



School Neighborhood Advisory Committee Guidelines

Introduction

All school and neighborhood sites participating in the Lincoln Community Learning Centers initiative must have an operating School Neighborhood Advisory Committee (SNAC). SNACs are the cornerstone of Community Learning Center (CLC) governance and are based on some fundamental premises including:

- In order to be most effective, services and supports for families must be provided close to where people live, work and go to school.
- Parents, children/youth and neighborhood residents best understand the environment in which they live and what services and supports will be effective.
- Professionals provide valuable advice and support and are more effective when they work as partners with participants and neighborhoods.
- Strengthening children, families and neighborhoods occurs as a result of active involvement in finding solutions and “ownership” for results.
- All neighborhoods have both formal and informal assets that can be built upon and that the best results are often achieved by the “natural helping networks.”

Membership & Participation

School Neighborhood Advisory Committees must include broad representation and active participation from parents, youth, educators and other school personnel, neighborhood residents, concerned citizens, community-based organizations and service providers. SNACs are maintained as “open groups,” with no rigid ratios, appointment processes, or limits on membership numbers. The membership is to be “fluid” and “inclusive” so that it can adapt, change and evolve as interest grows, relationships develop and outcomes change.

Purpose

The School Neighborhood Advisory Committee must make a sustained commitment to achieving the three core goals for children, families and residents from their school and neighborhood:

- Improved student learning and development
- Stronger families
- Healthier neighborhoods

This includes serving as a vehicle for planning, communication and oversight/accountability for the neighborhood-based service delivery system. Some of the functions of School Neighborhood Advisory Committees include:

- Evaluating current status of the school and neighborhood indicators in the core goal areas and setting priorities;
- Ensuring active involvement of parents, neighborhood residents, youth, service providers, community-based organizations, educators and school staff in designing and implementing service strategies;
- Identifying school and neighborhood assets, both formal and informal “natural helping networks” to build upon;
- Maintaining ongoing two-way communication with neighborhood, service participants and other stakeholders regarding results achieved, service strategies, emerging opportunities, and broader policy and planning issues affecting the neighborhood;
- Planning service strategies to be implemented in the school/neighborhood that will achieve better results in the three core goal areas;
- Ensuring that service strategies are implemented in a way that is consistent with key CLC program principles;
- Evaluating success of service strategies and identifying opportunities for further development and revising of plans as necessary to achieve the core goals.

Operating Principles

School Neighborhood Advisory Committees are expected to reflect the uniqueness of each school and neighborhood community and will build on or coordinate with existing planning structures within the school and neighborhood. For this reason, the committees may look differently across sites; however, they all are expected to operate according to a common set of principles including:

- The Committees are chaired by a citizen representative and staffed by the Site Supervisor.

- The lay volunteers representing the parents, youth, neighborhood residents or concerned citizens are the “voting members” of the committee. Voting members may have no possible funding or contractual relationship with site, or possible “conflict of interest.”
- The role of the service providers on the SNAC is to provide input, technical assistance and advice to the committee.
- Advisory Committee meetings are to occur on a regular and predictable basis, preferably monthly, but at a minimum bimonthly; are scheduled at a convenient time for parents and residents; and are held at an accessible location.
- Advisory Committee meetings are recorded in the form of written notes that are distributed to all members, with priority topics such as results data, budget, outreach plans and continuous improvement plans covered as regular agenda items.
- Each Advisory Committee will operate under a written vision, mission, guiding principles and operating procedures, which are consistent with those of CLCs.
- Each Advisory Committee will develop, approve and follow a written Program Plan that focuses on the core goals and includes indicators and benchmarks to measure progress, service strategies being implemented, and a specific budget funding request, as well as “in-kind” and other local, state or federal funding that will support the plan.

Reporting Requirements

Each Advisory Committee will ensure that reporting systems are in place at the site to collect program participation data, measure progress on core goals and benchmarks, and measure “process indicators” to demonstrate changes in service delivery, relationships among stakeholders and increased accountability.

The site will be responsible for reporting regularly to CLC Coordinators regarding the operations of the Advisory Committee including submitting a schedule of meetings, meeting minutes and sign-in sheets of those who participated in the meetings and planning sessions.

Program Planning & Budget Development

SNACs which involve parents, neighborhoods and community in program development, planning and decision making will be essential for subsequent 21st Century funding. Community participation will be required as a condition of receiving CLC funds.