

Issaquah School District Site Council Training Course

District Policy
Resources and
Related Materials

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Four Site Council Training Modules

Module 1 - Overview & Purpose

Module 2 - Meeting Management

Module 3 - Strategies & Resources

Module 4 - Communications

Click on underlined text throughout the course for examples and resource materials
All examples and resources are also available by advancing to the final slide of the
training course [EXAMPLES & RESOURCES](#)

Click on MOD numbers at the end of each module to go to the beginning of any module

MOD [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#)

Module 1 - Overview & Purpose

- Historic review
- District policy
 - Purpose
 - Focus
 - Composition
 - Role within System
 - Communications
 - Operating Guidelines
 - Support

Module 2 - Meeting Management

- **Internal management** - *How the council operates as an organization*
 - Member and facilitator selection and training
 - Scheduling and communication
 - Agenda format and preparation
 - By-laws, operating norms and evaluation
- **External management** - *How the council operates as linked to the greater school community and the District*
 - Stakeholder representation
 - School community participation
 - District relationship and resources

Module 3 - Strategies & Resources

- District civility policy
- Facilitator guidelines and training
- Development of group dynamics
- Member operating norms
- Guest speaker guidelines
- By-laws review and council evaluation

Module 4 - Communications

- E-News system
- School website
- District website
- Publicizing
 - Meeting dates and topics
 - School community participation
 - Membership opportunities

Module 1 - Overview & Purpose

- Historic review
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MOD 1 - Overview & Purpose

Historic Review (1 of 2)

Issaquah School District Site Councils of the Past

- Early councils of 1980's & 90's unified parent and staff efforts to build strong, quality K-12 student learning environments in Issaquah and around the country
- Councils were separately successful, but would need systematic consistency and clear focus to meet educational and financial accountability and ensure consistent student experience district-wide
 - 1993 *The Washington Education Reform Act*
 - 2000 District Site Council Policy sets roles and consistency
 - 2002 *No Child Left Behind*

MOD 1 - Overview & Purpose

Historic Overview (2 of 2)

Issaquah School District Site Councils of Today

- State and federal laws require consistency and mandate accountability and continually improving student performance
- Site councils partner to ensure that curriculum is consistent, that student, staff and community needs are identified and met, and that research-proven instruction is supported at each school
 - 2000 District site council policy was first step to consistency & role definition
 - 2005 District policy revision fine-tuned earlier work to sharpen-focus on student learning

MOD 1 - Overview & Purpose

District Policy - Purpose (1 of 7)

2005 District Policy is to be reviewed in its entirety by each school council to foster understanding and consistency across the district

The policy...

- School site councils advise the school principal on how to advance student learning through strong shared planning, communications and problem-solving
- Purpose of site councils
 - Create and maintain optimal learning environments
 - Blend values and perspectives of community, parents, staff, and students for effective school-wide results
 - Foster effective communications among school stakeholders
 - Provide creative school-wide planning and problem solving
 - Provide input for principal and superintendent on matters of District-wide interest

MOD 1 - Overview & Purpose

District Policy - Focus (2 of 7)

- Focus on matters directly related to student learning
 - Advancing the school's Continuous Improvement Plan, based on achievement data
 - Effective transitions from middle to high school or post-secondary
 - Relationship of school program to student needs (enrichment & remedial, before and after school support, etc.)
- Focus on matters indirectly related to student learning- some examples
 - Culture, climate, safety and facilities
 - Fair treatment, staff support, school rules & student discipline
- Council should *not* focus on problems related to individual employees, students or classrooms
- Councils should *not* focus on personnel decisions made by the principal, individuals, specific classrooms, or matters that fail to contribute significantly to student learning and/or well-being
- When addressing a matter controlled by state or federal law, District policy, external regulations, or negotiated labor contracts, the council shall refer the matter to central administration, along with the council's input, for further attention

MOD 1 - Overview & Purpose

District Policy - Composition (3 of 7)

- Size, composition and frequency of meetings
 - Proportionately represent various stakeholder groups
 - Not function essentially as staff meetings
 - Blend interests and perspectives of students, staff, and community
 - Combined parent/student membership makes up 50% of the total council
 - Meet often enough to be viable problem-solving body
 - Develop and publish a regular schedule of meetings
 - Principal represents interests of students, staff, parent and community at all times

MOD 1 - Overview & Purpose

District Policy - Role within System (4 of 7)

