

COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
HANDBOOK



SOUTHWEST REGION
SCHOOLS

Updated: September, 2002

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HANDBOOK
FOR
COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMITTEES

SOUTHWEST REGION SCHOOLS

1.0 CONCEPTS AND ROLES

The Board recognizes the importance of community participation in school affairs, and therefore establishes in each community of the District a Community School Committee (CSC). Community School Committees function under the direction of the School Board. School Board policy and actions shall prevail and be followed. The Community School Committee's function is advisory except where specified by the School Board in these policies.

The Community School Committees shall learn about issues important to the members of their respective communities and shall report those issues to the Site Administrator, Superintendent and Board, and make recommendations which reflect those issues and fit within the District's educational program.

The Community School Committee shall develop an effective working relationship with school personnel, particularly the site administrator.

1.1. Role of the Board

The School Board shall:

1. Establish Community School Committees where required by law and as deemed to be in the best interests of the district;
2. Determine the membership and method of selection of Community School Committee members;
3. Determine the powers and duties of the Community School Committee.
4. Set policies for the District's educational program.

1.2. Role of the Superintendent or Designee

The Superintendent or designee shall:

1. Supervise the conduct of elections of Community School Committee members;
2. Oversee the operation of the Community School Committees and report to the Board regarding the relationship between the Community School Committees and the schools;
3. Solicit and receive recommendations from the Community School Committees.
4. Administer the district pursuant to the policies and directives of the School Board.

1.3. Role of the Site Administrator:

The Site Administrator shall:

1. Report to the CSC about the operation of the school site.
2. Prepare agendas for CSC meetings after consultation with the CSC president and serve as the executive officer of the CSC.
3. Administer the site pursuant to the direction of the Board and Superintendent, with consideration given to the recommendations of the CSC.
4. Receive and consider suggestions of the CSC and facilitate communication between the CSC and the Board and Superintendent.

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES

14.12.035 Advisory school boards in borough school districts

ALASKA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

4 AAC 05.010-4 AAC 05.900 Local education

2.0. MEMBERSHIP/ELECTIONS

Each school attendance area shall be served by an elected Community School Committee (CSC).

The Community School Committees shall consist of three members in the villages of Twin Hills, Portage Creek and Ekwok (seat numbers A-C in each village), and five members in Aleknagik, Clark's Point, Koliganek, Manokotak, New Stuyahok and Togiak (seat numbers A-E). Members shall serve a term of three years. No person employed by Southwest Region School District may serve as a member of any CSC, provided, however, that occasional substitute employment does not preclude membership on the CSC. No person may serve on a CSC and the School Board.

Elections will be held on the first Tuesday of April which may be in conjunction with the city and borough elections. The site administrator, with the assistance of the district administrative staff, shall coordinate CSC elections.

2.1. Voting

An individual must meet the following requirements to vote in a Community School Committee election:

1. The voter must be a United States citizen;
2. The voter must be at least 18 years of age on the date of the election;
3. The voter must be a legally registered voter in the area served by the school;

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES

14.12.035 Advisory school boards in borough school districts

2.0 Community School Elections, continued

2.2 Election Procedures

1. Notice of election shall be posted four (4) weeks prior to the election and will note the vacancies for each Community School Committee.
2. A signed declaration of candidacy will be required to be on file in the district's office of the Superintendent one week prior to the election. Declaration forms shall be available when election notices are posted. If a declaration form is received after the deadline, the candidate's name will not be considered. However, an individual may seek election on a write-in basis.
3. The candidate must affirm on the declaration of candidacy that he or she meets the standards to serve on the CSC and is eligible to vote in the upcoming election.

2.3 Ballots

1. **Sample Ballots:** Sample ballots will be made available three (3) working days after the close of the date for receipt of declarations. They shall be printed on colored paper and clearly marked:
SAMPLE BALLOT.
2. **Official Ballots:** Official or regular ballots shall be prepared on white paper and be available to each precinct, except second class cities in the district, prior to election day.
3. **Absentee Ballots:** Absentee ballots will be available three (3) days after the closing date for the receipt of declarations. These may be requested from the district central office or from the individual schools, or from the city clerk of any second class city in the district.

