

CHAPTER 9

9.3 Public Participation

9.3.1 Board of Education Meetings

All residents of Marshall County and interested parties shall be welcomed at any or all regular (Section 1.4.1), special (Section 1.4.2), or statutory (Section 1.4.3) meetings of the Board of Education at the time and place described in Sections 1.4.1 and 1.4.7.

9.3.2 Visits to Schools

Residents are encouraged to visit Marshall County Schools.

Details and arrangements for all visits should be worked out in advance by the visiting individual and the school principal.

9.3.3 Gifts and Donations to Schools

Any and all gifts or donations, if of value to the school system, shall be received and accepted as described in Section 10.1.4.1; provided, such acceptance does not create an obligation of the Marshall County Schools.

9.3.4 General Participation by the Public

Residents of Marshall County shall be encouraged to take an active part in school affairs. Such persons shall be invited to assist individually or in groups in matters of concern of the school responsibility in school discipline.

9.3.5 Parent-Teacher Associations

All administrators, teachers, and other school personnel shall be expected to cooperate with and participate in parent-teacher organizations.

Success of such organizations is highly dependent upon the proper relationships with school personnel.

9.3.6 Parent Policy (Adopted 10/08/91)

The Marshall County Board of Education believes that parent involvement at early childhood, middle and adolescent levels is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education. Strong partnerships between homes and schools are needed if quality education is to be provided to all children. Parents and teachers, 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. The resulting home-school partnerships can have positive effects on parent, teacher and student attitudes, classroom instruction, and on student achievement.

Goals of the Marshall County Parent Involvement program are:

1. increased awareness and understanding of school/county goals and programs
2. increased involvement in education decision-making
3. increased support for schools
4. improved student achievement
5. improved staff morale
6. improved school-home-community relations
7. improved sense of cooperative responsibility for the success of the educational program.

Five Major Types of Parental Involvement:

1. The basic obligations of parents refers to the responsibilities of families to ensure children's health and safety; to the parenting and child-rearing skills needed to prepare children for school; to the continual need to supervise, discipline, and guide children at each age level; and to the need to build positive home conditions that support learning and behavior appropriate for each grade level.
2. The basic obligations of schools refer to the communications from school to home about school programs and children's progress. Schools vary the form and frequency of communications such as memos, notices, report cards, and conferences, and greatly affect whether the information about school programs and children's progress can be understood by all parents.
3. Parent involvement at school refers to parent volunteers who assist teachers, administrators, and children in classrooms or in other areas of the school. It also refers to parents who come to school to support student performances, sports, or other events, or to attend workshops or other programs for their own education or training.
4. Parent involvement in learning activities at home refers to parent-initiated activities or child-initiated requests for help, and ideas or instructions from teachers for parents to monitor or assist their own children at home on learning activities that are coordinated with the children's classwork.
5. Parent involvement in governance and advocacy refers to parents' taking decision-making roles in the PTA/PTO, advisory councils, or other committees or groups at the school, district, or state level. It also refers to parent and community activists in independent advocacy groups that monitor the schools and work for school improvement.

Anticipated Outcomes of Parent Involvement:

- Self-confidence in parenting
- Knowledge in child development
- Understanding of home as environment for student learning
- Understanding school programs
- Interaction with teachers
- Monitoring child's progress
- Understanding teacher's job and school programs
- Familiarity with teachers
- Comfort in interactions at school
- Interaction with child as student at home and encouragement of schoolwork
- Participation in child's education
- Input to policies that affect child's education
- Feeling control of environment.

Student Outcomes:

- Security
- Respect for parent
- Awareness of importance of school
- Student participation in parent-teacher conferences, or in preparation for conferences
- Better decisions about courses, programs
- Increased learning skills receiving individual attention
- Ease of communication with adults
- Homework completion
- Self-concept of ability as learner
- Achievement in skills practiced
- Rights protected
- Specific benefits linked to specific policies.

Teacher Outcomes:

- Understanding of family cultures, goals, talents, needs
- Knowledge that family has common base of information for discussion of student problems, progress
- Use of parent network for communications
- Awareness of parent interest, in school and children, and willingness to help
- Readiness to try programs that involve parents in many ways
- Respect and appreciation of parents' time, ability to follow through and reinforce learning
- Better designs of homework assignments

- Equal status interaction with parents to improve school programs
- Awareness of parent perspectives for policy development.

The county shall provide training for teachers, parents, and administrators in cooperation with state and local agencies that would help realize these goals. An ongoing, two-way communication system including feedback mechanisms for parents and school staff shall be provided.

Each school shall develop a plan to implement home-school partnerships which includes:

1. training for parents and school personnel to develop skills in becoming partners in education
2. school activities to include parents
3. activities for parents to assist their children at home
4. ideas for parents to become active decision-makers in the educational process.

A yearly evaluation process shall be conducted to identify/assess the county's strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement, revising county policy if necessary.

9.3.7 Local School Improvement Councils (Adopted 10/08/91)

A local school improvement council shall be established in every Marshall County School. The intent of the councils shall be to facilitate and encourage the involvement of the school community in the operation of the local schools to improve educational quality. However, the existence and/or operation of the councils shall in no way serve to restrict nor inhibit the ability of the County Board of Education to effect county-wide school improvements. The goal of the school improvement council shall be to mutually cooperate with the school in implementing policies and programs it may adopt to:

1. Encourage the involvement of parents in their child's educational process and in the school;
2. Encourage businesses to provide time for their employees who are parents to meet with teachers concerning their child's education;
3. Encourage advice and suggestions from the business community;
4. Encourage school volunteer programs and mentorship programs; and
5. Foster utilization of the school facilities and grounds for public community activities.

