

BEST PRACTICES FOR MEETINGS

MEETING CALENDAR

1. As a part of recruitment and elections, publicize the normal committee meeting day and time.
2. After the election, adjust days and times as needed by new SSC members. Establish the full year's schedule of meetings at your first meeting.
3. Meetings must be held in a place accessible to any member of the public
4. Meetings should be regular, preferably at set times, (for example, the first Thursday of each month at a particular time).
5. To encourage maximum community participation, publicize the schedule widely by posting on your school's website event calendar, including the dates in meeting minutes, and notifying the BSEP office to allow maximum community participation.



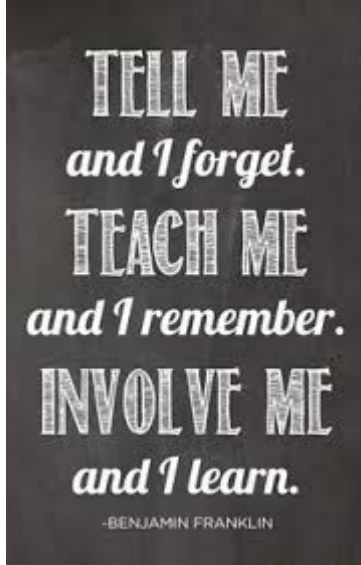
MEETING AGENDA

1. Refer to your shared SSC folder for the Agenda Template.
2. Chairperson and Principal should establish agenda in advance, a week ahead or even at the conclusion of the last meeting.
3. Post no less than 72 hours in advance to inform the school community of the items to be discussed (per Greene Act, "Open Meeting Law")
4. Publicize via school e-newsletter, principals' newsletter, school website, bulletin boards, etc.
5. Include times for each item.
6. Include a time slot for comments from the public (usually at either the beginning or end of the meeting). "Public" means anyone who is not an elected member of the committee.
7. The agenda must be voted on/approved at the beginning of each meeting.

MEETING MATERIALS

1. Any documents, handouts, or presentations that are shared or examined at SSC meetings must be posted publicly with the meeting summary (on the school website, in a binder in the school office, etc.).

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMITTEE ORIENTATION AND RULES OF CONDUCT



In October the district hosts workshops and an orientation for all members of the SSC and other school site committees. Your Committee will also need guidance throughout the year from the Principal and Chair to function at its best, and the BSEP Office staff are planning direct support to each SSC as well.

In your first meeting with a new SSC, you should;

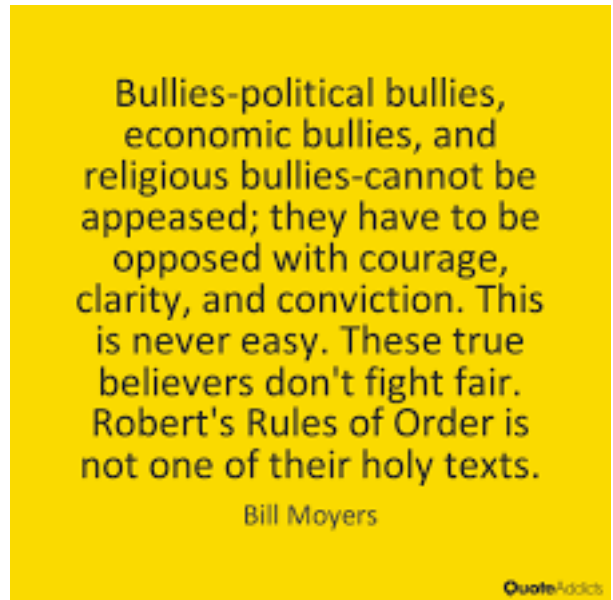
- Discuss and agree on general meeting practices and group norms,
- Review of the current school site plan & budget,
- Review and agree upon the home-school compact (Parent Participation).

MEETING MANAGEMENT

Rules for conducting meetings have been developed over many years. For example, *Robert's Rules of Order* was first published in 1870, and since then there have been elaborations and interpretations from literally hundreds of sources!

The SSC:

- May choose to use Robert's Rules, or a modified version thereof, to conduct its business as long as the group has shared access to a clear set of procedures for setting agendas and conducting its business.
- Should not assume that everyone is familiar with how to make or second a motion. Review how to do this (refer to "Robert's Rules: What You Should Know" included in this handbook) at your first couple of meetings.
- Should include at the end of each agenda a brief item called "for the good of the order," a time for positive comments and suggestions aimed at improving the work of the group.



COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES AND GROUP NORMS

Communication guidelines should reflect an awareness of, and respect for, the cultural and linguistic diversity of members. The group's meeting norms can be affirmed at the beginning of each meeting and new agreements may be added to the list over time. They might include:

- We have thoughtful discussions that are focused on the needs of students,
- We are responsible for supporting the learning of all of our school's students,
- We speak respectfully to each other,
- We assume positive intent,
- We do not engage in ad hominem (personal) attacks,
- We look for opportunities to find points of agreement or compromise,
- We step up to the discussion when we have something to contribute,
- We step back knowing that it's important to hear voices other than our own,
- We are careful and considerate listeners,
- We avoid side conversations,
- We make statements based on evidence and research rather than anecdote,
- We build upon each other's ideas to create the strongest conclusions.

PARTICIPATION, INCLUSION, AND TEAMWORK

ROLE OF MEMBERS

The SSC is only as strong as the commitment of the individual members to their roles and responsibilities, along with their shared commitment to the work of the team. Members should:

- Arrive on time and attend regularly,
- Be present, not “multi-tasking” (by doing other work at the meetings),
- Come to meetings prepared (by reading, researching, talking to diverse community members),
- Ask questions for clarification,
- Be willing to raise and discuss challenging issues that may affect the school’s ability to achieve the results for students outlined.



ROLE OF CHAIR AND PRINCIPAL

- Act as facilitative leaders in decision-making;
- Ensure that all SSC members have the information they need to make timely decisions;
- Draw upon SSC members’ individual skills and areas of expertise to enhance discussions in both substantive and procedural questions,
- Provide opportunities for the SSC to assess itself, for instance to share perceptions of how well meetings and committee work are accomplishing the SSC goals,
- Identify ways to improve meetings and decision-making,
- Resolve problems and conflicts effectively.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A prime function of the SSC is to act as a hub and clearinghouse for information at your school. To this end:

- Actively solicit input and updates from all school-level committees. This includes PTAs, ELACs, Parent Affinity Groups, Program Participants, etc.
- Send representatives from your SSC to provide updates to these same school-level committees about your work, progress, goals, needs, etc.
- Build in time at every meeting for updates from your P&O, PAC, DELAC, and/or SBAC representatives.
- Designate an SSC member to serve as "Broadcaster," to actively communicate with the school community about the SSC's work and to relay important site and district updates. These can be included in your e-tree communications or sent home with students. **See real-world examples from the past year of information pieces used to educate BUSD school communities, included at the end of this section.**

GATHERING INPUT FROM YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- Ensure that input is always focused on School Goals, Programs or Positions, and NEVER on individuals. Any commentary on individual employees cannot be disclosed due to privacy laws and will be unusable for your group.
- Consider a method OTHER than a survey. BUSD will distribute a survey related to the California School Dashboard rubrics to all families in the district, and it may be difficult to get robust participation in a site-focused survey as well.
- Other methods could be:
 - A community forum or meeting; some sites have held a picnic or pancake breakfast to gather families together and request feedback on school programs.
 - Conduct focus groups, with anonymous opportunities to share experiences with specific programs.
 - Identify community members who are directly impacted by SSC decisions and solicit attendance at SSC meetings when discussions will take place. Build in extra time for public comment.

DECISION-MAKING

The SSC is responsible for decisions that support all students' learning outcomes, and **must align decisions with site and district goals**. Before making decisions, planned discussions and presentations should ensure that a variety of ideas and issues are considered and addressed.

Consensus versus Voting:

- A collaborative process leading to consensus is desirable.
- "Consensus" is a decision-making process that works to include the voice of all persons responsible for making the decision.
- SSCs are encouraged to use consensus decision-making during the course of their discussions of recommendations and proposals.
- Straw votes may be taken during discussion.
- If consensus cannot be reached at the point when the decision must be made, and after every effort has been made to reach consensus, a vote should then be taken and the majority opinion prevails.
- Voting must be open -- no secret ballots.
- Methods of achieving consensus and/or coming to a vote should be part of each school site committee's operating agreements.

