

BYLAWS AND GUIDELINES

O.C.G.A 20-2-85

Eagle Springs Elementary SCHOOL COUNCIL

Article I

Name

A school council has been established in Eagle Springs Elementary School in the Houston County School System on August of 2003. The name of this school council shall be the Eagle Springs Elementary Local School Council hereinafter referred to as the school council organized under the authority of the state law and the Houston County Board of Education.

Article II

Preamble and Purpose

Recognizing the need to improve communication and participation of parents and the community in the management and operation of local schools, the General Assembly of Georgia and the Houston County Board of Education believes parent and community support is critical to the success of students and schools. The intent of these bylaws and guidelines is to bring communities and schools closer together in a spirit of cooperation to solve difficult education problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process.

The establishment of school councils is intended to help local boards of education develop and nurture participation, 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 share ideas for school improvement. School councils shall be reflective of the school community.

The management and control of public schools shall be the responsibility of local boards of education, and the school leader shall be the principal. School councils shall provide advice, recommendations, and assistance and represent the community of parents and businesses. Each member of the council, as a community representative, shall be accorded the respect and attention deserving of such election.

Article III Operational Date

By October 1, 2003, a school council shall be operational in each of the schools in the Houston County School System.

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:

- (1) the organization of councils;
- (2) their purpose and responsibilities
- (3) applicable laws, rules, regulations, and meeting procedures;
- (4) important state and local school system program requirements; and
- (5) shall provide a model school council organization plan.

Additional training programs shall be offered to school council members annually. The State Board of Education shall develop and make available a model school council training program.

Article IV School Council Membership

Any member may withdraw from the council by delivering to the council a written resignation and submitting a copy to the secretary of the council or school principal. Should school council members determine that a member of the council is no longer active in the council as defined by the bylaws of the council, the council may, by a majority vote, withdraw such person's membership status, effective as of a date determined by the council.

The property and business of the council shall be managed by a minimum of seven school council members of whom a majority shall constitute a quorum. The number of council members shall be specified in the council's bylaws. Members of the school council shall include:

- (1) A number of parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school, excluding employees who are parents or guardians of such students, so that such parents or guardians make up a majority of the council and at least two of whom shall be businesspersons. Parent or guardian council members shall be elected by, and from among, the group they represent.

Note A: An employee of the local school system may serve as a parent representative on the council of a school in which his or her child is enrolled if such employee works at a different school.

Note B: While terms of office are staggered, parents or guardians of any grade-level child enrolled in the school are eligible to vote and hold office, as long as the student is enrolled in that school.

Note C: School Board Members, as parents or businesspersons, are disqualified from serving on school councils but are allowed to vote as a parent from an electing body.

Note D: There is no prohibition in the law for a qualifying person to serve on two or more school councils, where qualified.

(2) At least two certificated teachers, excluding any personnel employed in administrative positions, who are employed at least four of the six school segments at the school. Teacher council members shall be elected by, and from among, the group they represent.

Note A: Teacher is defined as a regular classroom teacher, excluding media personnel, counselors, and itinerant or part-time teachers who serve less than four segments at the school.

Note B: Teachers who have resigned but are currently employed are eligible to vote and be elected as a teacher representative. Upon the effective date of the resignation, the teacher is disqualified to vote or hold office on the council.

(3) The school principal; and

Note A: The school principal is automatically appointed to the council. No election is required. The school principal holds office by virtue of his/her position as principal.

(4) Other members as specified in the council's bylaws, such as, but not limited to, students, staff, and representatives of school-related organizations. Other businesspersons from the local business community may serve on the council and shall be selected by the other members of the school council. Selection procedures for these members and the business members shall be specified in the council's bylaws.

Note A: There is no requirement that the businessperson's business be located within the school's attendance zone.

Note B: Church personnel, military personnel, and governmental personnel do not meet the eligibility criteria for "businessperson". Businesspersons must be actively engaged in commerce to be eligible.

Note C: Students are not eligible to vote on school council matters

With the exception of the principal and the business representatives, members shall be elected by, and from among, the group they represent.

Article V
Term of Office

Members of the council shall serve for a term of two years or for such other term as may be specified in the council's bylaws, except as provided in the law. The terms of the council members shall be staggered. Upon the expiration of the terms of the two businessperson council members in office on July 1, 2007, these member positions shall subsequently be filled by parent council members; provided, however, that additional businesspersons may serve on the council if provided for in the council's bylaws in accordance with paragraph (4) of subsections (d) of this Code section.

