



# Local School Improvement Councils Frequently Asked Questions

## ***What is a Local School Improvement Council (LSIC)?***

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 LSIC shall help develop and promote the school's and county's vision for excellence by being catalysts for innovation and encouraging parent, family, business, and community involvement in the school and county strategic improvement process.

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

Legislative code can be found at <https://code.wvlegislature.gov/>.

## ***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 I become a member of a Local School Improvement Council?***

The principal will arrange for the 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 a 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 that serve a two-year term;

(3) Two service persons elected by the service personnel employed at the school that serve a two-year term, one of whom may 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 parents, guardians, or custodians 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 a school's council be employed at that school in any capacity. Parents serve a two-year term;

(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. The at-large members serve a one-year term;

(6) In the case of CTE schools, comprehensive middle schools, and comprehensive high schools, the CTE 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/or postsecondary 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?**

The school principal shall arrange for the election of members to the LSIC to be held prior to September 15 of each school year and shall give notice of the elections at least one week prior to the elections being held. All elections to select council members shall be held within the same week, to the extent 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 business days in advance of this organizational meeting. At this meeting, a chair and two members to assist the chair in setting the agenda and taking minutes for each meeting will be elected, and the principal shall provide a copy of the current applicable sections of W. Va. Code 18-5A-2, any West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to the operation of these councils, and any information developed by the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) on the operation and powers of LSICs and their important role in improving student and school performance and progress.

### **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 positive and interactive dialogue regarding the school's academic performance and standing as determined by

measures adopted by the WVBE. Attendees 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, behaviors, supports for at-risk students, curricular offerings, resources, and school improvement. This meeting will be announced by the chair at least ten business days before. The council shall ensure that a report of concerns, suggestions, and points raised during this meeting is produced and made available on the school's website and forwarded to the County Board of Education Members (CBEM) and the WVDE. The county board shall also post this report on its website.

### ***Are LSIC 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 (W. Va. Code §6-9A-2).

### ***Where can a LSIC 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 LSIC refuse to forward a request for a waiver that originates in the school's curriculum team?***

W. Va. 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).

### ***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 West Virginia Accountability System in accordance with W. Va. Code §18-5-14. At any such meeting, the principal and the LSIC chair shall be prepared to address the dialogue at its meeting or meetings to give all stakeholders an opportunity to make specific suggestions to address issues which are seen to affect the school's academic performance and any other matters that may be requested by the county board as specified in the meeting agenda provided to the council.

### ***What resources are available?***

LSIC resources can be accessed on the WVDE website at [wvde.us](http://wvde.us).

### ***Who will be required for the LSIC training provided by the WVDE?***

Training will be available for principals, county boards, and others the state board determines appropriate, upon employment and every three years thereafter.

### ***What are the requirements for LSIC Meeting Minutes?***

The council shall ensure that minutes are taken at every meeting and made available to the public on the school's website and upon written request to the school's principal or council chair.