

**SCHOOL GOVERNANCE TEAM
BYLAWS**

Charter Term 2019-2024

Gilmer High School
408 Bobcat Trail, Ellijay, GA 30540
706-276-5080

Revised: September 24, 2019

Approved: _____

Gilmer County School System
134 Industrial Blvd
Ellijay, GA 30540
(706) 276-5000
www.gilmerschools.com

Dr. Shanna Downs
Superintendent of Schools

GILMER COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Mission

*Every Child, Every Opportunity, Every Day
Cada Criatura, Cada Oportunidad, Cada Dia*

BYLAWS TABLE OF CONTENTS

Initial Matters

Article I:	Name	4
Article II:	Preamble and Purpose	4
Article III:	Operational Date	5

Membership

Article IV:	Membership	5
Article V:	Officers and Duties	6
Article VI:	Term of Office	7
Article VII:	Elections	7
Article VIII:	Vacancy	8
Article IX:	Committees, Study Groups, Task Forces	8
Article X:	Compensation	8

Meetings

Article XI:	Meeting Notice and Location	9
Article XII:	Quorum and Voting Requirement	9
Article XIII:	Minutes; Open Records	9
Article XIV:	Parliamentary Authority	10

Responsibilities/Governance

Article XV:	Responsibilities and Accountability	10
Article XVI:	SGT Guidelines	11
Article XVII:	Immunity	11
Article XVIII:	Role of Board of Education	11

Additional SGT Guidelines 13

SGT Code of Ethics 14

School Governance Team Bylaws and Guidelines

Article I Name

The name of this school governance team shall be the Gilmer High School School Governance Team (or “SGT”) organized as a governing council for the school, pursuant to the authority of the Gilmer County Board of Education, the Charter Schools Act (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2060 et seq.), applicable state and federal law, and the Charter System Petition of entered into on April 3rd, 2014 and between the Georgia the Georgia State Board of education and Gilmer County Board of Education with a commencement date of July 1st, 2014 (“Charter”).

Article II Preamble and Purpose

1. Preamble we the establishment of SGTs, pursuant to the Charter Petition, is intended to work collaboratively with the Gilmer County Board of Education to develop and nurture participation, bring parents and the community together with teachers and school administrators to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other’s concerns, and share ideas for school improvement. SGTs shall be reflective of the school community, and shall aspire to the Gilmer County School System’s mission, vision, and beliefs.

2. Purpose is to recognize the importance of communication and participation of parents and the community in the efforts to educate our children, the SGT establishes as its purpose the support of Gilmer High School. The SGT shall work to support educational efforts of the school by working in a spirit of cooperation and collegiality with school staff to improve student achievement and performance, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process by working on educational issues. The SGT shall endeavor to bring parents and the community together with teachers and school administrators to create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other's concerns and role, and share ideas for continuous school improvement. The SGT shall provide advice, recommendations, endorsements, and assistance; and represent the community of parents and local businesses in support of continuous school improvement.
 - a. The school leader shall be the Principal whom is ultimately responsible for school operations and improving student achievement. Each member of the SGT, however, shall be accorded the respect and attention deserving of their position.
 - b. As is required by the Constitution of the State of Georgia, the management and control of the public schools shall be the responsibility of the local board

of education. The SGT understands that the Charter is a System Charter that governs the operations of Gilmer County Schools.

- c. To the extent that there is any inconsistency between these bylaws and the Charter, the Charter will govern.

Article III Operational Date

In August 2014, SGTs became operational in each of the charter system schools in the Gilmer County School System. The board of education provided a training program to assist schools in forming an SGT and to assist SGT members in the performance of their duties. Such program addressed

- (1) the organization of SGTs;
- (2) their purpose and responsibilities;
- (3) applicable laws, rules, regulations and meeting procedures;
- (4) important state and local school system program requirements; and
- (5) Shall provide a model SGT organization plan.

Ongoing training will be provided to SGT members annually and will focus, at a minimum, on roles and responsibilities of SGT, principal, superintendent, and Board of Education, in addition to other pertinent training topics, as needed.

Article IV Membership

1. The SGT shall consist of a minimum of five members of whom a majority shall constitute a quorum. Membership on the SGT shall be determined as follows:
 - a. One principal, who shall serve as co-chair of the SGT to ensure continuity from year to year;
 - b. At least One parent/guardian of a student in the school who are elected by the eligible parents/guardians of the school;
 - c. At least One community member appointed by the Principal and approved by the SGT who is a non-staff member and who lives, works, or has a substantial connection in Gilmer County
 - d. At least One full-time certified non-administrative staff member who works the entire day at the school elected by members of the eligible certified staff assigned to the school;
2. The membership of the SGT can be expanded to as many as seven voting members, provided the ratio between parent/community members and certified staff members remains balanced. Additional non-voting membership beyond the minimum seven (7) person voting membership shall be by appointment by the

Principal and approved by majority vote of the SGT. Secondary student representation can be appointed by the Principal and approved by the SGT to serve on ad hoc committees as deemed appropriate.

