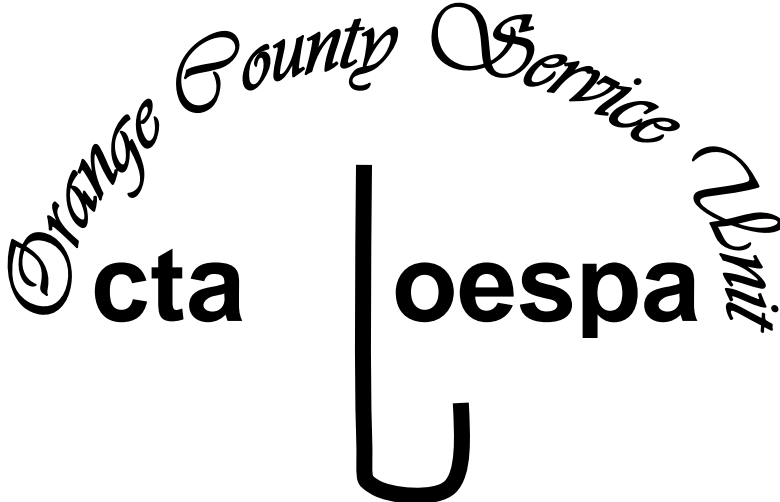


Faculty Advisory Committee



guidelines

**Orange County Classroom
Teachers Association**
1020 Webster Avenue
Orlando, Florida 32804
407-298-0756
fax 407-290-8799
www.orangecta.org

**A Handbook for
Decision Making**

cta oespa

INTRODUCTION

Faculty Advisory Committees (FACs) are one component of shared decision-making. Shared decision-making may be defined as a joint planning and problem solving process that seeks to improve professionalism and the quality of education. The language contained within the CTA/OCPS Contract is based on material developed by the National Education Association (NEA) in the late 1970s. That material was contained in a program called Team Approach to Better Schools (TABS). Orange County was one of the first sites in the nation to use the concepts in the TABS program. FACs were initially negotiated in the early 1980s with only two designated issues for shared decision-making. Implementation rested with the initiative of the individual sites.

The organization of FACs began to expand in 1987 when the merit schools negotiations designated that the FAC would determine the expenditure of funds received from that program. An awareness of a need to provide training and assistance for the success of the committees also increased.

This handbook is an attempt to suggest guidelines for developing an effective shared decision-making process.

3. Unclear or different goals or values.
4. Territorial ambiguity or lack of role clarity (e.g. whose job is it?).
5. Lack of information or misinformation.
6. Different methods and/or styles.

How does change occur?

Change requires four basic elements: desire to change, knowledge necessary to implement the change, effort to change, and an atmosphere or environment that supports the change.

Change creates conflict and some feelings of discomfort. Plan for this to happen. Keep in mind the story of the bear and the cage:

A panda bear lived in a cage for many years and spent his days pacing back and forth from one end to the other, dreaming of freedom. One day his cage was removed; however, the panda bear continued to pace back and forth in the same safe, familiar space.

Not all decisions can be shared because of time constraints and range of impact.

The primary advantage to shared decision-making is that there is usually a building of power through ownership for the final decision.

Once a decision is delegated to a group or body it remains the property of that group or body. Attempts to retrieve the decision without the consent of the group are rarely successful and highly destructive to the trust needed for the shared decision-making process to be successful.

Conflict

Conflict can be defined as two or more persons or things attempting to occupy the same space at the same time.

Basic Sources of Conflict:

1. Scarce and/or undistributable resources (e.g. time, money, people, material).
2. Unmet expectations.

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Article XIX

Faculty Advisory Committee

- A. The Faculty Advisory Committee shall have a membership of not less than five nor more than eleven employees elected by the employees at each school. Education Support Professionals may be included on the committee by a vote of the faculty. The Faculty Advisory Committee shall be elected by secret ballot election, conducted by the site Association representative within the first six weeks of the school year. In the absence of a site Association representative, CTA shall assist in selecting a teacher on that school's staff to conduct the election. A list of the members of the Faculty Advisory Committee of each school shall be sent to the Association and the administrator. The administrator shall meet with the Faculty Advisory Committee within three weeks of a request.
- B. The Faculty Advisory Committee may meet during the regular duty day at such times as committee members have no student contact. The Faculty Advisory Committee may choose to meet with other employees and/or with the administrator, during the regular duty day provided the employees have no assigned instructional responsibility and that such meetings shall not conflict with previously scheduled meetings.
- C. In addition to duties outlined in Article XIV, the Faculty Advisory Committee may meet to discuss and make recommendations concerning the following:
 1. A rotation plan composed of available staff to substitute in case of emergency.
 2. The purchase and distribution of instructional equipment, materials and supplies.
 3. Student discipline plans, which may include guidelines for referral of students into alternative education settings.
 4. The disposition of discipline referrals in a timely manner.
 5. Additional safeguards to deal with acts of violence, including those involving weapons, and procedures for notification of teachers when their students have been found to have carried a weapon on campus.

Power & Shared Decision-Making

Shared decision-making is in effect the sharing of power. One definition of power is the ability to influence. When a person or group has the ability to get another person or group to think, feel, or do something, s/he has the power to influence. Teachers, students, and administrations all have power in the school system and may have concerns about how the FAC may change the structure.

