

Joint Staff School Committee Handbook

Davis School District
45 East State Street
Farmington, Utah

.....
POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF WELL



Happy

AND

SATISFIED STAFF

FUNCTIONING JSSC

OPEN & EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Good direction



Positive

developed through collaboration

STAFF

school

INSTRUCTIONAL

DEVELOPMENT

climate

STRATEGIES

BASED ON



TAILORED TO FIT

SCHOOL GOALS

NEEDS OF SCHOOL

AND DATA



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Preface

Purpose of the Joint Staff School Committee Handbook

This handbook has been developed to provide each school staff with an overview of the purpose, functions, and procedures of a Joint Staff School Committee (JSSC).

Purpose of the Joint Staff School Committee

The purpose of JSSC is to provide for an orderly and professional means of improving the educational programs, professional and public relations, and the conditions within the school.

Current school restructuring programs call for a deeper and more meaningful involvement of staff members in decisions making. The Davis School District, the Davis Education Association (DEA), and the Davis Education Support Personnel (DESP) have a mutual goal of bringing together the points of view of administration and staff around pertinent school issues in order to maximize student achievement and improve the well-being of employees.

Joint Staff School Committee Oversight

JCCS is the umbrella committee that reviews the work of all other committees in the school to ensure that the work is being completed on time and in the best possible way. As an elected committee, JSSC should represent the interest of all licensed and classified staff. They are charged with identifying potential conflicts or redundancies; assuring alignment with the school improvement plan, district policies, and negotiated agreement; identifying and providing information and support, suggesting initiatives, etc. It is not within the purview of the JSSC to veto or negate the work of other committees, but rather to provide a deeper and more meaningful involvement of staff members in decision-making. The JSSC should provide information and focused communication to all staff roles and responsibilities.

Membership

Representation and Election

Minimum representation of the JSSC shall be: the principal, members of the teaching staff as elected by the faculty (at least two elected at-large in elementary schools), and two classified employees elected by the classified staff at the school. Other school administrators may be included at the principal's discretion.

A minimum of two-year staggered or rotating terms is recommended.

Election of the JSSC chairperson is done by secret ballot at the first meeting of the new JSSC.

Election of the faculty members to the Joint Staff School Committee shall be conducted by the chairperson of the current year's JSSC.

Vacant Seats

In the event that an elected member of the JSSC leaves the school or is no longer able to serve as a JSSC member, there shall be another election held for that position for the remainder of the term.

Additional Attendance

Faculty and staff that are not members of the JSSC may be invited to attend meetings or may request through the chairperson the opportunity to attend meetings in order to provide additional information as needed.

Compensation for Joint Staff School Committee Members

Stipends for members may be paid out of Instructional Improvement Leaders funds.

Meeting Protocol

Time and Length of Meeting

The committee should meet at least monthly. Regular, efficient meetings contribute to the overall success of the decision making process and increase the likelihood of positive outcomes. Enough time for thorough discussions is important. Generally speaking, meetings will usually last from one to one and a half hours.

Written Agenda

An official written agenda should guide each JSSC meeting. The elected chairperson should facilitate the meeting.

Adding an Agenda Item

Any school staff member may introduce any item of business to the agenda for consideration by the JSSC.

Anonymous Concerns

Each JSSC may need to make a decision about whether or not to review anonymous complaints or suggestions. Generally speaking, it is incumbent upon staff members to be willing to identify themselves and their issues. As the staff works toward a climate of cooperation and trust, that typically becomes the norm.

Minute Taking

Minutes must be taken in each meeting and committee activities reported to all members of the staff within five working days after the meetings. Minutes should also be kept on file for recordkeeping purposes.

Voting Procedures

Decision making will usually be through consensus, with each JSSC member in agreement with the proposals and decisions. When that is not forthcoming, a vote may be taken. Each member of the JSSC has an equal vote.

Responsibilities

Chairperson

It is the responsibility of the chairperson to schedule and conduct all JSSC meetings, help establish ground rules, involve all members of the JSSC, and ensure the distribution of minutes.

Members

It is the responsibility of all members to contribute meaningful items for discussion, express the opinions of those they represent, take the time to gather appropriate input and data, and support and implement decisions of the committee.

