance of their duties. I will strive to ensure that all personnel have not only the requisite responsibilities, but the necessary authority to perform effectively.
15. I will refer all complaints through the proper “chain of command” within the school and system.

School Governing Council Code of Conduct

(The following code of conduct is intended as a guide only. Schools may wish to develop their own school governing council code of conduct or school council protocols.)

As a guide to performing their advisory duties, School Governing Council (Council) members should:

1. Be an advocate of high quality free public education for all Connecticut children.
2. Uphold and enforce all laws, rules, regulations and court orders pertaining to public schools, and bring about any needed change only through legal and ethical means.
3. Help create public schools which meet the individual educational needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, physical condition or social standing.
4. Work to help the community to understand the importance of proper support for public education.
5. Become informed about the nature, value and direction of contemporary education and support needed change in the school.
6. Serve as a communications link between the community and the schools, working to ensure that the community is fully and accurately informed about the schools, and that the school staff understands the aspirations and desires of the community.
7. Recognize that a Council member's responsibility is not to "run the school," but to see that it is well-run through the implementation of effective policies.
8. Confine Council action to its advisory role as detailed in statute, Board of Education policy and Council bylaws.
9. Arrive at conclusions and/or positions after fully discussing the issue at an open meeting, and abide by the principle of majority rule.
10. Recognize that authority rests only with the whole Council assembled in a meeting, and make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the Council.
11. Never use the position on the Council for personal gain.
12. Hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools that, if disclosed, might needlessly injure individuals or the school.
13. Help to ensure that the best administrative personnel available are appointed to all positions in the school.
14. Refer all complaints through the proper "chain of command" within the school and system.