

# School Accountability Committee (SAC)

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## Handbook

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# Purpose, duties and roles within the SAC

## **Purpose of the Handbook**

This handbook is a resource to support the people involved in developing and maintaining partnerships between our schools and the communities they serve. It also helps to ensure that statutory expectations for a school-level accountability committee are met. The tools and references are intended to help create a platform of shared knowledge, collaboration and effective communication to foster a high-functioning School Accountability Committee (SAC). Schools may have different names for their SAC, including: School Improvement Team (SIT), Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)), and Accountability Committee (AC). It's encouraged that all schools transition to the CDE-recognized title, School Accountability Committee.

## **SAC Purpose**

The SAC serves in an advisory role to the school Principal. The school's Principal is ultimately responsible for assuring compliance with all federal, state, and district requirements and meeting the academic performance expectations defined by Adams 12 Five Star Schools.

## **SAC Composition**

Each school is responsible for establishing a SAC, which should consist of at least the following seven members:

- The principal of the school or the principal's designee;
- One teacher who provides instruction in the school;
- Three parents of students enrolled in the school;
- One adult member of an organization of parents, teachers, and students recognized by the school; and
- One person from the community.

## Other Considerations:

- A person may not fill more than one of these required member positions during a given year.
- Additional members may be added to the SAC so long as the number of parents serving exceeds the number of representatives from every other group.
- To the extent practicable, ensure that the parents who are serving on the SAC reflect the student populations significantly represented within the school.
- SACs must select one of their parent representatives to serve as chair of the committee.
- SACs may choose to appoint other officers such as a co-chair and/or secretary.
- If a vacancy arises on a SAC for any reason, the remaining members will fill the vacancy by majority action.
- The members of the governing board of a charter school may serve on the SAC.

- Generally, a parent who is an employee of the school or who is a spouse, son, daughter, sister, brother, mother or father of an employee is not eligible to serve on a SAC. However, if, after making good-faith efforts, a principal or organization of parents, teachers and students is unable to find a sufficient number of persons willing to serve on the SAC, the principal, with advice from the organization of parents, teachers and students, may establish an alternative membership plan for the SAC that reflects the membership specified above as much as possible.

### SAC Roles

The following table outlines suggestions for the responsibilities of the Chair and Principal/Designee, as well as additional roles for schools who desire to have additional officers. The table also provides suggestions for potential responsibilities of teacher, parent, and community members.

Role	Potential Responsibilities
Principal or Designee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboratively plan and facilitate meetings with the SAC Chair.</li> <li>• Provide the school performance data and school UIP plan to the SAC for review and input.</li> <li>• Provide budgetary information to the SAC for review and input.</li> <li>• Collaborate with the SAC Chair to recruit likely candidates for the SAC, and support the committee's plan to increase parent involvement.</li> <li>• Provide various reports, raw data, and specific information requested by SAC members.</li> <li>• Provide timely progress monitoring data to assist the team in reviewing implementation of the school improvement plan.</li> </ul>
Chair (Parent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboratively plan and facilitate meetings with the Principal.</li> <li>• Guide the team in reviewing targets, improvement strategies, and other elements of the school improvement plan.</li> <li>• Guide the committee in making budgetary recommendations.</li> <li>• Collaborate with the Principal to implement plans to increase membership.</li> <li>• Help bring parent concerns to SAC meetings.</li> <li>• Support the efforts of the Principal to recruit parent &amp; community members for SAC.</li> </ul>
Co-chair (Parent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fulfill all of the Chair responsibilities in the absence of the Chairperson</li> </ul>
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the Principal and Chair to document the work of the SAC and communicate effectively with the school community.</li> </ul>
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act as a liaison between SAC and the faculty at large.</li> <li>• Bring faculty concerns to SAC meetings.</li> </ul>
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring parent concerns to SAC meetings.</li> <li>• Provide parents' perspectives on school issues.</li> <li>• Help communicate school concerns to the broader community.</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help raise awareness of neighborhood/community issues.</li> <li>• Help communicate school concerns to the broader community.</li> </ul>

## **SAC Responsibilities**

Each SAC is responsible for the following:

- Making recommendations to the principal and the superintendent concerning preparation of a school Unified Improvement Plan (UIP);
- Publicizing and holding a SAC meeting to discuss strategies to include in a school Priority Improvement or Turnaround UIP, if either type of plan is required, and using this input to make recommendations concerning preparation of the school Priority Improvement or Turnaround UIP prior to the plan being written;
- Publicizing the district's public hearing to review a written school Priority Improvement or Turnaround UIP;
- Meeting at least quarterly to discuss whether school leadership, personnel, and infrastructure are advancing or impeding implementation of the school's UIP and other progress pertinent to the school's accreditation contract;
- Making recommendations to the principal on the school priorities for spending school moneys, including federal funds, where applicable;
- Providing input and recommendations to the DAC and district administration, on an advisory basis, concerning principal development plans and evaluations. (Note that this should not in any way interfere with a district's compliance with the statutory requirements of the Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act.);
- Publicizing opportunities to serve and soliciting parents to serve on the SAC (e.g. school newsletter, school website, schoolwide email);
- Assisting the district in implementing at the school level the district's [family engagement policy](#); and
- Assisting school personnel to increase family engagement with teachers, including family engagement in creating READ plans, Individual Career and Academic Plans, and plans to address habitual truancy.

