

EQUITY COUNCIL BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. MISSION and BELIEF STATEMENT

“The mission of the Equity Council is to monitor and analyze equity issues, advise the Fayette County Board of Education and advocate achievement for ALL students

Belief statements:

We believe we are advocates for all children regardless of their background and circumstances.

We believe we represent the Equity conscience of the community

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The Equity Council will monitor and assess policies and programs, as they relate to equity, in the Fayette County Public Schools. The Council shall recommend policies and programs, consistent with federal, state and local laws that will enhance student achievement and assure that all students meet the equity goals established by the Board of Education. The Council will provide guidance regarding educational climate and environments that are conducive to learning and are related to equity. The Council will also recommend strategies for removing barriers that may inhibit any student from learning or any teacher from teaching. We accept this responsibility and commit to collaboration with the Board of Education in accomplishing the equity goals as stated in the District Comprehensive Plan.

ARTICLE III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Equity Council fully supports the district’s effort and commitment to provide the means for every child to reach his or her maximum potential so as to assure that no child is left behind.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

A. COMPOSITION

The Equity Council shall consist of 15 members. Ten of the fifteen are appointed by the members of Fayette County Board of Education; the remaining five are elected by the Equity Council. All members, whether elected or appointed shall have expressed an interest, and have demonstrated a commitment or contribution to human rights and equal opportunities, and/or educational equity.

B. REQUIREMENTS, SOURCE OF APPOINTMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. Each member of the Board of Education shall appoint two members to the Equity Council, as vacancies occur. Appointments shall be made in consideration of the existing diversity of the community and the Council. Members shall be permitted to serve their complete terms of office even if the Board of Education member who appointed them leaves office.
2. Community members shall be elected by the Equity Council according to the following provisions:
 - a. The Equity Liaison shall maintain an on-going, updated list, to be maintained in the Office of Equity, School Support & Community Engagement (ES&CE) of organizations and individuals who have expressed an interest in membership on the Equity Council and who have demonstrated a commitment or contribution to human rights, equal opportunities, and/or educational equity. Upon request, the Equity Liaison will make the list available to the Council and Board of Education whenever a vacancy occurs. The Equity Liaison shall also maintain an updated list of current members with sufficient information to allow the Board of Education and the Equity Council to assess areas of need on the Council. The Equity Liaison shall solicit new applicants on an on-going basis.
 - b. The Chair, at the regular meeting in October of each odd numbered year, shall announce to the Council and to the community, the date in December that membership elections shall be held.
 - c. Members of the Equity Council will be afforded an opportunity to nominate organizations and/or individuals at this same October meeting. The Chair or designee will contact nominated organizations and/or individuals.
 - d. By October 10th of each odd numbered year, the Office of Equity, School Support & Community shall arrange for an ad to appear in the Lexington Herald-Leader, the FCPS website/homepage and periodically on Channel 13, along with other such media as may be deemed appropriate to reach all segments of the community. The ad shall include complete information regarding the application process. The Superintendent will arrange a budget for this specific purpose. In addition, a press release regarding the application process shall be issued to all organizations on the FCPS media list.
 - e. Nominated organizations/individuals must complete an application and attach additional information about its organization, or an individual that shows how his/her participation will help advance the cause of equity in the FCPS. Attached material may not exceed five additional pages. Completed applications must be received in the Office of Equity, School Support & Community no later than the end of business on the last Friday of the month of October. Incomplete or late applications shall not be considered or presented to the Council.

- f. The Equity Liaison will report to the Council at its regular meeting in November the names of all applicants and all information relevant to their application. The Council shall receive copies of the completed applications at this meeting.
- g. At the regular meeting in December of odd numbered years, the Office of Equity, School Support & Community shall prepare a ballot for the election of five new Council members, which election shall be by secret ballot. All members shall vote for up to five applicants. The Council Secretary shall count the ballots and report the results during the meeting. The five applicants receiving the most votes shall be elected. The results of the election shall become a part of the minutes. If the Council secretary is an applicant, the Council Chair will appoint a designee to count the ballots.
- h. Absentee voting. In case of an emergency, a Council member can be afforded the opportunity to vote an absentee ballot. The Council member will need to request in advance the absentee ballot from the Office of Equity, School Support & Community ES&CE Office and return via scan, fax or mail by 5:00 p.m. EST on the meeting day of the Election to the ES&CE Office.
- i. In the event of a tie vote between nominees, a run-off election will be held. The vote shall proceed as described in Section g above.

C. REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

- 1. The Equity Council (EC) Chair may request to have an Equity Council member whom he/she has reason to believe is guilty of immorality, misconduct in office, incompetence, willful neglect of duty, or nonfeasance.
- 2. A member of the Equity Council may be removed from the committee for cause, after an opportunity for hearing before an ad hoc committee convened by the EC Chair made up of ... Written notices setting out the charges for removal shall be read on the Equity Council minutes and be provided to the member of the Equity Council member.
- 3. A member who violates the standards of practices and does not submit a written letter of resignation to the Equity Council Chair could be reprimanded or removed in one of the following ways:

A. Fayette County Board of Education Chair

The Fayette County Board of Education Chair may recommend removal of an Equity Council Committee Member for immorality, misconduct in office, incompetence, and willful neglect of duty or nonfeasance, and then the Equity Council Committee holds an ad hoc committee hearing formed for this purpose to review the charges to decide whether removal is warranted. The action to remove a member must be substantiated by a majority vote of the Equity Council membership.

B. Member(s) of the Equity Council may Request Removal of a member

A member of the EC may request that an investigation takes place that look into claims of intentional interference with the goals and objectives of the EC and failure to adhere to the standards of practices agreement. The first time the Equity Council member finds a member guilty of such interference, the member will receive a reprimand. The second time, the person can be recommended for removal from office. The action to remove a member must be substantiated by a majority vote of the Equity Council membership.

D. FILLING VACANCIES

1. If a member of the Council resigns or is removed from office, that member shall be replaced not more than two months from the time of the vacancy. If a member of the Board of Education appointed the departed member, the Board Member shall name a replacement. If the Board Member does not name a replacement within two months, the Council shall promptly act to elect a new member from the applicant's list maintained in the Equity, School Community & Government Support Office. If the Equity Council elected the departed individual, then the Council elects a member from the applicant's list maintained in the Office of Equity, School Support & Community Engagement. If no applications are available to choose from then the council shall accept nominations.
2. If no qualified applicant(s) is on file, the Chair will submit an individual name to the Council for a Special Election.

E. TERMS OF OFFICE

1. The terms of Equity Council members shall be for two years and shall begin at the regular meeting in January and end following the regular meeting in December. Terms shall be staggered as follows:
 - One member appointed by each Board Member -- Term ends in odd numbered years.
 - One member appointed by each Board Member -- Term ends in even numbered years.
 - Five members elected by Equity Council -- Terms end in odd numbered years.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS

A. EQUITY COUNCIL OFFICERS

1. Officers shall include Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.
2. At the regular meeting in November the Equity Liaison will announce that elections will be held in December. Written nominations for officers may be submitted to the Office of Equity, School Support & Community no later than one week prior to the regular meeting in November. The Equity Liaison shall announce the nominees at the November meeting. Additional nominations for each office may be made from the floor at this time. After nominations are closed, the Office of School Community & Government Support shall prepare a separate ballot for each office that will list those nominated.
3. Council members who have been nominated and are willing to serve shall prepare a brief biographical sketch to be submitted to the Equity Liaison no later than two weeks prior to the December meeting. These biographical sketches shall be distributed by the Office of Equity, School Support & Community to all Council members at least one week prior to the December meeting to allow all members sufficient time to review them.
4. At the December regular meeting, prior to the election of officers, these three separate ballots (Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary) shall be distributed to each Council member. Each member, using the written ballots, shall first vote for the office of Chair who will serve a one-year term. The election shall be by secret ballot. The Council Secretary shall count the ballots and report the results during the meeting. The results of the election shall become a part of the minutes. The Chair may be reelected for additional one-year terms. A member who has been reelected to the Council under the provisions of Article IV, Section E of these bylaws, shall be eligible for election as Chair.
5. After the Chair is elected, members of the Equity Council shall elect a Vice Chair who will serve a one-year term. The election shall be by secret ballot. The Council Secretary shall count the ballots and report the results during the meeting. The results of the election shall become a part of the minutes. The Vice Chair may be reelected for additional one-year terms. A member who has been re-elected to the Council under the provisions of Article IV, Section E of these bylaws, shall be eligible for election as Vice Chair.
6. After the Vice Chair is elected, members of the Equity Council shall elect a Secretary who will serve a one-year term. The election shall be by secret ballot. The Council Chair shall count the ballots and report the results during the meeting. The results of the election shall become a part of the minutes. The Secretary may be reelected for additional one-year terms. A member who has been reelected to the Council under the provisions of Article IV, Section E of these bylaws, shall be eligible for election as Secretary.

