

ENGAGING PARENTS, FAMILIES, STUDENTS, BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY IN EDUCATION

Purpose

The Tyler County Board of Education believes that parent, family, and community engagement at early childhood, middle, and adolescent levels is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education. Strong partnerships between homes, schools, and communities are needed to ensure a quality education for all children. Parents, teachers, and community members, by fostering a sense of cooperative responsibility, can reinforce each other's efforts. Parents, as their children's first and most enduring teachers, can complement their children's school learning and behavior by serving as collaborators in the educational process. Community involvement, including strong business partnerships, promotes a safe and supportive school climate that connects students to a broader learning community. The resulting home-school-community partnerships can have positive effects on parent, teacher and student attitudes, classroom instruction, and student achievement.

The intent of this policy is to provide guidelines for establishing effective Local School Improvement Councils (LSIC) in ensuring parental, family, business and community involvement. LSICs are the vehicle to promote the broader school community in efforts that support local initiatives to impact school effectiveness. LSICs shall assist the school and system in ensuring parental, family, business and community involvement is embedded in all aspects of the school and county strategic plan. LSICs help develop and promote the school system vision for excellence by being a catalyst for innovation.

Definitions

- The term "parents", as used in this policy, means a parent of a student and includes a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian.
- The term "family" includes family members (e.g. guardians, parents, aunts, brothers, grandparents) and significant others whose involvement may be important to the child.
- The term "community" refers to all of the individuals who reside in a common locality including: residents, businesses, social organizations and networks, faith-based organizations and civic leaders.

The Tyler County Board of Education believes that active parent involvement in education significantly increases children's chances for success in school. Therefore, it shall be the responsibility of every administrator and teacher to provide appropriate opportunities for parents to participate in their child's educational experiences.

Organization of Local School Improvement Councils

Local School Improvement Councils LSICs represent the voice of the community's education stakeholders. These members contribute diverse expertise and insight to address complex issues and propose solutions that ultimately benefit students. W. Va. Code §18-5A-2 defines the members of LSICs. While these members are entitled to vote, nothing prohibits expanding the membership of LSICs to include non-voting members or to request other stakeholders to participate in meetings of the LSIC. Principals are encouraged to elect new LSIC members in May or June so that LSIC members are in place by July 1 and can play an active role in summer activities, strategic plan development, orientations and transition activities, etc. However, the school principal shall arrange for LSIC election of members to be held prior to the fifteenth day of September of each school year.

The school principal shall ensure that all LSIC members receive appropriate training regarding the roles and responsibilities of LSIC members to create a highly effective LSIC. The West Virginia Department of Education (hereinafter WVDE) has developed online materials that may be used for LSIC member training sessions. As soon as possible after the election of LSIC members, school principals are encouraged to convene the first meeting of the LSIC (as soon as practicable after July 1 of the current school year). However, the principal shall convene an organizational meeting of the LSIC (W. Va. Code §18-5A-2) no later than the first day of October of each school year. At this first meeting, the LSIC elects from its membership a chair and two members to assist the chair in setting the agenda for each LSIC meeting. The principal of the school shall not serve as the LSIC chair.

The LSIC must meet at least once every nine weeks or equivalent grading period at the call of the chair or by three fourths of its members. All meetings of the LSIC must be open to the public in compliance with the provisions of the Open Governmental Proceedings Act (W. Va. Code §6-9A-2(6)). Each LSIC shall adopt a set of bylaws or meeting procedures. The WVDE provides resources and technical assistance for conducting effective LSIC meetings.

Required Activities for All Local School Improvement Councils

Each LSIC is vested with specific statutory and policy responsibilities and authorities that convey an expectation for high ethical behavior. Each LSIC shall annually develop and deliver a report to the countywide council on productive and safe schools (W. Va. Code §18-5A-2 (l)). Each LSIC may propose alternatives to the operation of the public school which will meet or exceed the high quality standards established by the WVBE and will increase administrative efficiency, enhance the delivery of instructional programs, promote community involvement, or improve the educational performance of the school generally.

The alternatives proposed by the LSIC may include matters which require the waivers of policies or rules promulgated by the WVBE or county board or state superintendent interpretations (W. Va. Code §18-5A-3). The WVBE has established procedures to receive waiver requests and take appropriate action. The LSIC may also submit a written statement, with supporting reasons, to the legislative oversight commission on education accountability (hereinafter LOCEA) recommending a waiver of statute or legislative rule. LOCEA shall review and determine whether a recommendation should be made to the Legislature to waive such statute or rule.

Every school must develop and implement a school strategic plan (WVBE Policy 2510, Section 12.2.1). The plan must be prepared and monitored by the LSIC and other stakeholders as appropriate under the leadership of the school principal and in cooperation with faculty senate, school technology team and school curriculum team. The school strategic plan specifies how the school intends to increase student achievement and positively impact other student outcomes. The plan must be developed and implemented using a continuous improvement process, be based on all available data regarding student achievement and align with the goals of the district System Strategic Plan.

The LSIC shall assist the school in embedding parental, family, business and community involvement strategies in all aspects of the strategic plan.

