Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education

Organization and Operation Guidelines, Constitution and By-Laws

(*Revised 10/2025*)

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Governor's Advisory Council for Alternative Education is to advise, assist and consult the Governor, Commissioner of Education, General Assembly and the State Board of Education in matters related to alternative education in Tennessee Schools. The Advisory Council is charged to do the following under *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404*:

1. Consider any issue, problem or matter related to alternative education.
2. Study proposed plans for alternative education curriculum to determine effectiveness and if such curriculum should be adopted state- wide.
3. Consider and recommend rules of governance for alternative schools.
4. Upon request, submit annual report to the Governor, both education committees of the General Assembly, the Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of Education on the status of alternative education.
5. Study issues relating to pilot alternative school programs including recommending policies, curriculum and evaluation proceedings.

II. AUTHORIZATION

The Advisory Council for Alternative Education is authorized under section *49-6-3404* of the Tennessee Code Annotated.

III. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Advisory Council is outlined under *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3404*. Appointments are made by the Governor for a term of three years, except during the initial appointments. The council is composed of a maximum of ten members which include:

1. Parents of children attending an alternative school or who have attended.
2. Teachers and principals serving in an alternative school.
3. Members of local boards of education.

4. At least one community representative.
5. At least one representative from an educator's association concerned with alternative education.

In the event of a lapse between the expiration of old appointments and the appointment of new board members and/or the reinstatement of old board members, existing appointees may retain their position until new appointments have been made by the Governor.

IV. ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

The officers of the Advisory Council will include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and an appointed Executive Secretary. Elections of officers will be held during the first meeting of each year.[1] This meeting should be held no later than October. All offices will be held for (1) year, excluding the appointed Executive Secretary. The Vice-Chairperson will always assume the role of the Chairperson at the first meeting of each new year.[2] The two remaining offices will be filled by a simple majority vote.[3] The Executive Secretary shall be appointed by the Commissioner of Education who may also appoint other individuals from the Department of Education to help assist the council as necessary.

V. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

The Chairperson of the Advisory Council will preside at all business sessions of the council. Other duties will include keeping the appointees informed of council activities, working with the Executive Secretary to create an agenda, coordinating tasks and reports and representing the council in various venues related to the essential functions of the council.

The Vice-Chairperson will preside at any meeting in which the Chairperson is not present. The officer is expected to work closely with the Chairperson in the performance of other duties as outlined above.

The Secretary will be responsible for approving all minutes before they are sent out to board members for review. The Secretary will also write a brief synopsis of the meeting that will accompany the Executive Secretary's minutes. In the absence of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, the Secretary may preside over the business meeting.

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[1] Based on an academic school year, not a traditional calendar year

[2] Therefore, when a member casts a vote for that year's Vice-Chairperson, a member is also casting a vote for next year's Chairperson. This entails a (2) year commitment on the part of the person assuming this post.

[3] A voting requirement of more than 50% of all ballots cast.

The Executive Secretary will help the Chairperson in organizing council activities, creating an agenda and coordinating tasks and reports for the council. Furthermore, the Executive Secretary will act as a liaison for the Commissioner of Education who will then report to the Governor, General Assembly and State Board of Education. The Executive Secretary will record the minutes of all business sessions of the Advisory Council. These minutes will be delivered to each member no later than two weeks following a business session. This may be done via regular United States mail or email. Minutes will also be presented in emailcopy form to each member at the next business session for approval. All council members must approve the minutes before they are entered into record. The Executive Secretary will also be responsible for drafting the annual report to the General Assembly.

VI. MEETINGS AND QUORUM

The Advisory Council will meet quarterly. All meeting dates will be set at the first meeting of each school year. The meeting place will be decided by the Chairperson and Executive Secretary and must be approved by the Department of Education. The State Department will assume responsibility for providing adequate facilities and arrangements for each meeting.

A Quorum of (6) members will be necessary in order to conduct business of the council. Members may choose to participate virtually if necessary and will be counted in the quorum.

VII. PUBLIC NOTICE

All meetings of the Advisory Council are open to the public. Anyone who wishes to observe proceedings is welcome. Notice will be served to the general public via the Department of Education's website. The Executive Secretary will work with the Department's (PIO) Public Information Officer to insure adequate notice. Notice will be given at minimum two weeks before the business meeting.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

If a member of the general public wishes to make a statement before the council, he or she must send a written or email request to the Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary will then place the individual on the agenda. Notice must be made to the Executive Secretary one week before any business meeting. No one will be allowed to speak that has not followed this protocol. All statements will be limited to (10) minutes. A (2/3) majority of members present will be necessary to take action on any statement or report made to the council. No more than (4) statements from the public will be heard at each council meeting. Requests to provide statements will be

approved on a first-come first-served basis.

Members of the general public may at any time provide written statements or recommendations to the council. These will be distributed at every council meeting. The person submitting the document will be responsible for providing enough copies for all council members. Action on all written statements will not occur until the business meeting after the initial document was distributed. All documents must be delivered to the Executive Secretary one week before the meeting. The Executive Secretary will ensure that information that identifies a student is not distributed without permission from the parent. However, parental consent will be implied if a parent identifies his or her own child in a written statement.

The council may also request parents, students, practitioners or other appropriate individuals to provide testimony. In this event, the Executive Secretary will be responsible for scheduling those presentations at the next business meeting.

IX. MINUTES, REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Governor's Advisory Council on Alternative Education shall submit recommendations and reports to the Governor, Commissioner of Education, General Assembly and the State Board of Education in matters related to alternative education in Tennessee schools. All final reports and recommendations must be approved prior to their delivery to the Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner or designee shall distribute all documents to the General Assembly, Governor and State Board of Education. A (2/3) majority of members present is necessary to approve all official documents including: minutes, final reports and recommendations.

X. TIE VOTE

In the event that the council votes and there is an even (50/50) split where a simple majority is necessary, the Executive Secretary shall cast the deciding vote.

XI. CHANGES TO THIS DOCUMENT

Changes in the Organization and Operation Guidelines, Constitution and By-Laws may be changed only by a (2/3) vote of the Advisory Council members present.

XII. COMPENSATION AND TRAVEL

All members of the council serve without compensation. Travel expenses will be paid in accordance with the comprehensive travel regulations as promulgated by the Department of Finance and Administration as approved by the Attorney General.

XIII. Oath of Office and Conflict of Interest

All members will abide by the original oath of office in which the member pledged to "support the Constitution of the State of Tennessee and the Constitution of the United States." Furthermore, each council member pledges to bring any conflict of interest to the direct and immediate attention of the Advisory Council.