2.4 Polling Time and Places

1. **Time and Place** - all Community School Committee elections will be held the first Tuesday in April. The polls will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and will coincide with or be in close proximity to the polling place for general elections.
2. **Ballot Boxes** - each community will be provided a ballot box for the election.
3. **Booth** - a private voting booth will be available at each polling place.

2.5 Certification of the Election

The School Board at its next meeting shall certify the election for each community.

2.6 Write-in Candidates

A write-in candidate may be elected provided that the individual is a qualified Community School Committee voter and meets the other qualifications for membership.

If a write-in candidate receives the largest number of votes, the individual shall be immediately contacted by the Superintendent to determine if that person accepts the position. If the person accepts, that person's name shall be seated on the CSC. If the individual declines, the second highest vote getter shall be contacted, to determine if that person will accept, and the process shall continue until the position is filled.

2.7 Tie Vote

In the event a tie occurs with the two highest vote getters receiving an equal number of votes, a recount of the ballots, according to the procedure below, shall be made. If the recount yields a tie then a runoff shall be held within 30 days.

2.8 Recount Procedure

If necessary, a recount committee of three citizens who are acceptable to all the candidates and who have not been candidates themselves in the election shall be appointed by the Superintendent.

A recount shall take place in the district central office following a 24-hour posting of such a recount and notification to all affected candidates, with representation present from all candidates if they desire.

The results of any recount shall be certified at the next regularly scheduled School Board meeting.

2.9 Recount by Candidate's Request

Following certification by the School Board, requests for a recount must be made within fifteen (15) days by candidate's request. Such a request shall be accompanied by a check or money order for \$100 to pay for the expenses of said recount. This request for a recount shall be made to the Superintendent. The procedure shall be as outlined above.

**2.10 SAMPLE NOTICE OF ELECTION
Community School Committee (CSC)**

**NOTICE OF TWIN HILLS
COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
ELECTION**

THERE WILL BE AN ELECTION FOR THE TWIN HILLS COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY, APRIL 3, 2002, AT THE REGULAR POLLING PLACE. THE FOLLOWING SEATS ARE OPEN:

SEAT A: A THREE-YEAR TERM, EXPIRES APRIL 2006.

SEAT C: A THREE-YEAR TERM, EXPIRES APRIL 2005.

INTERESTED CANDIDATES MUST SPECIFY FOR WHAT SEAT THEY ARE FILING.

DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY: ANYONE INTERESTED MUST FILE A DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY FORM WITH THE PRINCIPAL AT THE SCHOOL OFFICE NO LATER THAN MARCH 27, 2003. FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE CITY OFFICE AND THE SCHOOL OFFICE.

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMITTEE SEAT: A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES AND 18 YEARS OR OLDER MUST BE A RESIDENT OF THE AREA SERVED BY THE SCHOOL FOR AT LEAST THIRTY (30) DAYS BEFORE THE ELECTION; AND A LEGALLY REGISTERED VOTER OF THE AREA SERVED BY THE SCHOOL. FURTHER, NO EMPLOYEE OF THE DISTRICT MAY SERVE ON THE CSC, PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT OCCASIONAL SUBSTITUTE EMPLOYMENT DOES NOT PRECLUDE SITTING ON THE CSC.

**2.11 DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY
for
COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMITTEE (CSC) CANDIDATE**

I, _____, hereby declare my candidacy for the
Community School Committee, Seat _____ in
_____, Alaska, which is to be
(Village Name)

contested at the regular election to be held on the _____ day of April, _____.

I further declare that I am a citizen of the United States, that I am (or will be) at least 18 years of age as of the date of the election, and that I will have been a resident for thirty (30) days preceding the date of election and am a qualified and registered voter in the area served by this Community School Committee. I am not employed by the Southwest Region School District.

