

**Section II: Site Council Organization**

Site Council can play a significant role in providing a structure that encourages the school, families and the community to collaborate together for the benefit of student achievement and school improvement. In order for Site Council to be most effective, it is important to consider how it is organized.

This section addresses how to organize a Site Council group and its meetings. It also provides ideas for upgrading Site Council by involving it in ways that impact student achievement and school improvement.

**Goals for Establishing a Viable Site Council**

*Participants Will:*

* Learn how to effectively organize a Site Council.
* Learn the roles of the different positions held on Site Council and their responsibilities (i.e. Site Council chair, secretary, principal, and members).
* Learn the procedures of conducting a meeting.
* Learn the guidelines and state and federal government mandates for Site Council.
* Receive suggestions on possible projects for Site Council.

**Background Information**

One of the key strategies for increasing student achievement is to enlist the support and assistance of families and the community. Having a Site Council that has diverse membership along with having various perspectives is essential for any school. An effective Site Council can assist in changing the culture of a school where partnerships are formed from school to families, school to community, and families to community.

**Things to remember when organizing a Site** **Council group:**

* Site Council is encouraged to meet monthly during the school year, but no less than four times a year.
* Site Council should consist of 6 to 12 members, including parents, business representatives, community members, support staff, teachers, school administrators and students.
* Provide new Site Council members with a welcome packet containing information about the school: programs, demographics and data.
* Site Council should meet at a time that is most convenient for parents and community members to attend.
* A parent or community member should serve in the role of chairperson.
* Membership should be an accurate reflection of the school’s population.
* Parent and community membership should exceed school staff membership.
* The principal reports the names of the members of the Site Council to the appropriate superintendent by October 15 of each year.
* Effective Site Councils have an elected chairperson, co-chairperson and secretary.
* Effective Site Councils have agreed upon by-laws which govern the organization of the group.

**Best practices for organizing Site Council meetings**

Conducting effective meetings is important for Site Councils. With limited time and the differing schedules and needs of Site Council members, well-planned meetings are critical. The following are some best practices for conducting Site Council meetings.

* Set a date, invite members, advertise and publicize the meeting.
* The Site Council Chair or principal should set an agenda and prepare any supporting materials that are needed.
* Set norms at the meeting (i.e. cell phones on vibrate, no side-bar conversations, etc.).
* Start and end meetings on time.
* The secretary should keep a full and accurate account of the proceedings and transactions.
* Time should be allotted at the end of the meeting for members to reflect and review what was discussed.
* After the meeting, the Site Council secretary should type the minutes and attendance roster.

**Site Council Project Ideas**

In the past, Site Councils have been defined as a group of parents, community partners, teachers and classified employees that work with the principal to review and evaluate school improvement plans and school budgets. As we look toward the future, Site Councils are taking a more proactive approach by being more than an advisory team but a team of leaders. In doing so, Site Councils should be more project-focused. Schools may use school data or conduct a school climate survey, for possible Site Council projects to be considered. Below are some possible Site Council project ideas:

**Project Ideas:**

* Site Council can recruit for new members during parent events/activities.
  + Example: recruit new members during Open House, Parent Teacher Conferences, etc. The Site Council can set-up an informational booth during these parent events/activities and offer incentives to build public relations.
* Site Council can be a positive ambassador for the school.
  + Example: serve on a panel to facilitate questions and answers. The Site Council can serve on a panel during a transition event and answer questions for parents.
* Site Council can research and support new initiatives for the school.
  + Example: research and decide on a father initiative that will help increase positive male participation at the school. The Site Council can choose to support the Watch D.O.G.S. program as the school’s father initiative.
* Site Council can evaluate and offer suggestions for improving a specific area of concern at the school. (Site Councils can even evaluate itself to improve areas of concern such as recruitment, retention, overall effectiveness, etc.)
  + Example: survey families and the community on the friendliness of the school. The Site Council can offer suggestions after evaluating completed family surveys.
* Site Council can focus on developing and maintaining community relationships.
  + Example: schedule an “Open House” for community partners. The Site Council along with other school parent organizations can assist in planning an event that will welcome community partners at the school.
* Site Council can assess school safety concerns.
  + Example: improve parking lot and traffic safety near school grounds. The Site Council can solicit the help of a neighborhood police officer who can offer his or her expertise on traffic safety.
* Site Council can use school data to help increase student achievement.
  + Example: analyze state assessment data to focus on a major area of concern. The Site Council can collaborate with the Family Engagement Team to address the area of concern accordingly to parents through focus groups or a family event.
* Site Council can address school and/or district budget to educate school stakeholders.
  + Example: review current district budget to understand how it affects school budget. The Site Council with the assistance of district representatives can assess district budget to clarify school budget to community members, staff and families.

As Site Council begins to meet and move towards project-based initiatives, it is important to include other teams, committees and organizations in the planning process. By collaborating with other teams, committees, and organizations within the school, it can be assured that all stakeholders’ ideas and expertise will be considered to achieve the best possible results. Collaboration among staff, families and community members is one of the first steps to becoming a Partnership School.

**Site Council Planning**

As you begin planning for Site Council, it is advantageous to use the Site Council Planning Cycle listed as “Handout #1”. The Planning Cycle diagram allows Site Councils to take a step-by-step approach from identifying to implementing areas of improvement at schools. The diagram should be utilized by Site Councils to help guide decisions for schools. The other “Handouts” listed below are operational tools that will help Site Councils better plan from meeting-to-meeting.

Handout #1– Site Council Planning Cycle

Handout #2– Site Council Welcome Packet Checklist

Handout #3 – Site Council Meeting Dates Sample

Handout #4 – Site Council Members Roster Sample

Handout #5 – Site Council By-Laws Sample

Handout #6 – Site Council Agenda Sample

Handout #7 – Site Council Minutes Sample

Handout #8 – Site Council Reminder Postcards Sample

Handout #9 – Site Council Sign-in Sheet Sample

Handout #10 – Sample of Site Council Survey for Project Options