


***TOOL BOX***

***FOR***

***SITE COUNCIL  
EFFECTIVENESS***



Bellingham Public Schools  
Adopted, 1995  
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# TOOL BOX FOR SITE COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS

Bellingham site councils have received training in numerous techniques for improving problem solving and decision making. These new approaches to decision making prove to be helpful to site councils either on an ongoing basis, or in one-time situations requiring specialized help. We refer to the collection of these techniques as a “tool box” and offer its content of instruments for you to use as needed.

## What Kind of Decision is This?

When site councils engage in formal decision making, it is useful to distinguish the varieties of decision strategies because not all decisions are alike. The chart on the following page defines five different decision making strategies and identifies the strengths and limitations of each.

## Who Makes What Decisions?

It would be a mistake to think that the site council must oversee all decision making within a school. However, many of the important decisions concerning the school improvement plan, budget, major elements of the instructional program, and so forth, are in the scope of the site council’s responsibility.

The site council, in concert with the principal, must use common sense in deciding what decisions need to be made. The site council must also help decide who should be involved in the decision and what type of input is required. Naturally, who will be involved in decision making will be determined by what issue or decision is at hand.

There are no established rules governing who should be involved in site-based decision making. One guideline is, however, that anyone significantly affected by a decision should have some type of input. Another guideline is that all final decisions must be aligned with the policies and goals of the Bellingham School District. This includes curriculum frameworks, performance standards, and district assessments. The principal or any other district administrator should be consulted when deciding the WHO and WHAT about site-based decision making as it relates to district policies and practices.

## How Do We Solve Problems?

Although this question would seem simple enough, it is easy to struggle with basic problem solving. People frequently experience the lack of time to do an adequate job of problem solving. Also, it is not uncommon for the loudest voices or most persistent personalities to have their way in a group lacking good problem solving skills.

There is no panacea for difficult problems. However, the “Six Step Problem Solving Process” offers a sequential process for making problem solving more systematic and less personalized. Other problem solving strategies are offered in “Problem Solving Tools” when more specific strategies are needed for unique problems. These techniques may also help streamline discussion and make problem solving a bit more efficient.

**SIX STEP PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS**

<b>STEP</b>	<b>QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED</b>	<b>WHAT'S NEEDED TO GO TO NEXT STEP</b>
1. Identify and select problem	What do we want to change?	Compare "existing" and "desired" conditions
2. Analyze the problem	What's preventing us from reaching the "desired state?"	Key cause(s) documented and ranked
3. Generate potential solutions	How could we make the change?	Solution list
4. Select and plan the solution	What's the best way to do it?	Plan for making and monitoring the change Measurement criteria to evaluate solution effectiveness
5. Implement the solution	Are we following the plan?	Solution in place
6. Evaluate the solution	How well did it work?	Verification that the problem is solved, or agreement to address continuing problems

*Xerox Corporation*

## PROBLEM SOLVING TOOLS

Strategy	Uses	Steps
<b>Positive Energy Forward (PEF)</b>	Technique used to focus and build on the <b>positive</b> aspects of a program. All participants have the chance to comment on an issue.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask the question and make a list of, "What is going well in...."</li> <li>2. Ask the question and make a list of, "What could we do differently to increase effectiveness in...."</li> <li>3. Prioritize the ideas from #2.</li> </ol>
<b>Situation-Target-Proposal (STP)</b>	Technique used to assess what the desired state is based on and how the current situation needs to be modified.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define the current <b>situation</b>.</li> <li>2. Define the desired <b>target</b> state.</li> <li>3. Develop a <b>proposal</b> for closing the gap between "S" and "T."</li> </ol>
<b>Brainstorming</b>  Types: "Free-wheeling," "Round Robin" and "Slip Method"	Idea-generating technique used to get a wide range of ideas for a group's consideration.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focus on a single problem.</li> <li>2. Generate many solutions.</li> <li>3. Record every idea on paper.</li> <li>4. Involve all participants.</li> <li>5. Build on the ideas of others.</li> <li>6. Do not evaluate or purge ideas.</li> </ol>
<b>Checksheets</b>	To collect: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information needed to analyze a problem</li> <li>2. Information needed to evaluate the solution</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask "What do you want to know?"</li> <li>2. Ask "What is the most reliable way to collect the data?"</li> <li>3. Place data on grid showing the "causes" on one axis and the "frequency intervals" on the other axis (weeks, months, years, etc.).</li> </ol>
<b>Interviewing</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To collect information to help analyze a problem.</li> <li>2. To involve those outside the group in generating potential solutions or implementing a proposed solution.</li> <li>3. To collect information to help evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented solution.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a list of questions.</li> <li>2. Write down responses.</li> <li>3. Verify your understanding with the interviewee's responses.</li> </ol>
<b>Surveying</b>	Interviewing on paper	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the information needed.</li> <li>2. Decide who has this information in its most reliable form.</li> <li>3. Develop a series of questions that will enable respondents to provide information that is accurate and clear.</li> <li>4. Keep the questionnaire short, simple and easy to use.</li> </ol>