I requested that the local school site administrator enter my name on the ballot for the annual election.

Signature

Attest: _____
Site Administrator

Date and Hour of Filing: _____

*Candidates must return this completed form to the school office
no later than one week prior to the election date at 4 P.M.*

*Site administrators should forward a copy of this form to the district
Superintendent's office.*

2.12 **SAMPLE BALLOT**
Community School Committee (CSC)

BALLOT

TWIN HILLS COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMITTEE
TWIN HILLS, ALASKA
APRIL 3, 2003

THE FOLLOWING SEATS ARE OPEN ON THE TWIN HILLS COMMUNITY SCHOOL COMMITTEE. IF YOU WISH TO VOTE FOR ANY PERSON, VOTE BY PLACING AN `X' ON THE LINE TO THE LEFT OF THE PERSON'S NAME. WRITE-IN CANDIDATES ARE ALLOWED.

SEAT A, THREE-YEAR TERM, EXPIRES APRIL 2006

(VOTE FOR ONE)

_____ Bill Whaler

_____ Mary Fox

SEAT C, A THREE-YEAR TERM, EXPIRES APRIL 2005

(VOTE FOR ONE)

_____ Sue Trapper

_____ John Eagle

3.0 VACANCIES

A vacancy on the Community School Committee may occur for any of the following reasons:

1. If a CSC member submits a written resignation to the CSC President or Site Administrator;
2. If a CSC member moves out of the attendance area he/she represents;
3. If a CSC member is removed from office by action of the Community School Committee or the School Board.

Should a Community School Committee member be absent from three consecutive regular meetings without being excused by a majority of the Community School Committee, the member will be removed from office and his/her position declared vacant. If a member misses two consecutive regular meetings, the Community School Committee President will notify the member by certified return receipt mail of the member's absences and shall enclose a copy of this policy. Further, if a member misses 4 regular meetings during a school year, the member shall be removed from office. The member shall be notified by certified mail of this policy after the third absence of the school year.

The Community School Committee may by resolution recommend that the School Board remove a member from office because of misconduct or failure to follow Board Policy. The School Board shall consider the resolution at the next regularly scheduled board meeting, provided there is adequate time for the parties to prepare. The affected CSC member may speak on his or her own behalf, and the majority of the CSC may designate a representative to speak in favor of the resolution.

If a vacancy occurs on the Community School Committee, the remaining members will, within thirty (30) days of the vacancy, appoint a successor to serve until the next regular election. If unable to agree on a successor, the members of the Community School Committee shall submit recommendations to the School Board for appointment.

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES

14.12.035 Advisory school boards in borough school districts

4.0 OFFICERS

Each Community School Committee shall annually elect a President, Vice-President and Secretary. Election of officers shall be placed on the agenda of the first meeting following certification of election results by the School Board. Should a vacancy occur in an officer position, the CSC will hold a new election to fill the vacancy. Members may serve consecutive terms as a Council officer.

The duties of the President are to preside at Community School Committee meetings, appoint all committees of the Community School Committee, and represent the Community School Committee at public meetings, special meetings, and other occasions as directed by the School Board or designate another CSC member to appear on his or her behalf. The President will also see that all information from the School Board is distributed to other Community School Committee members. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all Community School Committee committees.

The duties of Vice-President are to preside at Community School Committee meetings in the absence of the president and to perform all other duties as shall be assigned by the Community School Committee.

The duties of the Secretary are to ensure that an accurate record of the proceedings of the Community School Committee is kept and that a copy of this record is presented to each Community School Committee member, the site administrator or designee, and the Superintendent who will make these records available to the School Board.

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES

14.12.035 Advisory school boards in borough school districts

5.0 POWERS AND DUTIES

The powers and duties of the Community School Committee are delegated by the School Board and may be discharged only at a legal meeting conducted according to Board policy and administrative regulations.

