



COMMUNITY RELATIONS: Community Involvement

Area Education Advisory Councils

Statement of Purpose:

The area education advisory councils of the Board of Education of Baltimore County exist to strengthen the relationships between the school system and the community by educating citizens on public school issues and by promoting interest and involvement in public school affairs. With careful attention to input from the community, area education advisory councils are charged with advising the Board on matters related to public education.

1. Definitions.

As used in this Policy, the following terms have these meanings:

- a. Advisory Chair – The person selected in each geographic area who holds office in, or leads, the area advisory council.
- b. Area Advisory Coordinator – Shall be the person appointed by the Board of Education who oversees the activities of all of the Board’s area advisory councils.

2. Scope

- a. The Board of Education shall establish area education advisory councils as instruments to promote interest and involvement in school affairs. The Board of Education cannot delegate its authority or responsibility for decision and policy making.
- b. The Board of Education will receive and carefully consider all recommendations and suggestions of area education advisory councils but cannot be obligated to adopt them.

3. Organization

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- a. There shall be an area education advisory council in each of the five administrative areas of the school system. They will be designated as the Southeast, Northeast, Central, Northwest, and Southwest Education Advisory Councils.
 - b. Each education advisory council shall consist of no more than fifteen (15) community members, which may include no more than two (2) student members appointed by, and responsible to, the Board of Education.
 - c. The Area Assistant Superintendents for each administrative area shall serve as the staff liaison to the education advisory council in his/her respective administrative area.
 - d. Each area education advisory council shall elect its own officers and develop a program plan and operational procedures.
 - e. The Board shall appoint a coordinator for the area education advisory councils. The coordinator may not simultaneously serve as a member of any area education advisory council. However, the coordinator shall serve as a member *ex officio* on every area education advisory council.
 - f. The Board of Education, through the Area Assistant Superintendents, shall provide appropriate support to assist in creating reports or other communications as may be requested by the area education advisory council.
 - g. Close communication between the area education advisory councils and the Board of Education shall be maintained. The Board of Education shall provide opportunities for the area education advisory councils to present comments at regularly scheduled Board of Education meetings regarding education concerns or issues in their areas. The Board members are invited to the joint meeting of the area education advisory councils and the two meetings of the area education advisory council officers.
4. Membership and Terms of Office
- a. The Board of Education shall select members who represent the communities in each of the five administrative areas. No more than three (3) employees of the Board of Education may serve on each area education advisory council.
 - b. Individual citizens, Parent/Teacher Associations (PTA), and other community organizations may suggest candidates for membership on the area education

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advisory council for Board consideration. The recommendations may be forwarded to the appropriate area education advisory council for informational purposes. The Board shall make all appointments to the area education advisory councils in its sole discretion. Every effort should be made to ensure that the membership is representative of the area it serves, including, but not limited to, membership that is geographically balanced within the area.

- c. The term of office shall be for three (3) years. Members shall be eligible for appointment to two three-year terms and until a successor is appointed and qualifies.
- d. If a member is absent for three (3) or more meetings during a one-year period without sufficient reason, the area education advisory council may recommend termination of the individual's membership. The Board may terminate the individual's membership at its discretion.
- e. Up to two (2) members of each area education advisory council shall be students whose appointment shall be governed by the following procedures and conditions:
 - 1) Appointments shall be made in May. To be eligible for appointment, students shall be enrolled in good standing and pre-registered in the eleventh (11th) or twelfth (12th) grade of one of the high schools in the respective administrative area.
 - 2) Appointments of student members shall continue until the time of their graduation. Membership on the area education advisory council shall terminate at any time during the year that the student ceases to be enrolled in good standing in one of the high schools in the area.
 - 3) The Baltimore County Student Councils shall be requested to submit to the Board names of eligible students who are candidates for student membership on the area education advisory council for Board consideration in making appointments. Other stakeholder groups and principals may also suggest names of candidates for student membership for Board consideration. The recommendations may be forwarded to the appropriate area education advisory council for informational purposes. The Board shall make the appointment of students to the area education advisory council in its sole discretion.

