

Oregon Education Act

The Oregon Education Act for the 21st Century (HB2991) states that:

There shall be established at each school a 21st Century Schools Council.

The 21st Century Schools Council, however, shall not interfere with the duties, responsibilities, and rights of duly elected school district boards.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the 21st Century Schools Site Council is to work in collaboration with the school district, school staff, and community toward the improvement of student performance at the school site.

Site councils are successful when:

- The district's mission and student learning goals guide their work;
- The primary focus is on improving student performance;
- There is a solid educational basis as a foundation for collaborative decision-making;
- Site councils have the support of stakeholders;
- Site councils establish high levels of openness, teamwork, trust; and
- Site councils emphasize change with purpose, innovation, and creativity.

Objectives for Site Councils

- To place the overall interests of the students first;
- To help all stakeholders share responsibility for students success;
- To enhance parent and community involvement;
- To provide a forum for discussions on school success; and
- To promote positive attitudes toward public education.

Responsibilities

To the extent practical and within the policies, vision and goals of the school district, school site councils include:

- The development of plans to improve the professional growth of the staff;
- The dispensing of Professional Growth Funds from each buildings allocation;
- The improvement of the school's instructional program;
- The development and coordination of plans for the implementation of programs under the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century at the school site;

- The administration of grants-in-aid for the professional development of teachers and classified district employees; and
- The development of annual School Improvement Plans.

Site councils shall not have the authority to override contractual agreements, administrative rules or regulations, or board policy, without the approval of the superintendent and the board, respectively. No council shall have the authority to expend funds other than the Professional Growth Fund, 21st Century school grant monies or other grants, unless authorized by the school board.

Duties

Specific duties of site council include:

- Developing building site council roles and responsibilities;
- Developing, for review by the school staff and election process, bylaws, training, and processes for collaborative decision-making;
- Developing and contributing to a school improvement plan;
- Maintaining an updated school profile;
- Supporting staff development for school priorities;
- Ensuring that the Open Meeting Law is followed;
- Communicating the activities and decisions of the council; and
- Establishing operating procedures for the site council (decision-making processes, communication, elections, meetings, and bylaws).

Membership

The 21st Century Schools Site Councils will be composed of teachers, parents or guardians, the principal, and classified district personnel. The council may also include persons identified by the school community as having particular benefit for council memberships, such as business representatives, community members, students, or other district staff. The membership shall be composed as follows:

- Not more than half of the members shall be teachers elected by the teaching staff of the school;
- Not more than half of the members shall be parents/guardians of students attending the school elected by parents and guardians of students enrolled in that school;
- Community representatives may be appointed by the site council;
- At least one member shall be a classified employee elected by the school staff; and
- One member shall be the principal of the building or the principal's designee.

The site council will annually elect a chairperson who will conduct meetings and work with the principal to align site council work with district policies, vision, goals, and operating procedures.

Term of Office

The term of office for all members of the council, excluding administrators, shall be determined by each site council and included in the by-laws of that council. Elected members may be re-elected for consecutive terms.

The membership year shall be July through June of the following year, with new appointments and elections to the school councils being determined no later than September 30th of each school year.

Council Meetings

School site councils are required by state law to comply with the open meeting laws. To be in compliance, follow these guidelines:

- All meetings are open to the public and all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting. The site council voluntarily may allow limited public participation at their meetings.
- No quorum of the council can meet in private for the purpose of deciding on or deliberating toward a decision.
- The meeting site must be accessible to the disabled and interpreter services must be available if they are requested.
- Public notice of the meeting is required. The notice must be “reasonably calculated to give actual notice to interested persons...of the time and place” of the meeting and of the “principal subjects” that will be discussed at the meeting. Including advanced notices of the meeting in newsletters and posting them on bulletin boards within the school should be sufficient to meet this requirement.
- No special meeting can be held without twenty-four hours notice unless there is an emergency. It is unlikely that any site council business would be in the category of an emergency.
- Written minutes that “give a true reflection of the matters discussed at the meeting and the views of the participants” must be kept and available to the public within a reasonable time after the meeting.

- The minutes must contain the following information: members present, all motions and proposals and their dispositions, votes (consensus decisions), and the substance of discussion.

Code of Ethics

Site council members will:

- Be non-judgmental, respect confidentiality, hold constructive discussions, and reach decisions through consensus; however, if a vote is necessary, all council members are equal and can vote (other than the district liaison);
- Respect and recognize the rights of students and all district employees;
- Avoid discussions about individual persons (parents, students, district staff);
- Identify all agenda items and/or issues with which they have a possible conflict of interest; and
- Focus on school-wide issues and what is best for the school and its students.

Role of the Chairperson

The chairperson of the site council is elected by the members of the council and serves a one year term. The chairperson has the responsibility for:

- Establishing the meeting agenda;
- Assuring a comfortable atmosphere;
- Managing the time during the scheduled meeting;
- Assuring there is a recorder or secretary keeping the minutes of the meeting and that the minutes are published in a timely manner;
- Allowing input and involvement by all members of the council;
- Identifying the parameters of the site council responsibilities;
- Clarifying and summarizing during site council discussion;
- Ensuring that non-council members' issues within the parameters of the site council responsibilities are included in the agenda for site council discussion; and
- Ensures that the open meeting law is followed.

Role of the Principal

The principal of the school, in consultation with parents, teachers and other staff, shall facilitate the establishment of and shall assist in the operation of the site council and be responsible for providing the advice necessary to enable the council to operate within the Oregon Education Act for the 21st Century and its regulations, David Douglas School Board policies, operating procedures, and contractual agreements. The principal works with the site council toward common

goals of school improvement and carries to the council the vision for the school. The principal helps the council contribute to the discussion on school improvement in the context of the whole school, the school district, and the state of Oregon.

Relative to the site council, the principal:

- Is a voting member;
- Shares student performance data;
- Engages with the council in analysis of student performance data;
- Engages with the council in setting goals that contribute to the school improvement plan;
- Supports collaborative discussion and consensus decision-making regarding site council business; and
- Provides continuity, creating links between the work of this site council, the one that worked in the previous year, and the one that will work in the next year.

Role of District Liaison

Each site council will have a liaison from the Curriculum Department to assist in the gathering of data or information and to answer questions regarding district goals. The liaison is not a voting member of the council. The liaison acts as a resource for the council and any of its committees. The liaison was added to councils during the 1997-1998 school year at the request of the principals.

Professional Growth Funds and Grant Accounting

The principal and site council chair will receive a professional growth fund allocation by September 15th of each school year from the District Office based on the FTE of licensed staff in each school. It is the responsibility of each site council to keep an accurate accounting of professional growth fund expenditures and 21st Century Grant fund expenditures.