SAC LAUNCH GUIDE

How to Start a School Advisory Council at Your School

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The School District of Philadelphia
Office of Family and Community Engagement

SAC Launch Guide

HOW TO START A SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL AT YOUR SCHOOL

School District of Philadelphia

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Table of Contents

Letter of Introduction

Dear parents, family members, students, principals, school staff, and community members:

On June 16, 2016, the School Reform Commission adopted Policy 920, authorizing the establishment of an active and engaged School Advisory Council (SAC) in each district school. The goals of this initiative are to improve student academic achievement, school climate and culture, and family engagement through the support of a dedicated, diverse range of individuals—family members, students, school staff, and community members—who come together to move this work forward for our children.

Stakeholder engagement and sustaining a collaborative culture are priorities within our School District. Active, meaningful engagement and collaboration allow for valuable input to occur among our many stakeholders, allowing us all to define opportunities and challenges and work as a team on solutions to help ensure that our students have every chance to succeed.

For families and schools to truly be equal partners in education, there must be a venue for all stakeholders—parents, family members, students, administrators, teachers, school staff, and community members—to join forces for the purpose of improving our children's educational experience. The SAC allows for these collaborative conversations to happen.

Collaboration does not end at the school level. Every office and school in our Central Office and School District plays an important role and will contribute to the implementation of School Advisory Councils.

An active School Advisory Council in every school will help us in our efforts to achieve the School District of Philadelphia's Mission Statement: "For all children, a great school, close to where they live." When we all come together for the benefit of our children and students, the potential for success is unlimited.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our students and schools. I hope you'll join us in our renewed focus and efforts in creating strong School Advisory Councils.

Sincerely,

William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent
The School District of Philadelphia

Purpose of the SAC Launch Guide

The purpose of the School Advisory Council SAC Launch Guide is to provide accurate information and helpful guidance in starting a SAC from the ground up. This Guide is designed to serve family members, principals, teachers, school-based staff, administrators, students, and community members who are interested in supporting the creation and/or maintenance of a SAC.

This Guide will provide updated information regarding SAC membership, roles and responsibilities, and accountability procedures. It will also provide resources and best practice tips for recruiting SAC members, holding meetings, and making meaningful change happen at the school level.

The Guide includes the SAC Constitution, a new document created by the Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) to clearly outline the expectations and policies for SACs. SAC members should refer to the SAC Constitution when they have questions about their roles and responsibilities and the rules of SACs.

We have also included a template for SAC Bylaws. SAC Bylaws should expand on the policies outlined in the SAC Constitution and explain the procedures that the SAC will follow to carry out their responsibilities as indicated in the Constitution. SACs can and should make alterations to the Bylaws provided in this Guide; the Bylaws provided here are intended to be a template reflecting the FACE Office's SAC procedural suggestions.

The sections following the SAC Constitution and Bylaws include more detailed information on our new SAC criteria, best practices for creating a successful SAC, and step-by-step guidelines for getting your SAC in compliance with the FACE Office's criteria.

Please reach out to the FACE Office with any questions, comments, or concerns at sac@philasd.org. Thank you for reading!

1

School Advisory Council Overview

School Advisory Council Overview

A School Advisory Council (SAC) is a peer elected, collaborative team composed of family members, the school principal, teachers or other school based staff, students (in schools with grades 6-12), and community members, which champions the work for improved student achievement, effective teaching in the classroom, and parent and community engagement in the educational process.

OVERALL GOALS OF THE SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

SACs have three primary focus areas at the school:

1. Support academic achievement

"Academic achievement" refers to both improved test scores and improved engagement with classroom instruction. The SAC provides a unique opportunity for conversations on academics — both families and school staff can offer their perspectives and combine their expertise so that learning is strengthened both at school and at home.

> " Studies show that when parents/family members are more engaged in their student's school, the student's academic achievement improves. "

2. Improve school climate and culture

"School climate and culture" refers to the safety of the school as well as the social-emotional and physical well-being and competency of students in the school. Students learn better if they feel safe, healthy, and emotionally supported.

3. Strengthen family engagement

Studies show that when parents/family members are more engaged in their student's school, the student's academic achievement improves. "Family engagement" involves treating parents/family members as equal partners in education and providing meaningful opportunities for parents/family members to contribute to improving the school and improving their own capacity for supporting learning in the home.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

In accordance with School Reform Commission Policy 920 adopted on June 16, 2016, **all District schools are expected to have functioning SACs starting in the 2016 - 2017 school year.** To ensure that SACs are implemented with

fidelity, the Office of Family and Community Engagement has developed the following criteria to determine whether a SAC exists at a school:

1. The SAC has *Ongoing Meetings*.

SACs must meet at least every other month. However, in order to affect real change at the school, the FACE Office recommends that SACs meet every month.

The SAC must post its Meeting Calendar publicly so that non-SAC members can attend if they so choose.

SAC *members* ultimately have voting power when decisions must be made. However, SAC meetings are open to the public, and therefore anyone can sit in on meetings and contribute to the discussion.

2. The *Council Composition* includes all stakeholders.

The SAC must include family members (a simple majority), the school principal, school staff, students (in middle and high schools), and community members. Policy 920, which mandates the existence of SACs in all District schools, does not specify how many members must sit on a SAC.
Below are *examples* of SAC compositions:

Elementary School (K – 5)

Stakeholder Group	# of Seats
Principal	1
Teachers/Staff	2
Family	4
Community	1
Total # of Members	**8**

Elementary School (K – 8)

Stakeholder Group	# of Seats
Principal	1
Teachers/Staff	2
Students (from grades 6, 7, or 8)	2
Family	5
Community	1
Total # of Members	**11**
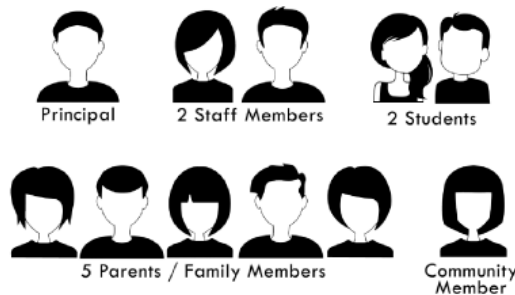
Middle School (5 – 8, 6 – 8, or 7 – 8)	
Stakeholder Group	# of Seats
Principal	1
Teachers/Staff	2
Students	2
Family	5
Community	1
Total # of Members	**11**

Principal — 2 Staff Members — 2 Students — 5 Parents / Family Members — Community Member
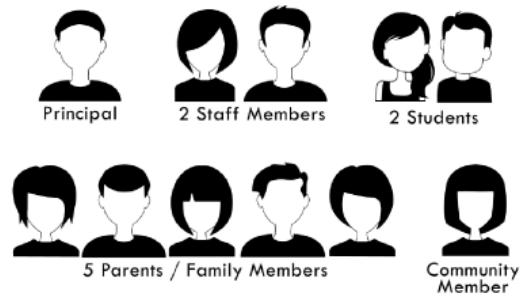
High School (9 – 12)	
Stakeholder Group	# of Seats
Principal	1
Teachers/Staff	2
Students	2
Family	5
Community	1
Total # of Members	**11**

Principal — 2 Staff Members — 2 Students — 5 Parents / Family Members — Community Member
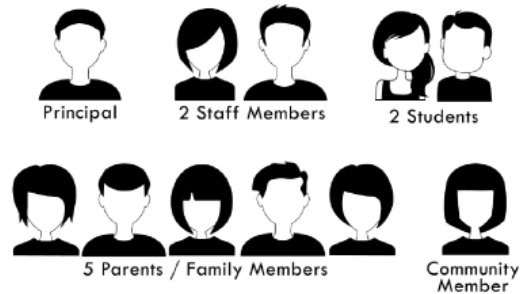
Each stakeholder group is elected by its peer stakeholder group. In other words, parents/family members are elected by parents at the school and teachers/school staff are elected by the teachers/staff at the school.

As outlined in Article III, Section F of the SAC Constitution, all SAC members must have up-to-date security clearances on file at the school (see Chapter 2, page 18 for more details).

IF THE FACE OFFICE DOES NOT DECIDE THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS, WHO DECIDES THIS?

Ultimately, membership composition decisions fall to the school principal. The FACE Office provides guidelines for membership composition, but this does not necessarily have to be adopted if the principal determines that a larger or smaller group would work better for the school.

The principal should decide what the composition of the SAC (i.e., total number of members, including a breakdown of the number of parents/family members, staff, students, and community members) will look like before opening the Application Process. The principal can formally indicate their SAC composition

plan by filling out the SAC Recruitment Timeline Form (www.philasd.org/sac > SAC Management Forms), which will also provide the FACE Office with information on the school's Application Process opening and closing dates.

WHAT DOES "MAJORITY PARENTS/FAMILY MEMBERS" MEAN?

When we say that the SAC is required to have a "majority of parents/family members," we mean that parents/family members must be the largest group on the SAC. The number of parents/family members must be greater than the number of staff members, as well as the number of student members and the number of community members.

DOES THE SAC HAVE TO HAVE 51% PARENTS/FAMILY MEMBERS?

No. In previous years, the SAC did have to have 51% parents/family members. The FACE Office made the decision to change this starting in the 2016 – 2017 school year. Our decision to move away from having 51% parents/family members was informed by anecdotal evidence from the school level about the difficulty of recruiting parents/family members to join the SAC. We have also moved away from the 51% parent/family member model because this model creates a very unbalanced SAC for schools that choose to have a small SAC (for example: if a SAC only has a total of 8 members, 5 members would have to be parents/family members and 1 member would have to be the principal, leaving only 2 seats open to staff members AND community members).

Parents/family members should still be regarded as an absolutely essential part of the SAC, and as such, parents/family members must represent the largest group on the SAC. In other words, if the SAC has a total of 8 members, 4 of those members must be parents/family members so that the group that represents parents/family members would have the largest number of SAC seats (2 would be staff members, 1 would be a community member, and 1 would be the principal).

3. The SAC has "*Strategic Conversations.*"

The SAC must have discussions that tie back to school data. Strategic Conversations address and use data to support academic achievement, improve school climate and culture, and strengthen family engagement at the school.

Strategic conversations can and will cover a wide range of topics, but they should **always be grounded in school data**. A SAC cannot effectively make decisions without an understanding of the school's needs. We suggest that SACs anchor their data-driven strategic conversations in the three SAC goal areas of supporting academic achievement, improving school climate and culture, and strengthening family engagement, but as the following list of examples will show, there is often much overlap among these goal areas.

Examples of "Strategic Conversations" include:

Academic Achievement

> **SACs will anchor their data-driven strategic conversations in the three SAC goal areas of supporting academic achievement, improving school climate and culture, and strengthening family engagement.**

- Examining the school's PSSA/Keystone data and School Progress Report (SPR) to identify academic areas that need added support.
- Determining what parents need to know and need to be able to do to support their children's academic success.
- Determining how family and community engagement can support school academic goals.
- Working with school leadership to conduct workshops for students and families on study skills, individual curriculum areas, standardized tests, and college and career planning.
- Determining better methods of communication between teachers and parents/family members so that teachers can keep parents/family members informed of the student's progress, barriers to learning, and achievement and parents/family members can request one-on-one meetings with the teacher as needed.
- Organizing a database of parent and family skills, expertise, and backgrounds, through which teachers can find academic support resources. For example, the SAC could bring in a parent who is a doctor to speak to children about how science relates to what goes on during a check-up with the pediatrician.
- Cultivating relationships with community organizations and coordinating organizations to run academic after-school programs at the school.

School Climate and Culture

- Adding an RtII (Response to Instruction and Intervention) Champion, especially in a specialized area, such as an RtII Champion for Behavior, or an RtII Champion for Academics.
- Meeting with the school's RtII Leadership Team to learn more about their work and how the SAC can support them in this work.
- Implementing PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions & Support) at the school and gaining parent/family buy-in and involvement.
- Coordinating family support classes to promote PBIS at home.
- Bringing Restorative Practices to the school to reform the school's disciplinary procedures.
- Conducting a wellness needs assessment using the School Health Index.
- Implementing socialized recess programs and/or bringing PlayWorks into the school.
- Working with cafeteria staff to determine nutrition initiatives and healthier options during breakfast and lunch.
- Working with the school nurse to launch an asthma awareness and prevention campaign and ensure a mold-free school.