## How Does Every Voice Get Heard?

The most common way for everyone to have a voice in decision making is brainstorming. Through brainstorming, every idea gets recorded. No comments or judgments are allowed on any idea until all ideas have been heard.

A second strategy is the Affinity Process. All participants are given small “post-its” to write as many ideas or suggestions possible to a given problem or question. The post-its are placed on a large board. They are then categorized and streamlined to common themes so that the entire group’s suggestions can be more easily seen and understood.

### BRAINSTORMING RULES

1. Focus on a single problem.
2. Generate many solutions.
3. Record every idea on butcher paper.
4. Involve all participants.
5. Try to build on ideas of others.
6. Emphasize quantity and divergence.
7. Do not evaluate or purge any ideas.

## How do We Reach Consensus?

Reaching consensus is an issue for the site council internally, as well as for the site council in developing a common understanding or agreement throughout the entire staff and school community.

There are certain ground rules that everyone needs to understand and abide by. Consensus does not depend on a formal vote. All sides to the issues must be heard, and minority concerns must be satisfactorily addressed. Not everyone has to completely embrace a final decision by consensus. But everyone must agree to be able to live with the general conditions of the decision. For consensus decision making to work, all participants must agree to abide by the final decision of the group. No one may undermine the consensus decision of the group once it has been established.

“Techniques for Reaching Consensus” offers several options for developing a consensus decision with the input of diverse points of view.

## Ground Rules for Consensus

1. Everyone knows that the consensus technique will be used.
2. Each member knows the process.
3. The team has enough information and process time to explore all issues fully.
4. If insufficient time or information is available, the team will return to a prior step in the problem-solving steps.
5. Each person on the team has a right to know every other person's opinions about the issues.
6. Consensus means that every member will support the decision. This may be described on a continuum of support.

## Techniques for Reaching Consensus

Strategy	Uses	Steps
<b>List Reduction</b>	A way of processing the output of a brainstorming session.	The leader asks for clarification of each item on the list. The group identifies "filters" that should be used for an item to remain in consideration. Members vote on each item. Process may be repeated with more stringent criteria until list is manageable.
<b>Balance Sheets</b>	Technique for a group to identify and review the pro's and con's of a variety of options. A way to organize information and facilitate discussion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up a grid with two columns. Label the columns "+" and "-".</li> <li>2. List the options along the left side of the columns.</li> <li>3. Enter the positive and the negative aspects for each of the options on the chart.</li> </ol>
<b>Criteria Rating Forms</b>	Form allowing criteria to be weighted relative to each other.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decide what factors or criteria are to be considered and reach agreement on their definitions.</li> <li>2. Determine what (if any) weights should be assigned. Agree on a scale to be used to rate the options.</li> <li>3. Create a chart showing the relationship between the "problems" and the "criteria".</li> <li>4. Discuss each "cell" on the form to arrive at a consensus rating.</li> <li>5. Total the ratings at the bottom of the chart to show the overall ratings of the group.</li> </ol>
<b>Weighted Voting</b>	A way to qualify the positions and preferences of group members. A technique used to "take the temperature" of the group.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up a grid or list of options to be considered.</li> <li>2. Give members at least 1 1/2 times the number of votes as there are options.</li> <li>3. Members distribute their votes among the options to indicate their preferences--they may "weight" their votes by voting for one option more times.</li> </ol>

## How Are We Doing?

Effective site councils frequently ask the question, “How are we doing?” But to answer this important question, there are several areas of site council business that can and should be addressed. Please see the following pages for examples.