The Community School Committee shall advise the School Board and the administration on all matters concerning the schools and shall perform other duties as prescribed by the School Board.

The Community School Committee shall seek to represent the interests of the community and communicate those interests to the School Board and administration.

Within the guidelines established by the School Board, the Community School Committee members shall:

1. Attend meetings on a regular basis, arrive at meetings on time, and work cooperatively with other CSC members;
2. Serve in an advisory capacity to the site administrator and to the Board;
3. Assist the site administrator in the revision of the school goals, philosophy, rules and regulations, and educational programs;
4. Assess the community's educational needs and advise the site administrator and the Board on appropriate direction;
5. Assist the site administrator to prepare a school calendar for the following school year for Board approval;
6. Prepare recommendations for the planning and budgeting of the site programs;
7. Provide recommendations to the Board related to the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse not less than once every three years, during the review period for the district's discipline and safety program;
8. Serve as liaison between the school and community;
9. Deal with local problems or public complaints by following school policy and keeping in mind the appropriate channel of communication, using the following procedures:
 - a. first, be a good listener without taking sides;
 - b. second, refer the individual to the site administrator;

5.0 Powers and Duties, continued:

- c. third, if the site administrator needs the assistance of the CSC to resolve the problem or complaint, the matter shall be placed on the agenda in the proper manner and discussed at an upcoming meeting;
 - d. fourth, if the site administrator is unable to bring a satisfactory solution, the matter shall be referred to the Superintendent;
 - e. fifth, unresolved problems will be referred to the Board by the Superintendent;
 - f. provided, however, that the CSC has no authority to participate in employment-related disputes between the site administrator and site personnel.
11. Confer with the site administrator as requested on existing classified positions and recommendations on selection for hire, although the site administrator shall make the final recommendation to the Superintendent;
 12. Keep confidential those matters, in accordance with state law, dealing with district personnel and finances;
 13. Assume other school-related duties and responsibilities as called upon by the site administrator, Board and district.
 14. Provide reports to the Board concerning matters discussed at each CSC meeting.
 15. Attend such CSC training as made available by the Board.
 16. Report to the Superintendent yearly concerning the site administrator pursuant to the procedure set forth in Board Policy.
 17. Stay informed about the actions taken by the Board.

The CSC members shall receive no financial compensation for their services.

Site Administrator Evaluations

Each February the CSC shall meet with the Site Administrator to discuss the Site Administrator's performance. The meeting may occur in public or executive session at the Administrator's request. The CSC President shall prepare a letter of evaluation which shall be presented to the Superintendent. Any member of the CSC which does not agree with the evaluation also may submit a letter. These letters shall be reviewed by the Superintendent and the contents reported to the Board, and shall be among the factors considered in determining whether to renew the Site Administrator's contract. This is the preferred method for CSC's to communicate to the Board concerning their site administrators.

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES

14.12.035 Advisory school boards in borough school districts

6.0 MEETINGS

All meetings of the Community School Committee shall comply with the open meeting laws. The Community School Committee shall provide public notice of its meetings and allow for public participation at its meetings.

The CSC shall comply with the requirements of Board Policy 1400.

6.1 Regular Meetings

Regular meetings will be held once every month, September through May, at a regular date, time and place to be determined by the Community School Committee. Meetings shall be scheduled so as to allow the site administrator and personnel to attend without disruption to school business or where possible, personal schedules. Meetings should not ordinarily be scheduled during weekends or school vacations.

1. The Community School Committee shall make the time and place of regular meeting a matter of public information and post a public notice, to include an agenda, at least five (5) days in advance. The agenda shall be prepared by the Site Administrator after consultation with the President.
2. The Community School Committee meetings shall normally be held in the school. No meetings shall be held in private homes.
3. School staff are encouraged to attend CSC meetings.

