



Sterling – USD 376

**Secondary
Site Council Handbook**

*Approved by the USD 376 Board of Education
on April 9, 2007*

Sterling High/Junior High School

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Sterling School District – *Vision Statement*

“Learning for All and Excellence in Teaching”

Sterling Secondary School – *Mission Statement*

The faculty, staff, parents, and students of Sterling Secondary School will work together to create an educational environment that promotes the physical, social, and intellectual skills needed to succeed in our changing world.



Kansas Site Councils

“The school is the significant unit for improvement and those associated with the individual school are the persons to effect change.”

John Goodlad, A Place Called School

A Brief History

In 1992, the Kansas legislature enacted **K.S.A. 72-6439**, a state statute that instituted the Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) system. *This legislation required all schools to establish site councils*, composed of the principal, teachers and other personnel, parents, business representatives, and other representative community groups. Specifically, *the site councils were charged with two responsibilities:*

- *Providing advice and counsel* in evaluating state, school district, and school site performance goals and objectives, and
- *Determining the methods that should be employed* at the school site to meet these goals and objectives.

In 2003-2004, the legislature approved **Senate Bill 304** which added responsibilities to the School Site Councils, thereby amending K.S.A. 72-6439. The amendments added as a result of SB304 are:

- Site councils *may make recommendations and proposals to the school board* regarding budgetary items and school district matters including but not limited to, identifying and implementing the best practices for developing efficient and effective administrative and management functions.
- Site councils also *may help school boards analyze the unique environment of schools*, enhance the efficiency and maximize limited resources, including outsourcing arrangements and cooperative opportunities as a means to address limited budgets.

Purpose of Site Councils

The original purpose of school site councils was to transform schools into effective learning environments by providing school staff and school community members with the authority, flexibility and resources they need to solve educational problems and implement change. Site councils give ownership to those responsible for carrying out decisions by involving them directly in making the decisions, while enabling the school community to create school conditions that facilitate improvement, innovation and continuous learning.



The purpose of the school site council is *to advise the school on such matters as student learning, education programs, school improvement planning, and accreditation issues.* The site council *also plays an advocacy role for the school regarding the same issues.*

Specifically, the purpose is to:

- Provide *advice and counsel* to the school in developing, implementing, and evaluating school performance goals and objectives;
- Present *recommendations and guidance* in regard to the methods to meet those goals and objectives;
- Provide *ongoing support* for the students and staff of the school, and any other *assistance* that the BOE may request.

In addition, school site councils may:

- Make *recommendations* regarding budgetary matters for efficient and effective administrative and management functions.
- *Assist* school boards in analyzing the unique environment of schools, enhance the efficiency and maximize limited resources.

*The ultimate goal of site-based management
is to improve the teaching and learning environment
for all students.*

Site Councils Strategies

National studies of site councils and site-based management found several strategies inherent within an effective council. These include, but are not limited to:

- *diversity of power* (actively involving several stakeholders);
- *timely and needed professional development* (provided and directed toward building capacity for change);
- *providing information* (dissemination of information supporting informed recommendations);
- *effective leadership* (by the principal and council officers to propel the team forward within their areas of responsibility and support);
- *vision* (a well-defined focus in regard to the mission, values, and goals of the district);
- and *accomplishment* (frequently rewarding individuals and groups on progress they have made toward reaching student and district goals).



In *Kansas*, a 2001 survey/study of site councils was conducted providing data that reinforced the results of national studies. Survey results showed that effective Kansas site councils had the following characteristics:

- a clear sense of *purpose*;
- clearly stated *benchmarks* and task-oriented *strategies*;
- an understanding of their *role* and *responsibilities*;
- a method for *orienting new members* to the work of the council;
- members who *understood effective schools literature* and the *goals* of the school and district;
- *action-oriented meetings* that had an agenda and were held regularly;
- and a membership that used *effective decision-making skills*.

Membership

Site councils should consist of at least six to 12 members, including the principal, teachers, other school personnel, parents of students attending the school, the business community and other community groups, and representatives of the student population.

Membership on the site council is representative of the demography the school serves (geographically, economically, etc.). Community membership should exceed school staff membership with special attention given toward underrepresented groups (senior citizen population, etc.). Local school board policies should clearly delineate site council member selection, rotation, terms of service, eligibility for service, and selection of leadership.

Meetings

Site councils should meet at regularly scheduled times agreed upon by site council members. Councils should meet at least six times annually, but optimally once a month during the school year. Council agendas include discussion of student learning, educational programs, school improvement planning, and accreditation issues.