1. Meeting effectiveness. The site council may develop its own report card for how it conducts its meetings. (**Site Council Meeting Report Card**)
2. Flexibility of decision making procedures. The site council may use a self-assessment on how often it actually uses different ways of making decisions. (**Assessing Decision Making Procedures**)
3. Reaching consensus effectively. “**How we Reached Consensus**” offers a simple strategy to check the effectiveness of developing group consensus.
4. Positive team interaction. Observations of group behavior may be made in a number of different categories. (**Elements of Effective Team Interaction**)

## SITE COUNCIL MEETING REPORT CARD

Mark each statement to assess today's meeting. One group member will volunteer to collect all report cards and report the group evaluation at the next meeting.

- + = We did very well in this area today.
- ✓ = We did okay, we could do better next time.
- = We need to improve in this area.
- ? = Not sure

1. \_\_\_\_\_ We had a clear and set agenda.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ We started on time.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ People shared information.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ We strove for equal participation.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ We used effective problem solving strategies.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ We used consensus in decision making.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ We used chart paper as an effective visual aid.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ People listened to each other.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ We stayed on track with our discussion.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ We managed time on individual agenda items.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ Disagreements were depersonalized.

What did we do today that will make a difference for our students?

Comments:

## ASSESSING DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES

Directions: For each method of decision making, check how frequently it is used by your group. Compile the responses of all group members and present them to the group.

<u>Kind of Decision Making</u>	<u>Frequently</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
1. Unanimity--everyone agrees that a proposed course of action is the best choice.				
2. Consensus--everyone agrees on a course of action, with perhaps some stated reservations, at least for a specified time period.				
3. Majority support--the majority of people agree, often demonstrated by voting.				
4. Minority support--a minority of people agree, with tacit agreement or lack of open disagreement by the remaining members.				
5. Handclasp--one or two members actively support and lead group to action.				
6. Topic jump--the topic shifts before an explicit decision is reached.				
7. Self-authorization--one person initiates action, with implicit consent or no overt disagreement of other members.				
8. Plop--one person initiates action, but the group does not respond one way or another; by default, no action is taken.				

## ASSESSING HOW WE REACHED CONSENSUS

1. The degree to which my ideas were listened to is:

Low      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      High

2. The degree to which members listened to one another is:

Low      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      High

3. The degree to which we kept an open mind and were respectful of differing points of view is:

Low      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      High

4. The degree to which we tried to involve everyone in the group in the process is:

Low      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      High

5. The degree to which we avoided conflict-reducing procedures such as tossing a coin or majority vote is:

Low      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      High

6. The degree to which we handled conflict constructively is:

Low      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      High

7. The degree to which I can support our final decision is:

Low      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      High

Source: Cerylle Moffett, ASCD

## ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE TEAM INTERACTION

As you observe the site council at work, note what you see as any of these elements are used.

ELEMENT	OBSERVATIONS
<b>GROUP GOALS:</b> Clearly stated, well defined and shared by all.	
<b>COMMUNICATION:</b> Two-way, direct, open and honest.	
<b>GROUP DECISIONS:</b> Agreed to and supported by all members.	
<b>TRUST:</b> Members trust each other, encourage diverse viewpoints and willingly give and receive feedback.	
<b>ENVIRONMENT:</b> Meeting room is chosen in advance. Physical arrangement promotes effective interaction.	
<b>CONFLICT:</b> Constructive, issues oriented. Differences in opinion are encouraged.	
<b>PROBLEM SOLVING:</b> Systematic definition and analysis of problems. Collaborative problem solving.	
<b>GROUP MAINTENANCE:</b> Members are responsible for the group's maintenance. Group process is discussed and evaluated.	
<b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> Group sees new and better ways of getting the job done. Roles are flexible. Progress is made.	

## ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE TEAM INTERACTION

While you observe, use the 1 to 5 scale to rate the group's effectiveness using the following characteristics. A rating of 5 means the group consistently exhibits the characteristic, while a rating of 1 means the characteristic is lacking.

**GROUP GOALS:** Clearly stated, well defined and shared by all.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**COMMUNICATION:** Two-way, direct, open and honest.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**GROUP DECISIONS:** Agreed to and supported by all members.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**TRUST:** Members trust each other, encourage diverse viewpoints and willingly give and receive feedback.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**ENVIRONMENT:** Meeting room is chosen in advance. Physical arrangement promotes effective interaction.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**CONFLICT:** Constructive, issues oriented. Differences in opinion are encouraged.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**PROBLEM SOLVING:** Systematic definition and analysis of problems. Collaborative problem solving.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**GROUP MAINTENANCE:** Members are responsible for the group's maintenance. Group process is discussed and evaluated.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**DEVELOPMENT:** Group sees new and better ways of getting the job done. Roles are flexible. Progress is made.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

## Are We Maturing as a Group?

Numerous theories describe the development of group norms and behavior over time. There are often observable stages through which groups pass. "Cog's Ladder" and "Tuckman's Critical Phases of Team Development" offer two brief descriptive explanations of the stages of group development. These theoretical frameworks offer site councils the opportunity to identify and discuss the progress of their overall development.

### Cog's Ladder

#### ***Polite Stage***

In this phase, group members are getting acquainted, sharing values, and establishing the basis for a group structure. Polite conversation includes information sharing, which helps group members anticipate each other's future responses to group activities. During this phase, some group members rely on stereotyping to help categorize other members. Cliques are formed which will become important in later phases. The items on the hidden agendas of group members stay hidden and do not usually affect behavior at this time. Conflict is usually absent in this stage.

#### ***Why We're Here Stage***

During this phase, the group members define the objectives and goals of the group. Cliques start to wield influence. Cliques grow and merge as clique members find a common purpose. Hidden agenda items begin to be sensed as group members try to verbalize group objectives most satisfying to themselves. The need for group approval declines from what it was in the Polite Stage as the group members begin taking risks and displaying commitment. There is usually active participation from all members. The time spent in this phase varies widely. Some groups omit it completely, while a few groups will give it most of their allotted time.

#### ***Bid for Power***

On this step of the ladder to maturity, group members attempt to influence one another's ideas, values, or opinions. This stage is characterized by competition for attention, recognition, and influence. Conflict in the group rises to a higher level than in any other stage of group growth. The group does not feel a strong team spirit during this phase. Some group members who contributed willingly in earlier phases remain completely silent in this phase. Other members relish the opportunity to compete and attempt to dominate the group. Cliques take on the greatest importance in this phase. Through cliques, the group members find they can wield more power. Hidden agenda items cause a behavior change. Members who easily concealed their hidden agendas in earlier stages now find that other group members are becoming aware of these hidden items. Some groups never mature past this stage. Nevertheless, they can fulfill many of their tasks through compromise.

#### ***Constructive Stage***

In this phase, group members are open minded, listen actively, and accept the fact that others have a right to different value systems. Members are willing to change their preconceived ideas or opinions on the basis of facts presented by other members. Individuals actively ask questions of each other. A team spirit starts to build and cliques begin to dissolve. Real progress toward the group's goal becomes evident. Leadership is shared.

#### ***Espirit Phase***

Here the group feels a high group morale and an intense group loyalty. Both individuality and creativity is high. Cliques are absent. Although hidden agendas are present in this phase, the trust level is so high that the group trusts each member not to misuse the group loyalty. A group in this phase continues to be constructive and productive. In fact, such a group usually achieves more than is expected or than can be explained by the apparent talents of the group members.

