

Sec. 6-29. Loss of Local School Council Eligibility Due to Ethics Violations.

For purposes of this Rule, references to Local School Council (“LSC”) shall mean an elected Local School Council or an appointed Local School Council or Board of Governors except when otherwise noted herein.

A. Challenges to Local School Council Members’ Eligibility Based on Ethical Violations

1. Any person may challenge a Local School Council member’s eligibility to serve based on ethical violations. Filing a false Statement or failure to comply with the Board’s Code of Ethics Policy may be grounds for disqualification from serving on any Local School Council for the remainder of the concerned member’s term(s) of office. Challenges shall be in writing and shall include:

- a. the name, address, and phone number of the person filing the challenge;
- b. a statement of the facts upon which the challenge is based and any evidence which supports the challenger’s position.

2. In cases where an allegation of an ethical violation under this Board Rule is made by another LSC member or an employee of the Board, the identity of the LSC member or Board employee may not be disclosed during an investigation of the allegation without his or her written consent. 105 ILCS 5/34-2.4(c) (“Whistle Blower Protection”).

3. In addition, the Board, its agents and employees, may act upon: (i) anonymous information regarding council members’ ethical violations; or (ii) personal knowledge or other information of ethical violations by council members obtained by Board agents or employees. A Board employee or agent with information of an ethical violation by an LSC member may initiate an investigation by submitting a written request for investigation to the Law Department.

4. Filing of Challenges – Challenges, requests for investigation and reports of LSC members’ ethical violations may be filed with the Law Department or the Board’s Ethics Advisor.

5. Investigation of Ethical Violations. The General Counsel shall review challenges based on ethical violations, requests for investigation of alleged ethical violations and reports of such violations received from Board agents or employees or anonymous sources. If the General Counsel determines that the challenge, request or report has merit, he/she shall refer the challenge, request or report for investigation. The General Counsel shall review the results of the investigation. If the results of the investigation indicate that the LSC member

may have committed an ethical violation, the General Counsel shall convene a hearing to afford the General Counsel's representative the opportunity to present evidence of ethical violations and the concerned council member an opportunity to personally present statements and evidence on his or her behalf. The concerned council member shall be notified in writing of the date, time, and place of the hearing, of his or her right to have a representative at the hearing and of the specific provisions of this Rule or the Board's Code of Ethics Policy which he or she is alleged to have violated.

6. A hearing officer shall conduct a hearing and shall afford the General Counsel's representative the opportunity to present evidence of ethics violation(s) and the concerned council member an opportunity to personally present statements and evidence regarding the allegations of ethics violations. The General Counsel shall have authority to promulgate rules, including, but not limited to, rules of procedure, procedural manuals and rules of evidence, to govern hearings under this Rule. As soon as possible after the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing officer shall make a recommended finding to the Chief Executive Officer or designee regarding the alleged ethical violation.

7. The Chief Executive Officer or designee shall decide the question of whether an ethics violation occurred. If the Chief Executive Officer or designee finds that an ethical violation has occurred, the Chief Executive Officer or designee shall declare the member ineligible effective on the date the Declaration is issued. The vacancy on the council which shall be effective on the date the Declaration is issued. However, the vacancy may be filled only after: (1) the concerned council member fails to request reconsideration within the time allowed, or (2) the concerned council member's request for reconsideration is denied.

B. Declaration of Vacancy

When a council member has been afforded a hearing pursuant to this Rule and the Chief Executive Officer or designee has found that he or she should be disqualified from the Local School Council based upon a violation of the Code of Ethics or this Rule, the Secretary of the Board shall forward a Declaration of Ineligibility and a Declaration of Vacancy to the concerned council member and Local School Council by certified and regular mail to the council member's last known address and to the affected LSC by regular mail. The vacancy shall be effective on the date the Declaration is issued. However, the vacancy may be filled only after: (1) the concerned council member fails to request reconsideration within the time allowed; or (2) the concerned council member's request for reconsideration is denied.