Will there really be a change? Who will be held responsible. These fears or concerns are real and legitimate. Both teachers and administrators need to acknowledge and understand each others' concerns. The role of the FAC is not to seize power but to provide a vehicle for participatory decision -making.

Factors to Consider

Whoever makes the decision must accept the responsibility for it, whether it generates praise or blame.

Shared decision-making is a process and is slower than independent decision-making.

Problem Solving

A standard approach to solving problems includes the following steps:

Define the problem (be specific)

Gather information

Brainstorm solutions/alternative

Evaluate alternative

Make a decision

Develop a plan

Implement/execute a plan

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an effective means of generating ideas. The process allows the group to foster new and creative ideas.

6. Other concerns of the faculty which may result in a smoother operation of the school.
- D. Any school-wide drives or collection of money which involve teachers shall not be approved until such have been discussed with the Faculty Advisory Committee.
- E. The Faculty Advisory Committee shall be responsible for establishing a process to elect teacher representatives to the School Advisory Committee.
- F. Participation on the FAC shall not serve as a basis for the evaluation of any teacher.

ARTICLE XIV

DUTY DAY

- B. As part of an ongoing program of school improvement, and in recognition of individual schools' needs to be given increased responsibility for site-based decision making, the parties agree to the following relating to the employee duty day:
 1. The Faculty Advisory Committee and the administrator, with input from the school staff, shall mutually agree on scheduling arrangements for teachers to include, but not be limited to, teaching load(s), student contact time, planning time, duty time, middle school IMPACT classes, extended-duty assignments, compensatory time, coverage of classes in lieu of using substitutes, scheduling of elementary teachers, the use of flexible time blocks, and the implementation of mandated school wide programs which affect any of the above. At the end of each school year, each teacher may submit scheduling preferences for elementary special area teachers.
 2. Such agreements shall be conditioned upon a strong level of support from the faculty, reduced to writing and distributed annually to each teacher on the school staff with a copy to the Association. The agreement(s) shall remain in effect until there is a strong level of support for a change.

Make-Up of the Committee

The Faculty Advisory Committee is an advisory committee made up of not less than five nor more than eleven teacher and/or ESP members elected by teachers to discuss with the principal all of the following:

- A. Problems and/or concerns
- B. Allocation of funds
- C. Collection and expenditure of monies
- D. Allocation of space
- E. Discipline plan

The members of the committee should communicate frequently with the administration in order to promote trust and avoid surprises. The goal of the FAC is shared decision-making. Exchanges with administration, whether as a part of a regular, all-inclusive FAC meeting or a pre-planning format, should be collaborative and problem solving - never "I gotcha" or trap-setting.

How are decisions made?

The FAC should use a team or collaborative approach to decision making. Reaching consensus is the most desirable method. Consensus is a process for resolving conflict by reaching general agreement. Complete unanimity may not be possible, but each individual should be able to accept the group decision on the basis of logic and feasibility. A formal "Robert's Rules" approach can have a chilling effect on free-flowing discussions.

- 👍 Listen to others and consider their positions carefully before you press your point.
- 👍 Look for acceptable alternatives for all parties. Avoid win/lose posturing.
- 👍 Yield only to positions that have objective and logical sound foundations. Do not change simply to avoid conflict.
- 👍 **Avoid conflict-reinforcing techniques such as: majority votes, averaging the ranks of members, and trading off votes (I'll give on this item if you give on that one).**

Communication

📖 The Purpose of the FAC is to represent the faculty rather than to serve as an independent decision-making body. To accomplish this purpose the FAC should solicit frequent input from the faculty and provide prompt feedback on FAC activities.

Input can be gathered in a variety of ways: idea or suggestion boxes, needs assessment, surveys or simple teacher-to-teacher requests. It will simplify the process if the ideas/concerns are submitted in writing.

Keeping the faculty informed of FAC actions is vital. This can be accomplished through reports of actions, newsletters, emails and verbal reports at faculty meetings. Reports should avoid citing individual names. FAC members' names should be included in communications and posted in a convenient place. Whenever possible, advance notice of FAC meetings should appear on the school calendar.

Reports from the FAC to the administration could be made by either the FAC chair(s) and/or members of the committee. Suggestion: send multiple suggestions for positive change to the administration.

Role of the Chairperson

✍ Conduct meetings

✍ Establish meeting time and place in cooperation with administration

✍ Develop Agenda

✍ Maintain open lines of communication with faculty and administration

✍ Promote Teamwork

✍ Maintain a file of issues and concerns at site

✍ Keep members abreast of the status of issues and concerns

✍ Follow-up or designate someone to follow-up on unresolved issues and concerns

Role of the Secretary

- ✍ Record proceedings including attendance and date
- ✍ Print and distribute minutes
- ✍ Handle correspondence
- ✍ Maintain a file including all correspondence, meetings, issues, and concerns at site

Role of the Member

- 📁 Attend Meetings
- 📁 Accept ideas from others
- 📁 Respond openly
- 📁 Promote collegiality
- 📁 Maintain professionalism and confidentiality
- 📁 Work for the good of the school

📁 Offer Encouragement

📁 Seek the facts

📁 Listen to what others have to say

📁 Communicate with faculty

📁 Keep Chair informed

📁 Encourage colleagues to put all concerns in writing

Role of the Administrator

Meet at mutually agreeable times with other FAC members.

Participate in the discovery process for solutions to issues.