Family Engagement

- Coordinating/hosting family literacy night, with interactive activities for families/children that help families learn how to support literacy development at home.
- Coordinating/hosting a family math night.
- Organizing a "classroom walk-through" for families, where families can observe various classroom management styles, instruction methods, and curricular content during the school day.
- Coordinating meaningful volunteer opportunities in the school that benefit staff and make families feel valued.
- Organizing a "clearances workshop" to ensure that interested family members are able to volunteer in the school.
- Working with the local Community Umbrella Agency (CUA) to host a Parent Cafe.
- Offering programs on parenting skills that will help promote learning. For example, an expert could give a presentation to parents about how to deal with the challenges that come with raising teenagers.
- Offering a series of workshops to teach parents strategies for supporting reading development for different grade levels.

WHAT MAKES A SAC DIFFERENT FROM AN HSA?

The FACE Office will distinguish between SACs and HSAs based on the above SAC Criteria, which include 1) ongoing meetings, 2) the correct council composition, and 3) strategic conversations. Beyond these formal criteria, there are a few fundamental differences between SACs and HSAs:

First, SACs must include all stakeholders: the school principal, parents/family members, school staff, community members, and students (for middle and high schools only). HSAs are often parent-only groups; staff members can attend HSA meetings, but only parents can become HSA members and vote at meetings. Also, all HSA members must pay dues to the Home and School Council. In contrast, SAC membership *must* include not only parents/family members, but the school principal, school staff, community members, and students (for middle and high schools).

Second, SAC meetings must be focused around strategic conversations. Strategic conversations require examining school data and brainstorming solutions to issues affecting student achievement and school improvement. While HSAs have historically been fundraising and event planning bodies, SACs are meant to be more policy-focused and issue-oriented.

Third, SACs cannot fundraise in the way that HSAs can. If a SAC chooses to fundraise, it must be done through the school's student activity fund because

SACs are overseen by the School District of Philadelphia. HSAs are not overseen by the School District of Philadelphia; the Home and School Council (which is the governing body of all HSAs in the city) has an office space in the School District of Philadelphia central office (440 N. Broad), but the District itself does not manage HSAs. The Home and School Council is a registered non-profit organization and as such it can fundraise.

The following table outlines the differences between a School Advisory Council and a Home and School Association:

	SACs	HSAs
Membership	Principal School staff Parents/family members Students (grades 6-12) Community members	Dues-paying parents Teachers and community members can participate but cannot vote.
Roles	Develop a culture of community support and involvement in decision-making for school-based policies. Collect and examine school data in order to brainstorm solutions to challenges affecting academic achievement, school climate and culture, and family engagement. Provide input on discretionary spending and school-based policies.	Plan programs of interest to families and school personnel and fundraise to support these programs. Promote open communication between schools and homes to create an engaged environment for students across the board.
Responsibilities	Meet monthly. Build consensus among all members on all decisions. Focus on strategic conversations rather than fundraising or applying for grants.	The HSA Board meets separately from the general membership. Voting members pay dues to the Philadelphia Home and School Council. Operate under 501c3 status.

Can members of the HSA be involved in the SAC?

Yes, and this is encouraged. A Home and School Association member can attend SAC meetings and/or apply for SAC membership, and a SAC member can become a member of the HSA if they are a parent of a child enrolled at the school. Membership cross-over between the two groups allows for the sharing of ideas and updates about the school and school improvement efforts.

SUPPORT FROM THE DISTRICT

Supporting School Advisory Councils will be a district-wide effort in which all central office departments will participate. The Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) will lead the implementation of Policy 920 to ensure that all District schools have a functioning and active SAC. The FACE Office will support SAC development throughout the District through the following **new** initiatives:

- User-friendly website (www.philasd.org/sac)
- Promotional materials
- Procedural and "how to" documents
- Trainings for SAC members (through interactive, engaging online videos as well as well as in-person trainings)
- Data collection and compliance
- SAC Mentorship Program

The FACE Office also has a SAC Support Team, which is available to answer questions, support schools at initial SAC meetings, and provide on-site consultation to assist in SAC development. The SAC Support Team can be reached at sac@philasd.org or 215-400-4180.

Additionally, all elementary schools and middle schools have a **Family Engagement Liaison** who can assist and support SAC-related efforts. Family Engagement Liaisons are FACE Office staff members and have been trained on the new SAC policy, best practices for recruiting SAC members, and how to comply with our new SAC Criteria.

Family Engagement Liaisons can help you form a strong SAC in the following ways:

- ✓ Bringing SAC flyers and Paper Applications from the FACE Office (printed on colored paper and/or in the languages needed for your school population)
- ✓ Handing out flyers before and after school, speaking one-on-one with parents/family members about the SAC, and other recruitment activities
- ✓ Calling parents/family members and community members to remind them about upcoming SAC meetings
- ✓ Assisting the principal and/or SAC leadership team in preparing for meetings and writing agendas
- ✓ Teaching the SAC Secretary how to fill out and submit the SAC forms correctly
- ✓ Helping the SAC move up to Category 1 (see Chapter 6)
- ✓ Providing clarity to SAC members and the general school community about SAC policies and procedures

2

The Constitution of the School Advisory Council

Introduction to the SAC Constitution

SAC POLICIES AND OPERATIONS

Policy 920 was passed in June 2016 by the Philadelphia School Reform Commission and outlines the expectations for School Advisory Councils. (Please see the Policy in the Appendix on Page 57). This policy states that "all District schools shall have an active and engaged School Advisory Council" and continues to provide an overview of the responsibilities of all SACs.

The Family and Community Engagement Office expanded Policy 920 from a four-page document into this Guide, which includes a SAC Constitution and the SAC Bylaws. The SAC Constitution expands the policy into a simple and clear structure that will help a SAC function successfully. The SAC Constitution takes the overall expectations from the SRC's Policy 920 and fits them into a guiding document for the day-by-day and year-by-year operations of the SAC.

The SAC Bylaws allow each SAC to individualize their policies and procedures based on their specific schools. The SAC Bylaws will be written by the SAC members to work in conjunction with the SAC Constitution. Members will write and agree upon the guiding policies and procedures in the SAC Bylaws and unite around the school-specific foundation of the SAC. Both the SAC Constitution and the SAC Bylaws are policy and procedural documents that bring life to Policy 920 and frame Policy 920 in a real-world, on-the-ground way.

Please find the SAC Constitution and the template for the SAC Bylaws as follows, in Chapters 2 and 3.

Note: The SAC Constitution is a working document that will be updated from year to year by the FACE Office based on the input of functioning SACs. As the SAC Bylaws will be voted upon each year by each SAC, they will also be considered a working document.

Constitution of the School Advisory Council

PREAMBLE

The School Advisory Council, in accordance with the School Reform Commission, recognizes that active and engaged organized family advisory groups strengthen both schools and communities, improve school climate and culture, provide opportunities for effective family involvement in school decision-making, and improve student achievement.

ARTICLE I: NAME OF COUNCIL

The name of this Council is the [School Name] School Advisory Council, hereinafter referred to as the SAC.

ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

An effective and successful SAC will comply with all of the following objectives and responsibilities:

A. Meet monthly or at least every other month.
B. Review the school budget and provide input on discretionary spending.
C. Review school-based policies. For example, policies governing school culture and climate, school safety, discipline, truancy, extracurricular activities, family member engagement, and student supports.
D. Play a major role in strengthening effective school-community relations, improving communication between school and home, encouraging community input, and sharing information on advisory work and decisions with the larger school community.
E. Play an active role in supporting, promoting, and recommending school-based programs and initiatives.
F. Examine data on the effectiveness of school-based programs and services and periodically inform Action Plan strategies and recommendations to ensure continued progress toward school goals.
G. Receive mandatory community-based trainings from the School District at least but not limited to once a year on a series of topics (including sessions on budgeting, interpreting school data, meaningful engagement, and more).
H. Collaborate with the Principal and school staff to develop and implement a mission and develop, implement, and annually revise a vision (Articles I and II in the Bylaws) for the school and an action plan for school improvement and effective family engagement practices.
I. Complete beginning and end of year SAC self-assessments which reflect goals, activities, and achievements.
J. Coordinate elections for family and community SAC members.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

All functions concerning the above objectives and responsibilities will be vested in the members of the SAC. The SAC membership will be made up of family members, the school principal, teachers or other school-based staff, students (at the middle school and high school level), and community members.

SECTION A: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The principal will always be an automatic member of the SAC. The principal will be accountable for developing and implementing the Action Plan and Budget in partnership with the SAC and staff. The

principal will collaborate with the School Advisory Council to identify school improvement priorities and review the Action Plan and Budget.

All duties and collaborations of the principal may be delegated to a school administrator of the principal's choosing.

Specific duties of the principal, or the designee of the principal, are as follows:

1. Coordinate the Application Process and, if need be, the Election Process for all SAC seats in the first year of the SAC.
2. Ensure that elections for family and community members are conducted in accordance with the SAC Bylaws and/or other school guidelines. The principal will act alone in this process in the first year, and with SAC members in all following years.
3. Develop a process whereby students elect student representatives to the SAC each year.
4. Develop a process whereby the school faculty and staff will elect staff representatives to the SAC each year.
5. Distribute election results directly to students and via the school's School Messenger, post them on the school's website, and include them in a newsletter, if those mechanisms exist.
6. Review any proposed changes or adjustments to the school's Action Plan and Budget throughout the year.
7. Address any concerns raised by members of the SAC throughout the year.

The principal, or the designee of the principal, will comply with all duties of the SAC listed in Article II.

SECTION B: PARENTS/FAMILY MEMBERS

Parents/family members are identified as individuals whose children currently attend the school, or the primary caregiver(s) with whom the child resides (legal, custodial, grandparent, foster parent). The term "parent" includes, in addition to a natural parent, a legal guardian or other person standing in as a primary caregiver (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives).

With the exception of non-instructional paraprofessional staff members, school-based staff are not permitted to apply to the SAC as parent/family members.

Parents/family members will comply with all duties of the SAC listed in Article II.

SECTION C: STAFF

Along with compliance with all duties of the SAC listed above, teachers and other school staff will contribute practical knowledge about curriculum and instructional strategies, school operations and support services, as well as the school's history and culture.

Staff members will comply with all duties of the SAC listed in Article II.

SECTION D: COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Community members are identified as individuals who have an interest in the school's welfare, namely individuals residing in the school's geographic area (catchment area), individuals owning, operating or

working in a business or organization within the school's community (catchment area), and/or alumni of the school.

Community members will comply with all duties of the SAC listed in Article II.

SECTION E: STUDENTS

Students will bring a different kind of practical experience to the SAC since they are direct recipients of school services. They will offer a range of opinions often distinct from adult perspectives.

A SAC should not have more than 1 representative from the senior (graduating) class in any given year.

Elementary School (Kindergarten through grade 6) SACs are not required to include student members.

Student members will comply with all duties of the SAC listed in Article II.

SECTION F: SECURITY CLEARANCES

Because SAC members will be meeting on school grounds on a regular basis (monthly or bi-monthly), all SAC members will need to get clearances so that they comply with the School District of Philadelphia's volunteer policy. Having clearances on file at the school will also allow SAC members to volunteer during school hours if they so choose (an example of a SAC initiative).

ITEM 1: IF THE SAC MEMBER HAS LIVED IN PENNSYLVANIA FOR 10 YEARS:
a. PA Child Abuse Clearance ($0)
   - https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS/Public/Home
b. PA State Criminal Record Check ($0)
   - https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp
c. Signed disclaimer affirming no criminal charges in other states that would prohibit selection as a volunteer ($0)
   - http://keepkidssafe.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/document/c_160267.pdf

ITEM 2: IF THE SAC MEMBER HAS NOT LIVED IN PENNSYLVANIA FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS:
a. PA Child Abuse Clearance ($0)
   - https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS/Public/Home
b. PA State Criminal Record Check ($0)
   - https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp
c. FBI Background Check with Fingerprinting ($27)
   - https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_pdeNew.htm

Please note that because SAC members are volunteers, **clearances are free of charge** (unless the SAC member has NOT lived in Pennsylvania for the past 10 years, in which case they will need to pay $27 for the FBI Background Check with Fingerprinting).

