SCHOOLSITE COUNCIL (SSC)

ELECTION PROCEDURE HANDBOOK

2012-2013

Sources: Administrator’s Guide to School Site Councils-CISI, California Education Code
Summary

The School Site Council (SSC), as set forth in statute, is the focus of the school-based management model (EC section 52852 and 64001). To ensure that the council operates within a school-wide improvement perspective, the legislation requires that the membership of the council be drawn from the total school community. Once established, the SSC is charged with the responsibility of developing a program that is responsive to the needs of every student in the school. In order to accomplish this goal, the SSC is required to develop a School Development and Improvement Plan (also known as Single Plan for Student Achievement), allocate the supplemental resources within the school to support this plan, and annually review and update the plan and budget to reflect changing needs and priorities within the school. The SSC is not to be viewed as an advisory body whose advice may be accepted or rejected. Instead, the actions of the SSC constitute the first step in a formal process for developing improvement strategies and for allocating resources to support these efforts. The process is completed only when the local governing board formally agrees to the SSC’s proposal for utilizing the supplemental resources.

This process of school improvement should not be seen as adversarial but rather as a process that enables both the school, through the SSC, and the governing board, usually through the district office, to strengthen the education system by allocating appropriate decision-making authority to bodies that are nearest to the tasks that are to be completed. It is successful only when the SSC and the local governing board focus this decision-making authority towards ongoing improvement in the curriculum and instructional program of the school.

It is incumbent on the governing board, the district staff, and the SSC to establish and maintain continual communication regarding the district’s goals and core curriculum as well as each school’s needs and plan to implement a program that can enable students to succeed. It is also the responsibility of each body to do everything possible to keep the program responsive to changing needs and priorities of the participating schools.

If schools are to be improved for the benefit of students, all segments of the school community must join together to accomplish this task. The SSC represents a major mechanism in California public education for bringing these segments together in a manner that provides for real and meaningful commitment in the effort to improve schools.

Selection/Election of Schoolsite Council Members

Overview

California Education Code, Section 52852: “…The council shall be composed of the principal and representatives of: teachers selected by teachers at the school; other school personnel selected by other school personnel at the school; parents/guardians of pupils attending the school selected by such parents/guardians; and, in secondary schools, pupils selected by pupils attending the school.”

The law does not specify a particular procedure for the selection/election of members. However, it is in the best interest of the school to have clearly defined procedures that provide opportunities for every member of the school community to nominate and select/elect their council representatives. The recommended practice is election by ballot.
Selection/Election of Schoolsite Council Members

Most formal complaints regarding the operation of a schoolsite council concern the school’s selection/election process. When procedures are clearly defined, known and followed by the school community, there is less of a chance that an appeal will occur.

If the school is creating a schoolsite council for the first time, it is important to have members of current school groups participate in defining the selection/election process. This can be accomplished by working with existing parent/guardian, student, and staff groups to establish procedures and assist with the nomination and selection/election of council members.

Many existing schoolsite councils define within their bylaws the procedures that will be followed for selecting/electing members to the council. Other councils maintain a side agreement that addresses these procedures. Whichever way the school site council chooses to operate, it is important to be sure that the procedures are defined in writing and provided to the school community.

Selection/Election of Members-The Principal:

The law is very clear that the principal is a permanent member of the council. The principal may not assign his/her responsibilities to a vice principal or other designee.

Selection/Election of Members-Parents

Parents/guardians have a vested interest in the achievement of their students. One way to include broad representation from the parent community is to notify all parents/guardians in the school about duties and responsibilities of the council and seek nominations. This can be accomplished by providing information about the council’s duties and the vacancies on the council. Encourage existing parent groups (e.g. ELAC, PTA/PTO, GATE) to nominate individuals. Allow for self-nomination or the nomination of another parent/guardian. (Please note that a community member can also submit for nomination to the council and to appear on the ballot. The parents of the school would be the electing group for an interested community member.)

The best way to select/elect members is to send parents/guardians of students attending the school a ballot that includes the names of only nominated parents/guardians or community members. It is helpful if each nominee provides a brief description of their school experiences or reasons for wanting to serve on the council. The ballot could also provide an opportunity for parents/guardians to write-in the name of another individual if they so choose. This process will assure that parents/guardians have chosen their representative.