## **SAC Best Practices to Consider**

- Complete SAC membership for the following school year in May. This allows the SAC to be in place when the new school year starts. This should not be construed to limit the opportunities of new parents.
- Publicize the opportunity to serve on the SAC throughout the year in common communications with the school community.
- Establish a SAC calendar for the entire year by the end of October, though the calendar can be adjusted as needed as unforeseen needs arise.
- Publish the SAC calendar on the school website and include notice of SAC meetings in regular school communications, such as the school newsletter.
- Consider providing supports such as interpreters, childcare, and food to promote greater engagement.
- Discussions at SAC meetings should revolve only around prescribed duties and responsibilities.

## Sample Annual SAC Calendar

Months	Potential Topics
August through October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recruit for new membership to fill all roles, including direct invitations, advertisements, and leveraging personal networks.</li> <li>● Implement an onboarding plan for new members.</li> <li>● Elect the chair (and officers, if applicable).</li> <li>● Determine the calendar for the year and communicate it to the school community.</li> <li>● Review the SPF, results of state and local assessments, and non-assessment data (e.g., survey, engagement data).</li> <li>● Review and provide feedback on the UIP before it is submitted to the district by October 1st.</li> <li>● SAC Chair and Principal sign and submit the UIP Endorsement form.</li> <li>● For Priority Improvement and Turnaround plan schools – publicize the SAC’s public meeting to discuss the UIP and the district’s meeting to review the UIP.</li> <li>● Review the district’s parent engagement <a href="#">policy</a> and brainstorm activities and strategies to support implementation.</li> <li>● Discuss other items as determined by Chair and Principal.</li> </ul>
November through January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review progress implementing the UIP and discuss any mid-course adjustments that should be made based on review of implementations benchmarks of interim assessment data</li> <li>● Continue to support implementation of parent engagement activities and strategies</li> <li>● If applicable, assist the school in increasing engagement in creating students’ READ plans as well as other academic plans</li> <li>● Review current year budget and begin discussing implications for the upcoming school year</li> <li>● Discuss other items as determined by Chair and Principal</li> </ul>
February through April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review progress implementing the UIP and discuss any mid-course adjustments that should be made based on review of implementations benchmarks of interim assessment data</li> <li>● Review results of survey and non-assessment data (e.g. Panorama surveys, grades, attendance data, etc.)</li> <li>● Continue to support implementation of parent engagement activities and strategies</li> <li>● Review current year budget and finalize budget recommendations for the next year</li> <li>● Discuss other items as determined by Chair and Principal</li> </ul>
May through July (if meeting over the summer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conduct final review of the implementation of the current year’s UIP including a review of implementations benchmarks of interim assessment data</li> <li>● Discuss and plan adjustments to the UIP for the next school year</li> <li>● Finalize SAC membership for the next school year including recruitment for any anticipated vacancies</li> <li>● Make adjustments to new SAC member onboarding plan as necessary</li> <li>● Discuss other items as determined by Chair and Principal</li> </ul>

## UIP Planning

The UIP was introduced to streamline the improvement planning components of state and federal accountability requirements. The common UIP template and planning processes are used to represent a shift from planning as an “event” to planning as a critical component of “continuous improvement.” The intent is to create a single plan that has true meaning for its stakeholders. Because schools and districts are required to publicly post their improvement plans through the state department of education website ([www.schoolview.org](http://www.schoolview.org)), UIP planning allows external stakeholders to learn about schools’ and districts’ improvement efforts.

### Potential Questions to Engage in UIP Work

- Are there patterns in the performance framework data (Achievement, Growth, Postsecondary Workforce Readiness) and other data?
- What is the school’s major focus for improvement?
- Should we continue with that focus or make adjustments based on what we see in our data?

### Principals:

- Before your SAC meeting discussions on the UIP, provide information about the UIP process.
- Also, provide data from prior years to allow for better discussion and insights regarding possible trends or outliers.