ARTICLE IV: APPLICATION AND ELECTION PROCEDURE

The SAC Election Procedures shall abide by democratic principles whereby the fairness and integrity of the democratic process are maintained. Members of the SAC shall be selected in a democratic manner that is outlined in the SAC Bylaws.

The school principal will commission all elections in the first year of the SAC. In all future years after the first year, the Application and Election Procedure for the parent/family and community seats on the SAC shall be coordinated by the SAC itself, which can delegate this task to a specially appointed "Application and Election Commission," according to the SAC Bylaws.

Elections for the SAC will be held in the previous Spring of each school year in order to have a functioning SAC by the beginning of the next school year. Schools establishing first year SACs will complete their Application and Election Procedure by December of the first implementation year and hold their first SAC meeting in January of the first implementation year.

SECTION A: APPLICATIONS

There will be a wide solicitation for applicants who are qualified to serve on the SAC while promoting diversity in representation. This Application Process will be outlined in the SAC Bylaws. The opportunity to apply for the SAC Elections will be made public in a timely manner in order to reach and represent all school-community stakeholders. In order for a candidate to complete the Application Process, they must fill out and submit an online application.

SECTION B: ELECTIONS

If there are more applications than available seats on the SAC, SAC members will be elected by votes from their representative groups (parents by parents, students by students, staff by staff) with the exception of the community members. Community members will be added to the ballot for parent/family candidates, meaning that parents at the school will elect the SAC's community representative(s) along with electing other parents/family members. The Application and Election Procedure will be made public to the school community in order to ensure a transparent Election Process. The date and time of elections will be made public to the school community in order to solicit as many votes as possible to ensure a well-represented constituency. The Election Process will be outlined in the SAC Bylaws.

SECTION C: ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTED MEMBERS

A public announcement of the election results should be made to the school community. The principal should distribute results directly to students, staff, families, and community members according to the announcement process outlined in the SAC Bylaws.

SECTION D: SPECIAL ELECTIONS

Special elections can be held if there are vacant positions or if the integrity of the election procedures has been challenged.

SECTION E: TERM LIMITS

SAC members who are part of first-year SACs will have two-year terms; they will automatically be a part of the SAC in its second year. In the spring of the SAC's second year, new members will be elected.

SAC members who are part of established SACs will have one-year terms; they should plan on holding elections in the spring so that a new SAC can be in place by the start of each new school year.

Applicants will run for SAC membership every year. There is no limit to how many times a person may apply to be on the SAC.

ARTICLE V: SAC LEADERSHIP ROLES

SECTION A: ELIGIBILITY

Only elected members of the SAC will be eligible to serve in a leadership role. The officers of the SAC will be elected at the first SAC meeting of the year by majority vote of the SAC members and will serve until the next year's first SAC meeting, when each successor will be properly elected. Each member holding a leadership role is permitted to run for the same role every year. The leadership election process will be outlined in the SAC Bylaws.

SECTION B: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ITEM 1: FACILITATOR

a. The SAC Facilitator will guide discussion during SAC meetings by keeping members focused on the meeting agenda and discussing all items within the meeting timeframe.
b. The Facilitator prepares the agenda for each meeting and ensures that items are aligned with the vision of the SAC.
c. If there are disputes or disagreements during SAC meetings, the Facilitator will act as a neutral mediator and resolve intra-SAC conflicts.
d. At the end of discussion, the Facilitator will call for and facilitate a vote when a decision must be made.
e. The Facilitator will lead all SAC members in completing SAC Self-Assessments by each Checkpoint designated by the School District of Philadelphia Office of Family and Community Engagement.
f. The Facilitator may act as the liaison between the SAC and other parent/family groups in the school (Home and School Association, Friends Of group, etc.) to ensure that all groups understand each other's goals and can collectively support the school.

ITEM 2: ORGANIZER

a. The SAC Organizer will conduct community outreach for the SAC.
b. The Organizer will recruit new members, particularly parents/family members and community members, by developing outreach materials and/or downloading outreach materials from www.philasd.org/sac.

c. The Organizer will work closely with the School Principal during the Application and Election Procedure by facilitating the Application Process and creating and disseminating ballots to parents in the event that an election needs to take place.

d. During the Election Process, the Organizer will make phone calls to applicants (including parents/family members, staff, students, and community members) to confirm their place on the ballot.

e. The Organizer will also utilize outreach materials and practices to communicate the purpose of the SAC to non-members and lead efforts to promote the SAC at events in the school and community, including events such as Back to School Night, new parent orientations, civic association/community-wide events, etc.

f. The Organizer may act as the liaison between the SAC and external partners or organizations, such as faith-based partners, civic associations, businesses, etc. The Organizer may build relationships with these groups and can solicit in-kind donations/resources.

ITEM 3: SECRETARY

a. The SAC Secretary should be familiar with computers and feel comfortable using technology (scanning, emailing, uploading forms to a Google Folder).

b. The SAC Secretary will operate and monitor the school's SAC Google Folder, where all documentation will be submitted.

c. The SAC Secretary will submit all required documents to the School District of Philadelphia Office of Family and Community Engagement. These documents are: the Meeting Agendas and Sign-In Sheets within five school days of each SAC meeting.

d. The SAC Secretary will ensure that all SAC members complete and submit the SAC Self-Assessments by each Checkpoint designated by the School District of Philadelphia Office of Family and Community Engagement.

e. The SAC Secretary will ensure that all documents have been submitted properly and on time so that the SAC meets the SAC criteria outlined by the School District of Philadelphia Office of Family and Community Engagement.

SECTION C: LEADERSHIP TERM LIMITS

Leadership positions are one-year terms. Leaders may serve for multiple consecutive or non-consecutive years, but they must run for re-election at the beginning of each year.

ARTICLE VI: QUORUM

Quorum is the minimum number of members that must be present at the SAC meetings for the meeting and the decisions made during the meeting to be valid.

The SAC will acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the SAC when making decisions. A quorum must exist during all decision-making by the SAC. A SAC meeting that fulfills quorum is one that has at least 51% of members in attendance. All decisions made without quorum are void and must be re-decided upon at the next meeting that there is quorum.

ARTICLE VII: DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

In the potentiality that a member of the SAC is not in compliance with the SAC Objectives and Responsibilities (Article II) and/or misses more than 40% of meetings, the member will be eligible for termination of membership. A breach of any of the responsibilities listed in Article II and any concerns with attendance will be addressed by the SAC Secretary. The SAC Secretary will issue an official warning of Breach of Membership.

If membership breaches persist after the warning is given, the SAC member in question will then attend a hearing at the next SAC meeting (only SAC members may be present for this hearing. All visitors will be asked to leave when all other business not related to the Breach of Membership Hearing is finished). At the hearing, the member in question will present their case, or an explanation for the Breach of Membership. The member in question will then be asked to leave. The remaining SAC members will discuss the member in question's case and must come to a unanimous decision on whether or not the membership will be terminated. If the SAC decides to terminate the member's SAC membership, the SAC Secretary must immediately notify the Office of Family and Community Engagement of the change in membership via the SAC Membership Update Form.

ARTICLE VIII: ROLE OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SECTION A: THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

The School District of Philadelphia will support active and engaged SACs by:

1. Developing policies and procedures that support the effectiveness of SACs.
2. Maintaining educational materials and resources to assist SACs in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.
3. Providing community-based trainings, workshops, and/or conferences to SACs (including sessions on budgeting, interpreting school data, understanding the School Progress Report, meaningful engagement, and more).
4. Providing annual mandatory trainings to principals and school-based staff on developing SACs in their schools (including recruitment strategies, roles and responsibilities of the SAC, and supports available to them).
5. The School Reform Commission will invite SAC leadership from each school to an annual Summit to collect input and keep the Commission informed with regard to school specific issues and initiatives.

SECTION B: THE OFFICE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The School District's Office of Family and Community Engagement will support active and engaged SACs by:

1. Supporting SAC performance and reporting summary information to the Superintendent and/or designee.
2. Maintaining a copy of active SAC membership for each District school.
3. Advising on conflicts within SACs in regards to membership, election of SAC members, and adherence to the SAC Bylaws in a fair and transparent manner.
4. Facilitating resolutions to disputes within the SAC which cannot be resolved internally at the school level at the request of the school principal.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Because the Constitution outlines policies implemented by the School District of Philadelphia, SACs will not amend the Constitution. SACs will have the opportunity to develop, implement, and amend their own SAC Bylaws.

Amendments to the SAC Bylaws must be submitted to the SAC Facilitator at least one week before the meeting in which the vote on the amendment will take place. The SAC member who submits an amendment must be present for the vote on the amendment, and must answer questions and comments on the proposed amendment before the SAC votes.

The Bylaws of the School Advisory Council

Bylaws of the School Advisory Council (Template)

ARTICLE I: SCHOOL MISSION

[This section will include the school Mission Statement.]

The SAC will collaborate with the Principal and school staff to develop and implement a mission for the school. This mission should remain constant throughout the years, but must be voted upon each year (regardless of the lack of changes) in order for SAC members to have a guiding statement to connect and agree to. Minor changes may be proposed and must be agreed upon by the SAC according to the SAC Decision-Making Process.

ARTICLE II: SCHOOL VISION

[This section will include the school Vision.]

The SAC will collaborate with the Principal and school staff to develop, implement, and annually revise a vision for the school. Articles I and II will outline the Mission and the Vision for the school. The vision will change year to year—this is the SAC's opportunity to set goals for the upcoming year that align with the mission statement. The SAC vision will be agreed upon by the SAC according to the SAC Decision-Making Process.

ARTICLE III: SAC DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

[This section will include the SAC's agreed-upon decision-making process. The implementation of this process will be agreed upon by building group consensus, in that all members of the SAC will 100% agree on the process, and any objections must be considered and addressed before implementing a process.]

Decisions should be made after there has been adequate discussion and all SAC members are ready to vote or come to an agreement. Following, you will find suggestions for methods of group decision-making that you may adopt or adapt:

1. Consensus-Building
   a. Fist to Five Voting
2. Simple Majority Vote
   a. Paper
   b. Raising Hands
   c. Blindly raising hands
   d. Spoken (aye or nay)
3. 2/3 Vote
   a. Paper
   b. Raising Hands
   c. Blindly raising hands
   d. Spoken (aye or nay)

ARTICLE IV: APPLICATION AND ELECTION PROCEDURE

[This section will include the SAC's Application and Election Procedure.]

SECTION A: APPLICATIONS

The Application Process should include any or all of the following suggestions:
1. Identifying contact persons responsible for the Application Process.
2. Sending out announcements during the first month of the school year to request Applications for the SAC through school newsletters, community newspapers, bulletins, School Messenger, etc., encouraging qualified candidates to apply. Information should include deadlines and the process for submitting the Application Forms.
3. Keeping paper copies of the SAC Application Form on hand at the welcome desk, security desk, and main office for applicants unfamiliar with computers.
4. Distributing flyers in the school yard during school drop-off in the morning and pick-up in the afternoon.
5. Distributing flyers at any scheduled parent meetings, parent and student orientations, Back to School night, and other school events or activities.
6. Requesting each grade group submit 5 – 10 names of prospective parents/family members who can be contacted by the designated person to determine their interest level.
7. Organizing informational meetings for all interested candidates regarding qualifications, roles and responsibilities of SAC members, and the Application and Election Procedure. In addition, school newsletters, school-parent links, and school notice boards and websites may include information on each candidate.
8. Organizing meetings at which candidates are introduced to the school community to provide voters with an opportunity to meet the candidates and to provide equal time for candidates to publicize their campaigns.

SECTION B: ELECTIONS

The Election Procedure should include any or all of the following suggestions:

1. Creating the ballot. The ballot should consist of a short description written by the applicant of their qualifications such as: ages of children at the school, past involvement with parent organizations, and professional background, if relevant.
2. Preparing and distributing the ballots to the appropriate voters (i.e., only parents should vote for the parent seats on the SAC, only school staff should vote for the staff seats on the SAC, and only students should vote for the student seats on the SAC); determining a method for counting ballots in public to insure fairness and integrity.
3. Posting a formal public announcement of elected council members in the main office and distributing it by all school communication vehicles (newsletters, bulletin boards, websites, etc.).