3. The SGT shall elect from its membership the co-chair to serve with the principal.
 - a. An employee of the local school system may serve as a parent representative on the SGT of a school in which his or her child is enrolled if such employee works at a different school or facility.
 - b. A parent of a child assigned to an alternative education program does qualify for election as a parent in the home school where their child would attend.
 - c. School Board members are disqualified from serving on school SGTs but are allowed to vote as an eligible parent from an electing body.
 - d. There is no prohibition in the law for a qualifying person to serve on two or more school SGTs, where qualified.
 - e. Teachers who have resigned but are currently employed are eligible to continue to serve on the SGT until their effective date of the resignation at the pleasure of the SGT.

Article V Officers and Duties

The officers of the SGT shall be two (2) co-chairs and a secretary. The Principal shall serve as one of the co-chairs. The other co-chair and secretary of the SGT shall be elected by the SGT at the first meeting of the SGT following the election of SGT members. The officers of the SGT shall hold office concurrently with their term of membership on the SGT.

1. **The Principal (Co-Chair):**The school principal shall have the following duties pertaining to the SGT activities:
 - a. Cause to be created the SGT by convening the appropriate bodies to select SGT members; setting the initial agenda, meeting time, and location; and informally notifying all SGT members of the same (it shall be the duty of the Secretary, as stated below, to give official legal notice);
 - b. Perform all of the duties required by law and the bylaws of the SGT;
 - c. Communicate all SGT requests for information and assistance to the Superintendent (or designee) and inform the SGT of responses or actions of the Superintendent;
 - d. Lead and collaborate with the school leadership and SGT to develop the school improvement plan. Present proposed local budget and school operational plans and share these plans with the SGT for review, comments, endorsement, recommendations and approval;
 - e. Aid in the development of the agenda for each meeting of the SGT after taking into consideration suggestions of SGT members and the urgency of school matters. An item may be added to the agenda at the request of one SGT member provided the co-chair concurs, or if requested by three or more SGT members; and

- f. Serve as the spokesperson of the SGT (or select a designee to serve as spokesperson).
2. **The Co-Chair (Non-Principal):** The SGT co-chairperson shall have the following duties pertaining to SGT activities:
 - a. Perform all of the duties required by law and the bylaws of the SGT;
 - b. Aid in the development of the agenda for each meeting of the SGT after taking into consideration suggestions of SGT members;
 - c. Shall be responsible for signing the required affidavit on each occasion the SGT elects to close a meeting and enter into executive session. A copy of the affidavit shall be made available for public viewing in the same manner as meeting minutes;
 - d. In the absence of the Co-Chair (Principal), shall preside at SGT meetings.
 - e. The Co-Chair shall, in the absence or disability of the Principal, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the chairperson and shall perform such other duties as shall be required by the SGT.
3. **The Secretary:** The secretary shall attend all meetings, act as clerk of the SGT, and be responsible for recording all votes and minutes of all proceedings in the documents to be kept for that purpose. The secretary shall give official notice of all meetings (or cause another person to give notice of meetings) of the SGT, according to Article XIII. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the SGT.

Article VI Term of Office

1. The term of office of all SGT members shall begin on September 1st and end on August 30th .
2. Members of the SGT shall serve a staggered term of two years. If approved by the SGT, a parent may serve one year past their student exiting the school to complete a 2-year term.
3. With the exception of the principal, SGT members may only serve two consecutive terms. After serving two consecutive terms a member must rotate off the SGT for at least one term before being nominated for reelection to the SGT.

Article VII Elections

Certified staff and parents will be elected by the constituents they represent. Nominations will be accepted in August. The election will be held at a called meeting. The principal shall provide public notice at least two weeks prior to the meeting of each elected body.

**Article VIII
Vacancy**

1. The office of SGT member shall be automatically vacated if:
 - a. a member resigns, or
 - b. if the person holding the office is removed by action of the SGT pursuant to Article VIII of these Bylaws,
 - c. if a member no longer meets the qualifications specified in the bylaws.
2. In the event of a vacancy on the SGT, an election, if required, will be held within 60 school days to fill the vacant seat or a replacement will be appointed (as is required according to the position vacated) within 60 days to fill the remainder of the term of office in accordance with the procedures set forth herein, unless there are 90 calendar days or less remaining in the term, in which case the vacancy shall remain unfilled.
3. An SGT member may be removed from office due to lack of participation (missing more than 50% of meetings), violating the SGT Code of Ethics, conflict of interest issues, lack of adherences to the bylaws, or other good and sufficient cause. Removal for cause requires a majority vote of the SGT. This provision is not applicable to the Principal.

