All About Collaborative School Committee (CSC) Membership, Elections and Running Effective Meetings

Training title: All About Collaborative School Committee (CSC) Membership, Elections and Running Effective Meetings

Length of time: 90 min

Materials needed:
- PowerPoint on CSC Membership, Elections and Running Effective Meetings (along with any necessary computer, projector, and AV equipment)
- 4 blank flip charts for documenting key points from the discussion on consensus decision-making
- Copy of the most current CSC Handbook for the trainer, and if possible, for participants
- Printed handouts
  - CSC membership handout (optional – included in PowerPoint)

Set up
- The room should be arranged into tables that either make one large circle/square, or in small groups, depending on available tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>FACILITATION PROCESS/CONTENT</th>
<th>HANDOUTS &amp; MATERIALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
<td>PowerPoint slide 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  Trainer introduces him/herself and shares qualifications to train on this topic
  Participants introduce themselves (recommended for trainer to suggest that participants share their 1. Name, 2. School affiliation, 3. Role there, and since we’ll be talking about membership later, 4. Favorite club or organization or committee that you’ve been a member of (can be any time in your life!)

Logistics

  Trainers shares the following information:
  - Location of bathrooms, exits, etc.
  - This training will last an hour and 20 minutes. There will not be any formal breaks, but please feel free to take care of your needs as they arise.
  - Other brief announcements as needed

| 5 min | Overview of agenda and objectives | PowerPoint slide 3 |

  Trainer explains:
  - Collaborative School Committees, or CSCs, are designed to engage parents,
teachers and the community to enhance student achievement and school climate, provide strategic direction in support of the school’s mission and vision as stated in the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) and help ensure compliance with various laws and regulations.

- Our training today will cover three main topics for CSCs. These topics will help ensure that your committees have the proper membership composition, run elections as designed and hold effective meetings.

*Trainer walks through agenda, sharing a bit on each item and associated process.*

### Share objectives for today’s training

*Trainer explains, “Our main goals today are that you”:
- Gain an understanding of the committee’s operational requirements
- Feel supported in developing a strong and diverse committee that will be able to run effective meetings*

### Membership

*Trainer explains, Now we are going to talk about CSC membership, including how members are selected, how long they serve, the type of diversity of membership expected and the composition of the committee.*

**Selection**
- New members are selected through a nomination process.
- Selection for membership should be through volunteers.

**Terms**
- CSC members are elected to a one-year or two-year term.
- Members may be elected to no more than three (3) successive terms.
- Staggered terms may be used to promote continuity.

**Diversity**
- The diversity of the school population should be represented in the CSC membership (e.g., low-English proficiency students, students on free or reduced-cost lunch status, students with disabilities, students who are gifted...)
- If, after making good-faith efforts, a principal or an organization of parents, teachers, and students is unable to find a sufficient number of persons who are willing to serve on the school accountability committee, the principal, with advice from the organization of parents, teachers, and students, may establish an alternative membership plan for the school accountability committee.

*Trainer passes out CSC membership handout (or instructs participants to turn to page 3 in the CSC handbook), and explains:*
### Composition

- There are a minimum of seven members required on a CSC.
- The composition of the CSC is required to include:
  - Three parents of students enrolled in the school, may be nominated by anyone, including self, and are chosen by the vote of their peers.
  - One teacher who provides instruction at the school, may be nominated by anyone, including self, and are chosen by the vote of their peers.
  - One business/employer or community representative from the local community; is nominated by a member of the CSC and approved by the other members of the CSC committee.
  - One adult member of an organization of parents, teachers and students recognized by the school.
  - The school principal or principal’s designee.
- In addition, optionally, the CSC can include up to five more members:
  - One classified employee representative, may be nominated by anyone, including self, and are chosen by the vote of their peers.
  - Three students in high schools, two student representatives in middle school (middle school student representatives are selected by the student council).
- A few other requirements include:
  - There can be no more than two parents or teachers representing any one grade or program.
  - If the CSC has more than the above-described members, the CSC shall ensure that the number of parents elected to the committee exceeds the number of representatives from the group with the next highest representation.
  - If there is a conflict of interest, that person should recuse him/herself from voting on a particular matter.

