

Advisory Committees to the School Board: Additional Board Advisory Committees

Community involvement is critical to Westmoreland County Public Schools. To provide a mechanism by which the community is involved in the decision-making process, the School Board appoints advisory committees to provide recommendations on issues in certain standing areas of responsibility and on an ad hoc basis outside those standing areas. These advisory committees provide various perspectives of the community. Advisory committee members solicit input from community members and organizations. These committees provide recommendations in specific areas as directed by the School Board and may inform the School Board of issues that are brought to the attention of committee by community members. Advisory committees are strictly advisory in nature and provide policy recommendations the School Board takes into consideration along with other input and recommendations in making final decisions.

It is the duty of the School Board to appoint advisory committees of citizens of the school division for consultation with reference to specific matters pertaining to local schools. In addition to those committees required by the Code of Virginia, Board of Education regulations, and federal law, the Westmoreland County School Board elects to establish the following Board Advisory Committees:

- 1) Human Resources
- 2) Student Achievement
- 3) Parental Involvement & Family Engagement
- 4) School Culture & Climate
- 5) School Facilities & Transportation
- 6) Business & Community Partnerships

These committees serve without compensation for one-year terms. The School Board actively recruits interested adult citizens of Westmoreland County to serve on these committees. The School Board appoints and confirms membership on the committees in July of each year. The School Board may dissolve an advisory committee at any time, unless the committee is required by state or federal laws or regulations. An advisory committee shall be deemed dissolved if it has not conducted business for 12 or more months. At its discretion, the School Board may reconstitute an advisory committee that has been dissolved.

Additional ad hoc committees may be established by the School Board as deemed necessary. At the time such committees are established, the School Board addresses the following considerations:

- 1) The purpose and responsibility of the committee.
- 2) The scope and duration of the committee's operation.

- 3) The committee membership, in terms of appropriate community representation, number of members, methods of selection, and length of term.
- 4) The time and means of reporting the committee's findings and recommendations to the School Board.

Ad hoc committees may be discharged when assigned work is finished or earlier than the specified completion date by majority vote of the School Board.

Authority and Responsibility of the Board Advisory Committees

A. Powers

Unless otherwise provided by law, Board Advisory Committees have no role or authority except to advise the School Board.

B. Selection and Representation

Board Advisory Committee representation is determined by the School Board, in accordance with the committee's purpose. Each School Board member nominates a committee member from his or her district, while the at-large-member also nominates one member from the county. Committee members must be residents of Westmoreland County or employees of Westmoreland County Public Schools. Appointments made by the School Board members aim to reflect the ethnic, demographic, and geographic composition of the school division. No employee of Westmoreland County Public Schools or member of the School Board may serve as the chairman of a Board Advisory Committee.

C. School Board Liaison

Each Board Advisory Committee has a School Board liaison appointed by the School Board chairman. The role of the School Board liaison is to provide reports to the School Board on the activities of the committee on which he/she serves, and to provide support to the Board Advisory Committee Chair in preparing/presenting the Committee's Annual Report. School Board liaisons are nonvoting members of the committee.

D. Staff Liaison

Each Board Advisory Committee has at least one staff liaison assigned by the Superintendent, or his/her designee. The role of the staff liaison is to assist the committee with obtaining information necessary to evaluate programs or issues under consideration and to support activities required to fulfill the committee's assigned responsibilities. Staff liaisons are nonvoting members of the committee.

E. Duties and Relationship with the School Board

A chair shall be elected by the advisory committee according to Robert's Rules of Order to serve a one-year term. The role of the committee chair is to preside over the meetings of the committee. The committee may elect a vice chair to act in the absence or inability of the chair to act.

In July of each year, the School Board, in consultation with the Superintendent, approves and provides a clear charge as to the issues or outcomes it expects each advisory committee to address. The School Board provides an opportunity for officers of advisory committees to meet with the School Board periodically, as needed, and after consultation with the committee's School Board Liaison.