SECTION C: THE APPLICATION AND ELECTION COMMISSION

The Application and Election Commission will oversee and facilitate the Application and Election Procedure outlined in the Bylaws. This is an optional commission and will be voted on by the SAC.
 The Application and Election Commission will ensure that the Application and Election Procedure gives everyone a fair chance at voting for new SAC members, consider whether election rules are fair and

impartial, count results, and report results to the candidates who were and were not elected and to the school Principal.

ARTICLE V: LEADERSHIP SELECTION PROCESS

[Electing the SAC leadership will be up to the SAC itself. This election process will be outlined here and agreed upon by the SAC.]

ARTICLE VI: SUBCOMMITTEES

[This section will include a list of the SAC's subcommittees and the subcommittee descriptions.]

Subcommittee work should be done at a different time than the regularly scheduled SAC meetings. Subcommittees can be responsible for a number of SAC projects including but not limited to:

1. The Application and Election Commission
2. Planning family engagement events
3. Conducting school or community-wide services
4. Marketing/Public Relations
5. Health and wellness

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS

[This is where the amendments to the Bylaws will be listed throughout the year, labeled as "1st AMENDMENT," "2nd AMENDMENT," "3rd AMENDMENT," etc.]

4

Moving from Policy to Practice: How Does the SAC Work?

Moving from Policy to Practice: How Does the SAC Work?

Collaborative, action-oriented meetings are the key to an effective SAC. See below for information on meeting expectations and rules as well as tips on how to run a smooth, productive meeting based on shared decision-making practices.

SAC MEETING EXPECTATIONS & RULES

Meet every other month (at minimum)

While meeting every other month (i.e., five times per school year) is the minimum requirement, the FACE Office recommends that your SAC meet every month in order to complete projects and affect change in the school.

Open Meetings

The SAC is required to open its meetings to the public. In addition, the SAC must allow the public to address the SAC on any matter within its scope. The SAC must also make any meeting materials available to the public upon request.

Publicize meeting dates/location

Because SAC meetings are open to the public, meeting notices must be posted at least three days in advance specifying the date, time, and location.

POST-MEETING PROCEDURES

Determine, agree upon, and sign the SAC Bylaws

Purpose of the Bylaws: An agreed-upon framework for interaction decreases the potential for misunderstandings or conflict and increases the inclusivity and effectiveness of subcommittee operations and decision-making. The Bylaws are a guiding document that all SAC members can unite upon. Creating, agreeing on, and signing the Bylaws is an important process for each SAC to build a foundation of success specific to its school. Bylaws should be voted on at the beginning of each year so that all members of the SAC are connected to the mission and vision of the school and are able to share their input on this foundation before the year starts.

> To learn how to correctly submit sign-in information and your agenda, please see the section on SAC Forms at the end of the SAC Launch Guide.

SACs may adapt of adopt the Sample SAC Bylaws found in the Appendix of the SAC Launch Guide.

Sign the SAC Constitution

Purpose of the Constitution: Signing the Constitution indicates an agreement by all SAC members to uphold the standards of a School Advisory Council. The Constitution will not change unless otherwise indicated by the FACE Office; this allows for a standardized format of SACs across the district.

Send sign-in sheet & agenda to the FACE Office

Starting in the 2016-2017 school year, the FACE Office will require SACs to submit their **sign-in sheets** and their **agendas** through a Google Folder that will be shared with the SAC Secretary and the school principal. It is extremely important to submit sign-in information and agendas after each meeting; if these items are not submitted within five days of the meeting, the FACE Office will assume that no meeting has taken place.

MEETING BEST PRACTICES

Shared Decision-Making & Using Consensus

It is recommended that SACs function by consensus or general agreement of the members. Members of the SAC should operate as a single decision-making team. Their task is to work together to fashion effective solutions to the school's educational problems and challenges. The SAC is not a group of spokespersons, narrowly representing the interests of the group that elected them or of any sub-group. SACs have parents/families, teachers, staff, students, and principals involved to guarantee that decisions reflect the viewpoints of everyone in the school community. SAC meetings are not competitive, win-or-lose events. Making decisions solely on the basis of majority runs the unacceptable risk of dividing the SAC. School improvement is a matter of teamwork, trust, and shared commitment on the part of everyone in the school community.

> ❝ **Building consensus involves everyone having the opportunity to be heard.** ❞

Consensus is an agreement which each group member:
1. **Has an opportunity to comment on,**
2. **Understands, and**
3. **Can live with and is willing to implement.**

Building consensus involves everyone having the opportunity to be heard.

The Fist-To-Five-Fingers method of consensus building allows each voting member to express their satisfaction by using the following hand signals:

- A fist means, "I vote NO," or in consensus it means, "I object and will block consensus (usually on moral grounds)."
- 1 finger means, "I'll just barely go along" or, "I don't like this but it's not quite a no" or, "I think there is a lot more work to do on this proposal." In consensus this indicates standing aside, or not being in agreement but not blocking the consensus.
- 2 fingers means, "I don't much like this but I'll go along."
- 3 fingers means, "I'm in the middle somewhere. I like some of it, but not all."
- 4 fingers means, "This is fine."
- 5 fingers means, "I like this a lot. I think it's the best possible decision."

If anyone signals two fingers or less, the group must address this person's concerns, find a compromise in the item being voted upon, and only continue when each voting member holds up three or more fingers.

Won't consensus result in endless discussion and no decision?

Not necessarily, if the SAC follows some guidelines:

- Importance of issue: Normally, the more important the issue, the more time members should be willing to devote to reaching a consensus decision. Routine matters should be given much less valuable time and energy than fundamental issues.
- Opportunity for all views to be expressed: Members with different views should have the opportunity to make sure other members have understood their views before ending the discussion. Although others may still not be persuaded, everyone must have a chance to state their views and to have others listen.
- Strength of feeling: How strongly members feel should guide how much time should be devoted to an issue. The Fist-to-Five-Fingers method can be a good indicator of members' strength of feeling.

Voting

The shared decision-making team approach does not prohibit voting in every case. Occasionally, "straw polls" may be a good idea to identify common ground on the way to reaching consensus decision. Voting can save valuable time in reaching decisions on routine matters.

> **If a vote results in a simple majority but does not reveal consensus on the issue being decided, the SAC should continue the discussion on the issue.**

Under SRC Policy 920, a quorum must exist during all decision-making by the SAC. A quorum exists when 51% of SAC members are present at a meeting. The purpose of voting is to validate and to make official consensus decisions. Formal voting should be the last step in the decision-making process.

If a vote results in a simple majority but does not reveal consensus on the issue being decided, the SAC should continue the discussion on the issue. A lack of general agreement should be viewed as a signal that the best option has not yet been developed and proposed. Unless all members are willing to support a majority decision, more discussion is needed. Votes which split parents and teachers are particular concerns and a clear indication that consensus has not been achieved. In such case, the decision should be set aside and the issue at hand revisited.

TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE DISCUSSIONS

General Tips

- *Conduct business one item at a time.* Jumping around from one item to another can be confusing, and it generally delays progress on any of the items.
- *Let subcommittees do their work.* Your general meeting is to resolve the major issues. Save everybody's time by letting subcommittees deal with the smaller details.
- *Don't allow crosstalk.* Consider requiring all speakers to address the Facilitator. This helps you keep control and ensures everyone will hear the business at hand.
- *Limit discussion to the topic at hand.* Keep discussions focused, and don't be shy about asking speakers to deal only with the current topic.
- *Cut off discussion when it becomes redundant.* For controversial issues, setting a time limit for each speaker can help. When discussion becomes circular, summarize the points on each side and ask for anything new—or shut off discussion by calling for a motion.
- *Avoid using educational jargon.* It's important to make sure people in all parts of the room hear the proceedings, but it's also important to make sure they can *understand* what they hear. If you must use it, explain what each term means. When talking about your group's previous activities, don't assume that everyone knows as much as you do.

> " Save everybody's time by letting subcommittees deal with the details. "

Keys to a Successful Meeting

Relationships

Collaboration doesn't happen without building relationships. Are your meetings set up to support joint learning, group decision-making, and people connecting with each other?

Transparency

Does everyone know when and where meetings are held, how decisions are made, what is expected of them, where to find information, and how to participate?

Vision

How will the work done at this meeting help the group achieve its longer term objectives? People have limited tolerance for meetings, so it's critical to have a clearly defined group vision of what the SAC is trying to achieve and how the work you get done at the meeting will move the group toward that vision.

Use creative ways to facilitate discussions and prioritize decisions.

- *Examine the structure of your meetings.*

Rather than sitting in rows, ask meeting attendees to sit in a circle. The circle structure helps break down barriers and hierarchies, leading to more fluid discussions.

- *Set aside time for your group to brainstorm answers to open ended questions*, like "What are some things that can help us improve school climate?" The Facilitator can give participants time to collect their thoughts before opening the floor for answers.

- *Experiment with different ways of recording problem-solving discussions.*

Try having one of the SAC members take
Notes on chart paper or the board.

Or try giving every SAC member a

sticky note

or a blank sheet of paper

so they can write their own answer
(*or even draw it*) and post it as they
share it with the group.

Whatever method you use, stay focused on generating solutions before you dive deep into the discussion of a particular issue.

- Once you have had an in-depth discussion of the solutions or priorities you have generated together, every participant can put a dot sticker next to the item of their choice or mark one or several items they would like to vote for. Once finished, you can tally the votes and see the group's priorities.

Consider what information participants need to have in order to fully participate and contribute

- Provide information in easy to understand formats.
    - For example, provide a simple version of the budget that explains the choices you have to make when allocating funds, in addition to the actual document.
- Provide background information and explanations. Share supplemental materials.
    - For example, if you will be talking about interventions, share the District's MTSS/RtII Parent Handbook and spend a few minutes explaining the process at a high level.

SETTING UP WORKING SUBCOMMITTEES

In order to move forward and reach your goals as a SAC, it will be necessary to conduct follow up with individual members throughout the month(s) between SAC meetings.

One strategy for delegating follow-up work is to create Working Subcommittees that are tasked with completing specific projects or pursuing certain goals identified by the SAC. For instance, you may choose to create Working Subcommittees that correspond to the three goals that you will outline in your SAC Vision Statement in the SAC Bylaws: Supporting Academic Achievement, Improving School Climate and Culture, and Strengthening Family Engagement.

The School Services Subcommittee can execute needs assessments around the school by surveying students, teachers and staff to gain insight on the needs of the school in terms of academics and climate. After examining and discussing the data during SAC meetings, the School Services Subcommittee can work to implement programs and events based on the needs of the school.

The Community Engagement Subcommittee can plan service days and engaging events to foster a relationship with the families of the school and other members of the surrounding community. This subcommittee can create a welcoming space for all members of the school community to engage in school improvement and support.

The Wellness Subcommittee can conduct a health and wellness needs assessment of the school using the School Health Index from the Office of Health, Safety, and Physical Education. This needs assessment might look at issues concerning asthma, healthy food availability, a smoke-free environment, the use of movement during school hours, etc. The Wellness Subcommittee can focus on creating a school environment ideal for student learning and success.

TAKING MEETING MINUTES

Taking meeting minutes is optional for the 2016-2017 school year, but if you have a SAC Secretary who is willing to take minutes (or if you decide in your bylaws to designate a minute-taker or rotating minute-taker), below are some tips for taking effective minutes.

Structure every set of minutes with this standard format:

Dr. William Hite Elementary School SAC Meeting — Standard Heading
10/10/16
7:00 p.m.
Dr. William Hite Elementary School Library

I. Meeting was called to order by Facilitator Amy Johnson at 7:05 p.m. — When was the meeting called to order?
II. Members in attendance:

a. Bob Smith, Staff   e. Amy Johnson, Parent
b. Jane Stevenson, Staff   f. Ken Adams, Parent
c. Susan Jones, Parent   g. Principal of William Hite Elementary School
d. Steve Brown, Parent   h. Arthur Peterson, Community Member

Who was there? Did they fulfill the quorum (51% of members)?

