

EVALUATION BRIEF

PLANNING, INNOVATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY
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Results From the 2021 School Planning Council Survey and Principal’s Advisory Committee Survey

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ABSTRACT

Each school has a School Planning Council (SPC) and Principal’s Advisory Committee (PAC) that participate in the school improvement process. The SPC reviews and monitors the school’s Plan for Continuous Improvement (PCI), and the PAC serves in an advisory role to the principal for the effective and efficient operation of the school. This brief summarizes the 2021 results from the School Board mandated SPC and PAC surveys. Overall division results were positive with agreement levels ranging from 93 to 99 percent on the PAC survey and 85 to 97 percent on the SPC Survey. Additionally, PAC results showed higher levels of agreement at high schools, followed by elementary schools and middle schools. SPC results showed higher levels of agreement at elementary schools, followed by middle schools and high schools.

BACKGROUND

School Board Policy 2-42 prescribes that each school maintain a School Planning Council (SPC) and a Principal’s Advisory Committee (PAC) as integral components of the School Improvement Process. The function of the SPC, as specified in School Board Regulation 2-42.1 (revised October 2018), is primarily to review and monitor the school’s Plan for Continuous Improvement (PCI), which contains measurable objectives focused on student achievement. To ensure community input, SPC membership is required to consist of representation from school staff and the community (to include school partners, volunteers, parents, and students as feasible) with the proportion of membership within the staff and community sectors to be based on the individual school and community constraints in recruiting individuals to serve on the SPC. Each school’s total number of SPC members is recommended to range from 8 to 12 members. In a related capacity, the purpose of the PAC, as specified in School Board Regulation 2-42.2, is to advise the principal on issues related to the effective and efficient operation of the school. This includes communicating with principals about on-site conditions that impact student achievement and employee morale. Membership on the PAC consists of only school staff, and there are no requirements for the number of members. In support of principals’ efforts to assess the effectiveness of the SPC and PAC, the Office of Planning, Innovation, and Accountability administers an annual survey to SPC and PAC members as required by School Board regulations 2-42.1 and 2-42.2. This brief summarizes the results from the 2021 SPC and PAC surveys.

SURVEY DATA COLLECTION

The SPC and PAC surveys were administered online from May 10 through May 21, 2021. Survey invitations were emailed to 996 SPC members (438 community-based and 558 school-based) and 931 PAC members. The email invitations included a unique link that provided participants with access to their respective survey. However, no identifying information about the respondent was included in the results data file to ensure anonymity.

The SPC survey consisted of 13 closed-ended items and one open-ended comment item. The items on the SPC survey related to the function and operation of the SPC. The PAC survey consisted of 16 closed-ended items focused on the operation of the PAC. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the survey items using a 4-point Likert scale with the following options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. In addition, the 2021 survey offered an option for respondents to indicate if they felt a survey item was not applicable due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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For reporting purposes, the participants who indicated that an item was not applicable due to the COVID-19 pandemic have been excluded from the agreement percentages reported later in this brief. For the PAC survey, 4 percent or fewer participants selected not applicable across all items, with the highest percentage of not applicable responses for the item about PAC meetings being scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time (4%). For the SPC survey, the percentage of participants who selected not applicable was 8 percent or less on all but two items. These items related to whether adequate training opportunities are provided to SPC members (14%) and that SPC meetings are scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time (11%). Therefore, most respondents felt they were able to respond to the PAC and SPC survey items even though the committees operated within the context of the pandemic during the 2020-2021 school year.

Survey Response Rates

Table 1: Response Rates for 2021 SPC and PAC Surveys

School Level	SPC Survey Response Rates	PAC Survey Response Rates
Elementary School	36.17% (191 of 528)	51.83% (326 of 629)
Middle School	49.44% (89 of 180)	69.29% (97 of 140)
High School	39.58% (114 of 288)	57.41% (93 of 162)
All Schools	39.56% (394 of 996)	55.42% (516 of 931)

Of the 996 SPC survey invitations sent, 394 (40%) SPC members across the division responded. The response rate for the PAC survey was higher; 516, or approximately 55 percent, of PAC members responded. Table 1 summarizes the SPC and PAC response rates. For both surveys, rates varied by school level with middle school rates being the highest. Response rates in 2020-2021 were relatively similar to response rates from 2019-2020 with the exception of high school. The high school SPC survey response rate increased 8 percentage points, and the PAC survey response rate increased 6 percentage points in 2020-2021.

