

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL AND DISTRICT DECISION-MAKING IN WCCUSD

This Fact Sheet was created by parents in WCCUSD with support from Public Advocates, relying on the California Education Code and the 2016-2017 WCCUSD Parent Handbook. For questions or help, email: Blackboardwcc@gmail.com

Students and schools benefit when parents¹ are involved in their children's education. For example, teachers and principals are more likely to experience higher morale, test score increase, and the quality of school programs are much stronger. *This fact sheet is targeted toward guiding parents who want to improve their schools and/or their district through participation, advocacy and policymaking with parents, students, community-based organizations as well as school and district officials.*

Q: What does "parent involvement" look like?

A: Parent involvement can take many forms and there is no "right" way to participate. Involvement can include volunteering for certain events, but it also includes:

- Reading with your student at home, tracking his/her homework, attending school meetings;
- Making your voice heard when you believe your student's education is not up to standards (particularly when your child has a disability, is an English learner, or struggles to achieve)
- Attending trainings and events of community-based organizations that advocate on behalf of students in WCCUSD
- Attending and joining school and district-based committees

For information about parents' rights, general advocacy tips, and how to file complaints, visit Building Blocks for Kids: Richmond Collaborative: <http://bbk-richmond.org/local-resources>. Resources available in English & Spanish.

WHAT GROUPS CAN I PARTICIPATE IN AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL?

Three programs welcome parent input at the school level: (1) School Site Council for Title I schools, (2) English Learner Advisory Committee, and (3) Title I School Policy on Parent Involvement.

According to WCCUSD, the Title I schools include:

- Elementary Schools: Bayview, Chavez, Coronado, Dover, Downer, Ford, Grant, Highland, King, Lake, Lincoln, Montalvin, Nystrom, Peres, Riverside, Shannon, Stege, Verde, Wilson
- Middle Schools: Crespi, DeJean, Helms
- High Schools: Greenwood Academy, Kennedy, Richmond

School Site Council (SSC)

The SSCs are required by federal and state laws at every school that receives Title I funds — in other words, schools with at least 40% of children from low-income families (see list above). The SSC is made up of school staff, parents, and students who play a critical role in the school's decision-making.

Role:

- Every year, SSC members create and approve a Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) to address how funds will be used to improve academic performance of all students, particularly high-need students.

¹ For purposes of this Fact Sheet, "parents" refers to parents and guardians.

- The plan shall also identify the schools' means of evaluating progress toward accomplishing those goals and how state and federal laws governing these programs will be implemented.

Membership

The SSC is composed of the principal, teachers, school personnel, and parents, and students at the high school level. You can participate even if you are not a member of the SSC, and you can nominate yourself to be a member when elections are held.

To learn about your school's SSC, ask the front office about meeting times, leadership, and bylaws.

English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)

Each California public school, with 21 or more English learners (ELs) must form an English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC). The ELAC is responsible for advising the principal and staff on programs and services for ELs and the School Site Council on the development of the SPSA.

Role

The ELAC shall assist the school in the development of:

- The school's needs assessment;
- Ways to make parents aware of the importance of regular school attendance;
- Appropriate training and materials to assist each member carry out his or her legally required advisory responsibilities. Training is planned in full consultation with ELAC members.

Membership

Parents of ELs should comprise at least the same percentage of ELAC membership as ELs constitute of the school's total student population. Other members can be parents, school staff, and/or community members. Parents of ELs must have an opportunity to elect parent members to serve on the ELAC.

For specific meeting dates and time, please contact your school's ELAC Coordinator.

Other organizations lead by parents, such as the Ford Elementary Parent Council, may exist at your individual school sites such as Parent Teacher Associations. These organizations, however, do not have decision-making power or specific legal requirements.

Title I School Policy on Parent Involvement

At Title I schools, parents are invited to attend an annual meeting to review and improve the school's parent involvement policy. Here, the parents will help the school develop a contract that outlines how parents, staff, and students will share responsibility for improved academic achievement and how school and parents will build a partnership to help students achieve state standards.

WHAT PROGRAMS CAN I PARTICIPATE IN AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL?

WCCUSD invites parents to attend and join the (1) District Local Control Accountability Plan Committee, (2) Multilingual District Advisory Committee, and (3) Title I Parent Involvement Program.

District Local Control Accountability Plan (DLCAP) Committee

Role: This parent, student and community advisory committee is required to advise the district on its Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). The LCAP is the district's annual programmatic and financial plan that addresses how it will improve schools and outcomes for students across the district, particularly for high-need students (low-income, English learners, and foster youth).