III. A quorum is reached
IV. Guests:

a. Alex Walker, Community Member

V. Report from the Academic Achievement Subcommittee
   a. Because of the low literacy scores, the AAC has been planning a book drive, and it is officially scheduled for November 10th at 6:00 p.m.
VI. Report from guest, Alex Walker
   a. As a member of the Hite Neighborhood Fitness Coalition, Alex reported on the school and community field day that promotes healthy activity.
   b. The field day is scheduled for Saturday, October 15th at 10 a.m.

Minutes: reports, votes, discussion

VII. Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. — When was the meeting adjourned?

Minutes prepared by Secretary Jane Stevenson — Who took down the minutes?

The Do's and Don't's of Taking Minutes

DO's ✔

- Use a laptop to take notes during the meeting **only** if you are comfortable and quick on the computer.
- Prepare a **template file** on your computer with the standard headings and major section titles already inserted. Use this blank file to start each set of minutes.
- If you take your notes on paper during the meeting, start with a **preprinted page with the heading** already filled out.
- Be **concise** and **accurate**.
- Include the **name** of the speaker and the **name** of any subcommittee that presents a report, along with a **very brief** (one or two sentence) summary of the subcommittee's report.
- Attach a copy of any subcommittee's or guest's **formal report** as part of the meeting's record.
- Include the name and title of any guest speaker at your meeting, along with **the topic** of the speaker's presentation.
- **Document major decisions** and ensure that the participants agree with your understanding of the decision.
- **Distribute the minutes** after the meeting using email.
- Keep a SAC Meeting Minutes **binder** or create an electronic **folder** where you can store all meeting minutes.

DON'T's ✖

- Do not use a laptop or computer to take minutes if you are uncomfortable on a computer. **You don't want to miss anything important** because you are struggling with the keyboard, spell-checker, etc.
- Do not **attribute discussion or comments to individuals**.
- Do not include **editorial comments** about the nature of the discussion.
- Do not try to summarize the guest speaker's **entire** presentation in the minutes.
- **Do not hesitate to speak up** if you are unclear about whether a decision has been made or if you've missed an important comment during discussion.
- Do **not take too long to finalize and distribute the minutes.** Make sure all SAC members have enough time to review the minutes for approval at the next meeting.
- Do **not forget** to bring a copy to the next meeting for review and approval (technically, **the minutes are not finalized until the members vote to approve**).

5

Building a Strong SAC: Recruiting SAC Members

Building a Strong SAC: Recruiting SAC Members

GENERAL RECRUITMENT TIPS

Explain the benefits of SACs

Begin by asking: what do these families need to understand? For those who are not familiar with SACs, it may be important to spell out why the SAC exists, what the SAC can achieve or has achieved, what the SAC expects of members and how membership benefits themselves, their children, and the school community.

Make and maintain contact

A primary strategy should be to talk frequently with members of the families or groups you are trying to reach. Personal relationships are critical in making people feel welcome, understood, and respected. Maintaining communication is crucial; the basis for SAC involvement will be created not just from an initial welcome but through ongoing interaction.

Make messaging a two-way, ongoing process

Frame your message about the SAC in ways that relate to the needs and concerns of your target audiences. Put your message in their terms, their language, and the forms they prefer. Ask for feedback and listen carefully. Be prepared to change in response to feedback, to show people that their perspective matters.

Market the purpose of your SAC

What are your SAC's long-term goals? How will you get there? If you want to get parents/family members excited, share your vision and give them something to work toward.

Clarify the commitment

Explain in your promotional material that meetings are only an hour. People worry about time commitments. Use Working Subcommittees to do the detail work. Limit general meetings to one hour, and limit business to finalizing the work of the subcommittees.

Extend a personal invitation

This is the best way to get parents/family members involved. People are most likely to take part in any group when they know someone who already participates. Don't just send flyers home, then wonder why nobody "signed up." Create situations in which you can communicate with people one on one.

Use a variety of communication tools

Make sure your message gets through. Flyers and emails are good for communicating a date and time. If you have a newsletter and website, use them to let people know about application deadlines and upcoming meetings.

Reach out to all parents/family members in the school

Do not just reach out to the ones who are easy to reach. Sponsor multicultural events. Translate parent group materials, if necessary. Your school, your group, and the kids all will benefit tremendously from broad-based family involvement.

TIPS FOR RECRUITING PARENTS/FAMILY MEMBERS

Discuss the SAC at **all existing parent meetings** (Back to School Night, Home and School, Coffee with the Principal, new parent orientation etc.).

If you have **parent volunteers** or an organized parent group in your building, meet and talk to these parents first, and get their support in reaching out to other families.

Post recruitment flyers across the building and outside the school (flyers can be downloaded from www.philasd.org/sac), and make applications available in the office. Have copies in other languages available for multilingual families. Send a SAC flyer home with all students.

Send a **School Messenger** call alerting all families about the creation of the SAC and the Application deadline.

If you are in a high school, think about what incentives you can put in place to encourage students to share information about the SAC with their families. Consider using a **tear-off letter** to solicit parents' interest and collect tear-offs. The class that collects the most responses can then receive a trip, additional computer time, a party etc.

Organize staff and parent volunteers to **talk to parents during drop-off and pick-up times** and encourage them to participate.

Form parent partners. Identify especially dedicated parents and ask them to invite other parents to school meetings/events. Parent recruitment is often more effective when done by parents who also have children in the school and know the community.

Arrange for **tutors** to help students with homework/watch children **during SAC meetings.** Ask partner organizations if they can run programs during SAC meetings so that parents do not have to arrange for childcare.

Advertise for the SAC in **all languages spoken at your school.** Also specify if there will be interpreters at the meetings. You can contact your Bilingual Counseling Assistants (BCAs) to have them recruit parents and interpret at meetings.

If you are still struggling with parent participation, **ask teachers to identify 3 parents** of students in their class who are the most involved (come to the meetings, chaperone trips, always come to conferences, contact them with questions, etc.). Reach out to those parents individually, and solicit their participation on the SAC.

TIPS FOR RECRUITING STAFF

Notify school staff that you are creating a SAC:

- Talk about the SAC in your morning announcements.

- Let staff know about the Application Process and how to access it through www.philasd.org/sac.

- Distribute the SAC FAQs (will be available at www.philasd.org/sac) to all your school staff, so they can answer questions from students and families.

Make sure all staff members, and especially front office personnel:

- Are familiar with the Application Process and deadlines.

- Know where to put completed paper applications in cases where the applicant is unable to submit the form electronically.

- Are able to answer simple questions based on the FAQs.

Direct staff members to www.philasd.org/sac to fill out the SAC Application Form if they are interested in serving on the SAC.

TIPS FOR RECRUITING STUDENTS

When promoting SAC membership to students, be sure to emphasize that it's a **leadership opportunity**—they will be representing the student voice if they serve on the SAC, and their opinions and perspectives will be taken seriously. They have the potential to directly affect school policies.

Work with teachers to identify especially active and engaged students who would be interested in serving on the SAC.

Besides emphasizing the leadership opportunity, be sure to mention that SAC membership can be listed as an **extracurricular activity** on **college applications.** Serving on a decision-making team with other adults—including the principal—will look very impressive on applications.

If the school has a **student government association**, reach out and ask that they elect or appoint members to the SAC.

TIPS FOR RECRUITING COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Let your **community partners** know that you are creating a SAC. Invite them to apply to serve on your SAC, and ask them to submit their Application Form online at www.philasd.org/sac.

In deciding which groups to engage, ask yourself: What can these groups potentially bring to a collaborative relationship with the SAC that would be **useful, valuable, or a resource** in advocating for children? Consider the ways that potential partners' missions overlap with SAC goals, as well as any challenges in reaching out to these groups.

Reach out to service agencies, public libraries and parks, civic organizations, foundations, police and fire stations, hospitals, religious organizations, and community service groups.

Collaborate with community-based organizations that serve **target populations.** For example, developing partnerships with organizations that serve immigrant/refugee families can create important alliances.

TIPS FOR RETAINING NEW MEETING ATTENDEES

Look closely at your activities to decide what's working and what isn't. Don't just do something because "that's what we've always done." For example, maybe your SAC hasn't had success in the past because meetings were at a time when many parents worked. New ideas can create new excitement for your group.

Have a greeter at meetings to welcome newcomers and make sure they feel comfortable.

Use name tags so people who don't attend often won't feel left out. Make that first experience a positive one, so people will want to come back; even if someone cannot commit to the SAC this year, they'll be more likely to get involved in the future if they have a positive experience at the meetings they do attend.

Awards, compliments, and simple thank-yous can go a long way. Always let people know that you appreciate their commitment to the group and the school in general.

6

SAC Assessments

SAC Assessments

The Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) has developed a more robust assessment structure for SACs starting in the 2016-2017 school year. We recognize that SACs have existed in the District for several years and have long been a part of the District's family engagement framework, but schools have not been held accountable for implementing this policy. With the passing of Policy 920 from the School Reform Commission in June 2016, we now expect that all schools will abide by the mandatory SAC policy. By having a stronger assessment structure in place, we hope to more accurately account for schools that have worked hard to create strong SACs and identify schools that need our support.

> **" We hope to more accurately account for schools that have worked hard to create strong SACs and identify schools that need our support. "**

The SAC assessments are not punitive — they are meant to target the FACE Office's support efforts and hold our staff accountable for carrying out this work. By completing the assessments, SACs will be able to receive greater assistance in specific areas of need and SACs that are functioning according to the policy will be recognized for their efforts.

Please see a copy of our **SAC Development Status Summary** in the Appendix for reference. You can use this sheet to keep track of your own progress, and you will also receive a filled-out, PDF version, called the **SAC Development Status Summary** (which will include the current category standing of your SAC) from the FACE office after each Checkpoint in your Google Folder (See Chapter 7, Step 6).
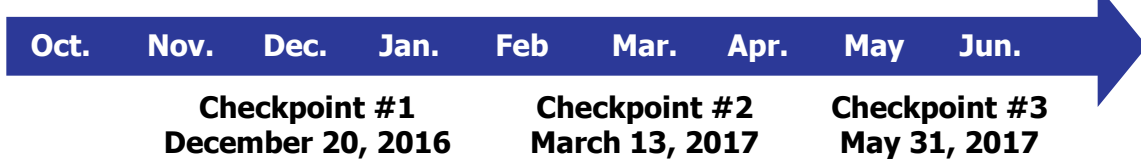
HOW WILL FACE ASSESS THE SACS?

The FACE Office will conduct three "checkpoints" throughout the 2016-2017 School Year to determine the level of SAC implementation in schools. By "level of SAC implementation," we mean the degree to which a school's SAC meets our SAC Criteria of having:

1. **Ongoing Meetings**
2. **Correct Council Composition**
3. **Strategic Conversations**

Based on a SAC's fulfillment of these criteria, we will assign them a Category (see page 47) that describes their level of implementation and in turn tells the FACE Office and the school how it can improve the SAC.

The Checkpoints will take place about every 50 school days:

Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.

Checkpoint #1	Checkpoint #2	Checkpoint #3
December 20, 2016	March 13, 2017	May 31, 2017

CRITERIA FULFILLMENT

After each checkpoint, the FACE Office will look at the documents and forms submitted by each school to determine whether the school meets the SAC Criteria. Criteria fulfillment will be based on the following:

1. Ongoing Meetings

SACs must meet at least every other month. These meeting dates should be shared with the FACE Office through the SAC Meeting Calendar Form. SAC meetings should be guided by the policies outlined in the SAC Constitution and the procedures outlined in the SAC Bylaws, both of which should be signed by all SAC members and kept at the school for the SAC's reference. The SAC needs to produce a Meeting Agenda for every meeting, which lists the items to be discussed, and a SAC Sign-In Sheet, which indicates that all stakeholders are attending meetings.

