

The School Board and their Role with School Community Councils

The locally elected school board acts as the direct governing body for the school district. School board members are responsible to their community 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 the required plans proposed by school community councils.*

Local School Board Responsibilities

- Provide and attend local board training on R277-477 Distribution of Funds from the Trust Earnings Account and Administration of 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.
 - Provide training for every school community council in the district on the requirements and responsibilities of school community councils, including training for the chair and vice-chair about their responsibly, resources available on the School LAND Trust website, the School LAND Trust Program and other responsibilities in the laws and rules listed below. Local Boards should be familiar with the expectations and limitations of councils and the plans councils create, and should be familiar with the guidelines used by the district to approve plans.
 1. 53G-7-1202 School Community Councils
 2. 53G-7-1203 School Community Councils – Open and public meeting requirements
 3. 53G-7-1206 School LAND Trust Program
 4. 53F-2-404 School LAND Trust program distribution of funds
 5. R277-477 *Distribution of Funds from the Trust Earnings Account and Administration of 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. Each school is required by R277-477-9 to ensure that a council member has had an opportunity to provide a signature indicating the member’s involvement in implementing the current School LAND Trust plan and developing the school plan for the upcoming year. This signature form should be reviewed by the board as part of the upcoming year plan to gauge the level of council participation.

- School LAND Trust Plans that do not meet the criteria of *most critical academic need* (see R277-477-4 for School LAND Trust expenditures) and/or do not propose a measurable, student focused, academic goal based on school assessment data 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 LAND Trust plans are to implement a component of the school's approved teacher and student success plan.
- 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 must be 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.