## Tuckman's Critical Phases of Team Development

### *Phase One--Forming*

- transition phase as people move from individuals in a group to members of a team
- members look to leader for direction, answers, encouragement, protection
- high levels of enthusiasm and anxiety, anticipation and suspicion
- involvement is cautious
- high level for specific details, answers, examples

### *Phase Two--Storming*

- most difficult phase for the team
- disagreements and conflicts begin to surface
- task seems more difficult than imagined
- frustration, impatience and anger mounts
- choice point for team of caring confrontation or blaming and defensiveness

### *Phase Three--Norming*

- reconciliation phases as members face issues but protect relationships
- shift from competition to cooperation
- meaningful collaboration begins
- members feel more accepting, comfortable, and important
- group rules are created, revised, and honored

### *Phase Four--Performing*

- team becomes truly effective and fully collaborates
- energy is focused on team goals
- synergy is high as team shares ideas and resources
- ownership and loyalty to team is high
- quality problem solving and productive change takes place

# WRITING SCHOOL SITE COUNCIL BYLAWS

School Site Councils will need to write bylaws soon after forming. The following guide-lines, sample, and checklist may help your council in this process.

## *Writing Your Council Bylaws*

Bylaws are written rules and procedures to guide the efforts of your site council. Before you begin writing your bylaws, you will need to know how you want to organize your council. The questions below should be answered by a representative group of the school constituents: principal, staff, parents, and, if appropriate, students and community members.

### *Vision/Mission*

What do you expect your site council to do? This statement sets the tone for the council. In keeping with the principles of school improvement, its chief focus should be on students. A simple statement like, "The mission of the \_\_\_\_\_ School Site Council is to allow the staff, parents, and community to work collaboratively to design and implement the best possible educational program that will allow every student to succeed" might be appropriate for your school.

### *Purpose*

The School Site Council is empowered to make many policy-type decisions for the school. You will, for example, take part in the development or continuation of a School Improvement Plan. You may want to affirm this and other specific areas in which you have been empowered to operate.

The following are some areas in which the School Site Council is empowered to make decisions or give advice. Do you want to include any of them in the bylaws?

- School Improvement Plan
- Needs assessment
- Help develop school budget
- Curriculum and program implementation
- School safety and operations
- Parent and community involvement
- Participation in selection of principal
- Early Release/Late Arrival plan
- Program Scheduling
- Staff development needs
- Evaluation of student and program outcomes
- School calendar of events

### *Terms*

- How shall an election be held? (at open house, by mail, special election day?)
- How shall an unexpected vacancy be filled?
- Should you have alternates?
- How long will members serve? (one, two, or more, years?)
- Will you have staggered terms? Everyone replaced at once? Different term lengths?
- Do you want to require attendance at meetings to maintain membership?
- Will there be a cause and procedure for removing someone from membership?

### ***Officers***

- Do you want to have officers?
- What will the officers be?

President	Chairperson	Facilitator
Vice President	Vice Chairperson	
Secretary	Recorder	
- How and when will they be selected?
- How long will they serve?
- How will a vacancy be filled?
- Will there be a cause and procedure to remove someone from office?

### ***Membership***

Bylaws should assure that fair representation occurs. You might ask these questions when writing them:

- Are there special constituencies of your school that should be represented on your site council?
- Who are significant staff groups in your school that should be represented on your site council? (Grade levels, programs, subject areas, departments, etc.)
- Are there minority groups in your school whom you should assure have representation on your site council?
- Do you want to have "at-large" members?
- Other considerations?

### ***Selection***

- When discussing selection guidelines, you might consider:
- When shall an election be held?
- Who should be elected? (parents, community, staff, students)
- Process for selecting representatives to the School Leadership Council?

### ***Meetings***

- How often and when shall you meet?
- Will you prepare an annual calendar of meeting dates?
- How will you assure that your entire school community is aware of the meeting schedule?
- How will you assure that meetings comply with the open meetings act?