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### Governance

**Trainer explains, Now we are going to discuss a few important governance requirements for CSCs, including what to do when vacancies occur, how to handle attendance issues and what to do in cases of removal or recall.**

**Vacancies**

- If a vacancy occurs during the school year, the constituent group should elect a new member who will fill the vacancy for the duration of the vacancy term.
- Upon completion of his/her vacancy term, that person may be reelected for a full term, and the vacancy term will not be counted as a successive term.
- In case of vacancy of the business representative position, a CSC member will recommend a business representative to the remaining CSC members for approval.
### Attendance
- If a CSC member accumulated three consecutive unexcused meeting absences during the school year, this should be grounds for removal from the committee.
- However, under extenuating circumstances, each situation should be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

### Removal
- If a CSC member fails to comply with these bylaws, procedures or rules and regulations of the CSC Committee, or the district, this failure should be grounds for removal from the CSC Committee.

### Recall
- If a CSC member was elected or chosen by a constituency group (teachers, parents, classified member, students or community representative) that member may be recalled.
- A process for this recall is outlined in the CSC handbook on pg. 8

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### Elections

*Trainer explains, Now, we’ll discuss how elections should be conducted, including when they should be held, how to solicit nominations and the process for holding the election and onboarding new members.*

#### Time frame
- Elections should be held as needed every year during the first two weeks of school, or during May of the following school year.

#### Nomination
- Forms
  - Persons nominated for the CSC must adhere to and sign a nomination form.
  - Nomination forms will clearly state due dates and must be in the office by the date and time specified.
  - A sample nomination form is included in the CSC district handbook on p. 14
- Process:
  - The CSC will be notified.
  - The ballots will be prepared and sent to the appropriate constituents.

#### Process
- Recruitment
  - Participants can be recruited through a letter sent home with students explain the CSC and elections process.
  - A sample elections letter is included in the CSC district handbook on p. 13.
- Voting
  - A sample ballot is included in the CSC district handbook on p. 15.
  - Ballots contain the reason a candidate wishes to serve on the CSC.
  - Parent ballots are sent home with the student, and certificated-staff ballots are distributed through interschool mail. Electronic ballots are also an allowable option.
  - Each household is permitted one vote, and all ballots must be returned to the school by the due date and time and placed in the ballot box located in the office.
- Accountability
  - The CSC then counts the ballots and announces the committee by letter.
  - A sample elections results letter is included in the CSC district handbook on p. 16.
  - To ensure accountability, all ballots will be kept on file for a period of one year following the election.

Onboarding of new members
- New members receive the following materials: (1) Copy of the CSC handbook, (2) Copy of the bylaws and procedures, (3) The current UIP
- They are also required to participate in CSC training

10 min

### Meetings

*Trainer explains, The next piece we’ll discuss is about meetings, including how often they should be held, who leads them, how agendas and minutes are created, and requirements for quorum and public engagement*

**Meeting frequency requirements**
- Meetings are held at least once a month and should be scheduled by the CSC.

**Officer requirements**
- The required leadership positions should consist of a CSC chairperson and a secretary.
  - The **chairperson** is responsible for maintaining order of each meeting. This is achieved through effective facilitation of discussions, recognizing the individual who has the floor and conducting the collaborative resolution for issues under consideration by the CSC.
  - The **secretary** is responsible for compiling the meeting minutes along with a list of decisions made for all meetings. The CSC secretary should compile minutes of each meeting in a notebook for each school year.
- Duties should be assigned at the beginning of the school year by consensus of the committee.

**Agendas**
- Agendas should contain all the items that will be covered in the meeting
- A sample agenda is included in the CSC district handbook on p. 19.
- Before the meeting: Agendas should be made available to staff and the community (publicly) at least one working day before the CSC meeting.
- For the next meeting:
  - A partial agenda for the next meeting should be discussed at the conclusion of each meeting.
  - A final agenda will be prepared through consultation with the principal and chairperson with input from the committee members.
  - Topics for consideration must be submitted to the CSC in writing or to a CSC member. It is the responsibility of each CSC member to present issues conveyed to them with the intent that the information be shared with the CSC.
- Posting agendas: Agendas will be posted on the CSC communication board and/or other agreed-upon location.