If the **FACE Office receives** all of the following forms by the time of the Checkpoint, the SAC will be listed as meeting the Ongoing Meetings criteria for that Checkpoint:

At the beginning of the School Year (or whenever the SAC forms) the FACE office must receive:

- *Meeting Calendar Form*, with meetings scheduled at least every other month from beginning of school year or date of SAC creation

After each SAC meeting, the FACE Office must receive:

- *Meeting Agenda*, showing items discussed
- *Member Sign-in Form*, which indicates that at least 60% of members (including the principal) are in attendance (percentage taken from average of all Member Sign-in Forms)

2. Council Composition

The SAC must include a simple majority family members, along with the school principal, school staff, students (in schools with grades 6-12), and community

members. For K-6 schools, the FACE Office recommends the SAC has: 1 principal; 2 staff members; 4 family members; and 1 community member. For schools with grades 6-12, the FACE Office recommends the SAC has: 1 principal; 2 staff members; 5 family members; 2 students; and 1 community member. The SAC may add additional members, but one family member must be added for every additional non-family member added to the SAC. In other words, family members must always make up the largest portion of SAC members.

If the FACE Office receives all of the following forms by the time of the Checkpoint, the SAC will be listed as meeting the criteria for Council Composition for that Checkpoint:

FACE Office must receive:

- *SAC Member Roster Form*, with correct minimum number of people from each stakeholder group and the contact information for all members

3. Strategic Conversations

The SAC must have discussions that tie back to supporting academic achievement, improving school climate and culture, and strengthening family engagement at the school by examining and addressing school data.

SACs will receive a **Self-Assessment Form** that will ask members questions about the content and quality of their meeting discussions.

Questions will center around the following:
- Are the meeting discussions data-driven? (i.e., Do members examine school data and then discuss improvement solutions in response?)
- Is the content of discussions rooted in the three core goals of SACs (supporting academic achievement, improving school climate and culture, and strengthening family engagement)?
- Are meeting discussions conducted in a collaborative way?

DETERMINING SAC CATEGORIES

Category 1
- Has Ongoing Meetings
- Has correct Council Composition
- Has Strategic Conversations

Category 2
- Has Ongoing Meetings
- Is missing *one* of the following criteria:
  - Council Composition
  - Strategic Conversations

Category 3
- Has Ongoing Meetings
- Is missing *both* of the following criteria:
  - Council Composition
  - Strategic Conversations

Category 4
- SAC does not have Ongoing Meetings
  - If the school does not fulfill the Ongoing Meetings criteria, it will automatically be placed in Category 4

"SAC+"
- Meets all 3 Criteria (Category 1) *and* has Working Subcommittees
  - Working Subcommittees support the work of the SAC and are in the areas of academic achievement, school climate and culture, and family engagement

A NOTE ON HSA, FRIENDS OF, ETC. ESTABLISHED PARENT GROUPS

If your school has a strong Home & School Association, Friends Of group, or other established parent group, good news: **this group can count as a SAC!**

As long as you fill out and submit the correct forms to our office (see the next chapter for our guide to filling out forms), we will count your school as having a "SAC." Your group may continue to call itself a Home & School Association, Friend Of _____, etc. The group does not need to be called a SAC; it simply needs to meet our criteria as mentioned above.

Improvement Goals

For information on how to improve your SAC and move up to Category 1, please see our **SAC Improvement Toolkits** on www.philasd.org/sac under "Resources for Existing SACs."
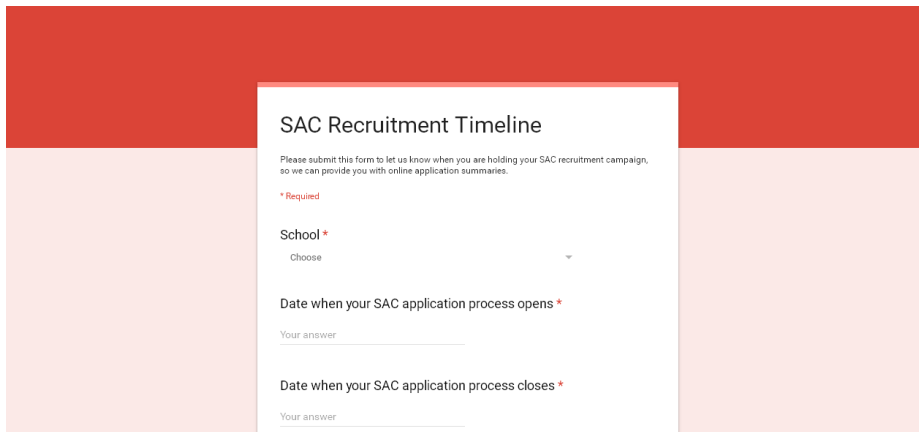
7

Guide to Filling out SAC Forms

Guide to Filling Out SAC Forms

STEP 1: SAC RECRUITMENT TIMELINE FORM

> ## Responsible person: Principal
> ## (or a designee of the Principal)

Principals (or a designated SAC point person at the school) should begin by setting a clear time frame for accepting Application Forms. Principals should refer to the **Principal's Guide to Creating a SAC**, found on www.philasd.org/sac under "SAC Creation Resources."

Once the principal determines when the Application Process opens and closes, **the Principal or a designee of the Principal** should submit the **RED SAC Recruitment Timeline Form** to the FACE Office via Google Forms. (A link to the SAC Recruitment Timeline Form can be found on www.philasd.org/sac under "SAC Management Forms.")

STEP 2: SAC APPLICATION FORM

> ## Responsible person: SAC Applicant

After the SAC Recruitment Timeline Form has been submitted, you can begin the Application Process. Have all interested candidates (family, students, community members, and staff) fill out the **ORANGE SAC Application Form**.

School Advisory Council Application

Please fill out this form to apply for a seat on the School Advisory Council. Do your best to provide as much information as possible. Please make sure you provide a correct e-mail address, so you can receive a copy of your form upon submission. Another copy will be sent to your school.

* Required

First Name *

Your answer

Last Name *

Your answer

Address

The Application Form can **only be submitted online**. Go to www.philasd.org/sac and click on the bucket called "Apply to be a SAC Member." This will take you directly to the Google Form where you will fill out your SAC Application.

At the school, identify a computer that can be made available for everyone interested, so they can complete their SAC Application Form online. Ensure that front office or other staff members understand what the SAC Application Form is and how to access it (through www.philasd.org/sac) and that someone can assist applicants who do not know how to use computers or who have limited English proficiency.

There will be a downloadable Paper SAC Application Form available on www.philasd.org/sac under "SAC Management Forms" if you would like to provide paper applications for applicants who feel uncomfortable using a computer. Translated Paper SAC Application Forms will also be available on this webpage in the 8 major languages of the District. **All paper forms you receive will need to be submitted electronically**. The FACE Office will not accept any paper applications.

An electronic copy of the Application Form will be sent to the applicant, the FACE Office, and the school principal via email.

STEP 3: SUMMARY SHEET OF SAC APPLICATIONS

Responsible person: FACE Office representative

Within five school days of the close of the Application Process (as indicated by the principal on the SAC Recruitment Timeline Form), the FACE Office (through sac@philasd.org) will send the principal a **Summary Sheet of SAC Applications** for the school.

Based on the number of applicants for each stakeholder group, the principal will know whether to hold an election for that group. Elections only need to be held if there are more applicants than seats available on the SAC.

STEP 6: SAC GOOGLE FOLDER 📁 School SAC Folder

Responsible people: Principal and SAC Secretary

Within five school days of the SAC Member Roster Form and SAC Meeting Calendar Form being submitted, the principal will receive an email notification stating that the **SAC Google Folder** has been shared with them. This will give the principal access to the SAC Google Folder specific to their school.

The SAC Google Folder will include the following items:

- **Agendas & Sign-In Sheets** Folder
- **SAC Status Reports** Folder
- **Custom SAC Sign-In Sheet**
- **SAC Member Roster**

This folder should remain organized with all documents in their appropriate folder. The process for uploading documents to the Google Folder and maintaining the Google Folder is outlined in Steps 7 through 9.

STEP 7: THE FIRST SAC MEETING

Responsible person: Principal
(or a designee of the Principal)

Print the following forms for the **first SAC meeting**:

a. **SAC Meeting Agenda (Enough for all SAC members plus extra for non-member attendees)**

The principal, or designee of the principal, should prepare a **SAC Meeting Agenda** (a sample first meeting agenda can be found in the Appendix and at www.philasd.org/sac) and distribute to all meeting attendees.

b. **SAC Sign-in Sheet (1)**

The principal should print the SAC Sign-in Sheet, which can be downloaded from www.philasd.org/sac under "Resources for Existing SACs." (A sample sign-in sheet can also be found in the Appendix.)

The SAC Sign-In Sheet should be given to the SAC Secretary at the end of the meeting.

c. **SAC Leadership Roles Descriptions (1)**

Print the **SAC Leadership Roles Descriptions** found on www.philasd.org/sac under "Resources for Existing SACs" for electing members to the **Secretary, Facilitator, and Organizer** positions.

Read aloud the descriptions and duties found in the **SAC Leadership Roles Descriptions** to ensure that members understand their responsibilities in these roles.

Once the chosen SAC Secretary, Facilitator, and Organizer accept their positions, the principal or new SAC Secretary should make a note of who these members are on the SAC Sign-In Sheet.

Once the SAC Secretary is chosen, the principal must give them access to the SAC Google Folder so that they can upload meeting documents after the meeting. To give the SAC Secretary access to the SAC Google Folder, the principal must share the folder with the SAC Secretary.

d. **SAC Constitution (1 official copy that all SAC members will sign)**

The principal must write the name of the school in Article I of the SAC Constitution.

All members must read and sign the SAC Constitution, which outlines the policies and expectations of all SACs. The SAC Constitution should stay on file at the school for the SAC's reference.

Signing the SAC Constitution indicates an agreement by all SAC members to uphold the standards and policies of a School Advisory Council. The SAC Constitution will not change unless otherwise indicated by the FACE Office.

e. SAC Bylaws Template (1 official copy that all SAC members will sign once completed and agreed upon)

Using the SAC Bylaws Template and/or the Sample SAC Bylaws for guidance, work together to come up with Bylaws that are specific to your school's SAC.

Write down the school's SAC Bylaws, either on paper or on a computer. At the end of the meeting, read the Bylaws aloud and have all SAC members vote on the Bylaws as a whole and sign them (if you are recording Bylaws on a computer, print and then have members sign).

Creating, voting on, and signing the Bylaws is an important process for each SAC to build a foundation of success specific to its school. Bylaws should be voted on at the beginning of each year so that all members of the SAC are connected to the mission and vision of the school and are able to share their input on this foundation before the year starts.

Confirm the next meeting date with the SAC.

If *changes* need to be made to any part of the Meeting Calendar, you *must* notify the FACE Office at face@philasd.org.

STEP 8: AFTER THE FIRST MEETING

Responsible person (for Agenda & Sign-in Sheet): SAC Secretary

Within five days of the first meeting, the **SAC Secretary** must submit the following:

- **Meeting Agenda**

The Meeting Agenda must be submitted electronically to the SAC Google Folder under "Agendas & Sign-In Sheets."

The SAC Secretary should scan the Meeting Agenda and send it to their email address.

The SAC Secretary should then upload the Meeting Agenda to the school's SAC Google Folder.

- **SAC Sign-in Sheet**

The names collected on the SAC Sign-in Sheet must be submitted electronically to the SAC Google Folder under "Agendas & Sign-In Sheets."
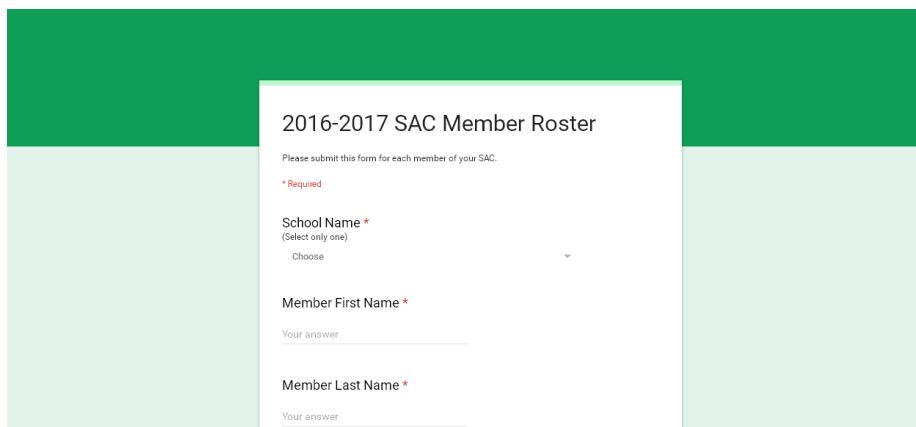
The SAC Secretary should scan the SAC Sign-in Sheet and send it to their email address.