### ***Quorum***

- How many people must be present in order to conduct business?
- Should it be a simple majority? Specific number? Minimum number from identified groups?

### ***Rules of Procedure***

- How will meetings be run?
- Will an agenda be prepared? By whom?
- How do items get on the agenda?
- Will parliamentary procedure be used?
- How will visitors be allowed to participate in the meetings? Open chair? Placed on an agenda? Open to council decision?

# SAMPLE BYLAWS

*The following sample wordings have been taken or adapted from bylaws developed by Seattle School Site Councils.*

## VISION/MISSION STATEMENT

The active collaboration of parents, staff, and students to ensure the success of students is the goal of the Bestdarn Site Council. Each student brings a unique set of skills and experiences to school. Our goal is to create a learning environment which celebrates the diversity of our students' backgrounds and enlists every member in an active learning community. We emphasize self and mutual respect and high expectations in order to foster confidence, excitement, and openness in the learning process.

or ... The Bestdarn Site Council is a representative group of administrators, staff, parents, and community people who will make decisions and recommendations for actions that create the best learning and social environment possible for our students.

or ... The Bestdarn Site Council is philosophically committed to teaching children to solve problems cooperatively and to work together in harmony and pledges to conduct itself in the same spirit.

or ... The Bestdarn Site Council is to assist in the creation of a learning environment in which children will seek knowledge, develop attitudes and acquire skills essential to ethical and productive learning, living and citizenship in an ever changing global and democratic society.

or ... The Bestdarn Site Council is dedicated to the belief that all students are capable of learning, and pledges to ensure that the opportunity to learn shall be afforded to all its students. The council is dedicated to provide an environment that will nurture and promote the development of each student to his and her potential.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Bestdarn Site Council shall be to:

- \* Act as a decision-making body to foster a positive learning climate which encourages the academic and social growth of all students through a policy of shared governance among the principal, teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community.
- \* Review, discuss, adopt, and evaluate annually a plan for the Bestdarn School which strives to enhance the academic and social growth of our students.
- \* Enlist the support of all Bestdarn School staff, parents, community, and school district toward the accomplishment of the plan.
- \* Participate in school personnel decisions to the extent allowed by law, regulations and contracts.
- \* To be responsible for program and budgetary planning and evaluation.
- \* To provide input in the determination of curriculum, materials selection, special programs, school safety, and other matters appropriate to the improvement of the education of students that is not prohibited by law, regulation, or contract.
- \* To select the school principal and assistant principal at a time of vacancy.
- \* To act responsibly in every action, upholding the rights of everyone, holding all meetings as required by the open meetings law, and by conforming to school board policy and all contracts in force with the school district.
- \* To actively seek ways to attract additional funding to the school.

## MEMBERSHIP

In keeping with the spirit of mutual cooperation and respect for all members of the school community, the council shall be composed of equal numbers of school personnel and parent/community members. Women, minorities and persons from all geographical areas of the school shall be represented.

The following elected members shall comprise the Bestdarn School Site council.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
1	Principal/Administration
1	Classified staff
3	Certificated staff (Representing a cross-section of the grades served)
1	Local 609 staff
3	Parents (Two from the neighborhood draw area and one from bussed area)
1	Community representative
1	Business representative from the Bestdarn School PIPE partnership
1	PTSA representative

## SELECTION

Each constituency above shall be entitled to use a secret election process to select its representative and may announce an alternate who will be a substitute for the representative should he or she be unable to attend a meeting or continue to serve on the council.

If the group chooses to use an election, it will be conducted under the auspices of the site council who will assist the group in preparation of a ballot, distribution to constituents, and counting of returns.

## TERM OF MEMBERSHIP

The first members of the Bestdarn School Site Council shall hold office for one or two year terms within each membership category. A lottery shall be held to determine each member's length of service. As terms expire and new members are elected, each shall serve for two years. No one may serve more than two consecutive terms except the school principal.