Each LSIC shall meet at least annually with the county board of education (W. Va. Code §18-5A-2(i) and W. Va. Code §18-5-14). The LSIC chair, or designee, shall be prepared to address any matters as may be requested by the county board and may provide any other information, comments or suggestions the LSIC wishes to bring to the county board's attention.

Expectations for Local School Improvement Councils: Desired Outcomes and Results

When a community takes an interest in a school it shows and when a school truly is part of the community it shows. LSICs play a key role in establishing and maintaining that reciprocal relationship. By virtue of their position in the community, LSIC members have an established level of trust and respect; therefore, they can activate resources, rally support, effect change, and broadcast data and results.

Each LSIC shall operate from a concise and targeted action agenda that guides them in accomplishing and realizing their goals. The action agenda can be used to encourage collaboration with other school and community groups (e.g., PTA, PTO, boosters, faith-based community, civic groups) to achieve measurable outcomes.

The LSIC shall utilize data: student achievement, discipline, parent, student, staff and community surveys, the school's strategic plan, and other pertinent data to drive their action agenda.

The action agenda shall include high yield strategies that result in measureable school growth, improved student achievement, and innovation. These strategies shall foster the following guiding principles:

- Providing a respectful, inclusive school community that welcomes all parents, families, community members and businesses to participate in all students' education.
- Using many different modes of communication, including 21st century technology tools, to interact with parents and the broader community about education issues and ensuring parents, families, business and community members are encouraged to communicate with the school.
- Developing more effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications with all families each year about school programs and their children's progress.
- Working together to support families' parenting skills and activities that prepare young children for school and promote ongoing achievement.
- Providing information and ideas to parents and families about how to establish home environments to support children as students such as reading with children, engaging them in educational activities, helping them with homework and other curricular-related activities, decisions and planning.
- Providing educational opportunities for educators about current research, model programs and best practices for engaging parents, families, and community members in improving student achievement.
- Developing student leadership and student voice and celebrating successes of students to encourage student achievement.

- Having high expectations for parents, families and community members to become partners in education to support school improvement and student success.
- Involving businesses to enhance educational opportunities, career development, and experiential learning.
- Collaborating with the community to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation. Ultimately strengthening school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

The LSIC shall monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of their action agenda. Outcomes of the action agenda shall be shared with the community and with the local board of education during the annual meeting between the board and the LSIC.

School Leadership and Local School Improvement Councils

The school principal shall collaborate with the LSIC to establish, promote and maintain a safe and effective learning environment for all. It is the principal's responsibility to elevate the importance and voice of the LSIC. The school's LSIC is a vital resource for connecting the school to families and the larger community. The LSIC is a vehicle to activate or develop community partnerships and resources that support student learning and success.

County Board of Education Responsibilities

Each county board of education shall meet with each LSIC at least annually. The local board identifies the issues they wish the LSIC to address (W.Va. Code §18-5-14(a)(1)(D)). The LSIC may also provide other information, comments or suggestions the council wishes to bring to the county board's attention. All information presented during the meeting shall also be submitted to the county board in writing. Each county board shall report details of their meetings with LSICs to the state board at the conclusion of the school year, but no later than the first day of September each year (W. Va. Code §18-5-14 D (2)). Each county board of education shall adopt and implement a policy that provides for parent, family, business and community involvement in the schools. Each county policy shall promote parents, families, community and business members, through a variety of means, to become involved in children's education. Each county policy shall meet the criteria for compliance with federal programs. Each county policy shall be developed by a committee consisting of, but not limited to, classroom teachers, parents/family members of school-age children, community members, business members, principals and other school personnel. The committee shall be representative of a variety of schools and shall include representation from early, middle and adolescent levels. Each county shall provide training for teachers, parents and administrators, in cooperation with state and local agencies that would help realize the objectives set forth in the county policy. Each county board of education's strategic plan shall be developed utilizing a collaborative strategic planning committee comprised of education personnel, parents, family, students, business, and community members. The collaborative approach assures involvement of all stakeholders in the planning for students' success. The county's strategic plan shall reflect the importance of stakeholder involvement and advocacy as critical elements of students' academic success, healthy living and emotional well-being. The school system strategic plan specifies how the county school system intends to strengthen the county education program in order to increase student achievement and positively impact other student outcomes. Each county's strategic plan shall include an ongoing, two-way communication system that includes feedback mechanisms for parents, families, students, communities and school staff.

Severability

If any provision of this rule or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this rule.

Additionally, in an effort to promote parent involvement and shared responsibility for children's education, the schools and parents must develop a partnership of open communication, cooperation, and mutual respect. To that end, principals and teachers will need to keep parents informed, on a regular basis, regarding their child's academic progress and be available for parent conferences. Meetings shall be scheduled at a mutually convenient time, so that instruction or other assigned duties will not be interrupted.

The most successful education of children depends on effective parent involvement. Although families are diverse in culture, language, needs and structures, they share the school's commitment to the educational success of their children. The Tyler County Board of Education is committed to encourage the growth of parent, family, student, business and community involvement in the educational process.

REFERENCE: WV State Board Policy 2200 – Local School Improvement Councils: Engaging Parents, Families, Students, Business and Community in Education

DATE: 1/10/18, 2/23/15, 7/2/12, 8/4/08, 11/20/06, 8/5/96