Training Options

Annual JSSC training will be provided to each school by October 1. Individual JSSCs may also request specific training through the DEA, DESP, or the District at any time. Some staff development suggestions are:

- Communication Skills
- Conflict Management
- Dealing With Difficult People
- Organizational Leadership
- The Change Process
- Stress Management
- Strategic Planning
- Diversity Training
- School Public Relations/Building and Involving Our Community

Contractual Obligations

Here is a list of items from the Davis Educators' Agreement that the JSSC is charged with developing and/or approving.

Contractual Obligations at All Levels

- Recommendations for use of professional leave days
- Input on assignment of FTE in the building
- Approval of any evening meetings other than parent-teacher meetings
- Provide a liaison from the JSSC to the School Community Council
- Refer items to District Liaison Council and any written requests for waivers of the contract
- Instructional Improvement Leaders
- School Budgeting

Additional Contractual Obligations at the High School Level

- Input on the use of time during late start
- Additional Compensation for Supervision of Extracurricular Activities

Additional Contractual Obligations at the Junior High Level

- Approval of exceptions to Friday early out activities
- Additional Compensation for Supervision of Extracurricular Activities

Additional Contractual Obligations at the Elementary Level

- Approval of exceptions to Friday early out activities
- Prep schedule
- Approval of any prep schedule modifications for special activities

Appropriate Topics for Discussion

In addition to contractual obligations, outlined above, the following are appropriate topics for discussion for a JSSC. While it is not intended to be exhaustive, it is provided to demonstrate the kinds of topics recommended for discussion in JSSC meetings:

- School Improvement Plan (SIP) development and implementation
- Improving educational programs
- Professional staff relations
- Public relations/community outreach
- Conditions within the school
- Communications
- Problem solving
- Professional Development needs
- School equipment utilization
- Student discipline policy
- Budget (there may be a separate site budget committee; however, many JSSCs fulfill this function)
- SIP budget
- Staffing/staff utilization
- Scheduling of site activities
- Track assignments (Year Round Schools)
- Innovative site programs
- Adjunct responsibilities

It is never appropriate for the JSSC to discuss personnel items such as evaluation, transfers, grievance procedures, or disciplinary actions.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following questions have no one right answer. What you will find below are some suggestions on how to establish a positive committee. Working together, the well functioning JSSC can make a real difference in the quality of life in their school community.

1. **How do we pay the classified members of JSSC?**

If the meetings are held within their regular work hours, the meeting is considered part of the requirements of their job and there is no compensation beyond their regular wage. If the meetings are outside of their regularly scheduled day, their schedule may be adjusted so the hours they work will include the meeting time and not exceed their regularly scheduled hours or they could be paid from IIL funds.

2. **Who elects the classified members?**

The classified members of the JSSC should be elected by the classified members of the staff.

3. **What if JSSC decisions are not supported by the administrator?**

Open communication will help prevent misunderstandings. Minutes should be kept of all meetings and distributed to staff for future reference. Discuss any changes to decisions at the next meeting of the JSSC.

4. **How do we encourage a variety of viewpoints and open discussion?**

Each JSSC should take the time to establish ground rules at the beginning of the year. JSSC members should bring the concerns of the staff members they represent to the committee meeting in a professional manner. If you feel you have abided by committee rules but were still not listened to, consider going directly to the JSSC chairperson to express your concern. Every voice on the JSSC should be valued.

5. **How do we not be viewed as the “fix it group”?**

It is critical that your JSSC communicate with staff. Share the ground rules and goals of the committee. Make sure minutes are distributed in a timely manner. Open communication with staff can help prevent the committee getting bogged down in minutiae.

6. **What if meetings go on and on and nothing gets decided?**

Your ground rules should include a policy for meeting frequency and duration. It may be helpful for either the JSSC chairperson or another member to act as a timekeeper to help keep meetings moving forward. Good meeting minutes can also prevent issues from being addressed over and over again.

Frequently Asked Questions

7. What if we meet infrequently or only when there is a crisis?

Every JSSC should establish a meeting calendar for the coming year. The committee should meet at least monthly. According to the contract, JSSCs were established “to provide for orderly and professional means of improving the educational programs, professional and public relations, and the conditions within the school.” These goals can only be accomplished with regular meetings.

8. What if someone always monopolizes the meetings?

It should always be remembered that the members of the JSSC represent the entire staff and not just themselves. It is the JSSC chairperson’s responsibility to make sure that all voices are heard and respected.