The SAC Secretary should then upload the SAC Sign-in Sheet to the school's SAC Google Folder.

- **SAC Member Roster Form**

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**Responsible person: Principal
(or a designee of the Principal)**

</div>

Once SAC membership and SAC Leadership Roles have been finalized, the principal must submit the **GREEN SAC Member Roster Form** to the FACE Office.

2016-2017 SAC Member Roster

Please submit this form for each member of your SAC.

* Required

School Name *
(Select only one)

Choose

Member First Name *

Your answer

Member Last Name *

Your answer

The SAC Member Roster Form should be submitted via Google Forms. A link to the Google Form can be found on www.philasd.org/sac under "SAC Management Forms."
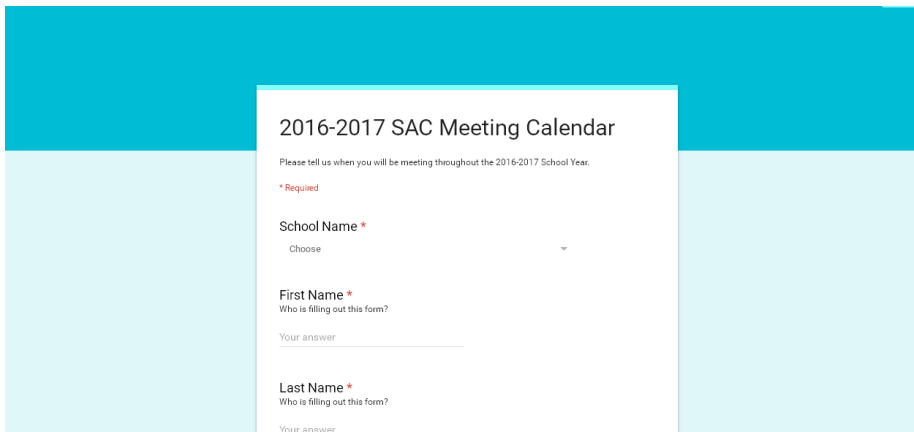
Once the FACE office has received information on all members of your SAC, we will create a **custom sign-in sheet** for your SAC with all members' names. **In future meetings, please use this custom sign-in sheet to ensure that your data is collected.**

- **SAC Meeting Calendar Form**

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**Responsible person: Principal
(or a designee of the Principal)**

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Once SAC membership has been finalized, the principal must also submit the **BLUE** **SAC Meeting Calendar Form** to the FACE Office.
— The SAC Meeting Calendar Form should be submitted via Google Forms. A link to the Google Form can be found on www.philasd.org/sac, under "SAC Management Forms."

2016-2017 SAC Meeting Calendar

Please tell us when you will be meeting throughout the 2016-2017 School Year.

* Required

School Name *

Choose

First Name *
Who is filling out this form?

Your answer

Last Name *
Who is filling out this form?

Your answer

STEP 9: SUBSEQUENT SAC MEETINGS

<table>
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**Responsible person (for all of the following):
SAC Secretary**

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Now that all major forms are submitted, the hard part is over! At each **subsequent meeting**, the SAC Secretary will only need to submit the following forms:
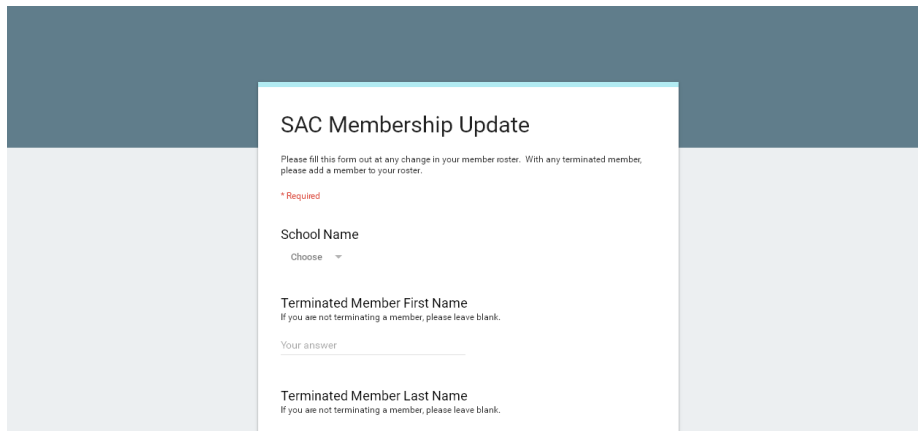
- **Member Sign-in Sheets**: Scan and upload to the SAC Google Folder under "Agendas & Sign-In Sheets."

The SAC Sign-in Sheet will include all of the names of SAC members (as well as their Member ID#s, for FACE Office use) and will be prepared by the FACE Office. **Please use this custom sign-in sheet to ensure that your data is collected.**

There will also be blank spaces for non-member meeting attendees to sign in.

Both SAC members and non-members should sign in by writing their signature next to their printed name and then writing the date in the next column.

- **SAC Meeting Agenda**: Scan and upload to SAC Google Folder under "Agendas & Sign-In Sheets."

- If any **changes** need to be made to the **Meeting Calendar**, the Secretary must contact the FACE Office (sac@philasd.org).

- If there is ever a change in membership, the SAC Secretary must fill out the **GRAY SAC Membership Update Form** via Google Form. A link to the Google Form can be found on www.philasd.org/sac under "SAC Management Forms."

STEP 10: SAC SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

Responsible people: ALL SAC Members

There will be **three checkpoints** throughout the school year. These checkpoints will allow the FACE Office to categorize each school's SAC development and provide better support and guidance. Before each checkpoint, SACs will be asked

to fill out a **SAC Self-Assessment Form**. This form will ask the SAC to critique itself on its work and effectiveness as a group.

The three checkpoints will take place on the following dates:

- December 20th, 2016
- March 13th, 2017
- May 31st, 2017

An **email notification** will be sent to SAC Facilitators a month prior to each Checkpoint. The Facilitator is responsible for leading the SAC through the Self-Assessment Form by each Checkpoint.

The Self-Assessment Form must be filled out online. It can be accessed at www.philasd.org/sac under "SAC Management Forms."

9

Appendix

Appendix

POLICY 920 (JUNE 2016 SAC POLICY)

SAMPLE SAC BYLAWS

SAC DEVELOPMENT STATUS SUMMARY

SAMPLE SAC MEETING AGENDAS

> For a year's worth of Sample SAC Meeting Agendas, please go to www.philasd.org/sac.

SAMPLE SAC MEETING SIGN-IN SHEETS

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS

ADOPTED: JUNE 16, 2016

REVISED:

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920 SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS

1. Purpose	The School Reform Commission recognizes that active and engaged organized family advisory groups strengthen both schools and communities, improve school climate, provide opportunities for effective family involvement in school decision-making, and improve student achievement.
2. Authority	All District schools shall have an active and engaged School Advisory Council (SAC) defined by the following characteristics:

1. Shall meet monthly or at least every other month.
2. Shall consist of a membership that is made up of majority family members, the school principal, teachers or other school-based staff, students (at the middle school and high school level), and community members.
3. Shall be selected in a democratic manner with guidance from the School District's SAC implementation plan.
4. Shall notify all stakeholders of the nomination and election process in a timely manner in order to ensure widespread participation.
5. Shall elect family members and teachers/other school-based staff by their representative groups. All family members shall have the opportunity to vote for their family member representatives.
6. Shall elect replacement SAC members by their respective groups (family member and teachers/other school-based staff) at the same time as SAC member elections.
7. Shall hold elections by the spring of the previous school year and the installation of new members shall follow at the start of the next school year. Schools establishing first year SAC's shall hold elections within the first sixty days of the start of the school year.
8. Shall collaborate with the Principal and school staff to develop, implement, and annually revise a vision/mission for the school and an action plan for school improvement and effective family engagement practices.
9. Shall review the school budget and provide input on discretionary spending.
10. Shall review school-based policies. For example, policies governing school culture and climate, school safety, discipline, truancy, extracurricular activities, family member engagement, and student supports.
11. Shall play a major role in strengthening effective school-community relations,

improving communication between school and home, encouraging community input, and sharing information on advisory work and decisions with larger school community.

12. Shall play an active role in supporting, promoting, and recommending school-based programs and initiatives.

13. Shall examine data on the effectiveness of school-based programs and services and periodically inform Action Plan strategies and recommendations to ensure continued progress toward school goals.

14. Shall receive mandatory community-based trainings from the School District at least but not limited to once a year on a series of topics (including sessions on budgeting, interpreting school data, meaningful engagement, and more).

15. Shall complete beginning and end of year SAC self-assessments which reflect goals, activities, and achievements.

16. Shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the SAC when making decisions. A quorum must exist during all decision-making by the SAC.

17. Shall request the intervention of the School District's Office of Family and Community Engagement for disputes within the SAC which cannot be resolved internally at the school level to facilitate resolution to conflict.

Additionally, the SAC:

- May identify additional projects agreed to by consensus on the SAC.

Joint responsibilities:

- 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.

The school Principal shall support active and engaged SACs by:

- Ensuring that the SAC is in place within the first sixty days of the start of the school year.
- Providing support for the effective functioning and management of the SAC with support from fellow SAC members.
- Attending all SAC meetings, unless this responsibility has been delegated to a designee who will have decision-making power.
- Considering each recommendation made by the SAC and communicating actions taken in response to the recommendation to all SAC members.
- Making the names of the members of the SAC known to the families of the students enrolled in the school and to the School District of Philadelphia.
- Engaging family members and community members in decision-making opportunities at the school through timely and ongoing communication.

	• 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. The School District shall support active and engaged SACs by: • Developing policies and procedures that support the effectiveness of SACs. • Maintaining educational materials and resources to assist SACs in fulfilling its duties and responsibilities. • Providing community-based trainings workshops and/or conferences to SAC (including sessions on budgeting, interpreting school data, understanding the School Progress Report, meaningful engagement, and more). • Providing annual mandatory trainings to principals and school-based staff on developing SACs in their schools (including recruitment strategies, roles and responsibilities of the SAC, and supports available to them). • The School Reform Commission will invite SAC leadership from each school to an annual Summit to collect input and keep the Commission informed with regard to school specific issues and initiatives. The School District's Office of Family and Community Engagement shall support SACs by: • Supporting SAC performance and reporting summary information to the Superintendent and/or designee. • Maintaining a copy of active SAC membership for each District school. • Advising on or resolving conflicts within SACs in regards to membership, election of SAC members, and adherence to the SAC by-laws in a fair and transparent manner.
Accountability:	As part of the current principal/school leader evaluation, School District of Philadelphia Framework for Leadership Domain 4a: Maximizes family & community involvement and outreach, principals will be evaluated on whether there is evidence of an established active and engaged SAC at their school. School principals/leaders are ultimately responsible for the organization and management of the school. In schools without an existing advisory group, the school community must establish a SAC. However, the SRC recognizes that the SAC is not the only type of group that fits the requirements set by this policy; and that some schools may have already established other groups that fit the requirements set by this policy. The School Reform Commission believes that education is a shared responsibility among families, staff, students, and the community. The participation of all

	stakeholders in the life of the school contributes to student learning and success. It is expected that SACs will encourage and involve other family/community groups to work in collaboration to collectively improve student achievement and foster a strong sense of community at the school. References: School Code – Home Rule Charter –

Bylaws of the School Advisory Council (Sample)

ARTICLE I: SCHOOL MISSION

The School Advisory Council commits to preparing our students to learn everyday so that they can become college and career ready and lead productive and meaningful lives. The work of the SAC focuses on supporting academic achievement, improving school climate and culture, and strengthening family engagement for student growth and achievement.

ARTICLE II: SCHOOL VISION

Parents/families, community partners, and neighbors will all play a role in supporting our school so that our students receive a high quality, diverse, and comprehensive education.

All students will feel safe, healthy and comfortable in the school.

Parents/families, staff members, community members, and students will have a genuine voice in the areas of academic achievement, school climate and culture, and family engagement.

ARTICLE III: SAC DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The SAC will conduct a thorough discussion of each matter before initiating the Decision-Making Process.