**Minutes**
- It’s very important to note that minutes from the meeting will be publicly posted and made available to staff and to the community in a timely fashion.
- Minutes should also be put in CSC file for the school’s records.
- A sample of meeting minutes is included in the CSC district handbook on p. 20.
- Attendees should sign in at each meeting; a sample sign-in sheet is included in the CSC district handbook on p. 18.

**Quorum requirement**
- A quorum must be present at the CSC meeting in order to enact or take action upon issues.
- A quorum is majority of CSC members and must include the principal.
- If there are quick turnaround decisions that must be resolved prior to the next scheduled meeting, a committee may wish to call an emergency meeting called by the principal. A quorum **must** be present here to make a decision. The entire CSC will abide by the decision derived from this emergency meeting, and the discussions should be communicated to all CSC members at the next scheduled meeting.

**Public engagement**
- CSC meetings are always open to the public.
- It is required that notice of these meetings be posted in appropriate public places as well as published in the school calendar, newsletter or other appropriate medium.
- At least once a month, CSC meetings should include time for public input.

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<th>10 min</th>
<th><strong>Decision-making process</strong></th>
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<td><em>Trainer explains, The final topic that we will discuss today is the consensus decision-making process used. In CSCs, decisions should be made by consensus.</em></td>
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### What is consensus?

- Consensus means that the decision is either unanimous or a majority decision that the entire committee (including any dissenter) will implement and support.
- Consensus decisions represent a group decision, supported (or at least accepted) by all group members, that is based on:
  - A thorough understanding of relevant information
  - Participation by all group members
  - An understanding of different perspectives, concerns, needs and recommendations (you have listened to others and they have listened to you)
  - Creative effort to accommodate different needs
  - A willingness to raise and understand disagreement and address the underlying needs manifested in disagreement
- **At the end, you should support the decision as if it were your own.**

### To help foster this type of decision making process:

- The CSC will operate in an environment marked by mutual support and respect. Collaborative decision-making is based upon trust and on the belief in the strength of shared responsibility in decision making. In order for this to happen, all participants must be able to state their cases, be listened to and have their points of view considered.
- Members cannot be instructed by their representative groups on how to decide; they should decide for the good of the students.
- Members will see proposals before decisions are made on the proposals.
- The CSC will establish norms at the first meeting and follow them.
- Facilitation may be requested whenever any three representatives of the CSC want to improve the collaborative decision-making process.

### If a CSC is not able to reach a decision by consensus...

- If the timing of the decision permits, the CSC shall seek facilitation assistance from the Instructional Superintendent to resolve the impasse.
- If the timing of the decision does not permit further delay, the principal shall make an impasse decision.

### Activity and discussion on consensus decision-making

**Trainer explains that we’ll engage in a short activity to practice consensus decision-making. Participants will be broken into small groups, and work together to come to a consensus decision about the hypothetical MathDance! program (facilitator reads prompt). Make sure that participants know that this is an entirely made-up problem that they’ll engage in to practice the consensus method.**

Groups will have eight minutes to deliberate (facilitator sets a timer) and come to a decision, and will share out their decision to other groups at the end of the five minutes.
Next, trainer engages participants in a discussion about consensus decision-making by asking the following questions:

- What was most challenging about the process?
- What made the process easier?
- What tips or successes can you share about the process of using consensus decision-making? (Feel free to draw from your earlier experiences using consensus decision-making)
- What questions do you have about the process?

Trainer should document key points on a flip chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 min</th>
<th><strong>Wrap up</strong></th>
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<td><em>Trainer thanks participants for coming today.</em></td>
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*Trainer explains,*

This is a lot of information, but as I mentioned before, there are a number of other trainings that relate to the CSC. All together, are to support the development of high functioning CSCs that operate in compliance with state and district policies.

In addition to this training, you can also learn about:

1. The UIP, school budget and School Performance Framework
2. The Policies, purpose and scope of the CSC

*Trainer asks participants to share (round-robin style) one important takeaway from today’s training.*