

EVALUATION BRIEF

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INNOVATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY
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Results from the 2016 School Planning Council Survey and Principal’s Advisory Committee Survey

Author: Brian K. Matney, Ph.D., Program Evaluation Specialist

Other Contact Person: Donald E. Robertson, Jr., Ph.D., Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer

ABSTRACT

Each school has a School Planning Council (SPC) and Principal’s Advisory Committee (PAC) for the purpose of developing and implementing the school’s Plan for Continuous Improvement (PCI). This brief summarizes the 2016 results from the School Board-mandated SPC Survey and the PAC Survey. Overall results from the 15-item SPC and 16-item PAC surveys were generally positive with high levels of agreement to all items, although PAC results were more positive (83% - 97%) than SPC results (76% - 94%). Further, SPC results were generally more positive at high schools and PAC results were generally more positive at elementary and middle schools.

BACKGROUND

School Board Policy 2-42 prescribes that each school maintains a School Planning Council (SPC) and a Principal’s Advisory Committee (PAC) for the purpose of developing and implementing the school’s Plan for Continuous Improvement (PCI). The primary function of the SPC, as specified in School Board Regulation 2-42.1, is to develop and oversee the school’s PCI, which is chiefly concerned with student achievement, attendance, and instructional quality. To ensure community input, SPC membership is required to consist of equal representation from school staff and the community (to include school partners, volunteers, parents, and students as feasible). Each school’s total number of SPC members must be at least 10 individuals not including the principal, who is a mandatory member. In a related capacity, the purpose of the PAC, as specified in School Board Regulation 2-42.2, is to advise the principal on employee issues related to the effective and efficient operation of the school. This includes communicating with principals about on-site conditions that may adversely impact student achievement and employee morale. Membership on the PAC consists of only school staff, and there are no requirements about the number of members. In support of principals’ efforts to assess the effectiveness of the SPC and PAC, the Department 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 both the 2016 SPC and PAC surveys.

SURVEY DATA COLLECTION

SPC Survey

The SPC Survey was administered online from May 16 through June 3, 2016. Survey invitations were sent to 1,188 SPC members: 472 community-based and 716 school-based. Because contact information provided by each school consisted of a mix of email addresses and U.S. mailing addresses, survey invitations were emailed to 1,145 SPC members and sent via U.S. mail to 43 SPC members. The email invitations included a unique link that provided participants with access to the SPC Survey. The invitations sent via U.S. mail provided participants directions for accessing the SPC Survey. Before beginning the survey, SPC participants who received invitations via U.S. mail were required to enter an access code included in the invitation. The purpose of the code was to ensure that the responses received were from the intended recipients of the survey invitation. The codes were randomly assigned and were not associated with any particular individual survey participant, ensuring anonymity.

KEY TOPICS:

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The SPC Survey consisted of 15 closed-ended items. The items on the SPC Survey related to the function and operation of the SPC. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each item using a four-point Likert scale with the following options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

PAC Survey

The PAC Survey was administered online from May 16 through June 3, 2016. Survey invitations were emailed to 1,032 PAC members. These invitations included a unique link that provided participants with access to the PAC Survey. The PAC Survey consisted of 16 closed-ended items. Respondents were asked to provide their level of agreement with each item using a four-point Likert scale with the options of strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Survey Response Rates

Table 1: Response Rates for 2016 SPC and PAC Surveys

School Level	SPC Survey Response Rates	PAC Survey Response Rates
Elementary School	32.73% (234 of 715)	51.18% (346 of 676)
Middle School	44.90% (88 of 196)	66.87% (109 of 163)
High School	32.49% (90 of 277)	63.21% (122 of 193)
All Schools	34.68% (412 of 1,188)	55.91% (577 of 1,032)

Of the 1,188 SPC Survey invitations sent, 412 (35%) SPC members across the division responded. The response rate for the PAC Survey was higher; 577, or 56 percent, of the 1,032 PAC members responded. Table 1 summarizes the SPC and PAC response rates. For both surveys, rates varied by school level with middle school response rates being the highest, followed by high school rates for PAC and elementary school rates for SPC.

COMMITTEE REQUIREMENTS

School Board Regulation 2-42.1 specifies the total number of SPC members that are required along with the expected division of members (school-based vs. non-school-based). These requirements were assessed based on the SPC Survey distribution lists obtained from each school. Table 2 summarizes the percent of schools who met each of these requirements along with the percent of schools who met both requirements. Of the 85 schools, 65 schools (76%) met the total number requirement, 10 schools (12%) met the equal representation requirement, and 9 schools (11%) met both requirements.