- Role of site councils within the larger system
 - District leaders value stakeholder participation in decisions that affect them
 - Site councils add value to leadership and management of schools, increasing understanding, trust and support
 - Site councils generate ideas and improve communications and understanding among stakeholders
 - Site council open channels to the District administration for system-wide consideration or decisions that impact the larger system
 - Provide school-level input on topics of District-wide interest
 - Principals share leadership; however, they retain ultimate responsibility and accountability for their schools

MOD 1 - Overview & Purpose

District Policy - Communications (5 of 7)

- Communications to stakeholder groups
 - The Council as a whole, and each member, must be responsible for effective communications with stakeholder groups
 - Meetings include a structured period for direct stakeholder input
 - Reports of discussions, decisions and activities should be disseminated to all stakeholders
 - Individual members are expected to communicate to and from the stakeholder groups they represent
 - Meeting minutes and other materials are posted in a timely manner on the District website; councils learn from one another and share resources

MOD 1 - Overview & Purpose

District Policy - Support and Operation (6 of 7)

■ Operating Guidelines

- Keep accurate minutes available as appropriate to interested parties
- Document clear, open process for selecting members
- Provide for rotation and continuity in membership and leadership
- Adopt by-laws and review them annually
- Develop a process for assessing and evaluating effectiveness and for setting goals for improvement
 - Include use of training materials to meet local needs
 - Conduct an exit survey of members as the end of each year

MOD 1 - Overview & Purpose

District Policy - Support and Operation (7 of 7)

■ Support

- Facilitators must know the purpose of councils, roles and responsibilities of members and District expectations
- Facilitators should have skills in meeting management, consensus-building, conflict resolution and fulfill designated tasks
- All members access training materials provided by the District as needed

Module 2 - Meeting Management

- **Internal management** - *How the council operates as an organization*
 - Member and facilitator selection and training
 - Scheduling and communication
 - Agenda format and preparation
 - By-laws, operating norms and evaluation

- **External management** - *How the council operates as linked to the greater school community and the District*
 - Stakeholder representation
 - School community participation
 - District relationship and resources

MOD 2 - Internal Meeting Management (1 of 6)

How the council operates as an organization

Member Selection and Training

- Successful site councils include members representing all stakeholder groups within the school community
 - Staff, administrators, classified and certificated reps from various departments and school areas
 - Parent reps of different grades, feeder schools and organizations
 - Student representatives (see [District Policy](#) and [By-laws](#))
 - District liaison
- Follow [By-laws](#), and established election process for all members
 - Publish applications and election timeline
 - Use [Application Form](#)
 - Applicants are responsible for reviewing bylaws, operating norms and council materials
 - Record election/selection process in council minutes
- Set a time to review district training materials
- Review [Operating Norms](#) with each new council, each year
- Provide training and exercises for establishing group dynamics as needed (reference [Module 3](#))

MOD 2 - Internal Meeting Management (2 of 6)

How the council operates as an organization

Facilitator Selection and Training

- Council facilitators/chairpersons should be carefully selected and trained accordingly
- Follow [By-laws](#) and established selection process
- Review tasks and responsibilities
- Provide [Facilitator Training](#) as needed for...
 - Understanding [District Policy](#) and council operation
 - Running effective meetings
 - Communicating - with council members, the school community and the District

MOD 2 - Internal Meeting Management (3 of 6)

How the council operates as an organization

Scheduling and Communications

- Schedule meetings according to by-laws, monthly meetings are suggested
- Establish starting and ending time in agreement with council members
- Publicize everywhere possible (reference [Module 4](#))
 - School and District websites
 - School reader board
 - Send reminders to school community (including parents and staff) through school E-News and newsletters
 - Publicize meeting topics whenever possible
 - Give reasonable notice of meeting changes

MOD 2 - Internal Meeting Management (4 of 6)

How the council operates as an organization

Agenda Format and Preparation

- Reference example [Agenda Format](#)
 - Include structured period for community input such as a “public forum” or “guest speaker” time
 - [Guest Speaker Guidelines](#) are recommended
 - Include structured time for members to report - reps of PTSA, Booster Club, Staff, Principal, etc.
 - Facilitator and Principal prepare agenda before the meeting
 - Provide a way that the school community can ask questions, get information or submit issues
i.e. [Information Form](#) or via email to council members

