

The School Board and their Role with School Community Councils

The locally elected school board acts as the board of directors for the school district. School board members are responsible to their community and its values and have the final authority in school governance issues consistent with state law and State Board of Education rules. They should establish a vision and direction for improving student achievement, and align policies, budgets, staff and other resources to that vision. While board members should take an active role in creating the vision and ensuring accountability within the district, they should rely on the expertise of the district and school administrators to carry out the day to day operations of the district. *Local school boards review and approve required plans that school community councils are responsible for.*

Local School Board Review Steps - School Community Councils

- Conduct local board training on R277-477 *Distribution of Funds from the Interest and Dividend Account (School LAND Trust Funds) and Administration for the School LAND Trust Program* and R277-491 *School Community Councils*.
- *Encourage councils to establish written procedures for parent notifications, elections and other council tasks and responsibilities, including rules outlining parliamentary order and procedure, ethical behavior and civil discourse.*
- Oversee training of every school community council in the district on the requirements and responsibilities of school community councils, including the School LAND Trust Program and other responsibilities in the laws and rules listed below. Training about the responsibilities of the chair and vice-chair should be included. They should be familiar with the expectations and limitations of councils and the plans councils are responsible for, and should be familiar with the rubrics that will be used by the district to determine funding and approve plans.
 1. 53A-1a-108 School Community Councils
 2. 53A-1a-108.1 School Community Councils – Open and public meeting requirements
 3. 53A-1a-108.5 School Improvement Plans
 4. 53A-16-101.5 School LAND Trust Program
 5. R277-477 *Distribution of Funds from the Interest and Dividend Account (School LAND Trust Funds) and Administration for the School LAND Trust Program*
 6. R277-491 *School Community Councils*
- It is recommended that each school plan be read by *at least* two board members. If the local board desires school presentation of plans, Board members should not rely solely on school presentations. The Board is responsible to approve what appears in the written plans submitted for approval. School LAND Trust plans are made accessible to the public. Board members need to be certain that the approved and posted plan meets state law.
- School Improvement Plans and School LAND Trust Plans that do not meet the criteria of *most critical academic need* (see R277-477-4 for School LAND Trust expenditures) should be sent back to the school for revision. See R277-477-4 for examples of expenditures not appropriate for these funds. If a plan is sent back, it is accompanied by a written explanation of amendments the council needs to complete before resubmitting.
- Each Board member is encouraged to use a locally agreed upon rubric to evaluate expenditures, carryover, and alignment of plans school community councils are responsible for. School academic plans are to be consistent with district school improvement plans, professional development plans and reading achievement plans.
- Board members are encouraged to meet annually with each school community council in their district to analyze the processes councils use to accomplish council responsibilities. The councils are encouraged to use all-inclusive, systematic collaboration in school improvement. It is important to communicate to the council the need to use data to create and evaluate the plans councils are responsible for and to assure the School LAND Trust Plan meets the *most critical academic need*. This will improve the quality of plans submitted. This activity should be supported by district staff.
- School plans are unique to each school and the needs identified and supported by school data. If Board members have any questions about any of the expenses, they should direct district personnel to follow up on the expenditure and report back to the board.

The School LAND Trust Funding is very unique in that it is the only state funding where the use is driven by the local school community council and solely approved by the local school board. It is imperative that responsibility to review and approve the plans for funding be taken very seriously by the local school board. If plans are approved that do not meet the criteria set forth by the legislation and rule, it falls back on the local board to answer for their actions.