10 Characteristics of Effective Site Council Meetings (KASB, 2006)

1. Develop and adopt a good set of operating rules; follow the law.
2. Recruit people who really want to participate.
3. Recruit a diverse membership that reflects district demographics.
4. Select a chairperson/president other than the principal.
5. Prepare an agenda in advance.
6. Distribute agenda and handout materials in advance.
7. Put weighty items on the agenda and wrestle with them honestly and openly.
8. Share opinions freely and actively listen to all.
9. Publicize meetings: agenda, topics, and invite visitors.
10. Follow-up between meetings and see opportunities to advocate for your school.



Responsibilities of Site Council Members

The chair, in consultation with the building principal or his or her designee(s), establishes agendas, conducts meetings, and communicates site council advertisement. Members participate in sanctioned school improvement meetings and visits in an advisory capacity.

Site council members periodically communicate with the school community and, at least annually with the local school board, on site council activities and other council matters. Site council members take part in ongoing training to build their knowledge and skills related to site council work.

Site Councils

Site Councils are...

- ... are *NOT* fundraising organizations.
- ... are *NOT* mini-BOE's.
- ... do *NOT* discuss individual students, nor employees, in anything but a complementary manner.
- ... do *NOT* discuss specific budgets, nor their allocation of funds.
- ... do *NOT* make decisions, but rather recommendations, in an advisory format.
- ... do *NOT* have tremendous *power*, but *DO* have tremendous *influence*.

However, Site Councils...

- ... *ARE* sounding and advisory boards for their BOE.
- ... *OFFER* experience and recommendations.
- ... *SUPPLY* their schools with perspectives from a parent/community viewpoint.
- ... *SUPPORT* public education, in general as well as within their own schools.
- ... *BRAIN-STORM* and problem-solve, on topics related to school improvement.
- ... *PROVIDE* a strong, integral link to the community.
- ... *GIVE* recommendations that concern state, district, and school site goals and objectives.
- ... *CELEBRATE* success, through public recognition.
- ... *RECOGNIZE* that a lack of success implies visible change.



Site Councils *Table of Purpose*

WHAT THEY ARE NOT	HOW THEY MIGHT ADVISE AND COUNSEL
A mini (or additional board of education)	The council might provide advice and counsel by making recommendations to the board.
An evaluator of staff	The council might provide advice and counsel on improving the evaluation system.
A district (building) budget development group	The council might provide advice and counsel on added funding for staff development.
A supervisor of staff members	The council might provide advice and counsel on development of staff supervision guidelines.
A mini administrative group	The council might provide advice and counsel on the development of goals and objectives, the method used for reviewing their implementation and the procedure for determining how well they are being met.
A curriculum specialist group	The council might provide advice and counsel on whether the curriculum is effective in accomplishing the district and building student learning goals.
A P-T-A	The council might have some of the same members, but the function of the council is clearly different than groups such as the PTA.
A fundraising organization	The council has no reason to be involved in fund raising, that is a PTA or other organizational function. However, if funds are needed for improvement of the educational program, the council could advise the board and provide public support for an LOB.
A forum for airing personal complaints about the district	The council needs to police itself to see that this area, if it arises during council discussions, is quickly stopped.
A forum for discussing individual staff members qualities	The council needs to police itself to see that this area, if it arises during council discussions, is quickly stopped.
A reviewer of bids	The council may provide advice and counsel on projects that have educational ramifications and will require the district to take bids. But once the bidding process is begun, the council's involvement stops.
A developer and/or writer of district policy	The council might give advice and counsel on changes in current policies or the development of new policies <i>where this advice and council is related to improved student learning.</i>
A determiner of bus routes	The council might have a legitimate reason to provide advice or counsel in this area if, and only if, the educational programs are being made to fit bus schedules rather than the other way around.
A participant in staff negotiations	The council needs to avoid discussions of any portion of current, past or possible future actions of the negotiating teams.
A determiner of staff salaries or salary increases	The council needs to avoid discussions of these topics just as they should avoid discussions of negotiations.
A panel for airing staff grievances	The council needs to avoid becoming a sounding board for staff grievances whether they appear to be legitimate or not.
A panel for reviewing due-process hearings and hearing results	The council needs to avoid becoming involved in any discussions of this area – no exceptions.
A maintenance supervision group	The council might advise and counsel in some instances where poor maintenance creates unsafe conditions or otherwise interferes with learning opportunities.
A determiner of coaching quality	The council needs to avoid becoming involved in any discussions of this area – no exceptions.