Some schools conduct elections during Back-to-School Night. Parents operate an election booth and pass out ballots to eligible parents/guardians. Others schools include the ballot in a newsletter or bulletin. Each ballot is returned to the child’s teacher or the school office. Be sure to provide enough time for ballots to be returned. Ballots should be counted by parents/guardians, or by an Elections Committee. In the event of a contested election, staff from State and Federal Programs is available to assist with the counting of the ballots. Ballots must be maintained for three years and serve as strong documentation during a Categorical Program Review (CPM), or complaint over an election outcome.
Selection/Election of Members-Teachers

The first step in the selection/election of teacher representatives is to notify all classroom teachers of any vacancy on the council. This notification should be done in writing. Provide an opportunity for teachers to self-nominate or to nominate a peer.

Once this step has been taken, there are two ways to select/elect classroom teacher members. The preferable method is to use a ballot. The ballot should have a space for a write-in candidate. Ballots can be distributed at a staff meeting, or placed in the teacher’s mailbox. Be sure to include a return envelope. The principal should not count the ballots. It is important to have teachers or an Election Committee assume this responsibility.

Another way to select/elect teachers is to conduct an election by voice/hand at a staff meeting. The first step in implementing this practice is to have a sign-in sheet with the names of each classroom teacher listed. The selection/election of classroom teacher representatives should be included in the agenda for the staff meeting. The principal or a teacher leading the selection process calls for additional nominations. If no other names are provided, the meeting leader calls for a motion to close the nominations. A vote is taken. The names of the nominated persons are listed on the board. A hand vote is taken for each name. The leader reports the vote for each nominated individual and summarizes the results of the election. Caution should be exercised to assure that only classroom teachers vote for teacher candidates. (Resource teachers or other certificated staff that work with students, but who are not assigned a class roster of students fall into the category of ‘Other School Personnel’.) The names of the elected individuals are then listed in the minutes of the staff meeting. Copies of the sign-in sheet, agenda and minutes are entered into the minutes and records of the next regular meeting of the schoolsite council.

Selection/Election of Members-Other School Personnel

The procedure for selecting/electing other school personnel is similar to the procedure used for classroom teachers. However, caution should be used to determine those individuals who are members of the other school personnel classification. It is important to remember that this classification is open to all classified personnel, all certificated personnel who are not classroom teachers, and all administrative staff other than the principal. Remember to include part-time members of the staff.

Selection/Election of Members-Students (Grades 7-12)

There are a variety of ways to select student representatives to the schoolsite council. The student council bylaws may be changed by the student body to specify that certain elected positions on the student council will serve on the schoolsite council. This change would be voted upon by the student body at large. However, another way to increase student participation in governance is to identify these council positions as additional body offices. The traditional method used by the school to select/elect its student body officers and representatives would be completed to fill these vacancies.

Selection/Election Bylaw Changes

The following additions may be added to the bylaws to address the selection/election process:

Selection/Election of council members: Elections of council members shall be held each year in (________) ENTER MONTH.
Annually the school site council will establish and Election Committee composed of a teacher, other school personnel, parent/guardian and students, if appropriate, to oversee the election of council members.

Election Committee: The duties of the committee shall be to supervise the election procedure, to declare nominees on the basis of the nominating procedure, to conduct the election, unseal and count the ballots, and to declare the elected representatives.

The following procedures shall be followed in nominating candidates and selecting/electing council members:

- Teachers (list procedure)
- Parent/Guardian (list procedure)
- Other School Personnel: (list procedure)
- Students: (list procedure)

Election ballots shall be prepared by the election committee with the assistance of the principal and shall be distributed in the following manner to each peer group:

- Teachers: (list procedure)
- Parent/Guardian: (list procedure)
- Other School Personnel: (list procedure)
- Students: (list procedure)

In all elections for council members, ties will be decided by lot.

**SSC Composition**

“Think-50/50”

**Elementary Composition:**

The basic rule for determining the composition of a schoolsite council is defined in Education Code, Section 52852. The legislation states:

“A schoolsite council shall be established at each school which participates in school-based program coordination. The council shall be composed composed of the principal and representatives of: teachers selected by teachers, other school personnel selected by other school personnel; parents of students attending the school selected by such parents; and, in secondary schools, pupils selected by pupils attending the school.”
The smallest size of an elementary schoolsite council is a 10 member council. This 10 member council would be composed as follows:

(1)-Principal
(3) Classroom Teachers
(1) Other school staff
(5) Parents

Secondary Composition:

The basic rule for determining the composition of a schoolsite council is defined in Education Code, Section 52852. The legislation states:

“A schoolsite council shall be established at each school which participates in school-based program coordination. The council shall be composed of the principal and representatives of: teachers selected by teachers, other school personnel selected by other school personnel; parents of students attending the school selected by such parents; and, in secondary schools, pupils selected by pupils attending the school.”