Council members may serve more than one term.

The term of office of all council members shall begin and end on the dates specified in the council's bylaws.

Article VI
Vacancy on Council

The office of school councilmember shall be automatically vacated:

- (1) If a member shall resign;
- (2) If the person holding the office is removed as a member by an action of the council;
or
- (3) If a member no longer meets the qualifications specified in the law.

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.

If a school council member misses more than 4 meetings and training sessions of the school council **or** more than 80 % of meetings and training sessions of the school council, without a valid reason as determined by the school council, the chairperson of the school council shall contact the school council member and inquire as to their intent to remain active in the school council. The chairperson shall report to the school council at its next meeting regarding the school council member's intention to remain active.

Article VII Meeting Notice and Location

All meetings of the school council shall be open to the public. The council shall meet at least four times annually and the number of meetings shall be specified in the council's bylaws.

Date: 10-29-20 Time: 4:15 Location: Zoom Meeting

Date: 1-14-20 Time: 4:15 Location: Zoom Meeting

Date: 3-11-21 Time: 4:15 Location: Zoom Meeting

Date: 4-29-21 Time: 4:15 Location: Zoom Meeting

The council shall also meet at the call of the chairperson, or at the request of a majority of the members of the council. Notice by mail shall be sent to school council members at least **seven days** prior to a meeting of the council and shall include the date, time, and location of the meeting. School councils shall be subject to Chapter 14 of Title 50, relating to open and public meetings, in the same manner as local boards of education.

Note A: Councils may meet before or after school hours (the time of the meeting will be established on the basis of consensus by the school council members), but, in all cases must be announced to the public at least twenty-four hours in advance. **Exception:** Public notice must be provided for School Council Elections at least two weeks prior to the election of each electing body.

Note B: The School Council Secretary will notify the Director of Community and School Relations who in turn will notify the media of meeting dates and times. Please submit the meeting dates and times for public notification to the Director of Community and School Relations at least ten (10) days prior to when the notice is to appear in the legal organ. The School Council Secretary may also notify the Director of Community and School Relations of all dates, times, and locations of school council meetings for the entire school year (July 1 - June 30), with additional notice for cancellations, date/time/location changes and called meetings provided, if necessary.

Note C: Because the law requires notice by mail to be sent to school council members at least seven days prior to a meeting of the council, there can be no emergency meetings of the council.

The council secretary shall be responsible for notifying, in writing, the legal organ for Houston County of any and all meetings of the council at least twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting. It is the responsibility of the council secretary to maintain a written record of compliance with this notification requirement. Additionally, the council secretary shall provide advance notification, in writing, to the school community of teachers and parents of any and all school council meetings. (See Article XIII, Officers and Duties).

Article VIII
Quorum and Voting Requirement

Each member of the council is authorized to exercise one vote. *Proxy votes are not allowed. Voting members must be present in order to vote in school council matters.*

A quorum must be present in order to conduct official council business.

At all meetings of the council every question shall be determined by a majority vote of members present, representing a quorum.

The adoption of bylaws or changes thereto requires a two-thirds affirmative vote.

Article IX
Remuneration

Members of the council shall not receive remuneration to serve on the council or its committees.

Article X
Electing Bodies, Election Method, Ballots
and
Posting of Elections and Meetings

After providing public notice at least two weeks before the meeting of each electing body, the principal of each school shall call a meeting of electing bodies for the purpose of selecting members of the school council.

Note A: Public notice must be provided for School Council Elections at least two weeks prior to the election of each electing body. The School Council Secretary will notify the Director of Community and School Relations who in turn will notify the media of election date and time. Please submit the meeting date and time for public notification to the Director of Community and School Relations at least ten (10) days prior to when the notice is to appear in the legal organ.

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 school council shall specify in its bylaws the month in which elections are to be held and shall specify a nomination and election process.

Elections are to be held in the fall of each year (August/September).