Appendix A

The QPA Framework

Accreditation Process

Beginning in 2005-2006, all schools had to be accredited based on meeting the quality and performance criteria below. Accreditation status is determined each year by KSDE.

Accreditation Criteria: Quality Indicators

Each school will be assigned an accreditation status based upon the extent to which it has met the following quality criteria:

- *A school improvement plan* that may be for a period of two to five years and that includes a *results-based staff development plan*;
- *A technical assistance team* that is external to the school;
- Locally determined *assessments* that are aligned with the state standards;
- Formal *training* for teachers regarding the state curriculum standards;
- 100% of the teachers assigned to teach in those areas assessed by the state or described as core academic subjects by the U.S. Department of Education, and 95% or more of all other faculty, *fully certified* for the positions they hold;
- Local *graduation requirements* that include at least those requirements imposed by the state board;
- *Curriculum* that allows each student to meet the Regent's Qualified Admissions requirements and the State Scholarship program;
- *Programs* to support student learning and growth at both the *elementary and secondary levels* including the following:
 - Computer literacy
 - Counseling services
 - Fine arts
 - Language arts
 - Library services
 - Mathematics
 - Physical education, which shall include health and instruction about human sexuality and AIDS
 - Science
 - Services for students with special learning needs
 - History and government
- *Programs* to support student learning and growth at the *secondary level*, including the following:
 - Business
 - Family and consumer sciences
 - Foreign Language
 - Industrial and technical education



- *Local policies* ensuring compliance with other accreditation regulations and state education laws including requirements for substitutes and emergency substitutes, student credit, records retention, interscholastic athletics and athletic practice, and if an elementary school, enrollment of 10 or more students on September 20.

Accreditation Criteria: Performance

The performance criteria used in the accreditation process will include the following:

- Meet the percentage prescribed by the State Board of students performing at or above the proficient level on state assessments
- An attendance rate equal to or greater than that prescribed by the State Board (e.g., 90% or higher or an increase from the previous year)
- For high schools, a graduation rate equal to or greater than that prescribed by the State Board (e.g., 75% or higher or an increase from the previous year)
- A student participation rate on state assessments at 95% or higher

Levels of Accreditation

Four levels of accreditation status are possible based upon meeting or not meeting the quality and performance criteria, to include the following:

- *Accredited:* A school meets the minimum performance and quality criteria established by the State Board.
- *Accredited on Improvement:* A school for two consecutive years, does not meet one or more of the performance criteria for any subgroup or all students assessed or fails to meet three or more of the quality criteria.
- *Conditionally Accredited:* A school for three consecutive years, does not meet the prescribed percentage of all students assessed who perform at the proficient level or above or fails to meet four or more of the quality criteria.
- *Not Accredited:* A school that for five consecutive years, does not meet the prescribed percentage of all students assessed who perform at the proficient level or above or fails to meet four or more of the quality criteria.

Sanctions That Apply to All Schools

Accredited on improvement or conditionally accredited schools will:

- Be assigned a technical assistance team by the state
- Develop a specific plan to address deficiencies
- Abide by federal sanctions that may apply
- Abide by other actions as may be determined by the State Board

State Assessments

	<i>Assessments in 2006-2007</i>
Reading Diagnostic	K, 1 or 2 annually
Reading	Grades 3-8, one high school, annually



Appendix B

NCLB – A Practical Guide for the Educational Community

How is the NCLB Act of 2001 supposed to help schools improve?

- It aims to reinforce the work we are already doing to set high standards for *all* students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, family background, or disability.
- It emphasizes *reading* and *mathematics*, the two essential building blocks of education, and it begins testing in grade 3 in an effort to make sure students needing help get it quickly.
- The law requires that *test results be reported separately* for all different groups in the school, to easily recognize if any particular group is in jeopardy and to identify more accurately the students most in need of assistance so that the school can focus their efforts there.
- The law requires *each state* to set specific goals for student achievement, developing its own standards and tests, and then defining what test scores would be considered “proficient” – that is, showing that students are doing “grade-level” work.
- If a school meets the annual goals as outlined by the state, it has made what is called “AYP” or “*Adequate Yearly Progress*” – for students at that grade level in the state. If schools don’t make AYP, they are classified as “*schools in need of improvement*” and given time and assistance to improve. If schools do not make AYP for two years in a row, parents are given a number of options, including transferring their children to another school or getting outside tutoring help.
- As every child deserves an excellent teacher, the law requires that every classroom must have a *highly qualified teacher* in it, defined as licensed by the state, fully certified, and able to demonstrate competence in the subjects they teach. Paraprofessionals working in Title I programs or schools must meet new requirements as well.

