

**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES OF THE
MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Administrative Policy 9.11
SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCILS**

<i>History</i>	<i>Adopted 11-25-97; amended on 5-26-99</i>		
<i>Previous Coding</i>			
<i>Legal Ref.</i>			
<i>Contract Ref.</i>			
<i>Cross Ref.</i>	<i>Admin. Policy</i>	<i>1.03</i>	<i>Parent Empowerment</i>
		<i>8.18</i>	<i>Student Involvement in Decision Making</i>
		<i>9.04</i>	<i>Community Involvement in Decision Making</i>
		<i>2.12</i>	<i>Advisory Committees</i>

(1) PREAMBLE

(a) It is the policy of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors to endorse and support parent, staff, student, and community involvement in school governance. It is the intent of the Board of School Directors 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 each school in conjunction with its school governance council.

(b) The following guidelines are designed to facilitate the development and operations of school governance councils.

(2) PURPOSE OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCILS

The purpose of a school governance council is to provide a forum for parents, teachers, community members, students, and principals to work together in providing continued analysis and improvement of public school policies, curriculum, educational plan goals, and general student well-being. The council shall also be a clearinghouse for information collected from outside organizations, including student groups, parent-teacher groups, teacher associations, etc. The council's decision-making authority is advisory with respect to all duties, powers, and responsibilities, with the sole exception of the council's authority and responsibility to submit a cover letter with its school's annual budget and the school's annual educational plan. Council participation shall be on a voluntary basis via a school-based election process. Councils are not intended to replace parent organizations.

(3) SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

(a) School governance council membership shall include at least 51% parent representation, at least one student at the middle (including K-8 schools) and high schools, community representatives, staff members, and the principal. The size of the school governance council will be based upon a percentage of total student enrollment at a given school.

1. The number of council participants shall equal one percent (1%) of the total student enrollment, or a minimum of nine (9) members, including the principal; however, the size of the council may exceed 1% where desired by the individual school.
2. If the percentage results in an even number of participants (e.g., 1,100 students x 1% = 11 + principal = 12 members), the number of participants shall be increased by one member (e.g., 12 + 1 = 13 members).

(b) Members shall be defined as follows:

1. Parent: A parent is a person at least 18 years of age who is the natural, adopted, or stepparent of a child enrolled or about to be enrolled in the school at which the council serves, and includes those people acting as legal guardian or registered custodian of the child, such as grandparents. A parent who is also a paid employee of his/her child's school shall not serve in the capacity of "parent member" on the council, but may serve as a teacher representative or support-staff representative.

2. Teacher/Support Staff: All teachers and support staff are eligible to participate on the council in this category.
3. Student: A student enrolled at a school with a middle school component (grades 6-8) or high school at the time of the election process is eligible to serve on the council for that particular school.
4. Community Member: Any resident of the City of Milwaukee is eligible to serve on a council.
5. Principal: The principal or employee serving as the leader of the school shall serve on its council.

(c) There are to be good-faith efforts to secure representation; however, a school governance council will continue to function even if full representation cannot be achieved. Every effort will be made to ensure that each school governance council has full representation.

(d) Even though representatives will be selected from various categories (e.g., parents, school staff, students, business, community), it is the responsibility of every member on the school governance council to communicate with, and represent, all segments of the school population.

(4) SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL ELECTIONS — MEMBERSHIP

Members will be selected through a fair and open election process. Each constituent group (parents, teachers, non-certificated staff, students) will oversee the process for electing school governance council representatives. The process for the election of representatives will be as follows:

(a) PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

1. Every year, no later than the third week of March, the principal/designated administrative leader of each school shall mail, via first-class postal service, information sheets regarding the school governance council and the school election timeline to all households of the school's student body (one mailing per household) for the purpose of soliciting parent/guardian nominations for Council membership. Parents who are interested in serving on the council shall complete a ballot information sheet and return it either by mail or in person on or before April 15. All eligible parents shall be included on the ballot.

2. The ballots (bearing a specific logo) shall be mailed via first-class postal service to all parents during the first week in May, with all of the nominees listed. Ballots shall be numbered sequentially for accountability purposes only. In addition, the principal/designated administrative leader is to plan an open meeting for nominees to speak relative to their candidacy for election to the council. Parents shall return either in person or by mail the completed ballots to the school on or before May 31. The number of parents to be elected shall be at least 51% of the total number of participants on the council.

3. Two members of the established parent group will assist the principal with the counting of the parents' ballots.

4. A record of the number of votes for each candidate shall be maintained at the local school until the end of the following school year. In the case of resignation, recall, or death, a parent member shall be replaced by the runner-up candidate not elected to the council the previous election period.