SCHOOL SITE PLAN AND DOCUMENTATION

The SSC meetings should include monitoring the implementation of the current year's Site Plan, updating the Plan as needed, and developing the Site Plan for the coming school year. In order to both develop and monitor the effectiveness of the school site plan, the SSC must agree on how to review various forms of student performance data.

The SSC will:

- Draw upon school and District expertise in the areas of data interpretation, educational programs, and budgeting;
- Review the programs in the Site Plan, including raising constructive questions or concerns about the activities or programs that are not being implemented, or that are not showing signs of progress toward student goals.
- Review proposed changes or adjustments to the Site Plan and budget throughout the year with the SSC so that questions and concerns can be addressed in a continuous cycle of inquiry.
- **Document** any changes to the plan via the site plan addendum and minutes.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RECRUITMENT AND PARTICIPATION

- **EARLY and FREQUENT reminders:**

1. Distribute the *We Need You!* flyers early and often.
2. Invite participation among incoming parents at orientations.
3. Have the flyer at the front desk and at school gatherings.
4. Ask your SSC chair, PTA president and other parent leaders to speak at your first school-wide gatherings about the different committees to join.
5. Include the nomination process at Elementary Back-to-School night, with nomination forms available for people to nominate themselves or others on the spot.
6. Use your newsletters and e-trees to remind people of the elections.



- **ONE to ONE outreach:**

The Principal's encouragement and invitation is critical in building community conversations.

Work with your parent liaison or Family Engagement Coordinator on coordinated outreach.

- **MESSAGE matters:**

1. Emphasize that the SSC provides vital support for the Principal, helping to pull together and evaluate student data and community input, and ensuring that the development of your school's Safety and Site Plans includes diverse perspectives.
2. Your SSC will be the hub of information and communication for your school community, receiving and sharing out information from many different district- and site-level sources. Parents and Staff who want to see the big picture will LOVE this role!
3. SSCs help the District to be a good steward of public funds, and this oversight is most effective when performed by an informed and engaged community.



