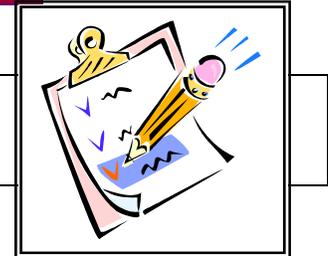


Joining Parent Committees: Parent Leadership Checklist



Before you take on a parent leadership role, you may want to review this checklist to be sure you fully understand the scope of the job you're undertaking and the extent of its commitment.

Know what the job is:

- Do I have a clear understanding of the job requirements?
- Are the anticipated outcomes the ones I wish to promote?
- Will I represent a broad group of parents or just myself?
- If I represent a larger group, do I understand what is involved in communicating with my group?
- To whom will I be accountable?

Understand the personal costs:

- How much of my time will this require?
- How will the costs of communication, travel, childcare, food and lost wages be paid?
- Will this work, combined with other things going on in my life, create too much stress for my family and me?
- Do I have strong self-care skills and a personal support system on which I can rely?

Evaluate your expertise:

- Do I need to improve my communication skills, need training in public speaking and working with the media?
- Do I need to learn more about the public policy process, and systems that serve children and families?

It's important to consider these qualities, but unless the answers clearly reveal that this is not the right time to take on more responsibility, don't let anyone dissuade you. Skills can always be polished or learned by doing. You have your own individual gift and strengths to bring to this important job. In exchange for your leadership, you will find an opportunity for personal growth and the chance to make a difference in people's lives.

Source:

Shared by Parents Helping Parents, Boston, MA

Overview: Single Plan Development



Single Plan for Student Achievement (*Senate Bill 374*)

Requires each school to consolidate all plans required by Consol Programs into a single plan for student achievement.

Purpose of the Single Plan (*Education Code* sections 64001(d), (f))

- Consolidate all school plans
- Align content of single plan with school goals
- Base school goals on Academic Performance Index (API) and the California English Language Development Test (CELDT)

Single Plan Requirements

The School Site Council:

- Develops and approves the plan,
- Consolidates plans for all programs operated at school
- Aligns plan with school goals
- Bases school goals on verifiable state data
- Decides how funds will be used to improve academic performance
- Annually updates plan and budget

District Governing Board Responsibilities

- Approve or disapprove the Single Plan for Student Achievement and its subsequent revisions
- Certify that school plans are consistent with local improvement plans required for federal funding

Summary: Steps to follow for Single Plan Development and Implementation

District provides leadership and support during the process:

1. School Advisory Group → Advise School Site Council
2. School Site Council → Develops and monitors the plan
3. District Governing Board → Reviews and approves or disapproves the plan
4. District/School Administrative Team → Implements the plan



Innovations that Nurture Success in Parent Involvement to Reach Excellence

STATE MANDATED COMMITTEES

School Site Council (SSC) (*Education Code Section 64001*)

Through the School Improvement Program, each participating school has a state-mandated School Site Council composed of the principal, staff, parents, and community members and, at the secondary level, students. The SSC must:

- Establish school goals for improving student achievement, based on their analysis of state and local academic performance data
- Establish expected gains for under-performing student groups
- Align activities with school goals

The council is a decision-making body in (1) operating procedures and bylaws, (2) selecting and maintaining membership, (3) developing the school plan and budget for Board of Education approval, and (4) evaluating the annual progress of educational improvement under the school plan. The purpose of the School Improvement Program is to improve the local school's total instructional program by assessing the skills and knowledge of students and by providing supplemental services that meet their needs. The School Improvement Program receives funding from the state.

District Advisory Committee (DAC) Generally speaking committee deals with Government Funded Program and is made up of parents, school and district personnel and in some cases community members who consult with the local Board of Education on behalf of Consolidated Government Funded Programs. In some districts each Title I school is asked to designate two School Site Council members to serve on this committee. Schools may also designate two alternatives.

English Learners Advisory Committee (ELAC) (*EC 62002.5;5 CCR 4312*)

Each school with 21 or more English Learners (ELs) in attendance must form a functioning ELAC. The primary purpose of the ELAC is to advise the principal and staff regarding issues relating to programs and services for ELs. Required tasks include: 1) advising the school principal and staff on the adequacy of the school's program for ELs and the effectiveness of the school's efforts to make parents aware of the importance of regular school attendance, 2) advising the School Site Council (SSC) on the SSC's development of the Single Site Plan for Student Achievement, 3) Reviewing the school's annual language census, and 4) conducting a site EL needs assessment. The percentage of parents of ELs on the ELAC must be at least the same as that of ELs at the school. Examples of appropriate members for an ELAC include any parent of an EL, parent of a non-EL, school staff member, and/or community member.