Council membership shall be of the following composition:

1. Principal
2. Teachers (3)
3. School Service Personnel (2)

4. Parents or Legal Guardians (3)
5. Members-at-Large (2)
6. Student (1) -- schools housing students in grade 7 or higher **only**.

The principal shall serve as ex-officio chairman of the council and shall be entitled to vote.

The three teacher members shall be elected by the school's faculty senate.

The two school service personnel representatives shall be elected by the school service personnel assigned to that school.

The three parents and/or legal guardians shall be elected by the school's parent-teacher organization.

The two at-large members shall be appointed by the school principal. One shall reside in the school attendance area. One shall represent business or industry. Neither of these appointees shall be eligible for membership under any of the other elected classes of members.

For schools housing students in grade 7 or higher, a student representative must be included. If the school has a student body council, then its president shall serve. For schools not having a student body organization, a student shall be elected by the student body to serve.

The principal shall arrange for such elections to be held prior to the tenth day of May of each school year to elect a council to serve for the next ensuing school year. The principal shall give notice of the elections at least one week prior to the elections being held. To the extent practical, all of these elections shall be held within the same week.

Persons elected to the council shall serve until the next election and may only be replaced upon death, resignation, failure to appear at three consecutive council meetings for which notice was given or because of a change in personal circumstances so that the person is no longer representative of the class of members from which appointed. In the case of replacement, an election shall be held to elect another qualified person to serve the unexpired term of the person being replaced. Such election process shall be the same as outlined above.

Each member of the school improvement council must be given written notice two employment days in advance of any council meeting. School improvement councils shall meet at least once every nine weeks grading period at the call of the chair or by three-fourths of its members. At the first meeting of the council, the chair shall provide each member with a copy of the current law(s) pertaining to school improvement councils as well as state and county board of education policies pertaining to their operations. The council shall elect from its mem-

bership two members to assist the chair in setting the agenda for each council meeting.

The school improvement council may propose alternatives to the operation of the public school which alternative will meet or exceed the high quality standards established by the state board and will increase administrative efficiency, enhance the delivery of instructional programs, promote community involvement in the local school system or improve the educational performance of the school generally. Such proposals must contain very specific information regarding objectives, evaluation methods, savings projections, etc. as set forth in State Code 18-5A-3. Councils may request of the local and/or state board of education waivers of policies or rules. A council may also submit a written statement, with supporting reasons, to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability for commission review. The Commission may determine whether a recommendation should be made to the legislature to waive such statute or rule.

All proposed alternatives shall include the following:

1. Objective(s) to be accomplished under the pro-posal;
2. Rationale for how the accomplishment of the objective(s) will meet or exceed the standards established by the West Virginia Board of Education;
3. Citation of the indicators upon which the meeting of such standards should be judged; and
4. Description of how funds saved from the proposal should be reallocated within the school.

The alternative(s) proposed by the council may include matters which require the waiver of policies or rules of the state or county boards of education, and/or interpretations of these bodies or the state superintendent of schools. However, such waiver request **MUST** be submitted to the appropriate board and written approval must be obtained from that board. The county board of education shall be given forthwith a copy of any such request made of the West Virginia Board of Education. Waivers of interpretations of the State Superintendent of Schools only require notification of his/her office by the council as per State Code 18-5A-3. However, the school principal is strongly encouraged to work closely with the county superintendent upon such matters prior to submission of such notice to the State Superintendent.

When a council decides to propose an alternative to the West Virginia Board of Education, it shall forward a copy of the proposal to the State Board of Education and the County Board of Education. The state board will acknowledge receipt of the proposed alternative, promptly review the proposed alternative in consultation with the County Board or their agents and, in its discretion, approve implementation of the alternative or reply to the council within a reasonable time as to its reasons for not approving the proposed alternative. If the state board approves a proposed alternative, the state board shall provide appropriate notice to the local

school improvement council and the county board of education and shall establish a process for evaluation of the operation of the alternative. Approval for the operation of the alternative may be continued or revoked at any time based on the results and findings of the evaluation.

When a council decides to propose an alternative to the Marshall County Board of Education, such shall be presented to the County Superintendent by the school principal first. Subsequently, the proposal (in its original or an amended form) shall be submitted or caused to be submitted to the Board by the Superintendent. The board may take the following action within a reasonable period of time:

1. Approve the proposed alternative as submitted;
2. Remand the proposed alternative to the school council with suggestions for improvement; or
3. Reject the proposed alternative.

The school improvement council shall be notified of the board's decision. If the proposed alternative is approved, the school council shall submit to the board in writing an appraisal of the operation semi-annually or at other such times as the superintendent or board may specify according to the approved evaluation process. The board reserves the right to revoke the approval at any time based on the results and findings of these evaluations.

Funds received through grants and awards by the school improvement councils shall be accounted for and expended in accordance with all policies and regulations of the West Virginia Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Schools, and the County Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee.

Reference: West Virginia Code 18-5A-1,2,3 **9.3**