### Additional Resources

[Colorado Department of Education - Unified Improvement Planning Site](#)  
[UIP 101 Videos which describe all steps of the UIP development process](#)  
[UIP School Quality Criteria](#)  
[UIP Handbook](#)  
[UIP Timeline](#)

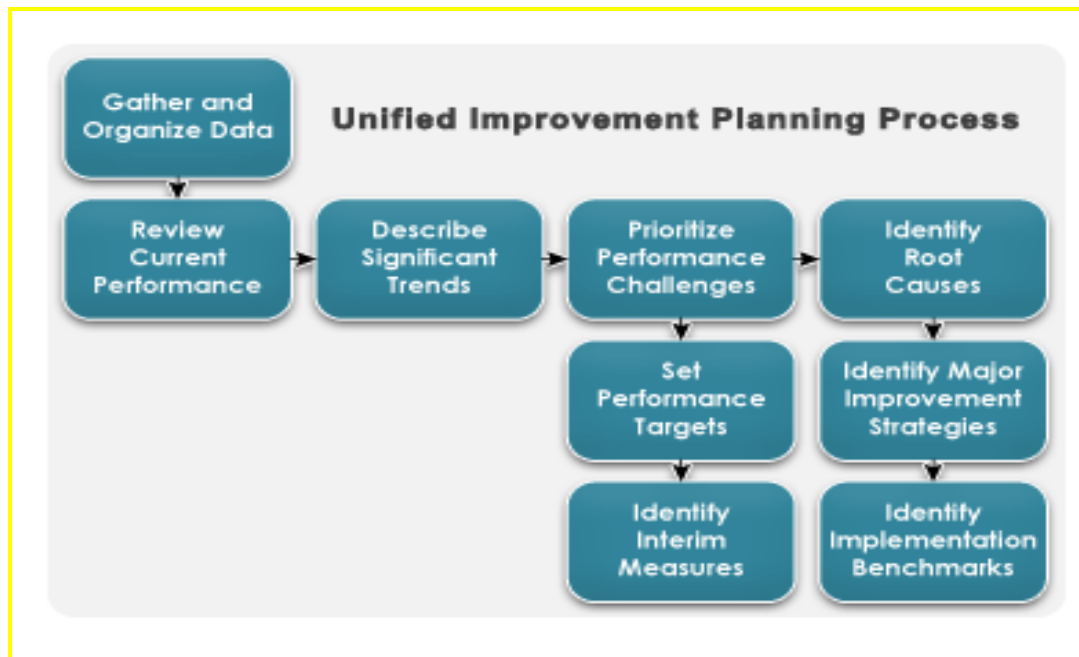


Image from [CDE UIP process map](#)

### Potential Ways to Engage in Improvement Planning

It is a responsibility of the SAC to advise the principal concerning the preparation and monitoring of the school's UIP through at least quarterly meetings. There are several possible ways in which the SAC may engage in the UIP planning process. The bullets below provide some ideas, but are in no way exhaustive.

- SAC members help to identify recurring patterns in school data, root causes of problematic patterns, and/or action steps to address the root cause(s).
- SAC members receive a partially or nearly completed UIP from school staff and make recommendations about changes and updates.
- SAC members make recommendations in April/May for work the school should consider for the following year based on the perceived success of recent improvement efforts and persistent patterns in data.
- SAC members (and possibly, other school committees) develop action plans of their own to support school improvement.

### Potential Steps to Monitor Implementation of the UIP

- SAC members review specific steps related to action strategies in the school improvement plan, and discuss implementation of those strategies.
- SAC members receive the principal's progress report and discuss how well it matches interim assessment data and their perceptions of the progress made in implementation of the UIP.
- SAC members share their general sense of whether implementation of the school's improvement plan is advancing or being hindered, and discuss differences in their perceptions based on their observations regarding specific steps related to action strategies in the UIP.

### **Priorities for Spending**

One of the statutory requirements of the SAC is to recommend the priorities for spending school discretionary monies. The priorities should be aligned with the goals of the UIP or other school goals and should be based on the best available data supporting maximum effectiveness toward increasing student performance.

### Potential Questions to Start the SAC Discussion

- Where can we maximize spending to meet the greatest needs of our students from the UIP or other key school goals for students?
- Can we meet any of these spending needs through community partnerships?
- Does the general budget support the goals of the school?
- How are PTO/PTA dollars being appropriated?
- What concerns, if any, does the SAC see with the current budget?
- What recommendations does the SAC have for budget items?

### Potential Ideas for Getting Started

- SAC members review and respond to a budget summary or proposal for spending school funds, and recommends specific priorities.



- In advance of having specific budget information, SAC members make high level recommendations for spending priorities based on school values and goals.
- SAC members receive a current year spending plan and make recommendations about future year spending.

Principals:

For greater, more beneficial input, consider providing:

- A summary of your discretionary budget items
- Prior spending priorities
- Past and projected enrollment

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