Strengthening Engagement with District Accountability Committees:

A Brief Resource for Board Members



Effective collaboration between the local board of education, district administration and district accountability committees leads to stronger decision-making, more meaningful stakeholder engagement, and greater trust across the district. The accountability committee can serve as both a voice of the community and thought partner as local board members engage in work to improve outcomes for students. It is important to continuously work to strengthen collaboration by establishing clarity, transparency, and effective working relationships. This brief resource provides a series of recommendations to help ensure that the local board and accountability committees maximize opportunities for collaboration and leverage each other's ideas to support their schools and district. It is anticipated that the local board will work with district administration to support the implementation of the shared recommendations. In addition, links are provided to supplemental resources that serve to further clarify the role and statutory expectations of accountability committees.

Building Board & Accountability Committee Collaboration: Recommendations for Success

Recommendations	In Practice
1. Clarify Roles & Expectations	• Communicate that District Accountability Committees (DACs) serve in an advisory role to local boards and not voting capacity. • Provide annual orientation on statutory responsibilities and district policies. • Reinforce boundaries: committees inform decisions but do not supervise staff. Similarly, committees provide one additional voice to help support board decision making and don't dictate their final decisions.
2. Co-Develop DAC Annual Focus Areas	• Support the understanding and fulfillment of statutory duties required from DAC. •Collaboratively determine annual issues the DAC will study based on the needs of the board that may not be addressed in statute. • Revisit priorities mid-year to maintain alignment with district goals.
3. Ensure Timely Access to Data & Plans	• Provide necessary data, draft budgets, and Unified Improvement Plans early to the DAC to support understanding and decision-making. • Establish predictable timelines for committee review.

Recommendations	In Practice
4. Strengthen Communication Pathways	• Define how recommendations move through principals, district administration, DAC, and the board. • Use a standard format for submissions and assign board/staff liaisons where needed.
5. Support Transparent Membership Processes	• Support committees in meeting statutory membership requirements. • Support recruitment and encourage diverse participation.
6. Reinforce the Family Engagement Mission	• Share district guidance and board policies on district expectations for family engagement. • Celebrate successes and clarify supportive—not disciplinary roles.
7. Promote Healthy Working Relationships	• Set expectations for respectful collaboration with principals and district leaders. • Provide conflict-resolution protocols.
8. Increase Transparency in Decision-Making	• Acknowledge DAC/SAC recommendations in board packets and meetings. • Provide clear reasoning to the DAC when recommendations are not adopted. Be clear about the multiple avenues from which feedback is received.

Next Steps & Resources

These recommendations should serve to support more effective board and accountability committee collaboration. Some additional resources related to accountability committees and effective family, school and community partnerships are available including:

- **Family, School, and Community Partnerships.** This webpage includes a wide range of resources designed to strengthen stakeholder engagement within districts. www.cde.state.co.us/familyengagement
- **Understanding the Role of the School Accountability Committee**. This online course introduces potential and new SAC members to the School Accountability Committee and its role/responsibilities. https://colorado-department-of-education.mylearnworlds.com/course/understanding-the-role-of-school-accountability-committees
- **SAC and DAC Composition and Responsibilities.** https://www.cde.state.co.us/familyengagement/sac_dac_responsibilities
- **CDE Board of Education Supports & Resources Webpage.** https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdeedserv/board-of-education-supports

Background to CDE Board of Education Supports: CDE support, grounded in C.R.S. 22-11-208, is non-directive and non-partisan, focusing on best practices and resources. CDE does not prescribe governance approaches; these decisions remain with local boards. Boards should consult legal counsel for specific guidance. Related resources are available at: https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdeedserv/board-of-education-supports