COMMITTEE REQUIREMENTS

Table 2: Committee Requirements for 2020-2021 SPC

School Level	Membership Contained School-Based Members	Membership Contained Community Members	Membership Contained School-Based and Community Members
Elementary School	100.00% (53 of 53)	100.00% (53 of 53)	100.00% (53 of 53)
Middle School	100.00% (15 of 15)	93.33% (14 of 15)	93.33% (14 of 15)
High School	92.86% (13 of 14)	92.86% (13 of 14)	85.71% (12 of 14)
All Schools	98.78% (81 of 82)	97.56% (80 of 82)	96.34% (79 of 82)

As of October 2, 2018, School Board Regulation 2-42.1 was revised to better align with the current practices of the SPC by allowing each SPC to determine the proportion of membership within the staff and community sectors, given individual school and community constraints in recruiting individuals to serve on the SPC. While the revised regulation no longer requires equal representation between school-based members and community members, the SPC membership must still contain representation from both. Table 2 summarizes the percent of schools whose membership contained both school-based members and community members. Of the 82 schools, 79 schools (96%) included both school-based and community members on the SPC based on the SPC committee lists submitted by the schools.

School Board Regulation 2-42.2 specifies that all PAC members are chosen from employees assigned to the school but does not require a specific number of members. Based on the PAC committee lists submitted by the schools, all schools met this requirement.

SPC SURVEY RESULTS

A summary of the 2021 SPC Survey results by school level is shown in Table 3. Agreement percentages include both “strongly agree” and “agree” responses. The highlighted cells indicate the school level with the highest percent agreement for each of the 13 items on the survey. Items in the table are in descending order by agreement for all schools. Divisionwide agreement on the SPC survey was approximately 90 percent or above for all but one item. The

item related to whether adequate training opportunities are provided to SPC members related to their role and duties as a member of the SPC. Divisionwide, 85 percent of SPC members agreed with this item with 87 percent agreement at the elementary school level, 84 percent at the middle school level, and 83 percent at the high school level.

Table 3: Percent Agreement by School Level on 2021 School Planning Council Survey

SPC Survey Item	Percent Agreement			
	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	All Schools
The School Planning Council (SPC) consists of representation from the staff and the community.	96.67%	95.40%	97.25%	96.54%
The school principal effectively leads the SPC decision-making process.	96.93%	95.29%	96.19%	96.32%
The SPC effectively monitors school improvement efforts to raise student achievement.	96.09%	95.35%	95.33%	95.70%
The SPC ensures that the school community is informed about meetings, activities, and progress on the school's Plan for Continuous Improvement (PCI).	95.43%	95.35%	91.82%	94.34%
I understand the responsibilities of the SPC for reviewing and monitoring continuous improvement in the school.	93.99%	97.75%	91.89%	94.26%
The SPC gathers staff and community input for continuous improvement planning.	94.83%	90.70%	94.39%	93.73%
Members of the SPC work effectively in collaboration with the principal to review and monitor the school's PCI.	95.09%	91.46%	93.07%	93.64%
Meetings of the SPC are scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time.	93.33%	95.18%	91.26%	93.15%
The SPC receives and reviews updates from the school's instructional leadership team as scheduled in the school's PCI.	93.17%	89.16%	95.10%	92.77%
Members of the SPC are provided adequate opportunities to submit agenda items.	94.90%	89.29%	92.31%	92.75%
I am knowledgeable of the measurable goals in my school's PCI.	93.92%	94.32%	88.99%	92.59%
The school division's School Improvement Process with a PCI is an effective means for raising student achievement.	92.18%	88.37%	87.04%	89.81%
Adequate training opportunities are provided to SPC members related to their role and duties as a member of the SPC.	87.07%	84.42%	83.16%	85.27%

Note: Shaded cell represents highest percent agreement for item.