Election Method:

No prior nominations will be accepted. No self-nominations will be accepted. Nominations from the floor shall be accepted at the meeting of the electing body, provided that the nominee has given prior consent for their name to be placed in nomination. An individual who is not present at the election may be nominated. If not present, the nominee must provide signed written documentation to the presiding officer of the school council election, via the nominator, indicating their acceptance of the nomination and their consent to serve as a member of the school council, if elected. Teacher and parent election meetings shall use the plurality method of election. One vote shall be taken with the two highest vote recipients being elected to serve on the school council. Where two individuals tie with the highest number of votes, both shall serve on the council, provided two council positions are open. If only one position on the council is open, then subsequent votes are required until one single individual emerges with the highest vote. Teachers/Parents must be present and qualified to vote, proxy votes are not allowed. A person does not have to be present at the time of the vote to be elected to the school council.

Note A: The law allows all qualified parent/guardians of a student enrolled in the school to vote. May more than one qualified parent/guardian of a child enrolled in the school vote during the election meeting? Yes.

Note B: Minutes of each election should be recorded and maintained as part of the school council minutes. Beginning and ending dates of terms of elected school council members should be reflected in election minutes.

Election Procedures:

Sign-in sheets should be prepared for each electing body: teachers and parents. For the election of parent members, a list of student names which represent the electing body with space by each student's name for two signatures (either two parents or two guardians) should be prepared. It should be noted that both parents or guardians of a student are entitled to vote and are entitled to be elected. One or more tables should be arranged where parents will sign-in by their child's name and receive a ballot. For teacher elections, the principal should prepare a list of teacher names that represent the electing body with a space for each teacher to sign. One or more tables should be arranged where teachers will sign-in by their name and receive a ballot.

A presiding officer for the election of the parent members and the teacher members should be appointed. The presiding officer may be the principal, a member of the school council, or a member of the central office staff. Someone other than a member of the electing body should serve as the presiding officer.

Two tellers who will collect and count the ballots should be appointed. The tellers should be individuals who are not a part of the electing body.

The School Council Secretary should be present to record the minutes of the election. If not, the principal should appoint someone to record the minutes of the meeting. This person may be a part of the electing body.

Once the meeting is convened, the following procedures should be followed:

1. The presiding officer will conduct the nominations and elections.
2. The presiding officer will explain the procedures that will be followed during the election. The Roles & Responsibilities of School Council Members should be distributed. The position(s) available on the council along with the term length should be shared with the electing body. If more than one position is available on the school council, separate election procedures should be followed for each position unless positions and term lengths are the same.
3. The presiding officer will call for nominations from the floor. Nominations from the floor shall be accepted at the meeting of the electing body, provided that the nominee has given prior consent for their name to be placed in nomination. An individual who is not present at the election may be nominated. If not present, the nominee must provide signed written documentation to the presiding officer of the school council election, via the nominator, indicating their acceptance of the nomination and their consent to serve as a member of the school council, if elected. A second is not required according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.
4. The presiding officer will accept nominations until there appears to be no further nominations. The names of those nominated from the floor should be written on a flip chart or displayed on a projector for all to see.
5. The presiding officer will then ask for a motion to close nominations. This motion requires a second and a majority vote of the electing body.
6. Once the nominations have been closed, the presiding officer will instruct the electing body in the voting procedures:
 - A. The electing body will write in the name of the nominee on the ballot for whom they wish to vote.
 - B. The presiding officer should explain that teacher and parent election meetings shall use the plurality method of election. One vote shall be taken with the two highest vote recipients being elected to serve on the school council. Where two individuals tie with the highest number of votes, both shall serve on the council, provided two council positions are open. If only one position on the council is open, then subsequent votes are required until one single individual emerges with the highest vote.
7. The tellers will collect and immediately count the ballots.
8. The tellers will inform the presiding officer of the elected person(s).
9. The presiding officer will immediately inform the electing body, introducing the newly elected representative(s).
10. The presiding officer will collect the used and unused ballots and declare the meeting adjourned.

Teachers/Parents must be present and qualified to vote, proxy votes are not allowed. A person does not have to be present at the time of the vote to be elected to the school council.

Election Ballots: It shall be the responsibility of the principal to provide the standard system voting ballots for each school to use in the election of parent and teacher representatives to the school council. All ballots, used and unused, shall be returned to the school principal for safekeeping following council elections. The principal will keep the used ballots which were counted for the term of the office for which the school council members were elected. The principal will destroy the unused ballots. If requested, the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources or designee may be available to monitor elections and/or count election ballots.

Procedure A: Each Teacher/Parent shall be issued one ballot after they have been identified by the school principal or designee as a member of the electing body.

