



School Governance

City Schools of Decatur (“CSD”) is a public school system, created by the General Assembly through the Charter for the City of Decatur, Georgia. The five-member elected Local School Board (“Board”) is a body corporate and politic that is empowered to engage in legal process and to enact such policies, bylaws, rules, and regulations, not inconsistent with the laws of the State of Georgia or the United States, for the governance of the Board, the Superintendent, staff, and students of the school system, as the Board may deem proper. Because the Board is the legally created body corporate and politic and is vested with the power and authority to bind and contract for the school system, it will retain its rights and responsibilities under the system charter and neither individual system charter schools, nor their School Leadership Teams (“SLTs”) or Principals, will have authority to bind the system or to contract or assume debts or obligations on behalf of the individual schools or the system.

The Board has hired a professional educator as the system CEO, the Superintendent of Schools (“Superintendent”), who also serves as the Secretary for the Board. The Board has delegated the creation of regulations regarding school governance to the Superintendent, with instructions to clarify and interpret the language of the charter as it relates to school governance.

The Board and/or Superintendent maintain all authority vested in those roles other than those explicitly delegated to other governing bodies as detailed later in this regulation.

Each system charter school (which does not include the Early Childhood Learning Center) shall utilize a Governing Council as its governing body, which shall be responsible for complying with and carrying out the provisions of the charter, including compliance with all applicable law.

Each school will have a governing council called the School Leadership Team (SLT):

Parent members of the SLT will be elected by a majority of votes of parents of students that will be enrolled in the school at the onset of the member’s term. Candidates for parent seats must have a child who will be enrolled at the school during the term for which the member will serve on the team. (Throughout this regulation, the term “parent” will be used to reference “parent or legal guardian.”)

Certified staff who are members of the SLT will be elected by a majority vote of certified staff who work at the school at the time of the election.

Each SLT will develop bylaws, as described later in this regulation. SLTs will not incorporate or form any other business entity.



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Members of the SLTs:

SLTs will generally have five (5) voting members. One member must be the Principal, two others must be certified staff, and two others must be parents. A member of central office staff, assigned by the Superintendent, who serves as a non-voting member, will be a liaison between the school and the system.

In addition, an SLT may choose to appoint up to two (2) additional members of the SLT. These members, as specified in the SLT's bylaws, may include, but are not limited to, students, staff, community members, or representatives of school-related organizations. Such members shall be appointed by the voting members of the SLT. Selection procedures for these members shall be specified in the team's bylaws, including whether the appointee will be a voting or non-voting member. Additional members shall not allow the size of the SLT to exceed seven voting members.

Employees of the school system may only serve in the capacities of Principal, elected certified staff representative, or central office representative. Employees may NOT serve as a parent representative on any SLT, nor may they serve as an appointed member of any SLT. Students may NOT serve as voting members of an SLT.

CSD is committed to providing meaningful opportunities to promote parental and community engagement. It is the desire of the school system that the composition of the SLTs be inclusive and diverse. SLTs shall take all reasonable means to engage parents and community members so that a culturally-sensitive, representative SLT exists in every school. In the unlikely event that an SLT is not able to achieve this school system desire, the Board and/or Superintendent may appointment up to two (2) additional voting SLT members as they see fit and as allowed by law. The total number of voting members on an SLT will thus be no less than five (5) and no greater than nine (9) members.

The officers of the SLT shall be a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. Officers of the SLT shall be elected by the process set forth in the team's bylaws at the first meeting of the team following the election of SLT members. The officers of the SLT shall hold office for the term specified in the SLT's bylaws. Any member of the SLT, unless otherwise prohibited by its bylaws, may be selected to fill the position of chairperson, vice-chairperson, or secretary. The vice-chairperson shall, in the absence or disability of the chairperson, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as shall be required by the team. The secretary shall attend all meetings, act as clerk of the SLT, and be responsible for recording all votes and minutes of all proceedings, and maintaining such records. The secretary shall give or cause to be given notice of all meetings of the SLT and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the team. In the absence of the secretary of the SLT, the chair or acting-chair of the team shall appoint another member of the team to be the acting-secretary for purposes of that meeting.



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Budget:

Annually, each school will receive its operational budget based on system-established criteria such as enrollment. During the budget construction process, the Principals, with the assistance of their SLTs, will determine staff requests/allocation decisions, professional learning activities, building repair issues, and instructional technology and material requests.

Accountability:

The members of the SLT are accountable to the constituents they serve and shall:

- Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues,
- Regularly participate in SLT meetings,
- Participate in information and training programs,
- Act as a link between the SLT and the community,
- Encourage the participation of parents and others within the school community,
- Sign a document indicating any conflicts of interest in serving on the SLT,
- Sign a confidentiality agreement, and,
- Work to improve student achievement and performance as outlined in the charter, school improvement plan, strategic plan, and Board Ends policies.

