



Standards of Excellence for School Advisory Councils

The school advisory council function is connected to the Prince William County Schools Strategic Plan, supporting Commitment 3- Family and Community Engagement, Objective 3.1- Prince William County Schools will engage families as authentic partners in education to support academic progress. By 2025, at least 85% of schools will have a high-functioning advisory council.

The purpose of a school advisory council is to provide opportunities for members of the school community to participate in the decision-making process at the local school level. A primary function of the council is to serve as an advisory body to the principal and school leadership team. Members fulfill both representative and advisory roles. While the council does not create a school policy, they play a critical role in helping to shape the continuous improvement plan through feedback and recommendations from the community. The functions of the council include the following:

- assisting with the identification of school needs
- reviewing, evaluating, and shaping the school's continuous improvement plan
- facilitating communication between school staff and the school community
- providing input for the proposed school budget

Prince William County Schools recognizes the school level advisory council as a critical conduit of family engagement. To assess current functioning, the advisory council team reviewed a variety of data sources including survey results, policies and regulations, bylaws, agendas, staff information and meeting minutes. At present, advisory council functions, meetings and processes differ between schools across the school division.

The advisory council standards of excellence development team focused their work on outlining procedures and systems that school teams will consider when planning and facilitating school-based advisory council meetings. The team then suggested best practices for school advisory councils, how to engage families in participation, and how the council can support the development and monitoring of the school's continuous improvement plan. These standards of excellence are outlined in the chart below.

Standards of Excellence for High-Functioning School Advisory Councils

High-Quality Indicators	Required	School-Based Options
Schedule	Advisory council meetings will be held six times each school year between September and June. Meetings will be held separately from other parent-teacher organizations.	Individual schools may select the meeting date and time of day that is most convenient for members of the school community to ensure maximum participation. Schools may offer virtual attendance options for parents/guardians who are unable to attend in person.
Meeting Agenda Topics	<p>Parents/guardians will be given the opportunity to participate in citizen's time or open chair at each meeting. The Superintendent's Advisory Council on Instruction (SACI) Representative will share information from the last SACI meeting attended. SACI agendas should be sent to principal in advance of the meeting so that they can prepare their school's representative for engagement in the listed topics.</p> <p>Additional required topics include the following: September- Welcome, Introduction to the School Continuous Improvement Plan October- Enrollment, Staffing, Approved Budget November/December/January- Student Achievement Data, Update on CIP Goals February- Proposed Budget, Student Achievement Data, Update on CIP Goals March/April- Update on CIP Goals May/June- Adopted Budget, Student Achievement Data, Update on CIP Goals</p>	Individual school teams may add additional topics that are relevant to their school community. This may include guest speakers, topics the principal wants feedback on from the school community, and topics of interest suggested by parents and guardians.
Membership	<p>At minimum, membership on the council should include the following: Principal Superintendent's Advisory Council on Instruction Representative (SACI) Advisory Council Chair Family Liaison Parents/Guardians Staff Students-Middle School/High School Only</p> <p>Parents/guardians can attend council meetings if their student attends the school.</p>	School teams may add additional staff members to the advisory council team to reflect a well-balanced reflection of the school community. This may include grade levels, departments, special education, gifted education, and classified staff. Schools should make every effort to ensure representation across grade levels, neighborhoods, specialty programs and be inclusive of parents/guardians whose students receive special education, gifted and English learner services.

<p>Meeting Communication</p>	<p>Schools will communicate advisory council meeting dates and times during open house, back-to-school nights, in newsletters and through division-approved communication tools. Schools will ensure that interpretation and translation services are available. Interpretation and translation services will be paid for out of flexible funds.</p> <p>Schools will post advisory council information on their webpage to include:</p> <p>Meeting Dates Agendas Officers Approved minutes Contact information</p>	<p>Schools will identify the staff member(s) responsible for sending advisory council communication.</p> <p>Schools may create an agenda that meets the needs of their school community. The samples below may serve as a reference.</p> <p>PAC Sample Agenda.docx PAC Sample Agenda 2.docx</p>
<p>Advisory Council Chair</p>	<p>The advisory council shall be chaired by a parent/guardian with support provided by the building principal.</p> <p>The Advisory Council Chair may serve for no more than two consecutive school years.</p>	
<p>Role of the Superintendent's Advisory Council on Instruction (SACI) Representative</p>	<p>All schools should have a representative and an alternate representative on SACI. The SACI representatives should be parents/guardians of the school advisory council and make regular reports to them.</p>	<p>Schools may decide whether to appoint the Advisory Council chair to serve on the Superintendent's Advisory Council (SACI). Alternatively, another parent or guardian may be selected to serve on the SACI.</p>
<p>Training</p>	<p>Training will be provided by PWCS (Prince William County Schools) to all principals on the indicators of high-functioning advisory councils. Schools will provide training to council members during the first meeting. School leaders and advisory council chairs will follow the training provided by the central office. A training module with resources is available on Canvas.</p>	
<p>Bylaws</p>	<p>Bylaws will be required. The school division will provide schools with sample advisory council bylaws.</p>	<p>Schools may tailor the bylaws to meet the needs of their school community. The sample below may serve as reference.</p> <p>Sample Advisory Council By-Laws.docx</p>
<p>High-Functioning Advisory Council Indicator Checklist</p>	<p>School should use this checklist to monitor their progress on establishing a high-functioning advisory council:</p> <p>HFAC Monitoring Indicators.docx</p>	