Selection of School Council Business Members:

1. The principal will prepare a list of business partners of the school or, if there are none, a list of businesses within the local business community. The Director of Community and School Relations can also assist the principal in compiling a list of local businesses from the community.
2. Once the list has been compiled, the principal should contact the businesspersons and ask if they would agree to serve as a member of the school council, if selected.
3. During a duly called open meeting, the principal will present the compiled list of businesses. The school council should follow parliamentary procedure with a motion to select a businessperson, a second, and a vote. A vote of the majority of the school council members present representing a quorum, is required to select the businessperson.

Article XI Local School Council Bylaws

The school council shall adopt the initial bylaws and guidelines included herein and such additional bylaws and guidelines as it deems appropriate to conduct the business of the council. The adoption of bylaws or changes thereto requires a two-thirds affirmative vote. The bylaws adopted by local school councils shall not be inconsistent with the language or intent of the *Houston County School Council System Bylaws and Guidelines*, adopted May 2001, and thereafter, as revised. The State Board of Education shall develop and make available model school council bylaws.

Article XII Immunity

The school council shall have the same immunity as the local board of education in all matters directly related to the functions of the council.

Article XIII Officers and Duties

The officers of the school council shall be a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. Officers of the council shall be elected by the council at the first meeting of the council following the election of school council members; provided, however, that the chairperson shall be a parent member. The officers of the council shall hold office for the term specified in the council's bylaws.

Officers shall be elected for a term of 2 year(s) and may serve more than one term.

The School Principal

The school principal shall have the following duties pertaining to school council activities:

- (1) Cause to be created a school council by convening the appropriate bodies to select school council members; setting the initial agenda, meeting time, and location; and notifying all school council members of the same;
- (2) Perform all of the duties required by law and the bylaws of the council;
- (3) Communicate all council requests for information and assistance to the local school superintendent and inform the council of responses or actions of the local school superintendent;
- (4) Develop the school improvement plan and school operation plan and submit the plans to the school council for its review, comments, recommendations, and approval; and
- (5) Aid in the development of the agenda for each meeting of the council after taking into consideration suggestions of council members and the urgency of school matters. An item may be added to the agenda at the request of three or more council members.

The Vice Chairperson

The vice chairperson shall, in the absence or disability of the chairperson, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as shall be required by the council.

The Secretary

The secretary shall attend all meetings, act as clerk of the council, and be responsible for recording all votes and minutes of all proceedings in the books to be kept for that purpose. The secretary shall give or cause to be given notice of all meetings of the council and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the council.

Article XIV Accountability

The members of the school council are accountable to the constituents they serve and shall:

- (1) Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
- (2) Regularly participate in 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 XV Minutes

The minutes of the council shall be made available to the public, for inspection at the school office *within two working days (Monday- Friday)*, and shall be provided to the council members, each of whom shall receive a copy of such minutes within 20 days following each council meeting.

School Council Meeting Minutes for the current school year are to be maintained in a three (3) ring notebook which will be visible and accessible to the public for inspection in the school office. All minutes are to be kept up-to-date and housed in this notebook.

School Council Meeting Minutes from previous school years may also be maintained in this notebook or they may be filed by school year in your archives, provided they are accessible to the public if requested.

A copy of the School Council Meeting Minutes and a copy of any affidavit shall be forwarded to the Director of Professional Learning within three working days (Monday-Friday) after each meeting.

Minutes, at a minimum, shall include the names of the school council members present, a description of each motion or other proposal, a record of all votes, and topics of discussion. In the case of a roll-call vote, the name of each school 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.

All school councils shall be subject to Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50, relating to the inspection of public records, in the same manner as local boards of education.

At all meetings of the council every question shall be determined by a majority vote of members present, representing a quorum.

Article XVI Committees, Study Groups, and Task Forces

The council may appoint committees, study groups, or task forces for such purposes as it deems helpful and may utilize existing or new school advisory groups.

Article XVII Board of Education and School Council Operational Agreement

The local board of education shall provide all information not specifically made confidential by law, including school site budget and expenditure information and site average class sizes by grade, to the council as requested or as required by state law or state board rule. The local board shall also designate an employee of the school system to attend council meetings as requested by a school council for the purpose of responding to questions the council may have concerning information provided to it by the local board or actions taken by the local board. The central administration shall be responsive to requests for information from a school council.

The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources or designee is appointed by the Houston County Board of Education to attend council meetings as requested, respond to council questions and provide information as requested by said council.