Meeting agendas and minutes are maintained for all advisory committee meetings and posted to the Westmoreland County Public Schools webpage. Minutes include: (a) meeting date, time, and location; (b) attendance; (c) approval of/revisions to the minutes from the previous meeting; and, (d) a summary of the discussion on matters proposed, deliberated, or decided and a record of any votes taken.

Meetings of the Board Advisory Committees are subject to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and are open to the public. All meetings of an advisory committee shall be held in a facility of the school system that is accessible to the public. All advisory committee members who participate in the meeting are to be physically present at the site of the public meeting. A majority of the members of the advisory committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The vote of a majority of the advisory committee members present at any meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the advisory committee. Each member of an advisory committee shall be entitled to one vote with respect to any matter voted on by the advisory committee. Members not present at a meeting shall not be entitled to vote by proxy. No committee shall vote by secret or written ballot or by telephone or other electronic communication means. In any case where a member has a personal interest in a particular vote of the

advisory committee, such member(s) shall excuse themselves and shall not vote on that matter.

Notice of advisory committee meetings is furnished to the public at least three working days in advance, while agenda packets for advisory committee meetings are available for inspection by the public at such time they are available to committee members. There shall be a published agenda for all committee meetings. Meetings of advisory committees may be recorded by the public, provided such does not interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Because the business of the School Board advisory committees is to be conducted at meetings where the advisory committee members are physically present, committee members are not authorized to discuss or transact committee business electronically or by conference telephone call, unless such is limited to two committee members (except where the two members constitute a quorum). The attendance record includes School Board and staff liaisons. All official records of advisory committees shall be kept on file in the School Board Office and shall be open to inspection as provided by the Freedom of Information Act.

F. Established Committee Norms

To maximize the committee's effectiveness, committee members:

1. Submit any requests of division staff to the elected committee chair. The chair contacts the Board/staff liaison to relay the request to the appropriate staff member.
2. Refrain from making any personal attack on any committee member or staff member.
3. Conduct all committee business at public meetings of the committee.
4. Represent the committee only when specifically authorized by the committee.
5. Abide by the decisions of the committee. Seek to address disagreements, if any, within the committee and, if appropriate, through the committee's reports.
6. Regular attendance is required at committee meetings. Any appointee missing two or more meetings per year may be asked to resign by the School Board from the committee assignment.

7. Members of advisory committees shall not receive compensation for their service, but the School Board may reimburse them for reasonable actual expenses incurred in carrying out their duties.

G. Reporting

Each Board Advisory Committee develops and submits an annual report to the School Board. The Committee Chair prepares the report, with support from committee members and the School Board liaison. The report contains an executive summary of committee recommendations, a brief summary of committee activities, meeting dates, attendees at each meeting, and specific actionable recommendations, along with the pros and cons of each. A draft report is presented to all committee members with adequate time to permit members to comment before voting to adopt the report at a committee meeting. In most cases, members are provided at least five days to comment. Once the report is approved, each committee member who attended at least 50 percent of the meetings signs the report as supporting, opposing, or abstaining from its conclusions or recommendations.

Board Advisory Committee Annual Reports are presented to the School Board at a work session scheduled for this purpose during June of each year.

H. Staff Response to the Annual Report

The Division Superintendent takes committee recommendations under consideration and provides the School Board with a staff response to each Board Advisory Committee's report.

I. Conflict of Interest

Committee members must recuse themselves from participating in or voting on any committee report, recommendation, proposal, or position that, if adopted by the School Board, would result in a financial benefit to the committee member or a member of his or her immediate family if such benefit does not accrue to the public generally. If the financial benefit would accrue to the committee member by virtue of the committee member's employment or membership in a business, profession, occupation, or other groups, such member may participate and vote if such employment or membership in the affected business, profession, occupation, or other group is disclosed to the other members of the committee and in any report or recommendation to the School Board. No member of a Board Advisory Committee shall solicit or receive, directly or indirectly, any compensation in exchange for bringing a matter to the committee.

Adopted: January 12, 2015