The smallest size of any secondary school site council is a 12 member council. This 12 member council would be composed as follows:

(1)-Principal
(4) Classroom Teachers
(1) Other school staff
(3) Parents
(3) Students

It is important to note that student participation at the middle school level is optional (EC 33133, subsection c). If students are not members of the middle school council, then the parent representatives should total six (6) to equal that of the staff.

Larger councils can be established, but composition rules need to be followed closely to assure the council guarantees parity between school staff and parents. Additionally, while all councils should strive to be representative of their community at-large, membership positions on the council may not be held or designated for any particular gender, race, religious, or ethnic group.

RESOURCES

The following forms and documents are meant to provide guidance and resources to school staff and community members while establishing or evaluating the work of their councils:
SCHOOLSITE COUNCIL
PROCESS CHECKLIST

1. Procedures for electing members are publicized.

2. Membership composition includes proper proportions of parents of participating students. (Note: to serve on a site’s SSC, parents cannot be district employees at the site, but can be an employee of the district at another site.)

3. Membership includes representatives from:

   **Staff (50%)**  
   _____ Teachers  
   _____ support personnel
   _____ Principal

   **Parent (50%)**  
   _____ parents/guardians  
   _____ community members
   _____ students (secondary)

4. Membership roster is current and reflects elected members.

5. Each member is aware of scheduled meetings. Dates, time, place, and meeting agenda are publicized to the public- **72 hours notice required**.

6. Committee members have received appropriate training and materials.

7. Procedures for preparing agendas are well known.

8. Special efforts are made to assure attendance of all persons not present at last meeting.

9. Minutes of the meetings have been disseminated.

10. Uniform Complain Procedures are provided to council members. Document date distributed to council and reviewed in the SSC minutes.

11. All members have verified they know where to obtain copies of current bylaws, regulations, and program plans for the project on which they are advising.

12. Each member is directly involved in some aspect of:

   _____ on-going planning of the program
   _____ implementation and evaluation of the program
13. The Committee reviews the involvement of parents in school activities.

14. The over and above services provided participating students is known to parents.

15. Parents have been informed of supplementary services for eligible students.

16. Plan progress is reviewed at each SSC meeting.

17. The Committee knows the evaluation procedures of the program(s).

18. There is a working communication system that disseminates information to all persons in and around the school, including the committee members and the community.

19. The Committee is represented at the District Advisory Committee.

20. The Committee has direct involvement in determining the training programs for the Committee.

21. The Committee is knowledgeable of school categorical budgets and plan expenditures.

22. The Committee is involved in assessing the School Development and Improvement Plan (also known as Single Plan for Student Achievement).

23. The Committee makes recommendations on any phase of the plan to the principal.

24. The Committee receives updates regarding reforms in education.

25. All parents of students being served have had an opportunity to present their views to the Committee.
SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Name: ___________________________

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED

SCHOOLSITE COUNCIL (SSC)

(Insert school name here) is in the process of accepting nominations for our Schoolsite Council (SSC) Committee. The SSC is an elected body composed of the principal, teachers, other school personnel, parents, and (at the secondary level) students.

RESPONSIBILITIES/DUTIES OF THE SCHOOLSITE COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Work as a team with other advisory group representatives to develop the School Development and Improvement Plan (also known as Single Plan for Student Achievement) for our school consistent with Sacramento City Unified School Governing Board’s Strategic Plan for Student Achievement
- Recommend the School Development and Improvement Plan (also known as Single Plan for Student Achievement) to the local governing board for approval
- Monitor implementation of the plan
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the School Development and Improvement Plan (also known as Single Plan for Student Achievement)
- Annually review and revise the plan and proposed expenditures of categorical funds
- Regularly attend scheduled SSC meetings
- Coordinate election process

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AND CONSENT

If you are interested in serving on the Schoolsite Council, please complete the attached APPLICATION FOR SCHOOLSITE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ELECTION form and return it to:

__________________________ by: _____________________________.

Ballots will be mailed home to all parents on: ____________.