- 4) The Board will attempt to rotate appointments among all of the high schools in the respective area.

f. Terms of Office

- 1) The term of office for the area education advisory council coordinator shall be two (2) years. The coordinator shall be eligible for one (1) reappointment.
- 2) Nominations for chair may be made by the area education advisory councils. A person shall have served at least two (2) years on an area education advisory council to be eligible for appointment as chair.

g. Duties of the Chair

- 1) The chair, in consultation with the Board and the area advisory coordinator, shall assist in the following:
 - a) annually orienting new members of area education advisory councils;
 - b) planning an annual joint meeting of area education advisory councils;
 - c) planning an annual meeting of council officers;
 - d) generating publicity countywide regarding the work of area education advisory councils, and
 - e) recognizing the work of council members.

5. Functions

- a. The role of the area education advisory council shall be strictly advisory in nature to the Board of Education. It should be made clear from the outset that its role is not to include policy making. However, area education advisory councils may make recommendations about policy to the Board.
- b. The area education advisory councils can provide a service by addressing itself primarily to area, community, or school system concerns. The area education advisory councils shall refrain at all times from considering or discussing individual school and personnel problems. These matters must be addressed only through appropriate administrative channels.

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- c. A valuable service can be rendered by interpreting Board policy in the community. The school system can benefit from the assessment of community feeling and reaction to issues and the transmission of opinions to the Board of Education.
- d. The area education advisory council may function as a sounding body for proposals, which are in the developmental stages.
- e. Area education advisory council members may be invited to participate in study groups, BCPS committees, and task forces, when appropriate. Area education advisory councils may advise the Board of Education regarding the need to hold public hearings on issues of interest or concern to the public.
- f. Within the framework of its advice and communication functions with the Board of Education and the community, the area education advisory councils may wish to have presentations and/or discussions such as:
 - 1) Hearing reports on curriculum projects.
 - 2) Discussing ideas on patterns of school organization and advising the Board of Education on proposed programs.
 - 3) Examining pupil population growth and shifts.
 - 4) Studying and communicating perspectives regarding educational specifications for new schools.
 - 5) Studying and communicating community perspectives regarding architectural planning and design.
 - 6) Reviewing physical needs in older buildings and becoming involved both in recommendations and the communication of plans and progress.
 - 7) Receiving information on budget preparations and offering suggestions on items for inclusion and emphasis.
 - 8) Enlisting community support for meeting the needs of the school system.
 - 9) Engaging in fact-finding in a variety of areas, which might include transportation and extended services, with a view toward apprising the Board of Education on conditions and needs.
 - 10) Serving as an instrument to strengthen the relationship between the school, community, and school system.

- g. The area education advisory council should provide an opportunity for interested citizens and community groups to offer suggestions for analysis and possible recommendations.

6. Application Process

- a. Anyone interested in serving on an area advisory council may contact a Board of Education member, an Area Assistant Superintendent, the Education Advisory Council Coordinator or his/her Area Advisory Council Chair to indicate his/her interest.
- b. The person shall submit a resume and/or application to the area chair and the chair shall acknowledge its receipt and forward a copy to the Area Assistant Superintendent and to the Area Advisory Coordinator within a week of its receipt or as soon as is practicable.
- c. The Area Advisory Coordinator will forward the application/ resume to the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education.
- d. The Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education will acknowledge receipt of the application for appointment by return electronic mail to the coordinator, the appropriate area education advisory council chairperson, and to the applicant, where communication by electronic mail is available.
- e. The Board of Education will make every effort to make a determination regarding the applicant's appointment within one month of receiving the resume/application.
- f. The Board of Education shall notify the Coordinator of the appointment and inform him/her when the appointment will be announced. If the Board declines to appoint the applicant, the Board will contact the Coordinator. In either case, the Coordinator shall inform the Chair and the applicant of the Board's decision.

Legal References:

Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §4-112

Policy

Board of Education of Baltimore County

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