7. The Superintendent's office shall provide the Equity Council with assistance by appointing a district Equity Liaison. The Equity Liaison shall be responsible for providing feedback/closure to all action items brought to the Council, provide regular addendums to meetings which lists the action taken on all motions or discussion presented at the previous meeting, provide assistance to all Council members on subcommittee items and act as a district resource to facilitate meeting the needs of the members on issues, work with the Superintendent's office to coordinate joint board and regular meeting dates and provide on-going reports on district items and initiatives relative to equity and student achievement within the district. This person shall serve as the primary referral source to support and facilitate the concerns of the council members.
8. The Superintendent's office shall provide the Council with additional secretarial assistance through the Office of Equity, School Support & Community Engagement. This person shall be responsible for the production of Council minutes and provide other clerical support duties as requested by the Chair, directed by the Equity Liaison and as contained in these bylaws.

B. CHAIR

Duties of the Chair include: Conducting Equity Council meetings, compiling and distributing the agenda for Council meetings, approving the meeting minutes prior to distribution, stating for the record the result of votes taken, coordinating standing committees and ad hoc committees, providing responses to citizens during the communication and public participation, initiating the production of the Annual Report of the Equity Scorecard and carrying out any additional responsibilities as stated in these bylaws.

C. VICE CHAIR

Duties of the Vice Chair shall include: Presiding over Council meetings in the absence of the Chair, calling a special meeting of the Council in the event a Chair vacancy occurs, and carrying out any additional responsibilities as stated in these bylaws.

D. SECRETARY

Duties of the Secretary shall include: coordinating with the Equity Liaison to call the monthly roll and review minutes of all Council meetings, count ballots as may be necessary during Council elections, serving as parliamentarian during Council meetings and carrying out any additional responsibilities as stated in these bylaws.

E. COUNCIL MEMBERS

Duties of Equity Council members include: Acknowledging and adhering to the mission, belief statements, purpose, and the standards of practices of the Equity Council; attending all regular and special called EC meetings, subcommittee meetings; encouraging and requesting concerns and issues that may be potentially substantial inequities and disparities within the district; supporting, promoting, and communicating Equity Council decisions, and researching and developing analytics as needed about issues presented to Equity Council; and directly reporting pertinent information to the Equity Council Chair. Members should notify the Office of Equity School Support and Community Engagement in advance if they are unable to attend.

ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES

A. PURPOSE

1. Standing and ad hoc committees are established to gain input from all stakeholders.
2. Standing and ad hoc committees shall serve as a Council resource for gathering data and information and making recommendations to the Equity Council.

B. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

1. Ad hoc committees are formed and dissolved by the Equity Council, or by the Chair with Council consent, as needed and shall be reflected within the Equity Committee Policy (See Appendix: Equity Council Committee Policy).
2. Standing committees can be created or dissolved by the Chair and by a consensus agreement of a majority of the Equity Council, as needed.

