



ADVISORY COUNCIL HANDBOOK 2017

FOREWARD

Western Maricopa Education Center (West-MEC), a Joint Technical Education District (JTED), firmly believes that one of the most common characteristics associated with **quality programs** in career and technical education is their link with the business community. Advisory Councils are one of the most effective ways to develop and strengthen such industry partnerships.

Local/district Advisory Councils are designed to increase the participation of the public in local and community based career and technical education (CTE) programs; to assist in maintaining high quality standards in all programs; and to provide greater cooperation between career and technical education and the private sector in:

- Preparing individuals for college and career opportunities
- Promoting quality career and technical education
- Making career and technical education more responsive to, and reflective of, both the labor market and business/industry standards

The **purpose** of this guide is to help West-MEC and local/district advisory council members, administrators and instructors to improve the overall quality of career and technical education in West-MEC. This guide outlines a process that advisory councils may follow to establish or improve the organizational structure of the council and to plan and carry out Advisory Council activities (i.e. Program of Work) based on the needs of the program and the requirements of the community it serves.

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PART I: PURPOSE AND ROLES OF THE COUNCIL

Purpose Statement

West-MEC Advisory Councils improve the quality of teaching and learning in career and technical education programs. Members are volunteers who have an expert knowledge of the career pathway, the job tasks and competency requirements.

Council Roles

The ***Industry Chair***, in collaboration with the West-MEC Chair, identifies discussion points for each Advisory Council meeting. Both the Industry Chair and the West-MEC Chair are charged with ensuring the execution of Advisory Council activities. The Industry Chair serves a two-year term, and may serve multiple terms.

The ***West-MEC Chair*** is a West-MEC instructor. If multiple instructors wish to serve as a West-MEC Chair, each instructor has an equitable opportunity to serve. The West-MEC chair serves a two-year term, and may serve multiple terms.

The ***Secretary*** is in charge of all documentation. The Secretary ensures the collection and submission of Sign-in sheets, Agendas, Meeting Minutes as well as new member contact information to the West-MEC Advisory Archive (<http://bit.do/WMAdvisory>). The Secretary may serve multiple advisory council roles. The Secretary serves a two-year term, and may serve multiple terms.

Advisory Council Members are expected to participate in Advisory Council activities throughout the year. Attendance of all Advisory Council meetings is important to the success of West-MEC programs.

PART II: ESTABLISHING THE COUNCIL

Each advisory council is unique, so the council members should develop the organizational structure. The structure and procedures are generally outlined in the council's bylaws. This section outlines areas to consider as rules and procedures.

Size of the Council

Effective Advisory Councils are large enough to reflect the diversity of the community, yet small enough to be managed effectively. Councils with fewer than five members may have limited perspective, inadequate information on the career fields and too little diversity. The ideal Advisory Council has 7-12 members. Groups larger than this can quickly become unmanageable.

Term of Service

All members should be willing to commit to multiple years of service to maintain continuity and build a foundation for long range planning and continuous improvement. Every two or three years, the council should review the breadth and balance of the council to determine if new members need to be recruited.

Selection of Members

To provide effective communication between the career and technical education programs and the community, advisory council membership should be representative of the total school/district service area. Members may be selected from the following:

- The geographical area served by the school/district
- Business and industry related to the program area
- Both labor and management
- Community's economic development or chamber of commerce members
- Parents of students enrolled in the career and technical education program
- Current and former students of the career and technical education program
- Various age levels
- Different education levels
- Both sexes, individuals with disabilities and racial and ethnic minorities found in the area and served by the program

Broad representation will include viewpoints of segments of the community being served by career and technical education. A career and technical education instructor and a representative of the district/administration are also recommended to serve on the council.

Personal qualities that are desirable in members include:

Interest - Choose motivated persons who express sincere interest in the program. Members must be willing to devote the energy and attention required to do a good job. This means being dedicated both to their occupation, career pathway and to the training process

Availability - Seek members who will be available in terms of time and location. Members are expected to attend meetings, work on projects and work in the community on behalf of the career and technical education program.

Character - Seek members who have earned the confidence of others in the community and their industry area. Their good reputation will enhance the program's standing with the community. Members should have the courage to express their own ideas and to respect, tolerate and work with ideas conveyed by others.

Skill/Experience - Seek members who are knowledgeable about the target occupations of the educational program. Usually this means selecting members who have work experience in the career/occupational area. Seek members who demonstrate good communication skills, administrative skills, social vision, intelligence and leadership.