MOD 2 - Internal Meeting Management (5 of 6)

How the council operates as an organization

By-laws, Operating Norms & Evaluation (1 of 2)

- By-laws should:
 - Be reviewed annually by the council
 - Align with District Policy
 - Contain:
 - Council purpose and focus
 - Membership election, duties and voting
 - Meeting notification and schedule
 - Record- keeping and reporting (reference Meeting Minutes)
 - Council Evaluation and annual by-laws review

MOD 2 - Internal Meeting Management (6 of 6)

How the council operates as an organization

By-laws, Operating Norms & Evaluation (2 of 2)

■ Operating Norms

- Adopted by each Council at the beginning of each year

■ Evaluation

- Recommended Council Evaluation via survey at the end of each year
- Suggested periodical survey of stakeholder groups
 - Survey school community on site council in general, or on specific topics, i.e. school communication
 - Contact District communications department to create electronic surveys

MOD 2 - External Meeting Management

How the council operates as linked to the greater school community & District

- Stakeholder representation and communication is key
 - Publicize selection/election process
 - Open communication as many ways as possible to and from stakeholder groups and council reps
- Ensure public aspect of meetings - publicize meetings and agenda topics
- After council meetings, report to stakeholder groups at their meetings (i.e, staff, PTSA or Booster Club meetings)
- Publish highlights and minutes of each meeting in a timely manner.
 - Publish on the school website
 - Send to Admin Assistant of Elementary & Middle School Ed for publishing on District website

Module 3 - Strategies & Resources

- District civility policy
- Facilitator guidelines and training
- Development of group dynamics
- Member operating norms
- Guest speaker guidelines
- By-laws review and council evaluation

MOD 3 - Strategies & Resources (1 of 2)

- With appropriate representational membership and proper operating procedures successful site councils can hold exploratory discussion, often problem-solving difficult topics
- When blending the values, perspectives and personalities of a diverse group it is valuable to spend some time establishing positive group dynamics, especially at the beginning of the year
 - Familiarize members with the [District Civility Policy](#)
 - Obtain facilitator training as appropriate to ensure meeting efficiency
 - Review and officially adopt council [Operating Norms](#)
 - Review by-laws and conduct [Council Evaluation](#) annually
 - Establish [Guest Speaker Guidelines](#) and agree on method for topics and issues to be brought to the council to be addressed
 - Establish an [Information Form](#) or other method available to the school community to bring questions and issues to the council

MOD 3 - Strategies & Resources (2 of 2)

- An atmosphere of trust may develop naturally, but may also need to be aided by appropriate team-building exercises
 - With this course the following [Team-building Resources](#) are available
 - TRUST
 - Some Ideas for Launches and Fun
 - Principles for Successful Engagement
 - Tips for Effective Conflict Resolution
 - Contact the District communications department for additional or varied alternatives

Module 4 - Communications (1 of 2)

- E-News system
 - Identify person in school responsible for sending emails via E-news
 - Establish routine for publicizing meetings and council member contact information
- School website
 - Publish meetings on school calendar and highlight with current key dates on school home page
 - Establish site council button on home page
 - On site council page be sure to include meeting dates, [By-laws](#), highlights of meetings, complete [Meeting Minutes](#)
 - Include member contact information and provide a way that the school community can ask questions, get information or submit issues, i.e. [Information Form](#) or via email to council members
 - At the appropriate time, include new member application process, dates and forms
 - Keep all information current

MOD 4 - Communications (2 of 2)

- District website
 - Send meeting dates and minutes to Admin Assistant of Elem & Middle School Ed for publishing on District website
- Publicize in all possible places - E-News, Web, paper newsletters, classroom newsletters and websites, local newspaper
 - Meeting dates and topics
 - School community participation
 - Membership opportunities
 - Provide a way that the school community can ask questions, get information or submit issues, i.e. [Information Form](#) or via email to council members

Examples & Resources

- [District Policy](#)
- Example of [Application Form](#)
- Example of [Meeting Minutes](#)
- Example of meeting [Agenda Format](#)
- Example of council [Operating Norms](#)
- Example of [Guest Speaker Guidelines](#)
- Example of an [Information Form](#)
- Example of [By-laws](#)
- Example of [Council Evaluation](#)
- [Facilitator Training](#)
- [District Civility Policy](#)
- [Team-building Resources](#)
- [Training Course Evaluation](#)