

SCHOOL BOARD LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

I. Purpose

This policy establishes a process for monitoring, influencing, and responding to local, state, and federal legislative proposals that affect Washington County Public Schools (WCPS).

II. Background

The Board of Education must operate within the bounds of state and federal laws affecting public education. It is, therefore, important for state and federal legislators to understand how new legislative proposals would affect our local schools. Frequent and timely communication will ensure that state and federal lawmakers understand and consider the perspective of WCPS when developing public education policy.

The Maryland Association of Boards of Education, the National School Boards Association, and other concerned groups develop legislative programs designed to influence state and local law. While these legislative programs are designed to advocate for public education, their goals may not always align with those of WCPS in the legislative process.

During legislative sessions, bills are introduced, changed, amended, and withdrawn quickly. Many bills affecting education are introduced each year. It is not possible for the full Board of Education to meet and react to each proposal that takes place during a session. Therefore, in order to provide timely responses to legislative proposals, a rapid local response process is required.

III. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Legislative Core Values: The guiding principles adopted by the Board of Education that serve to inform the school community of the Board's fundamental beliefs and its legislative plan of action to advance the education of students and to improve the public school system.
- B. Legislative Representative: An individual, or entity, who may or may not be a member of the Board of Education or WCPS employee, approved by the Board to act as its representative on state and federal legislative matters and advise the Board on pending legislative action.

IV. Policy Statement/Procedures

- A. The Board of Education will meet annually prior to the start of the Maryland General Assembly session to discuss its legislative program. During the annual discussion the Board will:
 - 1. Establish legislative core values to serve as a guide for evaluating proposed legislation,
 - 2. Establish priorities for state and federal legislation,
 - 3. Establish a Legislative Response Team (LRT), and
 - 4. Designate an individual - who may or may not be a member of the Board of Education - to serve as its Legislative Representative.

- B. The LRT will be comprised of the Board of Education President, at least one other Board member, the Superintendent, **and** the Chief Legal Counsel **or their designee**. ~~and the designated Legislative Representative~~. In no case will more than three Board members be appointed to the LRT.
- C. **The Board of Education may, at its discretion, include the designated Legislative Representative on the LRT.**
- D. The Board of Education will approve the legislative core values, legislative priorities, and the Board members appointed to the LRT during a regular Business Meeting before the start of the Maryland General Assembly Regular Session.
- E. The Board of Education will communicate to elected county, state, and federal officials its legislative core values and legislative priorities.
- F. The Legislative Representative will monitor proposed legislation and notify the LRT of any bill that might have an impact on local education, the Board of Education's legislative core values, or the Board's legislative priorities.
- G. Based on the Board of Education's legislative core values and legislative priorities, the LRT will take positions on proposed legislation on behalf of the Board and communicate those positions to lawmakers. Communication can take whatever form or forms the members of the LRT deem to be most effective.
- H. At each Business Meeting **during the legislative session**, the LRT will provide a report to the Board of Education that details any positions taken on any legislative proposal.

Policy adopted: July 15, 2014. **Revised:**
Board of Education of Washington County