Members who miss three consecutive meetings or more than four meetings in the school year will be contacted by the chairperson to determine their interest in continued participation. More than six absences during the school year shall result in automatic termination of membership on the council.

## OFFICERS

Officers shall consist of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. Additional offices may be created upon consensus of the council membership.

Any member may serve in any council office. The principal, however, may not serve as chairperson.

Each officer shall serve a term that ends upon the next regular meeting of the council, following the annual election of members. At that regular meeting, officer candidates will be nominated and elected by voice vote of the council. A previous officer may not be elected to consecutive terms.

Replacements of officers who are no longer members of the council or who resign their office shall be determined by an election of the majority of the members at the next regular meeting of the council.

The chair will preside at all council meetings with the vice-chair presiding in his or her absence. The secretary shall keep minutes of every meeting and maintain all records of the council.

## SAMPLE ROLES OF GROUP MEMBERS



For groups to work effectively in a problem solving mode, several key roles may be played by members of the site council. These roles may be shared or rotated from meeting to meeting. These responsibilities should be defined in your bylaws. Recommended roles are:

### *Facilitator*

- Clarifies the purpose of the discussion with the group
- Asks for volunteers to be recorder and reporter
- Ensures that all group members have an opportunity to share their ideas
- Keeps the focus of the discussion on the agreed-upon purpose

### *Timekeeper*

- Monitors agreed-upon time frames and gives updates on use of time

### *Group Reporter*

- Records the key points from the group discussion on chart paper for the group members to see
- Summarizes the discussion from the notes
- Clarifies what will be reported

### *Recorder*

- Takes the minutes of the meeting
- Prepared and distributes minutes to distribute prior to the next meeting

### *Process Guide*

- Maintains focus on agreed-upon processes being used
- Keeps the group on track
- Discourages side discussions or other distractions
- Identifies tools and techniques to help the group achieve goals
- Helps the group use the tools effectively

### *Agenda Setter*

- Meets with the principal to help set meeting agendas

## Central Office and School Site Coordination

The success of the Bellingham School District is dependent upon the coordination of all parts of the organization. Listed below is a table that will help explain the roles played by the District's central office and its schools in some of the basic functions they commonly share. It is important to point out that this table is merely suggestive of the many complex tasks that central office and school personnel are required to fulfill.

<b>CENTRAL OFFICE</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>
<b><i>PLANNING</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Superintendent and central office administrators organize strategic planning efforts which involve teachers, parents, administrators, students, and members of the broader Bellingham School District community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal and site council help organize and conduct school improvement planning and problem solving with staff, parents, students, and members of individual school communities.</li> <li>• Goals for school improvement planning are based on the District's Strategic Plan as well as on the unique needs of the school.</li> </ul>
<b><i>BUDGET</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Business and Finance Office prepares an annual District budget.</li> <li>• Recommendations for budget priorities, including overall amounts for school instructional budgets, come from the District's Budget Committee.</li> <li>• This committee is comprised of certificated and classified staff, central office and school administrators, and parents.</li> <li>• The Superintendent makes the final decision on the District's budget before submitting it to the Board of Directors for final approval.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools receive an annual school program budget allocation, typically based on a per-pupil allotment allocated by the District's annual budget.</li> <li>• The principal works with the site council and staff to help prioritize budget priorities and allocations to best meet the needs of the instructional program.</li> <li>• The principal, in collaboration with the site council and staff, is responsible for finalizing the budget priorities and allocations.</li> <li>• The principal is ultimately responsible for allocating and monitoring the school's budget.</li> </ul>