PAC SURVEY RESULTS

A summary of the 2021 PAC Survey results by school level is shown in Table 4, and the shaded cells highlight the school level with the highest percent agreement to each of the 16 items on the survey. Items in the table are in descending order by agreement for all schools. Divisionwide agreement to the items on the PAC survey, which includes both “strongly agree” and “agree” responses, was high and ranged from approximately 93 to 99 percent.

Table 4: Percent Agreement by School Level on 2021 Principal's Advisory Committee Survey

PAC Survey Item	Percent Agreement			
	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	All Schools
Meetings of the PAC are scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time.	98.10%	98.96%	100.00%	98.60%
The membership of the PAC adequately represents the various departments and grade levels in my school.	98.76%	94.85%	100.00%	98.22%
I am kept adequately informed about the meetings, activities, and accomplishments of the Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC).	97.48%	96.88%	98.84%	97.60%
I understand the responsibilities of the PAC for identifying obstacles that impede high student achievement.	96.52%	96.77%	98.82%	96.96%
I am knowledgeable of the measurable objectives in my school's Plan for Continuous Improvement (PCI).	97.20%	95.83%	96.59%	96.84%
I understand the responsibilities of the PAC for identifying obstacles to high staff morale.	95.63%	98.97%	98.88%	96.84%
The school principal effectively leads the PAC decision-making process.	97.48%	93.62%	96.43%	96.57%
Teachers serving on the PAC work effectively with the principal on issues addressed by the PAC.	96.20%	95.74%	97.62%	96.36%
The PAC uses appropriate avenues for conflict resolution.	95.87%	94.62%	98.82%	96.15%
The PAC and principal work together effectively to achieve continuous improvement in the school.	96.53%	93.68%	96.43%	95.97%
The PAC uses staff input for maintaining an effective and efficient operation of the school.	96.21%	92.55%	97.59%	95.75%
Members of the PAC are provided adequate opportunities to submit agenda items.	94.59%	95.79%	96.47%	95.14%
The PAC effectively identifies needed school improvement efforts to raise student achievement.	95.87%	92.55%	93.90%	94.91%
The PAC provides an effective method for teachers to share concerns for maintaining high staff morale.	94.70%	93.81%	94.25%	94.46%
The PAC effectively identifies needed school improvement efforts to maintain high staff morale.	93.35%	95.74%	92.86%	93.72%
The school division's School Improvement Process with a PCI is an effective means for raising student achievement.	93.38%	92.47%	94.12%	93.33%

Note: Shaded cell represents highest percent agreement for item.

Differences in the percent agreement for the 16 items were found across school levels. For the PAC items, high school PAC members had the highest agreement levels (9 items), followed by elementary school (5 items) and middle school (2 items) PAC members. Based on the data in Table 4, the item differences between school levels were relatively small with differences between the levels at 5 percent or less.

SUMMARY

Overall, the perception data gathered from the SPC and PAC surveys suggest that the activities and roles of the SPC and PAC align with School Board Policy 2-42 and School Board regulations 2-42.1 and 2-42.2. Although the SPCs and PACs across the school division operated during 2020-2021 within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated challenges, most survey respondents were able to respond to the survey items and agreed that the functions of these groups were maintained. The survey items with the largest percentages of respondents indicating that the item was “not applicable due to the pandemic” were related to scheduling of meetings and training opportunities for SPC members. However, the percentages selecting not applicable were relatively small.

Based on those respondents who were able to respond to the survey items using the agreement scale, the results from the 2021 SPC Survey were positive with 12 of the 13 items having agreement levels that were 90 percent or above at the division level. Agreement levels varied somewhat by school level with the elementary school level having the highest level of agreement on 8 of the 13 items. Overall, agreement across school levels was positive with agreement levels at or above 87 percent on all but one survey item related to SPC members having adequate training opportunities regarding their role and duties as an SPC member.

The results from the 2021 PAC Survey were also positive with all of the 16 items having agreement levels at approximately 93 percent or above at the division level. Agreement levels varied somewhat by school level with the high school level having the highest level of agreement on 9 items. Overall, the agreement levels were high at all three school levels, ranging from approximately 92 to 100 percent.

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