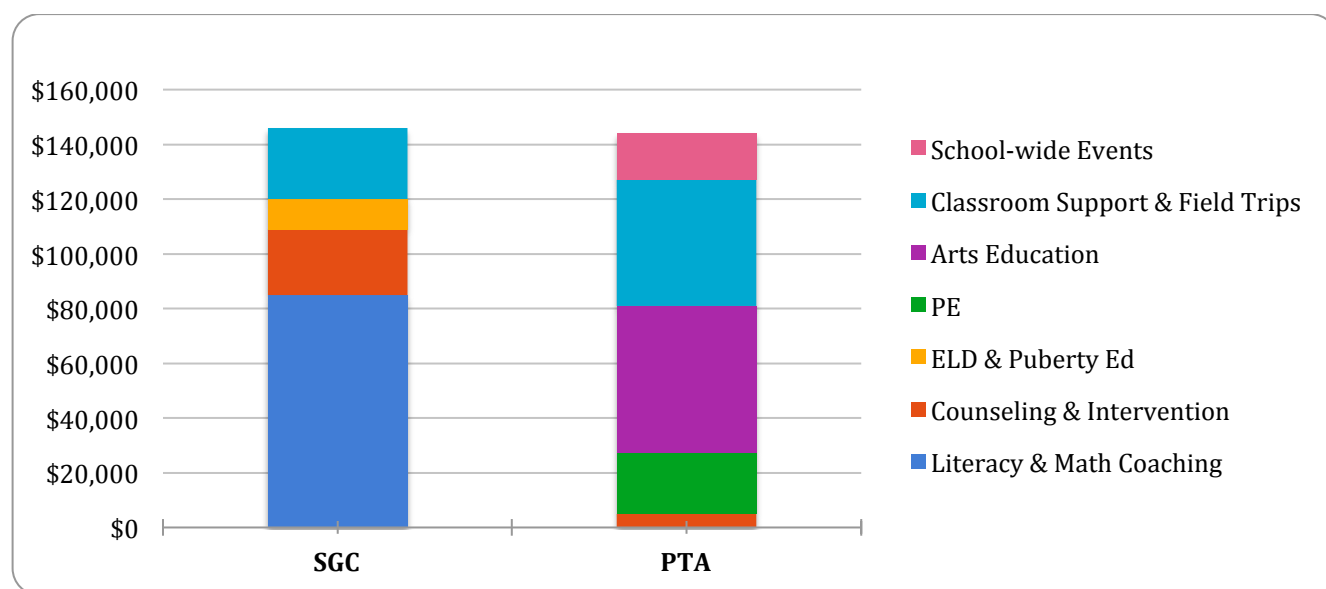
BEST PRACTICES FOR ELECTIONS



- **Help CANDIDATES to be SEEN and understood by the community:**
 1. In addition to candidate statements, you can schedule a candidate forum, or candidate introductions at a PTA or other community meeting held before or at the same time as elections. Help voters hear directly from the candidates if you can.
 2. Limit candidate statements to 2-3 sentences and make them available along with the ballots, and on the school website. Some schools also choose to include candidate photos, to help voters recognize faces they may know from around campus.
 3. Provide a template for the candidate statement – which can be helpful for those who are new to this kind of involvement.
 4. Some sites also wait to announce election results until the first SSC meeting, so that all candidates attend and those not elected can still participate in the committee orientation and be encouraged to serve as alternates who can still contribute to the group's work.
- **Engage VOTER participation**
 1. Send ballots home with students to be returned within the week.
 2. Provide online voting (with some safeguards).
 3. Ask teachers and after-school program staff to give ballots directly to families picking up their students after school.
 4. Attach a fun incentive for students to return ballots, like a homework pass or extra minutes at recess, for the classes with the most participation.
- **Consider staggering election terms**
 1. Each member commits for 2 year terms. Half of the committee seats are up for election each year.
 2. This provides continuity from year-to-year, encourages mentorship between members, and reduces pressure to fill seats each election cycle.

Example of parent-created funding summary.

An involved parent wanted to help community members visualize programs and positions funded by both BSEP site funds and PTA contributions, and show how the different funding sources work together to satisfy student needs across the school. This graphic was published in the school's e-tree and in the print newsletter sent home with students, and was accompanied by a brief description from the Principal.



Note that the parent was careful to combine certain categories, to avoid explicitly listing compensation values for individual staff members.

The parent also made an effort to use real-world program names like Arts Education, Events, and Field Trips rather than only educational terms like “intervention,” to help make the information as accessible as possible.

Example update from BUSD Principal.
(Names changed, obviously!)

Dear Parents,

I am excited to share that we had a very successful School Site Council (SSC) meeting, our first of the year, last Wednesday. Your 95 votes in favor of our proposed slate at Back to School Night allowed us to seat our new council members at that September 19 meeting. Parent members of our SSC include Ms. Marvel (chairperson), Iron Man, America Chavez, Black Widow, Prince T'Challa, and alternates Hawkeye (BSEP representative) and Scarlet Witch. Staff members include teachers Captain America, Doctor Strange, Iron Fist, Luke Cage, classified staff member, Jessica Jones, alternate Peter Parker, and me. At this first meeting, we provided an overview of the responsibilities of the SSC, discussed recent budget allocations, and learned about a new assessment called the STAR 360.

A few important needs also came up that I'd like to share with you. Our long time BSEP (Berkeley Schools Excellence Program) representative, Iron Man, will be "graduating" this year. She has done an outstanding job of representing the MCU at the district level BSEP meetings over these many years. In order to have a new representative set for next year, we should have someone shadow her this year. She would be more than willing to train a replacement over the course of this year so the new person would be ready to carry on as our representative in '19-20. A second representative (and alternate) we need this year is to the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC is a group of parent representatives from all schools that works with District staff to learn about, review, and make recommendations about services provided to our schools through the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).

I know that's a lot of words and acronyms. But I want you to know that these are both important ways to represent our school, and we are required to have people in these positions. Please email me if you are willing to consider stepping up to help out in one of these leadership roles. Just email me at boss@shield.com.

Sincerely,
Nick Fury

Note the tangible information this Principal included: calling out voter participation level, number and names of committee members, and updates on the SSC's recent meeting topics.

Also included are general descriptions of the various committees, and the message asks for volunteers from the entire community, not just SSC members.

This short message invites interest, identifies a contact person for questions, and places emphasis on the opportunity for community members to participate in a leadership capacity.