**Article IX
Committees, Study Groups and Task Forces**

The SGT may appoint ad hoc committees, study groups, or task forces for such purposes as it deems helpful and may utilize existing or new school advisory groups.

**Article X
Compensation**

Members of the SGT shall not receive compensation to serve on the SGT or its committees, nor shall they receive compensation for speaking engagements, serving on panels, etc on behalf of the SGT and school system.

**Article XI
Meeting Notice and Location**

1. All meetings of the SGT shall be held at the school in a location determined by the principal. The SGT shall meet at least six (6) times annually.
2. Notice of a meeting shall be given (via email, fax, or mail) in accordance with Georgia Open Meetings Act.

3. The SGT secretary shall provide advance notification, in writing or via email, to the school community of teachers and parents of any and all SGT meetings. (See Article V, Officers and Duties.)

Article XII Quorum and Voting Requirement

1. Each voting member of the SGT is authorized to exercise one vote. Proxy votes are not allowed.
2. Voting members must be present in person to participate or vote. (Face Time or Teleconferencing is permitted in the event of emergency or approval from the Team.)
3. A quorum representing a majority of SGT members must be present in order to conduct official SGT business. A regularly scheduled meeting which does not have a quorum of the members present does not have to be rescheduled.
4. At all meetings of the SGT, questions shall be determined by a majority vote of members present, representing a quorum, unless there is an express law or rule to the contrary.

Article XIII Minutes; Open Records

1. The minutes of the SGT shall be recorded by the Secretary and shall include the names of the members present, a description of each motion or other proposal made, and a record of all votes. Members voting against a motion must have their names listed in the minutes. The secretary shall provide a copy of the minutes to each SGT member at the next regularly scheduled SGT meeting.
2. A draft of the minutes shall be open to public inspection before the next SGT meeting. Minutes shall become permanent records of the SGT and shall be in the custody of the Principal and maintained in the school office.
3. SGTs shall be subject to Article 4 of Chapter 18 of Title 50, relating to the inspection of public records, in the same manner as local boards of education.

Article XIV Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall be the governing parliamentary authority for SGTs in all cases applicable but not inconsistent with these bylaws.

Article XV
Responsibilities and Accountability

The Gilmer High School SGT will develop quality focused decision making processes that are consistent with the beliefs that guide the system and ensure that the measures of quality conform with the requirements of those who provide support to students and the schools. Members of the SGT are entrusted with the responsibility of governing the actions of the SGT, providing input, making recommendations and rendering decisions regarding various aspects of the school program. The SGT does not have the authority to legally bind the school system or to contract or assume debts or obligations on behalf of the school or school system. Additionally, the SGT will not incorporate or form any other business entity.

1. The members of the SGT are accountable to the constituents they serve and shall:
 - a. Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues; and
 - b. Regularly participate in SGT meetings; and
 - c. Participate in information and training programs; and
 - d. Act as a link between the SGT and the community; and
 - e. Encourage the participation of parents and others within the school community;
 - f. Work collaboratively to improve student achievement and performance; and
 - g. Adhere to code of ethics and conflict of interest policies and confidentiality.
2. The SGT may provide advice and recommendations in the following areas:
 - a. Personnel Decisions – Participate in developing a process for principal or school leader selection when vacancies occur. Provide input on desired professional characteristics for individual positions and instructional staff
 - b. Financial Decisions and Resource Allocation – Provide input into school expenditures
 - c. Curriculum and Instruction
 - d. Establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals – Approve the school improvement plan and provide oversight of its implementation
 - e. School Operations – Provide input into school operations that are consistent with school improvement and charter goals.

Article XVI
Immunity

To the extent allowed by law, the SGT shall have the same immunity as the local board of education in all matters directly related to the functions of the SGT.