Selection Process

Members may be elected or appointed. One procedure for nominating members is for the career and technical education instructor(s) and the appropriate administrator/district staff person to recommend a list of possible nominees. Another procedure is for the program instructor, council or school/district to contact specific businesses or organizations and have them select someone from their business or organization to serve on the council. The invitation to serve should be in writing. (See *Appendix A*)

Following the nominee's acceptance of the invitation to serve, a confirmation letter should be sent. (See *Appendix B*)

The advisory council chair and/or program instructor should contact the new members to welcome them to the council and to provide them with appropriate material, such as the Advisory Council Quick Guide and Advisory Video. (<http://bit.do/WMAdvisorytoolkit>).

Selection and Duties of Officers

The success of the council depends in part, on the leadership ability of the officers.

Every council will have an election of officers at the first or last meeting of the school year. The first meeting of the new Fiscal Year can be reserved for orienting new members and for establishing the council's activities (i.e. Program of Work). Ideally, suggested officers should include an Industry Chair, a West-MEC Chair and a Secretary.

Orientation of New Members

The council's success depends on how well members understand their role at the first meeting. New members should be orientated to their responsibilities and tasks. Orientation for all members should continue as needed, throughout the school year. At a minimum, all new members must watch the West-MEC Advisory Council Video and be given a copy of the quick guide.

New member orientation may include a review of the Advisory Council Handbook, the council's bylaws, a summary of past accomplishments, a tour of the program/facilities and presentations about the program by the instructor, program graduates and current trainees. Discussion of current issues within the program should also be included.

Bylaws

Effective Advisory Councils are guided by policies and rules that describe the purposes of the Council, its scope of responsibility and what is expected of Council members.

Bylaws are a formal written description of council operation. At a minimum, they include:

- Name of the Council
- Purpose
- Membership
- Officers and their duties
- Meetings
- Committee
- Parliamentary authority
- Amendment procedure

Bylaws should be tailored to the needs and requirements of the program and the school/district in which the program operates. (See *Appendix C*)

Recognize outstanding members

Rewards and acknowledgements encourage attendance and involvement. Recognition activities also attract the attention and interest of other qualified people who may someday serve on the Advisory Council. They also bring public attention and goodwill to the organization because they demonstrate that the organization appreciates the efforts of its members.

Members are not paid for their efforts; therefore, rewards and recognition are especially important to Advisory Councils. Rewards should not be given indiscriminately but should be based on actual contribution to the Council's activity.

The best types of rewards or recognition are those that can stimulate productivity, improve Council interaction and increase member satisfaction. Most members are willing to attend regularly and work hard as long as their expertise and talents are used, their recommendations are seriously considered and they are given feedback concerning their efforts.

The following are ways to recognize Council members:

- Issue press releases announcing member appointments.
- Report periodically at meetings and in the media on the results of council recommendations and the ways the council has been of service.
- Invite members to visit programs to see the results of their recommendations.
- Invite members to attend special career and technical education events.
- Introduce Advisory Council members at program or CTSO meetings or events.
- Hold a banquet in honor of the Council and present certificates of service.
- Schedule a meeting whereby administrators of the school or institution can attend.
- Place members' names on a display board or plaque at the school, program or institution.
- Include members' names on program information disseminated to the public.
- At the end of the year, send each member a letter of thanks and appreciation, signed by the appropriate school official. (*See Appendix D*)
- Send a letter of appreciation to the council member's supervisor and/or company, explaining the work being done by the member and council and thanking the company for its support. (*See Appendix E*)
- Provide a certificate that the member can display at work, identifying him or her as a current advisory council member. (*See Appendix F*)

PART III: PLANNING AND CONDUCTING ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Planning Meetings

Successful Councils meet *regularly*. West-MEC advisory councils have three formal meetings per year (Fall, Winter, and Spring).

Each meeting should be planned well in advance of the meeting date, held in a comfortable location and be focused on specific issues. It is best practice to send multiple notifications of the meeting to committee members (See *Appendix G*).

Along with the notification, include the agenda for the upcoming meeting. (See *Appendix H*)

Providing refreshments, if possible, shows appreciation for council member attendance and may be used to generate a group feeling.

Consider varying the location of meetings. Holding meetings at the school/district enables council members to gain a better picture of how the program operates. Meeting at business or industry sites gives recognition to council members and their organizations and brings the instructor/district staff person to the sites where students might eventually be employed.

A pattern — scheduling all meetings at the same time of day and on the same day of the week can help members remember meetings. Some Councils have had success “piggy-backing” their meetings onto other activities that members generally attend, such as scheduling a meeting prior to a school event or other related activity.