6.2 Special Meetings

1. When necessary due to exigent circumstances, a special meeting may be called to consider matters which must be addressed prior to the next regular meeting. All meetings called for a special purpose shall be considered as special meetings and are open to the public. Public notice shall be given as soon as reasonably possible and in no instance less than 24 hours in advance.
2. Notice of a special meeting shall include a statement of the purpose of the meeting.
3. No business may be transacted other than that stated in the notice of the meeting.
4. All Community School Committee members must be contacted in person as soon as reasonably possible and in no event less than 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
5. Special meetings may be called by the site administrator or superintendent upon the request of the President or any two other Community School Committee members.

6.3 Agendas

1. Agendas will be prepared by the Site Administrator, after consultation with the Community School Committee President. An agenda shall be made available to each Community School Committee member prior to each meeting.
2. Anyone wishing to address the Community School Committee may request placement of an item on the agenda by contacting the Site Administrator or President five (5) school days in advance.
3. The president shall give ample notice to a person who wishes to address the Community School Committee of the time and place of the meeting.

6.4 Communications

1. All written communication addressed to the Community School Committee whether directed to a member or to the Site Administrator shall be brought to the Community School Committee's attention.
2. Lengthy documents, correspondence of a repetitive nature and reports may be summarized by the secretary.
3. Oral communications, whether a new subject, a report, or in support of a written communication or agenda item shall be limited usually to five (5) minutes, unless the time is extended by the CSC.
4. The president shall have the power to maintain order at all meetings of the Community School Committee or hearings held before it. Persons who behave in a rude, insolent, or contemptuous manner during any meeting of the Community School Committee may be ordered to leave.
5. Following consideration of oral and written communication, the Community School Committee shall direct the site administrator or designee as to whether or not the subject shall be replied to, acted upon at that time, or scheduled for a future agenda.
6. As far as practical, the site administrator or designee shall provide logistical and clerical support to the Community School Committee.
7. Concerns that are not resolved through communication with the site administrator may be referred to the Superintendent in the form of a letter from the CSC president.

6.5 Suggested Agenda Order

1. Call to order;
2. Roll call;
3. Approval of previous minutes;
4. Public comment;
5. Correspondence;
6. Administrative reports;
7. Items for Community School Committee consideration:
 - a. Old business;
 - b. New business;
8. CSC member comments;
9. Items for next meeting's agenda;
10. Adjournment - time and place of next meeting.

6.6 Minutes

1. A record of Community School Committee discussions is to be made in writing in sufficient detail to provide accurate information for later reference.
2. The official minutes shall be primarily concerned with definite recommendations of the CSC. Public comments may be summarized.
3. Minutes shall indicate speaker, organization and topic. Reactions from Community School Committee members, staff or public will not be reported except as they indicate solutions to problems addressed.
4. Copies will be made available by request in the site administrator or designee's office.
5. Copies shall be sent to the Superintendent who will present them to the School Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

6.7 Quorum

A majority of the number of filled positions on the CSC constitutes a quorum. Affirmative votes by a majority of the CSC membership are required to approve any action under consideration, regardless of the number of members present.

6.8 Motions

1. The vote on all recommendations shall be by voice.
2. When the number of ayes and nays is not clear, a member or the president may call for a roll call vote in order to determine the prevailing side.

6.8 Motions, continued:

3. In a roll call vote the name of president shall be called last.
4. No member shall be entitled to participate in discussion or to vote on any matter in which he or she has any direct or indirect financial interest.

6.9 Executive Sessions

The CSC may occasionally find it necessary to hold a portion of their meeting in executive session. An executive session is a session held in which the public is not allowed to attend. The only subjects that may be discussed in an executive session are:

- Matters, the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the school district;
- Subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person must receive notice that he/she will be discussed, and may request a public discussion;
- Matters which by law, municipal charter, or ordinance are required to be confidential;
or
- Matters involving consideration of government records that by law are not subject to public disclosure.

Prior to entering executive session, the CSC first shall meet in open session. The CSC may enter executive session only after a majority of the CSC members vote to accept a motion to enter the executive session. The motion shall clearly and with specificity describe the subject of the proposed executive session without defeating the purpose of addressing the subject in private. Unless stated in the motion for executive session, or auxiliary to the main question, no other subject may be discussed in that executive session.