ARTICLE VII. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

A. REGULAR MEETINGS

1. The regular monthly meeting of the Equity Council shall be the first Tuesday of every month. Council meetings shall be open to the public. Meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m.
2. Unless otherwise advertised, the regular monthly meetings will be held in Conference Room C of the It's About Kids Support Services, 701 East Main Street, Lexington, Kentucky.

3. The Equity Council Liaison shall provide local news media with the Council's regular meeting schedule for the year in October and provide notification of the Council's meeting time and agenda at least one week in advance of each regular meeting.
4. The Equity Council shall comply with all provisions of the Open Meetings and Open Records laws (KRS Chapter 61).

General Guidelines for Public Comment:

Individuals may address the Equity Council for a maximum of five (5) minutes, as determined by the EC Chair. A speaker should state his or her name,, and provide whether the subject of their statements will address item(s) on the agenda or not.

Attendees wishing to speak at a public meeting of the Equity Council are encouraged to share their issues/concerns and ideas with the Equity Council in writing prior to the monthly meeting date. . Additionally, anyone may submit written proposed agenda items to the Equity Council Chair at least five (5) calendar days before the Equity Council meeting.

Contact the Equity Council Chair for more information.

B. SPECIAL MEETINGS

1. If the Equity Council needs to meet between regular meetings, or if the regular meeting is rescheduled, the Chair or a majority of the Equity Council members may call a special meeting. The following steps must be completed by the Chair when a special meeting is called:
 - a. Written Notice: The Chair shall prepare and sign a written notice that states the date, time, and place of the special meeting and the agenda for each meeting. Only the items on the agenda may be discussed.
 - b. Delivery of Notice: The Chair, in collaboration with the Equity Liaison, shall arrange for the notice to be delivered and received to each Council member at least 48 hours prior to the time of the meeting, and to any media organization that has requested notice of Council meetings at least 24 hours prior to the time of the meeting. The delivery can be by hand, FAX machine, email, or mail.
 - c. The Council shall comply with all provisions of the Open Meetings and Open Records laws (KRS Chapter 61).

ARTICLE VIII. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

A. QUORUM

A quorum of the Equity Council shall be a majority (more than one-half) of the Equity Council members. No Equity Council business shall be conducted unless a quorum of Equity Council members is present.

B. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Council meetings are open to the public and all interested persons can attend, except for those portions that are conducted in closed session.

C. CLOSED SESSIONS

Definition: A closed session is a portion of a regular or special meeting of the Equity Council during which the Equity Council members could meet pursuant to the Kentucky Open Meetings Act in private. The Equity Council may only meet in closed session to discuss pending allegations and claims to remove an Equity Council member(s) for reasons contained herein these bylaws. Before a closed session can be conducted, the following steps must be taken:

1. **Announcement:** An announcement of the general nature of the subject to be discussed and the specific section of the law [KRS 61.810(1)(c)] that allows the conduct of the closed session must be announced in the open meeting and recorded in Council minutes.
2. **Motion:** The motion to go into closed session must be made, passed by a majority of Equity Council members present, and recorded in Equity Council minutes.
3. **Closed Session:** During the closed session, only the business stated in the announcement can be discussed, and no action may be taken. No minutes are to be taken in closed session. Details discussed in closed session shall not be discussed outside the closed session.
4. **Decision:** After full discussion of the issue in closed session, the Council must return to open session where it may take any official action on the matter. Any actions taken must be recorded in Equity Council minutes.

D. AGENDA

1. Anyone may submit items for inclusion on the agenda to the Equity Council Chair, in writing, no later than five (5) working days prior to a meeting.
2. The Equity Council Chair, in consultation with the Equity Council Liaison, and the Superintendent shall prepare a preliminary agenda for each regular Council meeting, including items submitted in writing for inclusion by the public, staff, other Equity Council members and other items he or she believes should be on the agenda. The Equity Council Chair may declare an item received as not within Equity Council's authority. The Equity Council Liaison shall provide members with a copy of the preliminary agenda at least one week prior to the meeting.
3. Each agenda shall include the following items:
 - Item 1: Setting of the final agenda for the current meeting.
 - Item 2: Review and approval of previous meeting minutes.
 - Item 3: An opportunity during the course of the meeting for persons to address the Equity Council.
 - Item 4: Other items submitted.
4. Setting of the agenda shall be conducted prior to each regular Equity Council meeting by the Equity Council Chair, Equity Council Liaison, and the Superintendent. At a special called meeting, only the items listed on the notice of meeting can be discussed and no new items can be introduced for discussion or inclusion on the agenda.

E. DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEMS

1. The Equity Council shall discuss each agenda item before a decision is made. Each Council member shall be given an opportunity to express his or her opinion on the item.
2. If an item under discussion is determined inappropriate by , the Equity Council Chair, Equity Council Liaison, and the Superintendent the issue will be item immediately tabled, researched, and clearly articulated and shared with Equity Council at the subsequent Equity Council meeting.
3. Other persons attending the meeting may be recognized by the Chair and may address the Council by completing a speaker registration card prior to the start of the meeting and will be called upon to speak at the appropriate time of the agenda by the Equity Council.. If a significant number of persons wish to contribute to the discussion on a particular item, the Chair may set limits on the number of persons who will speak to the issue and a time limit for each.
4. Any agenda item may be referred to a standing or ad hoc committee for further study as deemed necessary by the Council.

ARTICLE IX. MINUTES AND OTHER COUNCIL RECORDS

A. MINUTES KEPT AND APPROVED

1. Minutes shall be kept and maintained in the Office of Equity, School Support & Community Engagement Equity for each meeting of the Equity Council.
2. The minutes shall reflect an accurate record of discussions, recommendations, actions and votes taken at an Equity Council meeting. Minutes shall show the words of the motion and the majority vote or consensus support.
3. If the action taken was the recommendation of a policy, the entire text of the policy shall be attached to the copy of the minutes.
4. The minutes of the Equity Council shall not be official until they are reviewed and approved by the Council.
5. A preliminary copy of the minutes for all Council meetings will be provided to the members five (5) days in advance of the next meeting.
6. The Equity Council liaison will forward an official copy of the minutes to the Superintendent and Board of Education.
7. Draft minutes shall be constructed by the administrative support staff from the Office of Equity, School Support & Community Engagement, Equity Council Liaison and provided to the Equity Council Chair and the Secretary for initial review. Once the minutes are reviewed, they will be forwarded to members for approval at the next meeting.

B. EQUITY COUNCIL RECORDS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION

The following are official documents (i.e., Equity Council Bylaws and Policies, Equity Council minutes, subcommittee minutes, Equity Council Annual Scorecard(s), Equity Council and committee membership lists, etc.) that must be kept on file for public inspection in the Superintendent's office (or Designee's Office):

C. REQUESTS FOR COUNCIL RECORDS

1. Requests for Council records must be made in writing to the official custodian of records (Superintendent's Office) for the FCPS. Requests must include specific documents and dates.
2. Requested Equity Council records shall be provided in accordance with the Open Records Law.

3. The Superintendent's office (or Designee) shall make or provide copies of requested documents, consistent with the provisions of KRS 61.870, et. seq.

ARTICLE X. REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS

The Equity Council may deem it necessary from time to time to secure the services of an outside contractor to accomplish tasks consistent with the mission and purpose of the Equity Council. Any such Requests For Proposal shall be developed in concert with and have the approval of the Board of Education and shall be consistent with the provisions of the Model Procurement Code, KRS Chapter 45A.

ARTICLE XI. ANNUAL REPORT

The Equity Council shall produce and present to the Board of Education, in a joint meeting, an Equity Scorecard report and a report of activities and accomplishments of the past year in alignment with the District Scorecard.

ARTICLE XII. AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended after a first and second reading at two consecutive meetings by majority vote of the Board of Education.

ARTICLE XIII. REVIEW

These bylaws shall be reviewed by an Ad-hoc committee every two (2) years or as needed.

Revisions: 6/22/09

Revisions: 12/4/2012

Revisions: 3/24/2014

Revisions: May 2016