Conducting Meetings

The following guidelines are useful for managing group interaction at Council meetings.

- Structure the meeting to avoid wasted time. This conveys a sense of organization, purpose and productivity.
- State the purpose of the meeting and review the agenda. Some Councils set goals or objectives for each meeting as a way to focus on their work.
- Use parliamentary procedure for decisions impacting the Advisory Council; otherwise encourage open and informal discussion.
- Encourage all members to speak respect the rights and opinions of each individual and to respect the rights and opinions of each individual.
- Periodically summarize discussion and point out connections between points.
- Consider and resolve one issue at a time.
- Distribute work assignments throughout the group.

- Make assignments and work tasks clear and specific as appropriate; explain expectations, time lines and deliverables. Discuss background of issues so that everyone shares a common understanding.
- Keep members informed of activities and progress.
- Recognize and reward members. Even a simple thank-you is effective reinforcement.
- Evaluate council work regularly.

The meeting atmosphere is critical. Members use discussion to present views and develop findings while moving toward consensus. Taking time to create a supportive and productive atmosphere is time well spent.

Maintaining Minutes of Meetings

Minutes are the official record of Council activities. Minutes keep individuals and groups informed about the Council's concerns, decisions and actions. They remind members of their progress and document the Council's productivity and contribution to the program.

It is not necessary to record all discussions; however, the minutes should include:

- Any decisions or recommendations made by the Advisory Council (recommendations should be recorded in the same wording that will be reported to the administration)
- Responses to questions or recommendations made at previous meetings
- Assignments to be carried out following the meeting (include what is to be done, who is in charge and date of completion)
- Items to be addressed at the next meeting

A sample of typical minutes for an advisory council meeting is shown in Appendix I.

All Meeting minutes must be submitted to the West-MEC Advisory Archive (<http://bit.do/WMAdvisory>).

Part IV: PLANNING ADVISORY COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The overall purpose of the Advisory Council is to help programs and the district improve the quality of instruction in career and technical education. As they develop Advisory Council activities (i.e. Program of Work), Council members should keep two things in mind: first—the needs of the program; second—the requirements of the business community.

To assist Advisory Councils plan activities, this guide suggests that a sequence of five planning steps be used:

Step 1: Establishing Annual Priorities

First decide what the Council wants to accomplish. Advisory Councils are usually involved in some or all of the following broad areas:

- Community Relations
- Curriculum Review and Updating
- Community Resources
- Career and Technical Student Organizations
- Career-based experiences
- Program Review
- Staff Development
- Recruitment

These areas of Advisory Council involvement are not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather are starting points for discussion to determine the overall needs of the program. Instructors and/or administrators are excellent resources to help identify the needs of the program.

These items should be considered as the Council discusses the selection of priorities.

- Past accomplishments
- Current and future needs of the program
- Current and future needs of the community

The number of priorities the Council selects should be kept manageable. In other words, don't take on more than the Council can realistically accomplish.

Step 2: Specifying Council Activities

Once the Council has identified its priorities, the discussion will become more specific as the Council determines exactly what it wants to accomplish. Possible activities in each priority area include:

Community relations activities

- Present programs to civic and service groups.
- Establish ways to recognize outstanding students, teachers and community leaders.
- Obtain contributions to promote programs.
- Participate in and promote special school/district events.
- Provide information at district Governing Board meetings.
- Set up and support a scholarship program.

Curriculum review and updating

- Review instructional materials for technical accuracy.
- Assist in obtaining instructional materials.
- Recommend equipment and supplies.
- Recommend core curriculum content.
- Recommend safety policies.
- Provide equipment and facilities for specialized training needs.

Community resource activities

- Identify community resource people.
- Provide tours and field trip experiences.
- Provide speakers.

Career and Technical Student Organization activities

- Assist in developing competitive skill events.
- Judge competitive skills events.
- Sponsor student organization activities.
- Collect contributions of equipment and supplies for skill events.

Career-Based Experiences

- Organize employer/student conferences.
- Notify teachers of job openings for students.
- Provide training sites for students.
- Job Shadowing.
- Mock Employment Applications.
- Encourage other employers to provide training sites.
- Assist students to develop interviewing skills.
- Recommend employability skills.
- Employ career and technical education graduates.

Program review activities

- Review program goals and objectives.
- Participate on program evaluation teams.
- Compare curriculum standards to business/industry standards.
- Review adequacy of the facility.
- Make recommendations for program improvement.

Staff development activities

- Provide in-service activities on new and current business/industry methods and processes for instructors.
- Provide skilled technicians to supplement instructor's experience.
- Provide summer/part-time externship and/or employment to instructors for technical upgrading.
- Support instructor participation in professional development activities.