When the time comes to make a decision, the Facilitator will prompt everyone to express their final opinions using the Fist-to-Five-Finger Consensus-Building Method.

All voting members will raise their hands, holding up fingers or a fist according to the following codes:

- A fist, "I object and will block consensus (usually on moral grounds)."
- 1 finger, "I think there is lots more work to do on this proposal." In consensus this indicates standing aside, or not being in agreement but not blocking the consensus.
- 2 fingers, "I don't much like this but I'll go along."
- 3 fingers, "I'm in the middle somewhere. I like some of it, but not all."
- 4 fingers, "This is fine."
- 5 fingers, "I like this a lot. I think it's the best possible decision."

If there are any members who are holding up 3 fingers or less, the Facilitator will allow the member(s) to speak on why they are not fully consenting to the decision. The Facilitator will then lead all members in a discussion to amend the proposed decision to include the concerns of the non-consenting members. This will ensure that all members will be on board with and supportive of the decision.

After the proposed decision has been amended, the Facilitator will prompt all voting members to raise their hands with corresponding fingers again.

This cyclical process will continue until all voting members are holding up 4 or 5 fingers. The SAC Secretary will add the consensus to the minutes once the final hand-raising is finished.

ARTICLE IV: APPLICATION AND ELECTION PROCEDURE

SECTION A: APPLICATIONS

ITEM 1: MARKETING

    a. The Principal will identify a due date for applications. For a new SAC, applications will be due by mid-November. For an existing SAC, applications will be due by May of the previous school year.

    b. If there is no Application and Election Commission, the SAC Organizer or the school Principal will identify a contact person responsible for the Application Process (this person can be the SAC Organizer or the Principal, or another member of the existing SAC). This person will perform the following duties:

        i. Sending out announcements in the months leading up to the SAC Elections to request Applications for the SAC through school newsletters, community newspapers, bulletins, School Messenger, etc., encouraging qualified candidates to run. Information should include deadlines and the process for submitting the Application Form.

        ii. Keeping paper copies of the SAC Application Form on hand at the welcome desk, security desk, and main office for applicants unfamiliar with computers.

        iii. Distributing flyers in the school yard during school drop-off in the morning and pick-up in the afternoon.

        iv. Distributing flyers at any scheduled parent meetings, parent and student orientations, Back to School night, and other school events or activities.

        v. Requesting each grade group submit at least 10 names of prospective parents/family members who can be contacted by the designated person to determine their interest level.

        vi. Organizing informational meetings for all interested candidates regarding qualifications, roles and responsibilities of SAC members, and the Application and Election Procedure. In addition, school newsletters, school-parent links, and school notice boards and websites may include information on each candidate.

ITEM 2: COLLECTING APPLICATIONS

    a. Applicants will submit their applications online at www.philasd.org/sac before or on the designated due date.

    b. Applications will be reviewed by the Principal to ensure all applicants are suitable for candidacy. Applicants suitable for candidacy filled all required application fields with appropriate and relevant answers.

    c. All applicants suitable for candidacy will have their names on a ballot for community-wide elections.

SECTION B: ELECTIONS

1. The Principal will identify a date for elections. This date will be advertised to all stakeholders school-wide to insure a public and open election. For a new SAC, elections will be held before Winter Recess. For an existing SAC, elections will be held before the last day of the school year.

2. The Principal (of a new SAC) or the Organizer (of an existing SAC) will create the ballot. The ballot should consist of a short description written by each applicant of their qualifications such as: ages of children at the school, past involvement with parent organizations, and professional background, if relevant.
3. If there is no Application and Election Commission, the Principal (of a new SAC) or the Organizer (of an existing SAC) will distribute the ballots to the appropriate voters (i.e., only parents should vote for the parent seats on the SAC, only school staff should vote for the staff seats on the SAC, and only students should vote for the student seats on the SAC).
4. If there is no Application and Election Commission, the Principal (of a new SAC) or the Organizer (of an existing SAC) will post a formal public announcement of elected council members in the main office and distribute it by all school communication vehicles (newsletters, bulletin boards, websites, etc.).

SECTION C: SPECIAL ELECTIONS

Special elections will be held if there are vacant positions or if the integrity of the election procedures has been challenged.

This process will repeat the Application and Election Procedure and will commence no more than one week after the end of the initial Application and Election Procedure.

SECTION D: THE APPLICATION AND ELECTION COMMISSION

The Application and Election Commission will oversee and facilitate the Application and Election Procedure outlined in Article IV of the Bylaws. The Application and Election Commission will ensure that the Application and Election Procedure is followed and fulfilled and that it gives everyone a fair chance at voting.

At the end of each Application and Election Cycle, the Application and Election Commission will consider whether election rules are fair and impartial. Before the next Application and Election Cycle, the Application and Election Commission will review and amend the Application and Election Procedure with updated policies each year. These amendments to the Procedure will be agreed upon by the SAC using the Fist-to-Five-Finger Consensus-Building Method outlined in Article III.

ARTICLE V: LEADERSHIP SELECTION PROCESS

The SAC will select members to leadership roles during the first SAC meeting. Before leadership roles are filled, the school Principal will run the meeting.

The selection process will fill positions one-by-one according to the following process:

1. The Principal will ask all interested members in the position to raise their hands.
2. The Principal will write down the names of all members interested in the position.
3. In alphabetical order by last name, the Principal will invite each interested member to speak before the SAC for two minutes about why they want to fill the position.
4. After all interested members have spoken, the principal will give each voting member of the SAC a small slip of paper.

5. Everyone will write the name of their choice down on the paper, fold it up, and give it back to the Principal.
6. The Principal will count the votes and announce the person who will fill the SAC Leadership Role.

This process will repeat for each position until all positions are filled.

After all leadership positions are filled, the SAC Facilitator, Organizer, and Secretary will prepare to fulfill their roles starting with the second SAC meeting of the year.

The Principal will continue to lead the first SAC meeting for the duration of the meeting.

ARTICLE VI: SUBCOMMITTEES

Subcommittee work will be done outside of the regularly scheduled SAC meetings.

SECTION A: THE APPLICATION AND ELECTION COMMISSION

The Application and Election Commission will be chaired by the SAC Organizer or the SAC Secretary. The Application and Election Commission will be a volunteer Commission, and it will be open to all members of the SAC and wider school community.

Responsibilities of the Application and Election Commission are found in Article IV Section D of the SAC Bylaws.

SECTION B: THE SCHOOL SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

The School Services Subcommittee will be chaired by a SAC member elected by the SAC (using the same Leadership Selection Process outlined in Article V of the Bylaws). The School Services Subcommittee will be a volunteer subcommittee, and it will be open to all members of the SAC and wider school community.

The School Services Subcommittee will have the following responsibilities:

1. Actively identify services to be implemented based on the SAC's Strategic Conversations. For example, if the SAC examines school data that reveals low literacy rates in the school, the School Services Subcommittee can plan a book drive event or implement a literacy tutoring program in the school.
2. Complete needs assessments throughout the school by surveying teachers, staff, and students, and provide this data for further Strategic Conversations at SAC meetings.
3. Meet with school staff, specifically the building engineer, custodial staff, library staff, and cafeteria staff to foster a strong partnership between school staff and the SAC.

SECTION C: THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

The Community Engagement Subcommittee will be chaired by a SAC member elected by the SAC (using the same Leadership Selection Process outlined in Article V of the Bylaws). The Community Engagement Subcommittee will be a volunteer subcommittee, and it will be open to all members of the SAC and wider school community.

The Community Engagement Subcommittee will have the following responsibilities:

1. Actively identify engagement practices to be implemented based on the SAC's Strategic Conversations. For example, if the SAC discusses lackluster parent engagement in the school, the Community Engagement Subcommittee can plan a family Literacy Night, a PSSA "Prep Course" for parents/family members, a school tour and classroom walkthrough for parents/family members, or create a volunteer program at the school for parents and families.
2. Plan SAC Days of Service throughout the school and community. For example, all members of the SAC could volunteer for a local organization once a month or every other month to stay connected to the needs of the surrounding school community.
3. Meet with other parent and community groups within the school to foster a strong, communicative partnership among all parent and community groups at the school.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENTS

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS

SAC DEVELOPMENT STATUS SUMMARY

School Name: _____

The purpose of this status summary is not punitive; this is not a grade. This is a tool meant to guide and assist all schools in creating and maintaining successful SACs, and to improve the FACE Office's data-collection so that we know how we can best support each individual school based on their specific needs.

Criteria #1: SAC has Ongoing Meetings

This is a yes-no status. If the SAC does not fulfill the requirements, it does not fulfill the **Ongoing Meetings** criteria.

Requirement	Checkpoint 1	Checkpoint 2	Checkpoint 3
SAC has submitted the **Meeting Calendar Form** to the FACE Office			
SAC meets at least **every-other month**			
SAC submits the **Meeting Agenda** to the FACE Office after each meeting			
SAC submits the **Meeting Sign-In Sheet** to the FACE Office after each meeting			

Criteria #2: SAC includes All Stakeholders

This is a yes-no status. If the SAC does not fulfill any of the requirements for their school type (grades K-6 and 7-12), it does not fulfill the **Council Composition** criteria.

	Schools with Grades K-6		
Requirement	Checkpoint 1	Checkpoint 2	Checkpoint 3
SAC has submitted the **Member Roster Form** to the FACE Office			
School staff members are represented on the SAC			
Parents/family members are represented on the SAC, and they make up the largest portion of the SAC.			
Community members are represented on the SAC			
The school **Principal** (or designee of the principal) attends all SAC meetings			

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Schools with Grades 7-12

Requirement	Checkpoint 1	Checkpoint 2	Checkpoint 3
SAC has submitted the **Member Roster Form** to the FACE Office			
School staff members are represented on the SAC			
Parents/family members are represented on the SAC, and they make up the largest portion of the SAC.			
Community members are represented on the SAC			
Students are represented on the SAC.			
The school **Principal** (or designee of the principal) attends all SAC meetings			

SAC Development Status Summary
Page 3

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Criteria #3: SAC has Strategic Conversations

This is a yes-no status based on SAC members' Self-Assessments (via Google Form). If the SAC does not receive an average of 3 or 4 points across all Self-Assessment components, it does not fulfill the **Strategic Conversations** criteria.

Component	Checkpoint 1	Checkpoint 2	Checkpoint 3
SAC has **Strategic Conversations** according to the **average scores of 3 or 4** from the SAC members' Self-Assessments			

Overall SAC Assessment

Component	Checkpoint 1	Checkpoint 2	Checkpoint 3
SAC has **Ongoing Meetings**			
SAC has the correct **Council Composition**			
SAC has **Strategic Conversations**			

Checkpoint 1 Category: _____

Checkpoint 2 Category: _____

Checkpoint 3 Category: _____

SAC Development Status Summary
Page 4

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Dr. William Hite Elementary School
SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

[SAMPLE FIRST MEETING AGENDA]

I. Introductions

    a. Name,
    b. Stakeholder Group
    c. Why you wanted to join the SAC

II. Choose/elect SAC Roles
    a. Facilitator
    b. Organizer
    c. Secretary

III. Read and sign SAC Constitution

IV. Write SAC Bylaws
    a. Mission & Vision Statements
    b. Decision-making Procedures
    c. Agree on and sign SAC Bylaws

V. Adjourned
    a. Next meeting date:
    b. SAC Secretary must submit all documents within 5 days

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Dr. William Hite Elementary School

SEPTEMBER SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA
[SAMPLE FOR ESTABLISHED SACS]

I.   Introductions
  a. Name
  b. Stakeholder Group
  c. Hopes for the year

II. Appoint Application and Election Commission
  a. Purpose: recruit staff, family members, community members, and students

III. Back to School Night
  a. Table: promote SAC and recruit new members
  b. Paper applications; flyers

IV. Adjourned
  a. Next meeting date:
  b. SAC Secretary must submit all documents within 5 days

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SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS

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SAC Sign-In Sheet

School Name: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

MEMBERS

MEMBER ID#	PRINTED NAME	SIGNATURE

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS

The School District of Philadelphia
Office of Family and Community Engagement

GUESTS

PRINTED NAME	SIGNATURE	GROUP AFFILIATION (family, community member, staff, student)	EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER

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