The site administrator shall be entitled to be present in all CSC executive sessions. The CSC may invite other persons into an executive session as it deems necessary. Matters discussed in executive session are confidential and should not be discussed by any member outside of the executive session.

The CSC may not take any action or vote in an executive session. All actions of the CSC must occur in an open meeting.

7.0 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The School Board encourages Community School Committee members to participate in inservice training as made available by the District. In addition, Community School Committee members must become familiar with state laws and regulations related to schools and district policies and regulations. The Superintendent or designee shall assist members to understand their responsibilities within the framework of the laws, Board policies and regulations. Members of Community School Committee have no authority within the school system to manage or control students or staff, except as may be specifically authorized by the School Board or administration.

The Community School Committee may recommend to the Superintendent or designee that its members represent the District at community or school functions or at activities associated with school business.

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES

14.12. 035 Advisory school boards in borough school districts

8.o CODE OF ETHICS

The School Board expects all members of Community School Committee to maintain the highest ethical standards, which includes complying with state and federal laws and the Board policies and administrative regulations of the district, including the following Code of Ethics.

CSC CODE OF ETHICS

As a member of my local Community School Committee, representing all the citizens of my village, I recognize:

1. That my fellow citizens have entrusted me with consideration of important matters of school policy;
2. That the public expects my first and greatest concern to be in the best interest of each and every one of these young people, without distinction as to who they are or what their background may be;
3. That the future welfare of the community, of this state, and of the nation depends in the largest measure upon the quality of education we provide in the public schools to fit the needs of every learner;
4. That my fellow Community School Committee members and I must take the initiative in helping all the people in this community to have all the facts, all the time, about their schools;
5. That I must never neglect my personal obligation to the community and my obligation to the state, nor surrender these responsibilities to any other person, group, or organization.

In view of the foregoing consideration, it shall be my constant endeavor:

1. To devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of a Community School Committee member, so that I may render effective service;
2. To work with my fellow Community School Committee members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise;
3. To base my personal decision upon all available facts in each situation; to vote my honest conviction in every case, unswayed by partisan bias of any kind; thereafter, to abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Community School Committee and the School Board;

8.0 Code of Ethics, continued:

4. To remember at all times that as an individual I have no authority outside the meeting of the Community School Committee, and to conduct my relationships with the school staff, local citizenry, media representatives and all other agencies or individuals on the basis of this fact;
5. To resist every temptation and outside pressure to use my position as an Community School Committee member to benefit either myself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the school;
6. To recognize that it is as important for the Community School Committee to understand and evaluate the educational program of the schools as it is to plan for the business of school operation;
7. To bear in mind under all circumstances that the primary function of the Community School Committee is to recommend procedures by which the school is to be administered, but that the administration of the educational program and the conduct of school business shall be left to the employed site administrator or designee of the school and staff. The local site administrator or designee and his/her staff function under the direction of the Superintendent or designee as he/she implements the policies established by the School Board;
7. To bear in mind that disputes concerning school staff are to be addressed and resolved by the Site Administrator, Superintendent, and Board;
9. To welcome and encourage active cooperation by citizens, organizations and the media in the district with respect to making recommendations on current school operations and proposed future developments;
10. Finally, to strive step-by-step toward ideal conditions for the most effective Community School Committee service to my community, in a spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and perpetuation of our representative democracy.

9.0 OATH OF OFFICE

Newly elected CSC members shall read aloud and sign an oath of office at the first meeting following certification of election results by the School Board. The oath shall be administered by a person mutually agreed upon by the site administrator and the CSC president.

I, _____, do solemnly swear that I will honestly, faithfully, and impartially perform my duties and responsibilities as a member of the Community School Committee to the best of my ability; and that I will always keep in mind that the primary purpose for the office I hold is to help provide the best possible education for the children of my community.

Signature Date

Witness Date