Recruitment activities

- Assist in reviewing teacher selection criteria.
- Assist in recruiting new staff from the field.

This list of activities is not all-inclusive, but should give the Advisory Council some ideas to consider. The functions and activities chosen for the program of work should match the needs of the program, district and community.

Step 3: Developing Planning Tasks

Once Council activities have been selected, identify steps to carry out the activities. Several factors need to be considered, including time, cost, people power and community/school/district support. Some of these factors may influence how the Council carries out a given activity.

Step 4: Assigning Responsibilities

With most projects, little is accomplished unless an individual is assigned to assure it is carried out. Even if the entire Council will work on the project, someone needs to get the action started, keep the process moving and keep everyone working toward the goal. Individuals assigned, should have a clear understanding of what is expected.

Step 5: Establishing Timelines

In addition to clearly understanding what is to be accomplished, each person assigned to a specific planning task should know when the task is to be completed. Tasks completed by the entire Council may be performed during regular Council meetings. This will necessitate the setting of future meeting dates well in advance. Tasks assigned to individual members may need to be completed prior to meetings so that a status report can be presented at the Council meeting.

Part V: Assessing the Advisory Council

Reviewing the Council's Activities

Like the career and technical education program itself, the work of the advisory council should be reviewed periodically. The primary reasons for this review are to determine:

- The extent to which the Council is accomplishing the scope of its work
- The extent to which the recommendations and actions have strengthened and improved the career and technical education program
- The future direction, functions and activities for the Council

It is suggested that an annual review/evaluation be part of the agenda for the Advisory Council's final meeting of the school year. Review of the Council's activities might include answering the following questions.

Management Factors Affecting Success

The success of an Advisory Council can also be affected by the way in which the council is managed. While each Advisory Council may operate differently, certain factors can help to predict whether the Council will be able to function effectively. These factors include:

Number of meetings each year

At a minimum, Advisory Councils meet formally three times a year. However, effective Advisory Councils are meet informally on a regular basis throughout the year. The key to have a successful Council is to establish the scope of work during the formal meetings. The scope of work should be enough for Councils to move beyond the "information" stage and into action that addresses specific issues of program improvement.

Attendance at meetings

Adults frequently "vote with their feet". If Advisory Council members feel an activity is not a good use of their time, they attend less often or even end their involvement.

Length of service on the Advisory Council

Service on the Advisory Council should be long enough that members become well acquainted with the program/district and are able to make knowledgeable suggestions or recommendations.

Representation from diverse populations

A Council has greater credibility when it is perceived to represent the entire community, program and student population it serves. Where occupations in a business or industry had been traditional to one sex, extra care should be taken to change the perception by securing Advisory Council representation from among non-traditional employees in that field.

Meeting agenda

Having the agenda prior to the date of the meeting gives members an opportunity to consider the issues that will be discussed.

Distribution of minutes

Minutes of meetings remind members of what was done and what remains to be done. The minutes also inform decision-makers within your district/school about what is being discussed and/or proposed for the career and technical education program. At the conclusion of each meeting, meeting minutes will be uploaded to the West-MEC Advisory Archive (<http://bit.do/WMAdvisory>).

Public recognition of Council members

When individuals volunteer their time, appropriate recognition can let Advisory Council members know that their investment of knowledge and time is worthwhile and appreciated.

Recommendations are given careful consideration

Knowing they make a difference can inspire Advisory Council members. Therefore, inform the Advisory Council when recommendations are implemented.

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Appendix A: Sample Invitation Letter

Date

Name

Address

Dear :

You have been recommended for membership on the Local Advisory council for the [Program Area] program. The council is composed of business, industry and civic representatives from the community. The goal of the council is to improve career and technical preparation for students by developing closer cooperation between business and education. Your knowledge of training needs and worker competencies would be valuable to the program. There will be two or possibly three meetings a year. I will telephone you later this week about your potential commitment and to answer any questions you may have. We invite you to become a member of the advisory council. We look forward to working with you to advance the goals of our program and broaden opportunities for youth in the community. If you need additional information, please feel free to call me at [Phone Number].

The council looks forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

[Instructor/Administrator [High School]]

Appendix B: Sample Confirmation Letter

Date

Name

Address

Dear :

[School District] thanks you for your willingness to serve on the Local Advisory council for the [Program Area] program. Your experience in this field and active participation on the council will contribute significantly to our effort to offer the best program possible.