System Charter Leadership Team:

The goals of the System Charter Leadership Team (“SCLT”) are to provide feedback, continuity, and communication between and across SLTs; provide community involvement in system charter oversight at the system level; and review and recommend changes to the system charter to the Superintendent when the charter is being re-negotiated with the State.

The roles and duties of the SCLT are detailed later in this regulation.

Each SLT selects one of their members (among both voting and non-voting members) to serve along with the Principal on the SCLT. Meetings of the SCLT will be initiated and organized by central office staff at the direction of the Superintendent. The SCLT will meet two to four times each year.

While not an SLT, the ECLC Advisory Council is invited and encouraged to send a representative along with the Early Childhood Director to all SCLT meetings.



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Roles and Duties of the Governing Bodies:

Board/Superintendent	SCLT	SLT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall fiscal management (including but not limited to purchasing and contracting), ● Final development and approval of the annual system budget, ● Fiscal expenditures beyond the school's allocations, ● Legal oversight, ● Fair and non-discriminatory personnel practices, ● System strategic plan, including overall goals and objectives of the charter system, ● Final approval regarding School Improvement Plans, ● Calendars, ● Curriculum, assessment, and testing, ● Overall safety and maintenance of buildings, ● School nutrition, ● Transportation, ● Decisions related to one school that will impact another school, ● Existing and future Board policy and administrative regulations, ● Final approval regarding personnel, including hiring and termination, ● Attendance zones, ● Appeals, ● Facilities, ● Hiring and evaluation of the Superintendent, and, ● Other areas as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share information and innovations from each school, ● Focus on system goals and outcomes, ● Provide oversight for the systemic nature of the SLTs, ● Mediate between SLTs and other entities, ● Review and recommend changes to the system charter to the Superintendent when the charter is being re-negotiated with the State, ● Assist with system accreditation and improvement reviews and assessments, such as the AdvancED accreditation process, and, ● Provide oversight and recommendations to the Superintendent on issues submitted by one or more SLTs with a scope and impact beyond a local school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide input to the Superintendent regarding the performance of the Principal, ● Provide input to the Principal and/or Superintendent on personnel decisions through participation of an SLT member in the personnel selection process, ● Determine budget for school-allocated funding (as per formula based on system-established criteria such as enrollment), ● Review, recommend improvements, approve, and monitor the School Improvement Plan, ● Review assessment data and use it for decision-making purposes, ● Assist with school accreditation and improvement reviews and assessments, such as the AdvancED accreditation process, ● Review and approve the implementation of any state waiver based on the impact principle and within the purview of the SLT, ● Review and approve changes to its bylaws, and, ● Recommend school needs to the Principal during the annual budgeting process.



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SLT Bylaws:

Each SLT shall develop and maintain bylaws. Such bylaws shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Process for determining the annual school budget,
- Process for making decisions (i.e., voting, quorums, consensus, etc.),
- Process for annual elections, including:
 - Provision for public notice of election at least two weeks prior, and no more than four weeks prior, to election.
 - Eligible voters for each role (i.e., parent/guardian of student, certified staff member, etc.),
- Staggered term lengths of between one and three years, running October through September,
- Process for replacing a seat vacated mid-term,
- Process for removing a member (due to lack of participation, due to unethical or inappropriate behaviors, due to conflicts of interest, due to their child leaving the school, etc.),
- Process for selection of SCLT representatives,
- Process for selection of officers at the first meeting following elections,
- Adherence to open and public meetings act and inspection of public records requirements, including:
 - Publication of meeting dates and times,
 - Publication of meeting agendas and minutes,
 - Process for calling special meetings,
 - Definition of a meeting and a quorum,
 - Minutes, including members present, description of motions, record of votes, etc.,
- Governance model (such as Robert's Rules of Order),
- Process for evaluating and acting upon conflicts of interest and breaches of confidentiality,
- Process for appointing voting and non-voting members to the SLT (such as students),
- Process for adding, removing, and updating the meeting agenda.

SLT Best Practices:

The following are some recommended best practices for SLTs to consider:

- Assign times to each agenda item in advance to keep the meeting focused and on track.
- Identify the purpose of a given discussion (i.e., to gather information, to discuss ideas, to solve problems, etc.).
- Maintain separation between discussion regarding the development of ideas and those regarding the evaluation of ideas. Consider developing ideas first, with no feedback on the relative merit of any given idea, prior to discussing the merits of all ideas developed.
- Be prepared to handle difficult conversations.



