



Review: Policy 920, School Advisory Councils

Joint responsibilities of family members, community members, staff, and the principal on the SAC (page 2):

*"Creating a **collaborative, inclusive, and transparent** process to inform school level decisions.*

*Fostering a **cooperative and collaborative** environment.*

***Fostering** family member, staff, student, and community **support** around **school priorities.**"*

Key terms:

"Collaborative" – All stakeholders on the SAC should work together to support and achieve the goals of the school, as outlined by the principal.

"Inclusive" – All SAC meetings must be open to the public and advertised to the entire school community (ie, through flyers, an announcement in the newsletter, a robo-call, etc). All families—not just those elected to the SAC—should have an opportunity to provide input during discussions.

"Transparent" – In the spirit of collaboration, individual SAC members should not hold separate meetings unbeknownst to the greater SAC; should not attempt to undermine any one SAC member or the principal's authority; and should strive to air any disagreements or dissatisfactions with SAC discussions/projects while the SAC is together as a group rather than through email chains or separate conversations, so as to ensure all concerns are heard and resolved as a group to the fullest extent possible.

"Cooperative" – By joining the SAC, members agree to work on a council made up of multiple stakeholders representing various groups and agendas. The purpose of the SAC is to unite all stakeholder groups and align priorities so that everyone can work strategically towards school improvement.

"Fostering...support around school priorities" – By electing to be part of a District-managed program, SAC members agree to support the principal's agenda and school priorities. This includes providing input to the principal; asking appropriate questions; gathering further feedback from the greater school community if the principal requests such action; promoting the decision (ie, the program, policy change, new procedure, etc.) to the greater school community to garner buy-in from fellow families; and supporting the principal in implementing the policy/program/procedure to the extent that the principal requests such support.



Role of the Principal (page 2-3):

*"Considering each **recommendation** made by the SAC and communicating actions taken in response to the recommendation to all SAC members."*

*"Acting as a **resource** to the SAC by obtaining information relevant to the functions of the SAC, including information relating to the School District of Philadelphia's policies and procedures."*

Key Terms:

"Considering" and **"recommendation"** – The SAC is an advisory board, meaning that its members should provide the principal with relevant and appropriate input, ideas, pertinent concerns and questions, and suggest alternative solutions to problems. As the leader of the school, the principal has final decision-making authority on any issue/discussion. In alignment with the collaborative spirit of SAC, SAC members should support the principal in whatever decision she/he comes to. While individuals have the right to voice disagreements with decisions made by the principal, SAC members should not utilize their position on the SAC to lobby against the principal.

"Resource" – Working collaboratively goes in both directions. Family and community members are expected to support the principal and help them achieve their goals for the school, but the school principal is likewise expected to provide the necessary and reasonable information so the SAC can provide meaningful feedback and input. (Note: Per FERPA Law, no data that allows individual students or families to be identified will be shared with the SAC.)

Role of Family Members and Community Members

This is not addressed in Policy 920. The Office of Family and Community Engagement will soon debut a SAC Member Code of Conduct, similar to the Volunteer Code of Conduct, to delineate SAC member norms and expectations (for all members, not just family/community members).

Included in the Code of Conduct will be the following:

- SAC members agree to work as a team to strategically and collectively support and achieve the goals of the school.
- SAC members agree to support the school principal, and if disagreements occur, SAC members agree to air their concerns to the greater council during meetings and work to clear concerns, misunderstandings, and questions in an objective, professional manner.



- SAC members will comply with all School District of Philadelphia policies and school-level policies and procedures. This includes School District of Philadelphia Policy 907 (School Visitors), which stipulates that all visitors (including volunteers, parents/family members, community members, and SAC members) must sign-in at the main office and obtain a Visitor's Badge. No individuals, including SAC members, may enter a classroom without prior permission. From Policy 907 (page 1):
 - *"Those wishing to visit a school shall make arrangements in advance with the school office by stating reason, date, and time of the proposed visit. In all cases where permission is not obtained in advance it must be obtained promptly upon entering the school."*
 - *"Acceptable reasons for such visits include observation of significant programs, participation in special events, and conferring with staff. The visit should have legitimate purpose and not interfere with the continuity of instruction."*
 - *"Classroom observation is encouraged to assist the visitor in developing understanding of the school program; observation of a staff member to determine his/her competency is reserved for the administrator."*
- SAC members not only agree to follow all School District of Philadelphia and school-level policies and procedures, but they also understand that if they break any of these policies, they will be given a warning and notice of which policy or procedure they have broken. After a repeated offense of a policy/procedure, the principal has grounds to revoke the individual's School Advisory Council membership.