<b>CENTRAL OFFICE</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>
<p><b><i>HUMAN RESOURCE</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Human Resource Office works with the Superintendent, principals, and program administrators to identify staffing needs, recommend staffing levels, prepare job descriptions, establish selection criteria, advertise open positions, screen applications, and identify interview teams.</li> <li>• The Human Resource Office works with the principal and site council to identify building strengths, areas of need, and desired characteristics of new staff members.</li> <li>• On occasion, the Executive Director of Human Resources will serve as interview team leader and at other times will train principals to serve as interview team leaders to work with other administrators, parents, and staff in the interview and selection process.</li> <li>• The Human Resource Office assists in the areas of reference checking, interview questions and performance test preparation, and other personnel functions to ensure that all District and legal requirements are met.</li> <li>• The Human Resource Office also serves as a resource to the building principals in areas such as evaluation and collective bargaining agreement implementation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools receive a certificated and classified staffing allocation, typically based on enrollment.</li> <li>• The principal, in collaboration with the site council and staff, prioritizes the needs of the school program and assigns staff to meet those needs within the specifications of the negotiated contract, state and federal laws, etc.</li> <li>• When staff position openings exist, the instructional needs and characteristics of that position will be identified and communicated to the Human Resource Office.</li> <li>• Principals, certificated and classified staff, and parents will be selected to serve on interview teams to make hiring recommendations to the Superintendent whenever possible.</li> <li>• Building principals are charged with the responsibility of evaluating all certificated and classified staff assigned to the building.</li> <li>• They also implement and uphold the terms and conditions of collective bargaining agreements.</li> </ul>

<b><i>CURRICULUM</i></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Curriculum Department is responsible for developing basic curricular guidelines and standards for student performance, professional development, and assessment.</li> <li>• In accordance with Board policy and state laws governing criteria and selection of instructional materials, teachers, parents, and staff are involved in the development of the screening and selection of appropriate, quality instructional materials.</li> <li>• Curriculum and instructional materials guidelines clarify legally-mandated requirements.</li> <li>• The guidelines also specify options for supplementary instructional materials and identify best practices for instructional delivery at the school site.</li> <li>• The process for selecting appropriate instructional materials and the curriculum guidelines are submitted to the Superintendent and School Board for approval.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal and site council, following Board approved District guidelines, implement the basic curriculum at their school and select appropriate supplemental instructional materials based on the needs of the students they serve.</li> <li>• The principal and staff determine the organizational delivery options and classroom instructional practices which best meet the needs of their students and follow the curriculum guidelines.</li> </ul>

CENTRAL OFFICE	SCHOOL
<b>SPECIAL PROGRAMS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Central Services houses several programs including: Special Education, Student Services, Vocational Education, English as a Second Language (ESL), Highly Capable Learners, and Title 1.</li> <li>• One of the primary responsibilities of Central Services is to establish local program guidelines that comply with state and federal regulations, as well as with local School Board policy.</li> <li>• Allocating and assigning staff to special programs and developing district-wide program goals and practices is another responsibility of the central office.</li> <li>• Parents and staff participate in numerous advisory committees which help shape the implementation of special programs throughout the District.</li> <li>• Central Services supports buildings in the development of programs and services needed to meet the special needs of students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal is responsible for working collaboratively with the school and special program staff to implement special programs in the school.</li> <li>• The principal and staff are responsible for complying with state and federal laws, School Board policy, and working within the special program guidelines.</li> <li>• Support for meeting the special needs of individual students is a school-wide responsibility.</li> <li>• The principal, in collaboration with the site council and total staff, is responsible for meeting the needs of individual students in a way that integrates the student's learning and experience within the entire school program.</li> </ul>

CENTRAL OFFICE	SCHOOL
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department of Library, Media and Technology Services provides assistance to sites as they develop school plans for the implementation of technology.</li> <li>• Central office sets standards for hardware, software and technology systems in order to safeguard system integrity and future development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings establish site technology planning teams to identify and plan technology implementation strategies consistent with the <i>District Technology Plan</i> and Strategic Plan, including human resource design and program integration.</li> <li>• The technology team blends technology planning efforts into the school improvement and problem solving model being employed by the site council.</li> <li>• The technology team and principal monitor and assess program implementation to assure high levels of utilization consistent with learning goals.</li> </ul>



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**BELLINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
1306 Dupont Street  
Bellingham, Washington 98225-3198

*Dr. Kenneth D. Vedra, Superintendent*

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*For Additional Information Contact:  
Deputy Superintendent  
360-676-6512*

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