The local board of education shall receive and consider all recommendations of the school council, including the annual report, as follows:

- (1) Public notice shall be given to the community of the local board's intent to consider school council reports or recommendations;

Procedure A: Council items shall be listed on the board's agenda and such agenda shall be faxed to the Superintendent's Administrative Assistant for public notice. Copy of the notice shall be posted for public review at the School Board's Administration Offices.

- (2) Written notice shall be given to the members of the school council at least seven working days prior to a local board meeting, along with a notice of intent to consider a council report or recommendation; and

Procedure A: The Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources or designee is responsible for notifying at least ten (10) working days (Monday – Friday) in advance, in writing (e-mail acceptable notice), the principal of each school council that has matters pending before the board, that the board of education shall hold a meeting and at such meeting the board intends to consider a council's report or recommendation. Such notice shall contain the meeting date of the board of education and the matters to be considered and shall be kept on file for reference should a question arise concerning notification. It then becomes the responsibility of the principal to notify, in writing, each member of the council at least seven days prior to the board of education meeting concerning the notice received.

- (3) The members of the school council shall be afforded an opportunity to present information in support of the school council's report or recommendation. The local board of education shall respond to recommendations of the school council within 60 days after being notified in writing of the recommendation.

Procedure A: The school council chairperson shall speak for and represent the council in all school council matters before the board of education. At the Board Chairperson's discretion, other members of the council may be allowed the opportunity to present information.

Note A: Notification is perfected when the board of education officially received written notification in a meeting (regular, called or work session) of the board of a school council's report or recommendation. After initial receipt of a school council item, the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources is responsible for placing school council item(s) on the board agenda within the sixty (60) calendar day requirement.

Article XVIII
Scope of Council Responsibilities

School councils are advisory bodies. The councils shall provide advice and recommendations to the school principal and, where 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) School board policies;
- (2) School improvement plans;
- (3) Curriculum and assessments;
- (4) Report cards issued or audits of the school conducted by the Office of Student Achievement;
- (5) Development of a school profile which shall contain data as identified by the council to describe the academic performance, academic progress, services, awards, interventions, environment, and other such data as the council deems appropriate;
- (6) School budget priorities, including school capital improvement plans;
- (7) School-community communication strategies;
- (8) Methods of involving parents and the community;
- (9) Extracurricular activities in the school;
- (10) School-based and community services;
- (11) Community use of school facilities;
- (12) Student discipline and attendance;
- (13) Reports from the school principal regarding progress toward the school's student achievement goals, including progress within specific grade levels and subject areas and by school personnel; and
- (14) The method and specifications for the delivery of early intervention services or other appropriate services for underachieving students.

Article XIX

Role of the School Council in the Principal Selection Process

The role of the school council in the principal selection process shall be determined in policy written by the local board of education.

The following guidelines established by the Houston County Board of Education shall be used in selecting new principals effective October, 2004:

There shall be two (2) rounds of interviews.

The Superintendent will seek advice from the School Council concerning the qualities, abilities, and leadership style that meets the needs of the school.

I. Round One

The Executive Director of Elementary Operations or the Executive Director of Secondary Operations shall select a committee consisting of five (5) members:

- a) Executive Director
- b) Two (2) teachers from the campus where the opening exists
- c) One (1) principal on the same level from another campus
- d) One (1) person from the Teaching and Learning Department.

This committee shall interview all applicants and select at most three (3) applicants for the second round of interviews.

II. Round Two

The second round of interviews will be conducted by the Superintendent's Committee. This committee shall consist of six (6) members.

- a) Superintendent
- b) Assistant Superintendent of School Operations
- c) Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
- d) Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
- e) Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning
- f) Assistant Superintendent of Business & Financial Operations
- g) Executive Director

This committee shall interview the top applicants (at most three) and the Superintendent will recommend his selection to the Board of Education for approval.

Article XX
Student Information

School councils are not entitled to student information, which is not considered directory information pursuant to FERPA.

Article XXI
Parliamentary Authority

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

Article XXII
Reports to the Board of Education

All school councils are required to submit the following information to the Office of Professional Learning:

- *Adopted School Council Bylaws, using the revised 2007 System School Council Bylaws
- *School Council Agendas and Minutes submitted within three (3) working days following each school council meeting
- *School Council Meeting schedule submitted annually to the Director of Community and School Relations and Professional Learning
- *School Council Member Information and list of School Council Officers