(b) TEACHER/STAFF REPRESENTATIVES

The faculty and support staff at a given school shall be responsible for selecting its representatives to the council. Selection shall be completed on or before May 31.

(c) STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Schools with grades 6-8 (middle and K-8) and high school student representatives of the council shall be elected by the student body through existing student government procedures. If no student government exists, 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 voice vote or ballot during the general assembly.

(d) COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Community representatives interested in participating on the council shall make their interest known at the open meeting held for parent nominations, although community members shall not be selected by the public at large. Community representatives shall be elected at the first meeting of the incoming Council held at the beginning of the new school year.

(e) PRINCIPAL REPRESENTATIVES

The principal of the school is entitled to automatic participation on the council at that school.

(5) SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL ELECTIONS — PROCESS

(a) Following the initial election process, the council shall manage the election process.

(b) The school governance council must be in place by the end of September each school year.

The term of office for the smallest number greater than half of the council shall be elected for two (2) years at the first election. All other members of the council shall be elected for a 1-year term at the first election. All Council members thereafter shall be elected to 2-year overlapping, staggered terms. The candidates receiving the fewest votes serve 1-year terms after the first election. All candidates thereafter will serve 2-year overlapping, staggered terms.

(6) AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE COUNCILS

(a) School governance councils are empowered and limited in function by policies and procedures adopted by the Milwaukee Board of School Directors. If current policies and procedures, contracts, laws and regulations, or district agreements impede a school's restructuring process or strategic planning, the principal will obtain the support of the appropriate Central Services personnel to assist the school governance council with requests for adjustments, waivers, or memoranda of understanding from the appropriate body. School governance councils shall not discuss wages, hours, or working conditions unless a bargaining unit waiver has been secured. The Division of Labor Relations will assist schools in securing requested waivers.

(b) The role of the principal in terms of authority and responsibility for school management is not changed by this policy. Ultimately the principal is responsible and accountable to the superintendent.

(c) The Milwaukee Public Schools' Code of Ethics applies to all employees. Non-employees will be required to sign a statement that they will not participate in advisement which represents a conflict of interest. School governance councils shall establish procedures to be followed by members to ensure that conflicts of interest are prevented.

(d) All newly elected council members will participate in inservice/training sessions. Related costs for these sessions shall be funded by local school funds. Inservice/training sessions will focus on the development of quality educational programs and high standards with respect to team building, school policies and procedures, increasing parental involvement, consensus building, leadership skills, financial procedures (audits, budgets), committee work, and other issues that affect student achievement. Common documents (cover letters for the schools' annual educational plans and annual budgets, formats for agendas and written records of council meetings, etc.) will be developed by the Office of the Deputy superintendent – Operational Leadership.

(e) School governance councils shall develop and publish their own bylaws. Bylaws shall be guided by the principles of the Open Meetings Law, and all meetings shall be open to the public unless permitted to be closed under the law. The Department of Human Resources, in consultation with the Office of the City of Attorney, shall provide assistance in this regard. The definition of a meeting shall be included in each school's bylaws and shall be consistent with the Open Meetings Law definition. Written records for all school governance council meetings shall be taken at each council meeting and maintained in one binder. Minutes shall be on file and available for review at each school.

(f) Council authority and responsibilities will be advisory as referenced below:

1. The council shall participate in the selection and evaluation of school staff in a manner consistent with federal and state statutes, Board policy, and collective-bargaining agreements. Members of school governance councils shall interview and recommend

principal appointments to the superintendent in a manner consistent with Administrative Policy 6.23: "The superintendent shall have the sole right of nomination for employment and promotion of certificated personnel, and the appointment of any nominated candidates shall be effected only with the approval of the Board. In the case of rejection, the Board may request another nomination."

2. The council shall participate in the development of the annual school educational plan and the annual school budget.
3. The council shall regularly review and assess the annual school educational plan and the annual school budget. The council shall have the authority and responsibility to submit an accompanying cover letter when its school submits its annual educational plan and annual school budget to the superintendent. The cover letter will bear the signatures of each council member, thereby indicating the council's participation in the development of both documents.
4. The council will regularly review and assess school performance with respect to:
 - a. student achievement;
 - b. parental involvement;
 - c. dress-code expectations;
 - d. character and value building;
 - e. behavioral concerns;
 - f. scheduling procedures;
 - g. building maintenance;
 - h. suspension/disciplinary procedures.
5. The council, in cases in which the principal of the school has volunteered in writing to have the council's evaluation included in his or her professional evaluation, shall conduct such an evaluation of the principal's performance.