Table 2: Committee Requirements for 2016 SPC Survey

School Level	Membership Requirement Met	Equal Representation Requirement Met	Both Requirements Met
Elementary School	70.91% (39 of 55)	14.55% (8 of 55)	12.73% (7 of 55)
Middle School	85.71% (12 of 14)	7.14% (1 of 14)	7.14% (1 of 14)
High School	87.50% (14 of 16)	6.25% (1 of 16)	6.25% (1 of 16)
All Schools	76.47% (65 of 85)	11.76% (10 of 85)	10.59% (9 of 85)

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 Survey distribution list, all schools met this requirement.

SPC SURVEY RESULTS

Table 3 shows a comparison of the agreement percentages, which includes both “strongly agree” and “agree” responses, by school level. The highlighted cells indicate the school level with the highest percent agreement for each of the 15 items on the 2016 SPC 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 five items. The two lowest items related to whether adequate training opportunities are provided to SPC members for overseeing and monitoring the school’s

Table 3: Percent Agreement by School Level on 2016 School Planning Council Survey

SPC Survey Item	Percent Agreement			
	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	All Schools
I understand the responsibilities of the SPC for overseeing and monitoring continuous improvement in the school.	93.53	94.25	95.56	94.13
I am knowledgeable of the measurable objectives in my school's PCI as established by the SPC.	92.70	94.32	95.56	93.67
I am kept adequately informed about the meetings, activities, and accomplishments of the SPC.	91.85	93.10	92.22	92.20
The school principal effectively leads the SPC decision-making process.	89.70	94.32	93.02	91.40

Table 3: Percent Agreement by School Level on 2016 School Planning Council Survey (continued)

continuous improvement efforts (76%) and whether measurable objectives in the school's PCI are established by the SPC (81%). These two items have consistently had the lowest percent agreement on each of the past eight SPC surveys from 2009 through 2016.

Responses to the SPC items varied by school level. High school SPC members had the highest agreement levels on 10 of the 15 items and middle school SPC members had the highest level of agreement on 3 items. The item with the largest difference among school levels (8%) was related to the SPC receiving reports from action teams on the school's PCI and monitoring progress on the action plans. At the high school level, 82 percent of SPC members agreed with this item, compared to 85 percent at the elementary school level and 90 percent at the middle school level.

When compared to the same SPC Survey administered in 2015, divisionwide agreement decreased on 14 of 15 items in 2016. However, responses to survey items were still positive, with agreement levels at or above 81 percent on 14 out of 15 items. The largest decrease (6%) was for the item "Members of the SPC are provided adequate opportunities to submit agenda items."

SPC Survey Item	Percent Agreement			
	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	All Schools
The school division's Continuous Improvement Model with a PCI is an effective means for raising student achievement.	89.18	91.95	95.51	91.15
The SPC effectively identifies needed school improvement efforts to raise student achievement.	89.27	91.95	93.33	90.73
Meetings of the SPC are scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time.	88.41	93.10	94.25	90.66
The SPC and principal work together effectively to achieve continuous improvement in the school.	89.70	90.91	91.95	90.44
The SPC uses staff and community input for continuous improvement planning.	89.61	89.66	92.22	90.20
The membership of the SPC adequately represents the various populations served by my school.	88.89	89.77	93.33	90.05
Members of the SPC work effectively in collaboration with the principal to achieve continuous school improvement.	88.36	89.77	89.77	88.97
The SPC receives reports from action teams on the school's PCI and monitors progress on the action plans.	85.22	89.77	82.02	85.50
Members of the SPC are provided adequate opportunities to submit agenda items.	82.33	82.76	87.36	83.50
The measurable objectives in the school's PCI are established by the SPC.	82.17	81.40	78.65	81.23
Adequate training opportunities are provided to SPC members on the responsibilities of the SPC for overseeing and monitoring the school's continuous improvement efforts.	75.32	75.86	77.27	75.86

Note: Shaded cell represents highest percent agreement for item.