C. Request for Reconsideration

1. Within thirty (30) days of the date of a Declaration of Vacancy based upon a ruling by the Chief Executive Officer or designee, the challenged council member may submit a request to reconsider to the Chief Executive Officer or designee. The request for reconsideration should state specific reasons or grounds for rescinding the Chief Executive Officer's or designee's prior determination concerning the council member's eligibility. New evidence not readily available at the time that the challenge was filed may be submitted.
2. The Chief Executive Officer or designee shall review the request for reconsideration and issue a final determination.
3. The Secretary of the Board shall forward the final determination to the challenger, if any, and the challenged council member by certified and regular mail to the concerned council member's last known address and to the affected LSC by regular mail.
4. Failure to file a request for reconsideration within the time allowed will render final a Declaration of Vacancy based upon a ruling by the Chief Executive Officer or designee.

D. Statement of Economic Interests Filing Requirements

Failure to timely file a Statement of Economic Interests (hereinafter "Statement"), or failure to file a complete Statement, shall result in automatic disqualification from the Local School Council for the remainder of the concerned member's term of office. The Secretary of the Board shall every year, transmit to all schools a sufficient number of blank Statements of Economic Interests for all Local School Council members. Local School Council members shall file the Board's Statement of Economic Interests with the Secretary of the Board by the deadline specified in the annual Statement. Council members will have 45 days from the date the Statement is sent to principals to complete and submit such Statement. Council members appointed after the due date of the annual Statement shall initially file the Board's Statement within seven (7) days of their appointment. Council members shall deliver their completed Statements to the principal of the school where they serve by the deadline specified in the annual Statement or, if appointed after the due date of the annual Statement, within seven (7) days of their appointment. Such delivery shall be considered as the filing of the Statement with the Secretary of the Board.

Within seven (7) days of the applicable filing date, principals shall forward to the Secretary of the Board all Statements and/or the names of any council members who have failed to file Statements as required. Local School Councils shall maintain copies of their members' Statements on file at their schools for public inspection.

When a council member has failed to file a complete Statement by the applicable filing date, the Secretary of the Board shall automatically issue a Declaration of Intent to Disqualify to the concerned council member by certified and regular mail to the council member's last known address and the affected LSC by regular mail. The concerned council member shall have thirty (30) days from the date of the Declaration of Intent to Disqualify to file a complete Statement. If the council member does not file a complete Statement within the time allowed, the Secretary of the Board shall automatically forward a Declaration of Vacancy to the concerned council member and Local School Council by certified and regular mail to the council member's last known address and the school where he or she serves. The vacancy shall be effective on the date the Declaration is issued. There shall be no right to request reconsideration of a Declaration of Vacancy based upon a failure to timely file a complete Statement. Either the concerned Local School Council or the Board, as appropriate, may immediately proceed to fill the vacancy by appointment of a qualified person who meets all applicable eligibility requirements to serve the remainder of the disqualified member's term.

E. Notice of Declarations

The Secretary of the Board shall forward a Declaration of Intent to Disqualify and Declaration of Vacancy for failure to timely file a complete Statement to the concerned council member in writing by certified and regular mail to the concerned council member's last known address and the affected LSC by regular mail. The Secretary of the Board shall forward a Declaration of Vacancy based upon findings by the General Counsel to the challenger, if any, and the concerned council member in writing by certified and regular mail to the concerned council member's last known address and the affected LSC by regular mail.

F. Appointment to Vacancy

If a parent or community Local School Council member is determined to be ineligible to serve on the elected Local School Council pursuant to this Rule and a vacancy is declared by the Secretary of the Board, the Local School Council shall fill the vacancy by appointment of a qualified person who meets the applicable eligibility requirements.

If a teacher, non-teacher staff or student Local School Council member is determined to be ineligible to serve on the elected Local School Council pursuant to this Rule and a vacancy is declared by the Secretary of the Board, the Board shall fill the vacancy by appointment of a qualified person who meets the applicable eligibility requirements after a non-binding advisory poll of school staff or students, whichever is appropriate.

If a member of an appointed Local School Council or Board of Governors is determined to be ineligible to serve on the council or board and a vacancy is declared, the Board shall fill the vacancy by appointment in accordance with the Board's Policy on Governance of Alternative and Small Schools.