[Industry char/ West-MEC Chair] or [Administrator,] Appropriate Title, will contact you to provide you with a tentative agenda and other materials. This meeting will help you better understand the role of the council and how you can contribute. Thank you for your interest in Career and Technical Education.

Sincerely,

[Administrator]

[High School/District]

Appendix C: Sample Local Advisory Council Bylaws

[PROGRAM AREA]

ADVISORY COUNCIL BYLAWS

Article I: Name

The name of the Council shall be the [School/Institution] [Program Area] Advisory Council.

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of this Council shall be to advise, assist and support and advocate for the [Health Careers] program on matters that will strengthen instruction and expand learning opportunities for students.

Article III: Members

Section 1. Members shall be selected and appointed by the program coordinator, advisory Council or administration.

Section 2. Members shall represent a cross-section of the industry or occupation for which training is provided and the community served by the program.

Section 3. Member terms shall be three years, with one-third of the membership appointed each year. No member shall serve consecutive terms, but a former member may be re-appointed after a one-year absence from the Council.

Article IV: Officers

Section 1. Officers shall be a chair, vice-chair and secretary. These officers shall be the Executive Council for the Advisory Council.

Section 2. Duties of officers shall be those commonly ascribed to these offices.

Section 3. Officers shall be elected by simple majority at the first meeting of the school year. Officers may be re-elected.

Article V: Meetings

Section 1. A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of appointed members.

Section 2. Decisions will commonly be made by consensus. A formal vote shall be taken when a decision is to be forwarded to the instructor or administration as a recommendation.

Article VI: Sub Council

Section 1. Sub Council s shall be appointed by the chair as needed to accomplish the program of work.

Article VII: Parliamentary Authority

Except as otherwise provided in its Bylaws, the Advisory Council shall be governed in its proceedings by the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Article VIII: Amendment of Bylaws

These bylaws may be amended at a meeting of the Council by a two-thirds vote.

Bylaws adopted [date]

Bylaws amended [most recent amendment date]

Appendix D: Sample Thank-you Letter to Council Member

Date

Name

Address

Dear

Thank you for your dedicated service on the [Program Area] Advisory Council. This program's effectiveness depends upon the cooperation and participation that you have so freely given.

With your help and recommendations, we have developed a better program that will prepare students for successful careers. Our students have already benefited from your ideas, and we plan to make other improvements resulting from your suggestions.

Please accept my sincere appreciation.

Sincerely,

Appendix E: Sample Letter to Council Member’s Supervisor

Date

Name

Address

Dear

West-MEC and the [High School/District] administration appreciate the important role that [council member] of your organization has played in helping to develop the [Program Area] at [High School/District]. [She/He] has faithfully attended the [Program Area] Advisory council meetings throughout the school year and participated in related activities. With [council member’s] help, we have improved learning experiences for students.

We are grateful that [council member] served on our [Program Area] Advisory council.

Sincerely,

[Administrator]

[High School/District]

Appendix F: Sample Certificate of Appreciation

Certificate of Appreciation

Presented to

[Council Member]

On behalf of

[High School/School District]

For the dedicated service on the [Program] Advisory Council

Superintendent

CTE Instructor

Appendix G: Sample Notice of Meeting

[Date]

[Name] [Title/Business

Name] [Address]

[Address]

[Dear:]

The next meeting of the [Program Area] Program Advisory Council will be [time/date] at [location]. Enclosed is a copy of the agenda for the meeting. We plan to tour the facility and discuss curriculum concerns. We want to provide a [Program Area] that will satisfy community needs and your input is important.

We look forward to seeing you. Please notify me if you cannot attend—[555-0000].

Sincerely,

[Council Chair]

[_____ Program Advisory Council]

FALL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING



Meeting Agenda

Item	Notes
Call to Order	
Welcome/Introductions	
Approval of Minutes	
Previous Business	
Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities 	
Good of the Order	
Future Meeting Days	
Adjourn	

FALL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING



Meeting Agenda

Item	Notes
Call to Order	Chair calls the meeting to order.
Welcome/Introductions	Introduction of new members.
Approval of Minutes	Council reviews and approves the previous meetings minutes.
Previous Business	Council reviews commitments and any other action items from previous meetings.
Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities 	The Fall Advisory Council Meeting will (at minimum) feature a discussion on Advisory Council’s Activities for the coming year.
Good of the Order	Chair asks for any additional items to discuss at future meetings. Chair identifies Advisory Council member action items (i.e. industry speakers, facility tours, recruitment of additional advisory members)
Future Meeting Days	Confirm next meeting dates.
Adjourn	Chair adjourns the meeting.

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