DLCAP Membership: Parents must constitute the majority of DLCAP members. All community members are welcome to attend. For more information, please see the DLCAP bylaws, membership roster, agendas and minutes, available at: www.wccusd.net/Page/5842

2016-2017 DLCAP Meeting Dates, Times and Locations

January 26 | March 21 | April 27 | May 11

All meetings are from 6:30-8:30 pm at Kennedy High School Library

Multilingual District Advisory Committee (MDAC)

Each California public school district, with 51 or more English learners must form a district-level EL advisory committee. In WCCUSD, this is called the Multilingual District Advisory Committee (MDAC). The purpose of the MDAC is to advise the district on issues related to ELs. Meetings are open to any interested parties.

Role:

The MDAC advises the district's governing board on programs and services for ELs such as:

- Conduct a district-wide needs assessment on a school-by-school basis.
- Develop or revise a district master plan of education programs and services for ELs, taking into consideration the Single Plans for Student Achievement at each school site.
- Establish district goals, programs, and objectives for programs and services for ELs.

Membership

Parents of ELs who are not employed by the district must constitute a majority membership (51% or more) of the MDAC. Each school's ELAC must have the opportunity to elect at least one of its members to be a site representative in the MDAC.

2016-2017 MDAC Meeting Dates, Times and Locations

- **Thursday Evenings (6:30-8:00 p.m.):** Oct. 27, Dec. 8, Feb. 2, March 16, April 17, May 4, June 1
Helms Middle School | 2500 Road 20, San Pablo, CA 94806
- **Friday Mornings (9:00-10:00 a.m.):** Oct. 28, Dec. 9, Feb. 3, March 17, April 18, May 5, June 2
Kennedy High School Library | 4300 Cutting Blvd., Richmond, CA 94804

Title I Parent Involvement Program

Every year, the Superintendent or designee must identify specific objectives of the parent involvement program. The Superintendent will jointly develop involvement strategies with parents and will involve parents in decisions regarding how Title I funds will be used for parent involvement activities.

For more information, contact the Superintendent.

Translation and Interpreters

Parents have the right to student specific documents in their native language. In WCCUSD, parents are entitled to translations and interpreters at SSC, ELAC, MDAC, and DLAC meetings.

Q: How do I request a translated document or an interpreter for my meeting?

A: The WCCUSD RAP Center oversees document translation and interpreters. To request a specific translated document or to request an interpreter for a specific meeting, a parent may obtain a request form from the school. If these forms are unavailable, contact Chris Pharm at (510) 307-4590 x 26206.

If You Experience Obstacles to Parent Involvement and Advocacy

Conflicts are inevitable, and can hopefully be resolved through clear communication and cooperation. If, for example, you feel that the SSC, ELAC, DLCAP, or MDAC is not being run according to its bylaws, is not addressing the issues it is required to address, or is not being inclusive of parents, you have the right to seek resolution to the problem. We recommend:

1. Raise the issue with school or district staff, preferably in a separate meeting. We strongly encourage you to bring a friend to serve as a witness. If possible, invite others who share your concerns or to serve as support. Make specific requests whenever possible.
2. Follow up with a written summary of the meeting, reiterating specific requests and/or thanking staff for making specific commitments.
3. If issues are not resolved, raise in writing with other district staff, and
4. If issues persist, file a complaint.

Filing a Complaint

Parents may file a written complaint of alleged noncompliance when the district violates a state or federal law (5 CCR § 4630). We recommend parents receive assistance from a local organization or a legal organization such as Public Advocates before filing a complaint.

Step 1: Filing the Complaint

Submit a complaint describing the district violation of state law, federal law, or regulations governing educational programs. Attach any supporting evidence. Submit the complaint to the school or the District's Office of Educational Equity. You may write the complaint in your native language.

Step 2: Investigation

Within 10 days of receiving the complaint, the Office of Educational Equity will begin an investigation, which may include interviewing relevant parties.

Step 3: Response/Report of Findings

The compliance officer shall prepare and send a written report of the district's investigation and decision within 60 calendar days of the district's receipt of the complaint.

Step 4: Final Written Decision

The district's written decision will be sent to the person who submitted the complaint. If the complaint involves an English learner or parent with limited English, the decision shall also be translated into their native language.

Step 5: Appealing the District's Determination

If you are dissatisfied with the district's decision, you may appeal to the California Department of Education within 15 days. In your written appeal, be sure to specify the problem(s) with the district's decision, e.g. whether the facts are incorrect and/or the law has been misapplied. Include a copy of your original complaint, any evidence, as well as a copy of the district's decision.

*For more information, please visit their website at www.ccusdoee.net/.
Material can be found in English and Spanish.*