District English Learners Advisory Committee (DELAC)

When a district 51 or more English Learners enrolled, it is required to establish a DELAC made up of one representative from each site-level ELAC. It is important that each school site ELAC elect a DELAC representative and arrange to have that representative attend every DELAC meeting. Site administrators are encouraged to attend meetings together with the site's DELAC representative. Generally speaking, DELAC bylaws require each DELAC representative to be 1) a parent/guardian of an EL or former EL (i.e., a reclassified fluent English proficient student) currently enrolled at the site he/she represents, and 2) elected to serve as the DELAC representative by the site ELAC. Schools are responsible for providing at least eight meetings to inform parents of the academic program for English Learners and budget items that directly impact student learning.

Optional Parent Committees

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)

Schools often form committees known as PTA or PTSA to bring home and school into closer relation. Through PTA/PTSA parents, teachers, and students may collaborate to improve the quality of education. There are national, state, regional, and local levels of PTA/PTSA organization.

Objectives of PTA/PTSA:

1. To promote the welfare of children and youth in the home, school, church and community.
2. To raise the standards of home life.
3. To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
4. To develop the educators and the general public in such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantage in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

Schools and districts are responsible for establishing meeting dates, time, and location. If you are interested in participating, contact your school.

The National PTA

The National PTA is the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the United States. Founded in 1897, today its nearly 7 million members are parents, teachers, students, and other citizens eager to work on behalf of children nationwide. The organization prides itself on being noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan. Its members serve as child advocates in schools, in the community, and before government agencies. The National PTA builds partnerships with other health, education, and welfare organizations, both public and private, to develop national coalitions on children's issues. The organization also produces programs, publications, and training to help state and local PTAs encourage parents and families to become involved in their children's lives.

The Role of the School Site Council

Who is best qualified to make decisions about a school? Policymakers in states across the country agree that those who are involved with schools and students on day-to-day basis—teachers, parents and other school employees—can make some of the best decisions. This belief led to the creation of the school site council.

The school site council is a group of teachers, parents, classified employees, and students (at the high school level) that works with the principal to develop, review and evaluate school improvement programs and school budgets. The members of the school site council are generally elected by their peers. For example, parents elect the parent representatives and teachers elect teachers.

The exact duties of school site council vary from state to state and even between districts in the same state, but **school site councils generally either make decisions or advise the principal on the school budget and the academic or school improvement plan.** In addition to academic planning, many site councils are also responsible for safety and discipline.

Over the course of a year, a typical council might **consider the goals of the school** or district and then work with the principal to evaluate the school's progress toward those goals. In this evaluation, the council might consider school test scores, attendance and discipline records, parent surveys and input from students.

After looking at the big picture of the school's progress, the council and the principal create a plan for improvement. This plan might involve a new academic program, staff member or parent outreach strategy. For example, one council might use funds to develop a new math program, while another might decide to hire a reading specialist. Another council might decide that hiring an additional teacher to reduce class sizes in a particular grade or a parent liaison to get more parents involved would be the best use of its money. Because school budgets are limited and many funds can only be

spent in certain ways, there are always tough decisions to make.

In some schools, the site council merely advises the principal and does not have any authority to make decisions. In other schools, site councils are powerful and have the last word on staffing and budgeting decisions, including evaluating the principal and hiring teachers. Even at schools where the official duties are the same, some site councils generally defer to the principal's judgments, while others are actively involved in developing new programs or overseeing major school change.

Successful school site councils, regardless of their specific agendas, are more than a "rubber stamp" committee, and always ask thoughtful and challenging questions.

School site council members don't just represent their own interest. **They have an obligation to make decisions that will best serve the whole school community.** In fact, many site councils are specifically charged with finding ways to close the gaps in achievement between groups of students.

If you are interested in school policy or budgets, you might enjoy serving on your school's site council. To find out more about what your school site council does, attend a meeting or talk to the school principal. If you to participate the council, call the school secretary to find out how the selection process works at your school. You can learn more about the official roles of the school site councils in your state from the Education Commission of the States. Many school district Web sites also have information about and resources for school site councils.

Source: www.greatschools.net