Final election date will be: ________________.

Election outcome will be announced on: ________________

Questions? Please call: _________________________________
SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Name: _________________________

APPLICATION FOR SCHOOLSITE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ELECTION

SCHOOLSITE COUNCIL
PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

I would like to be a member of the ___________________________Schoolsite Council.
(insert school name)

Please list your children attending this school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ____________________________</td>
<td>______</td>
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<td>2. ____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. ____________________________</td>
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</tbody>
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I give permission for my name to appear on the ballot.

(NOTE: Your name will only will appear on ballot. Your address/phone number will not appear on the ballot.)

Name ____________________________ Signature ____________________________
(print name)

(For school office use only)

Address ________________________________________________________________

Phone: (home) ______________________ (work) ________________________________

Date ____________________________

Please return this form to the school office by ____________________________
(date)

Ballots will be mailed on ____________________________.
(date)

Thank you for supporting our school.
SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
(Insert School Name)

SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL BALLOT

☐ Teacher ☐ Parent ☐ Other ☐ Write In

Please Vote for (#) Candidates

☐ __________________________
Name of Candidate
Grade level of student(s)

☐ __________________________
Name of Candidate
Grade level of student(s)

☐ __________________________
Name of Candidate
Grade level of student(s)

☐ __________________________
Name of Candidate
Grade level of student(s)

☐ __________________________
Name of Candidate
Grade level of student(s)

Submit ballot to the school office by ________________
(Insert School Name Here)
SCHOOLSITE COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP
2012-2013

Education Code Section 64001 requires that the School Development and Improvement Plan (also known as Single Plan for Student Achievement) be reviewed and updated at least annually, including proposed expenditures of funds allocated through the Consolidated Application, by the schoolsite council. The current make-up of the council is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of Members (include titles of SSC Officers)</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Classroom Teacher</th>
<th>Other School Staff</th>
<th>Parent or Community Member</th>
<th>Secondary Student</th>
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</table>

At elementary schools, the council must be constituted to ensure parity between (a) the principal, classroom teachers and other school personnel and (b) parents of pupils attending the school or other community members. Classroom teachers must comprise a majority of persons represented under section a).

At secondary schools there must, in addition, be equal numbers of parents or other community members selected by parents, and students. Teachers, other school personnel, parents and (at secondary schools) students select representatives to the council (Education Code 52012).

District Advisory (DAC) Representative:  
Name: ____________________________  
Address: ____________________________

SSC Chairperson (If different than DAC Rep.):  
Name: ____________________________  
Address: ____________________________

Email: ____________________________  
Email: ____________________________

Phone: ____________________________  
Phone: ____________________________

(Return this completed form to: Jerry Uhl, Accountability Office Box 718 or email Jerry-Uhl@scusd.edu)
SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

(Name of School)

SCHOOLSITE COUNCIL
Parent/Staff Election Checklist
2012-2013

Enter date completed. Attach necessary documentation.

_______ 1. Letter to parents entitled “COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED” with attachment “APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AND CONSENT” form sent home to parents at the beginning of the school year. (Attach sample)

_______ 2. Ballots prepared based on the forms submitted by interested parents.

_______ 3. Ballots mailed out to parents with request to return by specified date. (Attach sample)

_______ 4. Ballots tabulated and election results publicized. Ballots and election results must be maintained on file at the school site and be submitted to Accountability Office in the event of a contested election, or during a Categorical Programs Monitoring (CPM) review.

_______ 5. SSC Membership roster attached.

_______ 6. Staff was provided an opportunity to select/elect SSC members. Ballots or staff meeting minutes is on file and election outcomes have been publicized. Ballots or minutes reflecting the process and outcome of an election may be submitted to Accountability Office in the event of a contested election, or during a Categorical Programs Monitoring (CPM) review.

I certify that the above Schoolsite Council Election Procedures were implemented as indicated above.

Principal’s Name ________________________________

Principal’s Signature ________________________________

Date ________________________________

Please return this completed form and attachments to: Jerry Uhl, Accountability Office BOX 718 or email Jerry-Uhl@scusd.edu. Please retain a copy at your site with your SSC records.