

Local School Improvement Council Frequently Asked Questions



What is a Local School Improvement Council?

The West Virginia legislature mandated the public schools establish councils to collaborate with administrators and faculty to promote innovations and improvements in the teaching and learning environment in the schools. LSICs are designed to represent the voice of the community's education stakeholders.

What authority does the Local School Improvement Council have?

The Local School Improvement Councils may propose alternatives to the operation of the school that will meet or exceed the high-quality standards established by the state board of education, 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.

Where do I find the West Virginia legislative code on Local School Improvement Councils?

The code can be accessed at <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/Code.cfm?chap=18&art=5A#05A>.

How do Local School Improvement Councils work?

Local School Improvement Councils serve an integral role in school governance through shared decision making. The membership is designed to draw upon the expertise and insight of stakeholders from various backgrounds to define the strengths and weaknesses of a school and to develop solutions to improve education at the school. The LSIC is responsible for addressing complex issues and fostering changes that may drastically alter the curriculum, instruction, or administration of the school.

Local School Improvement Councils should critically examine their school's needs and develop comprehensive improvement plans. The LSIC efforts are supported by the legislation which provides a waiver process by which Councils may propose to change local and/or state board policies.

How do you become a member of your Local School Improvement Council?

The principal will arrange for LSIC member elections to be held prior to September 15 each school year and will give notice of the elections at least one week prior to the elections being held. To the extent practicable, all elections to select council members shall be held within the same week.

Who can become members of your Local School Improvement Council?

The Local School Improvement Council is comprised of:

- (1) The principal, who serves as an ex officio member of the council and is entitled to vote;
- (2) Three teachers elected by the faculty senate of the school, one of whom must represent the social-emotional needs of the students;
- (3) Two service persons elected by the service personnel employed at the school, one of whom shall be a bus operator who transports students enrolled at the school;
- (4) Three parents, guardians, or custodians of students enrolled at the school elected by the parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s) members of the school's parent teacher organization. If there is no parent teacher organization, the parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s) members shall be elected by the parent(s), guardian(s), or custodian(s) of students enrolled at the school in such a manner as may be determined by the principal (under no circumstances may a parent member of the council be employed at that school in any capacity);
- (5) Three at-large members appointed by the principal, at least one of whom resides in the school's attendance area and at least one of whom represents business or industry, neither of whom is eligible for membership under any of the other elected classes of members;
- (6) In the case of vocational-technical schools, comprehensive middle schools, and comprehensive high schools, the vocational director or principal, as applicable, shall appoint up to four additional

members from any one or more of the following categories: employer, employer-sponsored training program, apprenticeship program, and post-secondary education;

- (7) In the case of a school with students in grade seven or higher, the student body president or other student in grade seven or higher elected by the student body in those grades.



Can Local School Improvement Councils have non-voting members?

Nothing prohibits expanding the membership of LSICs to include non-voting members or requesting other stakeholders to participate in meetings of the LSIC.



When is the first meeting of the Local School Improvement Council each year?

As soon as practicable after the election of council members, and no later than October 1 of each school year, the principal will convene an organizational meeting of the Local School Improvement Council. The principal must notify each member by written or electronic means at least five days in advance of this organizational meeting. At this meeting, a chair and two members to assist the chair will be elected and the principal will distribute information on the operation and powers of LSICs.



How often do LSICs meet?

The LSIC must meet every nine weeks or equivalent grading period, at the call of the chair, or by petition of three-fourths of its members.



What meetings are required for LSICs?

In addition to the organizational meeting conducted by the principal, all LSICs must conduct at least one meeting annually to engage stakeholders in a dialogue regarding the school's academic performance and standing as determined by measures adopted by the West Virginia Board of Education. Attendees should have the opportunity to make specific suggestions on how to address issues affecting the school's performance. This may include topics such as: parent and community involvement; the learning environment; student engagement; attendance; supports for at-risk students; curricular offerings; resources, and school improvement. This meeting will be announced by the chair at least ten employment days in advance of the meeting.



Are LSICs required to meet with the County Board of Education?

County Boards of Education must meet at least annually with the LSIC of each school deemed to be low performing under the accountability system established by the West Virginia Board of Education. At least thirty days before this meeting, the County Board of Education will develop and submit to the Council an agenda for the meeting, which will include plans to address deficiencies as described in WV Code 18-5-14.



Are Local School Improvement Council meetings open to the public?

Yes. All LSIC meetings must be open to the public in compliance with the provisions of the Open Governmental Proceedings Act (WV Code 6-9A-2).



Where can a Local School Improvement Council find information on requesting waivers?

Councils may propose alternatives to the operation of the school based on the school's needs and circumstances by requesting a waiver of rules, policies, interpretations, and statutes. WVBE Policy 2322 provides guidance on the procedure for requesting waivers. It can be accessed at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/policies/>.



Can a Local School Improvement Council refuse to forward a request for a waiver that originates in the school's curriculum team?

WV Code §18-5A-2 (j) states that any and all matters which may fall within the scope of both the school improvement council and the school curriculum teams authorized in §18-5A-6, the school curriculum teams have jurisdiction. Therefore, the LSIC would have to submit the requested waiver to the appropriate body (e.g., local board of education, state board of education).