PAC SURVEY RESULTS

Table 4: Percent Agreement by School Level on 2016 Principal's Advisory Committee Survey

PAC Survey Item	Percent Agreement			
	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	All Schools
The membership of the PAC adequately represents the various departments and grade levels in my school.	97.98	98.13	93.44	97.04
Members of the PAC are provided adequate opportunities to submit agenda items.	94.80	98.13	93.39	95.12
I understand the responsibilities of the PAC for identifying obstacles that impede high student achievement.	95.34	95.24	94.26	95.09
I am kept adequately informed about the meetings, activities, and accomplishments of the Principal's Advisory Council (PAC).	94.80	94.50	92.62	94.28
I understand the responsibilities of the PAC for identifying obstacles to high staff morale.	92.17	98.15	93.44	93.57
I am knowledgeable of the measurable objectives in my school's PCI.	95.66	93.58	86.89	93.41
Meetings of the PAC are scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time.	91.52	96.26	88.52	91.77
The school principal effectively leads the PAC decision-making process.	91.28	93.46	79.51	89.18

Table 4 shows a comparison of the agreement percentages by school level and highlights the school level with the highest percent agreement to each of the 16 items on the 2016 PAC Survey. Items in the table are in descending order by agreement for all schools. Divisionwide agreement to the 16 items on the PAC Survey, which includes both "strongly agree" and "agree" responses, were relatively high and ranged from 83 percent ("The PAC effectively identifies needed school improvement efforts to maintain high staff morale.") to 97 percent ("The membership of the PAC adequately represents the various departments and grade levels in my school.").

Differences in the percent agreement for the 16 items were found across school levels.

Table 4: Percent Agreement by School Level on 2016 Principal's Advisory Committee Survey (continued)

PAC Survey Item	Percent Agreement			
	Elementary School	Middle School	High School	All Schools
Teachers serving on the PAC work effectively with the principal on issues addressed by the PAC.	91.52	89.52	81.15	88.93
The PAC uses staff input for maintaining an effective and efficient operation of the school.	89.83	85.85	86.07	88.29
The PAC effectively identifies needed school improvement efforts to raise student achievement.	90.41	85.85	82.79	87.94
The school division's Continuous Improvement Model with a PCI is an effective means for raising student achievement.	90.14	88.79	80.33	87.80
The PAC and principal work together effectively to achieve continuous improvement in the school.	90.96	85.71	79.34	87.52
The PAC uses appropriate avenues for conflict resolution.	85.47	89.42	83.61	85.79
The PAC provides an effective method for teachers to share concerns for maintaining high staff morale.	83.72	84.11	80.33	83.07
The PAC effectively identifies needed school improvement efforts to maintain high staff morale.	81.40	88.68	80.33	82.52

Note: Shaded cell represents highest percent agreement for item.

Elementary and middle school PAC members had the highest overall agreement levels, with each having the highest level of agreement on eight items. Based on the data in Table 4, the statement with the largest difference among school levels was that “*The school principal effectively leads the PAC decision-making process.*” There was approximately a 13 percentage-point range in the agreement levels; 80 percent of high school PAC members agreed, 91 percent of elementary school PAC members agreed, and 93 percent of middle school PAC members agreed.

When results were compared to the 2015 PAC Survey, divisionwide agreement on 11 of the 16 PAC Survey items decreased in 2016. However, responses to survey items were still positive with agreement levels at or above 83 percent on all items. The largest decrease (2%) was for the item “*Meetings of the PAC are scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time.*”

SUMMARY

The results from the 2016 School Planning Council Survey were positive with 14 of the 15 items having agreement levels that were 81 percent or above. Agreement levels differed by school level with the high school level having the highest level of agreement on 10 items. Overall, the lowest levels of agreement were found at the elementary school level, although the elementary school levels of agreement were generally high at 82 percent or more on 14 items.

Although SPC Survey results were positive, the adherence to School Board Regulation 2-42.1 in regards to membership numbers and division of the SPC members among school-based and non-school-based members needs to be monitored. Overall, 76 percent of schools met the required number of members, 12 percent had the required division of membership, and only nine schools (11%) met both criteria of the aforementioned policy.

The results from the 2016 Principal's Advisory Committee Survey were also positive with all of the 16 items having agreement levels at 83 percent or above. Agreement levels also differed by school level. Differing from the SPC results, PAC Survey results demonstrated that elementary and middle schools had the highest levels of agreement. Overall, the lowest levels of agreement were generally found at the high school level, although the high school agreement levels were high, ranging from approximately 79 to 94 percent.

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. However, it is worth noting that agreement levels decreased on 14 of 15 SPC items and 11 of 16 PAC items when comparing the results from the 2016 surveys to 2015 surveys. This will need to be monitored on future surveys to determine if the pattern continues.