9. What if we can’t come to a consensus?

Each JSSC needs to determine at the beginning of each year how group decisions will be made. Although consensus can be a powerful way to make decisions, it can be time-consuming. If this is the model chosen, provisions should be in place if consensus cannot be reached.

10. What if JSSC members feel like they are positioned to ‘take sides’ or be manipulated?

Every JSSC member needs to keep in mind that they are representing staff members that do not sit on JSSC.

11. What if the principal has already made the decision and just wants approval?

Your principal makes many decisions that are within their managerial purview on a daily basis. It may be helpful to clarify if he/she is seeking input from the JSSC or asking that the JSSC make the final decision.

12. What if no one will risk being open to talking about difficult issues?

Avoiding tough issues will not make them go away. It is important to establish ground rules that will allow for open communication in a risk-free environment. Someone needs to be brave enough to ask the tough questions or ask for outside help from the District, DEA, or DESP.

13. What if we really don’t function as a group?

The first step is to acknowledge there is a problem. Training and mediation are available from the District, DEA, or DESP to support your JSSC. Taking the time to develop good group dynamics will save time in the long run and make for a more effective school year.

ADDENDUM A

Certified Agreement Language

Joint Staff School Committee

- [a] The Joint Staff School Committee (JSSC) shall be established in each school from the licensed and classified staff of that school to provide for a respectful, collaborative, orderly and professional means of improving the educational programs, professional and public relations, and the conditions within the school, including oversight of other school committees.
- [b] Representation of the Joint School Committee shall be:
 - (i) The principal, members of the teaching staff as elected by the faculty (at least two elected at-large in elementary schools), and two classified employees elected by the classified staff at the school. Other school administrators may be included at the principal's discretion.
 - (ii) Election of faculty members to the Joint Staff School Committee shall be conducted by the chairperson of the current year's JSSC.
 - (iii) The committee shall elect its own chairperson by secret ballot.
 - (iv) A representative from JSSC should serve as a member of the school Community Council to facilitate communications between the two groups.
- [c] Additional participation or representation on the committee will be determined by the committee as needs arise.
- [d] Any school staff member may introduce any items of business or points of view for consideration by the committee.
 - (i) Committee activities shall be reported to all members of the staff within five working days after each meeting.
 - (ii) The committee shall meet monthly and more often as business dictates.
- [e] When appropriate or necessary, the JSSC may refer matters to the District Liaison Council.
- [f] The District Liaison Council and the Joint Staff School Committees are subject to the provisions of the Davis Educators Agreement.
- [g] A school's Joint Staff School Committees may request waivers from the current negotiated agreement by application to the District Liaison Council.
 - (i) The requests shall be in writing and shall indicate the section of the Agreement the JSSC is requesting to have waived. The request must also include a description of the procedure or policy being proposed as an alternative to the waived policy and an explanation of how the proposed alternative will help the school better meet District and/or school goals.

ADDENDUM B

Classified Agreement Language

JOINT STAFF SCHOOL COMMITTEE (JSSC)

The JSSC shall be established in each school from the licensed and classified staff of that school to provide for a respectful, collaborative, orderly and professional means of improving the educational programs, professional and public relations, and the conditions within the school including oversight of other school committees.

Representation of the JSSC shall be; the principal, members of the teaching staff as elected by the faculty (at least two elected at-large in elementary schools), and two classified employees elected by the classified staff at the school. Other school administrators may be included at the principal's discretion.

- [a] Election of faculty and classified members to the JSSC shall be conducted by the chairperson of the current year's JSSC.
- [b] The committee shall elect its own chairperson by secret ballot.
- [c] A representative from JSSC should serve as a member of the school Community Council to facilitate communications between the two groups.
- [d] Additional participation or representation on the committee will be determined by the committee as needs arise.

Any staff member may introduce any items of business or points of view for consideration by the committee.

- [a] Committee activities shall be reported to all members of the staff within five (5) working days after each meeting.
- [b] The committee shall meet monthly and more often as business dictates.

When appropriate or necessary, the JSSC may refer matters to the District Liaison Council.

The District Liaison Council and the Joint Staff School Committee on School Improvements are subject to the provisions of the Davis Classified Agreement.