Article XVII
Role of the Board of Education

1. The SGT may request information from the Board, which will be provided unless specifically made confidential by law. SGTs have the responsibility to follow the code of ethics and respect the chain of command and should be aware of their duty of care.
2. The Superintendent may designate an employee of the school system to attend SGT meetings as requested by an SGT for the purpose of responding to questions the SGT may have concerning information provided to it by the local board or actions taken by the local board. The central office shall be responsive to requests for information from an SGT.
3. The Superintendent's designee will attend SGT meetings as requested, respond to SGT questions and provide information as requested by said SGT. Requests for information from the Board or Superintendent shall be made by a motion, second and subsequent affirmative vote by the SGT. The minutes shall reflect such action.
4. The local board of education shall respond to each recommendation of the SGT within sixty (60) days after being notified in writing of the recommendation. The Board shall have the authority to overturn any decision of the SGT.
 - a. Public notice shall be given to the community of the local board's intent to consider SGT reports or recommendations (said public notice to be made by including SGT actions on the Board agenda);
 - b. After initial receipt of a SGT item, the Superintendent or his/her designee is responsible for placing the item(s) on the Board agenda within sixty (60) calendar days.
 - c. The publishing of the Board meeting agenda listing the Board's intent to consider the SGT's reports, recommendations, or other decisions shall constitute public notice.
 - d. The Superintendent or his/her designee is responsible for notifying the Principal in advance, in writing (email is acceptable notice), that the Board shall hold a meeting and at such meeting the Board intends to consider the SGT's report, recommendation or any decision made by the SGT. The Principal shall notify SGT members of the Board meeting to consider a SGT report, recommendation, or any other decision of the SGT.
 - e. The Principal and/or co-chairperson shall speak for and represent the SGT in all matters before the Board. At the Board Chair's discretion, other members of the SGT may be allowed the opportunity to present information.

Appendix A

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE TEAM

Code of Ethics

The Gilmer County Schools Board of Education desires to operate in the most ethical and conscientious manner possible and to that end the board adopts this Code of Ethics and each member of the board agrees that he or she will:

Domain I: Governance Structure

1. Recognize that the authority of the SGT rests only with the SGT as a whole and not with individual team members and act accordingly.
2. Support the delegation of authority for the day-to-day administration of the school system to the local superintendent and/or principal and act accordingly.
3. Honor the chain of command and refer problems or complaints consistent with the chain of command.
4. Not undermine the authority of the local superintendent and / or principal or intrude into responsibilities that properly belong to the local superintendent or school administration, including such functions as hiring, transferring or dismissing employees.
5. Use reasonable efforts to keep the local superintendent and principals informed of concerns or specific recommendations that any member of the SGT may bring to the SGT.

Domain II: Strategic Planning

1. Reflect through actions that his or her first and foremost concern is for the educational welfare of children attending schools within the school system.
2. Participate in all planning activities to develop the vision and goals of the SGT and the school system.
3. Work with the SGT and the local superintendent / principal to ensure prudent and accountable uses of the resources of the school system.
4. Render all decisions based on available facts and his or her independent judgment and refuse to surrender his or her judgment to individuals or special interest groups.

5. Uphold and enforce all applicable laws, all rules and regulations of the State Board of Education and the board and all court orders pertaining to the school system.

Domain III: Board and Community Relations

1. Seek regular and systemic communications among the SGT and students, staff and the community.
2. Communicate to the SGT and the local superintendent / principal expressions of public reaction to board policies and school programs.

Domain IV: Policy Development

1. Work with other SGT members to establish effective policies for the school system.
2. Make decisions on policy matters only after full discussion at publicly held SGT meetings.
3. Periodically review and evaluate the effectiveness of policies on school system programs and performance.

Domain V: School Governance Team Meetings

1. Attend and participate in regularly scheduled and called SGT meetings.
2. Be informed and prepared to discuss issues to be considered on SGT agenda.
3. Work with other SGT members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during the discussion and resolution of issues at SGT meetings.
4. Vote for a closed executive session of the SGT only when applicable law or board policy requires consideration of a matter in executive session.
5. Maintain the confidentiality of all discussions and other matters pertaining to the SGT, board and the school system, including discussions during executive session of the SGT.

6. Make decisions in accordance with the interests of the school system as a whole and not any particular segment thereof.
7. Express opinions before votes are cast, but after the SGT vote, abide by and support all majority decisions of the SGT.

Domain VI: Personnel

1. Support the employment of persons best qualified to serve as employees of the school system.

Domain VII: Financial Governance

1. Refrain from using the position of SGT for personal or partisan gain or to benefit any person or entity over the interest of the school system.

Conduct as SGT Member

1. Devote sufficient time, thought and study to the performance of the duties and responsibilities of a member of the SGT.
2. Become informed about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed education and training.
3. Refrain from disparaging or disrespectful remarks about another SGT member. Communicate in a respectful professional manner with and about fellow SGT members.
4. Take no private action that will compromise the SGT or school system administration.
5. Participate in all required training programs developed for SGT members by State Board of Education.
6. File annually with the principal a written statement certifying that he or she is in compliance with this Code of Ethics.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when there is a conflict between the private interests and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust. A clash between professional obligations and personal interests arises if the individual tries to perform a professional obligation while at the same time trying to achieve personal gain.

1. Announce potential conflicts of interest before SGT action is taken.
2. Comply with the conflicts of interest policy of the board, all applicable laws.

“I acknowledge that I have carefully read and considered this document.”

SGT Member Printed Name

SGT Member Signature

Date