(7) COUNCIL PROTOCOL

(a) The first council meeting of the new school year shall take place during the month of September, at a date and time agreed upon by all elected members. During the first meeting, the council shall select at least one person in the community to participate as a member of the council, based upon interest previously shown by eligible parties. Thereafter, the council shall have at least nine (9) monthly meetings during the school year.

(b) During the first meeting, council members shall elect an executive committee, which shall include a chair, vice-chair, recording secretary, and corresponding secretary. The principal will serve as a resource to the executive committee of the school council.

1. The chair shall conduct each meeting and shall execute all business necessary between meetings to ensure that each meeting is run in a smooth and orderly process.
2. The vice-chair shall assist the chair with his/her responsibilities and shall assume the responsibilities of the chair upon his/her absence.
3. The chair and vice-chair shall make themselves available to answer questions from the public in general, including from members of other organizations.
5. The recording secretary shall keep the written notes of each meeting, and make sure the minutes of the previous meeting are distributed to members of the council prior to each subsequent meeting, together with a reminder of the time and place of the next meeting. The corresponding secretary shall be responsible for making available to the public, by whatever means agreed upon by the council, the agenda of each upcoming meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting. Members of the public wishing to speak at any upcoming meeting with regard to a particular agenda item may contact the corresponding secretary to ask to be added to the agenda.

(8) DUTIES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Council will be made up of parents, teachers, students, community members, and the principal. Each constituency represented shall have a corresponding set of responsibilities.

(a) PARENTS

Council parents are responsible for soliciting input from the parental community with respect to issues of concern to the council. Parent members shall relay council activities to the parent community at large, as well as to parent organizations. The council shall have the responsibility of training and informing incoming parents elected to a subsequent council. Parent members shall have the responsibility of promoting the organization of a parent group where none is in existence for the particular school at which they serve.

(b) TEACHERS/SUPPORT STAFF

School-staff council members are responsible for soliciting input from the faculty and support staff with respect to issues of concern to the council. School-staff members shall report to faculty and support staff, as well as outside teacher/staff organizations. Faculty members shall present the school's educational plan to the council for input. Faculty members shall be responsible for playing an active role in addressing issues such as curriculum additions and deletions, grading practices and standards, test scores, building concerns, staffing needs, and resource/budget concerns.

(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. Student members shall be responsible for organizing student government associations where there are none.

(d) PRINCIPAL

The principal is responsible for keeping the council informed of all relevant school information. The principal shall take the lead role in promoting new programs at the school. The principal shall report to the council with respect to principal meetings, building meetings, etc. The principal shall seek the active participation of the council in deciding all school budget matters and shall present to the council in a timely fashion all information dealing with programming and budget items. The principal shall be responsible for creating and distributing a newsletter of council activities and agendas to school members, and shall provide administrative service support for council members needing supplies or resources. The principal may not serve on the executive committee, but shall have a vote equal to all other council members.

(9) REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

No members of school governance councils are to receive compensation or additional compensation for their service, with the exception of reasonable reimbursement for expenses resulting from their work on school governance councils. The expenses are to be paid from the school budget. Reasonable parameters shall be determined by the principal.

(10) COUNCIL LIAISON

The superintendent shall appoint the deputy superintendent, Operations Leadership, to oversee all councils and their operations. Council members shall have the right to request the liaison's involvement in dispute resolution between council members. The liaison shall have the responsibility of enforcing council decisions in cases of dissent and of ensuring the continuity and effectiveness of each council.

(11) EXCEPTIONS TO PROCEDURES

Exceptions to procedures outlined in this policy may be submitted to the superintendent for review and approval, with such action to be reported to the Board.

(12) RELATION TO EXISTING AGREEMENTS

(a) Nothing in this policy shall in any way reduce the powers or responsibilities already authorized at schools with ongoing governing councils, including Andrew Douglass School, Fritsche Middle School, La Escuela Fratney, HiMount Community School, Madison University High School, Malcolm X Middle School, North Division High School, Palmer Street School, South Division High School, or any other MPS school that already has such powers or responsibilities.

(b) Nor shall anything in this policy in any way reduce powers or responsibilities assumed by school governance councils consistent with federal and Wisconsin statutes, Board policy, or collective-bargaining agreements, as proposed by school governance councils and authorized by the superintendent.

(c) All schools, however, including these, are expected to adhere to all provisions of this policy regarding school governance councils with regard to the manner of representation and conduct of elections.

—◇—