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- Beware of the orator: this individual likes to practice his/her speaking skills and may tend to talk for a long time. Get him/her back on track by saying something like, “Excuse me, Jack, but we’re running short on time and several members have some points they would like to make. We’d all appreciate it if you could wind up your comments in the next minute or two. Thank you very much.”
- A wanderer tends to bring up an entirely unrelated topic: the chair can keep this person focused by saying something like, “Linda, I’m sorry to break in like this, but I think that you’re getting away from the subject. Remember we’d like to settle the issue of _____ and we would appreciate it if you could confine your remarks to that subject. Thanks.”
- A repeater: this person talks numerous times on the same subject while other members having had a chance to talk. Get him/her back on track with something like, “Dave, before we hear from you again I would like to know how Debbie and Rick feel about this subject. Thank you.”
- An interrupter: as the name suggests, this person interrupts others as they are speaking. An interrupter may need to be interrupted by saying, “Before you say anything more, Jason, please wait until Shirley has finished and you then will have an opportunity to make your point. Thank you.”
- Remember that effective communication is a management function, involves two-way communication, relies on research and data, and builds relationships and trust with stakeholders.
- Ensure that feedback is provided regularly, through active participation and constructive criticism.
- Make your time count by starting and ending on time, staying focused on the business listed in the agenda, encouraging prompt and focused participation, controlling interruptions and digressions, using Robert’s Rules of Order or another parliamentary procedure, closing the meeting positively, and making sure members leave feeling their time was valued and well spent.
- Regularly review the basics of teamwork:
 - Roles are clearly defined and adhered to
 - Principal and SLT view themselves as a team
 - Principal and SLT understand the bylaws
 - There is regular, effective, two-way communication between the Principal and SLT members
 - There is clear consensus on how SLT meeting agendas are developed
 - Decisions are based on a clearly understood and agreed upon method, such as consensus

Fiduciary Duty:

SLT members share the duties of care, loyalty, and obedience:



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- Duty of Care - duty of care means that an SLT member must exercise reasonable care when making a decision as a steward of the charter system.
- Duty of Loyalty - duty of loyalty means an SLT member will put the good of the system and school first and avoid engaging in transactions with the school from which the member will benefit.
- Duty of Obedience - duty of obedience means that SLT members are not permitted to act in a way that is inconsistent with the system or school's mission.

Conflicts of Interest:

The charter requires SLT members to avoid conflicts of interest. It is essential that SLT members be independent and impartial, that SLT decisions be made in the proper channels of governance structure, that the SLT membership not be used for private gain, and that there be public confidence in the integrity of the SLT. Conflicts of interest relate broadly to ethical behavior, not just financial conflicts of interest. In accordance with the charter, SLT members must disclose conflicts of interest. If a conflict of interest arises at any time during service on the SLT, the SLT member shall disclose the conflict in writing to the chair of the SLT. The following questions shall be asked of each member each year, with any answers of “yes” requiring further explanation.

- Did or will you sell any supplies, materials, equipment, or other property to the City Schools of Decatur?
- Do or will you have any contractual agreements with the City Schools of Decatur?
- Do you currently serve as a member of the Board of Education for any Georgia public school district?
- Do you currently serve as an elected public official?
- Do you have a managerial, fiduciary, ownership interest, or advisory role with a company or organization that has a contract or is seeking a contract with the City Schools of Decatur?
- Are you, your spouse, or anyone you live with an employee of the City Schools of Decatur?
- To the best of your knowledge, are there situations not described in the above questions that may give rise to a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest between you and the City Schools of Decatur, or which would make it difficult for you to discharge your duties or exercise judgment independently on behalf of the school at which you serve on the SLT?

Upon receipt of any affirmative responses to the above questions, the SLT chair shall implement the procedures described in the SLT’s bylaws regarding handling of conflicts of interest.

Confidentiality:



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Confidentiality is essential to an SLT's function as a governing body. As such, each SLT member must complete a confidentiality agreement including the language below.

I, _____, understand that in my capacity as a School Leadership Team (SLT) member at _____ School in the City Schools of Decatur, I may have access to confidential and/or private records of students, faculty and staff, and/or pertaining to the operations of the City Schools of Decatur. I understand that under federal law, state law, and City Schools of Decatur policy, confidential records, including, but not limited to, student records and personal health information, are protected from disclosure to third parties (i.e., anyone) except in very narrow circumstances and that confidential records must not be disclosed.

I agree to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of all such records during and after my service on the SLT. I shall not directly or indirectly communicate to any person other than authorized City Schools of Decatur staff, any information concerning such records. I understand that any such disclosure may be grounds for removal from the SLT.

Upon presentation of evidence of a breach of confidentiality, the SLT chair shall implement the procedures described in the SLT's bylaws regarding such a breach.

Acceptable Use Policy and Records Retention:

To support SLTs' and the SCLT's work, the Information Services department provisions an email account and collaboration tools to all SLT members. Online SLT business must be conducted via CSD-provisioned resources, and not through a member's personal or work (non-CSD) email account. By logging into the CSD-provisioned collaboration tools, SLT members agree to abide by CSD's Acceptable Use Policy for digital resources ([Board policy IFBGE](#)).

SLT and SCLT business are subject to the Georgia Open Records Act ([§ 50-18-70](#)).

Questions about this regulation should be directed to the Superintendent.