

## **The Role of the School Site Council**

The School Site council plays an important role in decision-making at many schools. Find out what the council does and how you can get involved.

Who is best qualified to make decisions about a school? Policymakers in states across the country agree that those who are involved with schools and students on a day-to-day basis – teachers, parents and other school employees – can make some of the best decisions. This belief led to the creation of the school site council.

### **What the School Site Council Does**

The school site council is a group of teachers, parents, classified employees, and students (at the high school level) that works with the principal to develop, review and evaluate school improvement programs and school budgets. The members of the site council are elected by their peers. For example, parents elect the parent representatives and teachers elect teachers.

The exact duties of school site councils vary between districts and schools, but site councils generally either make decisions or advise the principal on the school budget and the academic or school improvement plan. In addition to academic planning, site councils are also responsible for making decisions about parent involvement, and instructional materials.

Over the course of a year, a site council will consider the goals of the school and then work with the principal to evaluate the school's progress toward those goals. In this evaluation, the council might consider school test scores, attendance and discipline records, parent surveys and input from students.

After looking at the big picture of the school's progress, the council creates a plan for improvement. This plan might involve a new academic program, staff member or parent outreach strategy. For example, one council might use funds to develop a new math program, while another might decide to hire a reading specialist. Another council might decide that hiring an additional teacher to reduce class sizes in a particular grade or a parent liaison to get more parents involved would be the best use of its money. Because school budgets are limited and many funds can only be spent in certain ways, there are always tough decisions to make.