What are some of the challenges in meeting the NCLB requirements?

- NCLB requires that *every* student (100%) across the country be at grade-level in reading and math by 2014. This is a very ambitious goal, with a very tight timetable.
- Because test results must be reported separately for all groups, if even one group falls below the AYP goal, the school will *not* be counted as making AYP for that year – *even* if all other student groups meet that goal.
- Unfortunately, the law does *not* reward progress. Some will make outstanding progress, yet not meet the AYP goal. It’s very important to recognize and

applaud the good work going on in those schools, while helping them move upward.

- Schools that don't make AYP may be labeled "*failing*" by some, but this is not accurate. The law says they are "*schools in need of improvement.*" Virtually every school can improve, even those at the top, but some need to improve more than others.
- Helping schools in "need of improvement" will take resource, when in fact, schools don't expect to get a lot of new resources or funding for those resources, meaning... schools may have to do the best they can, with *what they currently have*, refocusing available resources to the areas of greatest need.

How can this law help us building on our school's successes?

- While we should focus on test scores, there are *other significant events* that are happening in schools which should be focused on as well. These include, but are not limited to, events such as: increased promotion/graduation rates; awards received by the schools; teachers or students; decreased dropout rates; reduced class sizes; fewer suspensions; new course offerings or curricula; greater parent involvement; grants for new or expanded programs; etc.
- We should *congratulate* all students, teachers, administrators, parents, and patrons who have contributed to these successes and *look forward* to even more in the future, keeping in mind the bigger picture as we look at scores.
- We should *disseminate* and *share* these successes to the greater school community on a regular basis.

How can the community help?

- Our schools *belong* to this community, and we need the help of the entire community to improve it. Everyone has a role to play in helping all our children to succeed.
- Think about the organizations and groups you may be involved in, and consider ways they might get *involved* in helping our schools. Schools can provide suggestions in how they might get involved as well.
- *Parent involvement at home* is probably the most important kind of involvement in education, as there are many things a parent can do – and all parents *should* do – for their children, including:
 - Providing a quiet place to do *homework*.
 - Make sure children get a *good night's sleep* and a *good breakfast*.
 - *Take an interest* in children's schoolwork and talk with them about it.
 - Teach children *respect* for others and *responsibility* in their own behavior.
- Your school has resources to help parents help their children, but you can also get quick tips in Appendix D: *35 Things To Do to Help Your Children Succeed in School*.

Conclusions



- We have big challenges ahead, but believe we can do more even with limited resources... together.
- Our doors are open to the community, and we invite everyone in, wanting them to be involved in the many ways that support can be offered to our students.



Appendix C

Glossary of Educational Terms

Accreditation: The state’s “seal of approval.” Accreditation is the primary way the Kansas State Board of Education ensures educational quality.

Accreditation Criteria – Performance Indicators: Under the new QPA, student learning will be monitored through state assessment results that will be used in conjunction with Quality Indicators to determine building accreditation status.

Accreditation Criteria – Quality Indicators: Under the new QPA, buildings need to provide a specific level of programs, policies and practices that will be used in conjunction with Performance Indicators to determine building accreditation status.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): A statewide accountability system mandated by the NCLB Act of 2001 which requires each state to ensure that all schools and districts make adequate yearly progress. If a school meets the annual goals as outlined by the state, it has made what is called “AYP” – for students at that grade level in the state. If schools don’t make AYP, they are classified as “schools in need of improvement” and given time and assistance to improve.

At-Risk: An at-risk student is one who meets one or more of the following criteria: Is not working on grade level; is not meeting the requirements necessary for promotion to the next grade or is failing subjects; is not meeting the requirements necessary for graduation from high school; has insufficient mastery of skills or is not meeting the state standards; has been retained; has a high rate of absenteeism; has repeated suspensions or expulsions from school; is homeless and/or migrant; is identified as an English language learner. (*KSDE*)

Continuous Improvement: The driving concept behind the original QPA and the No Child Left Behind Act. Improvement in student achievement for all student groups, not just for “average” scores, is expected.

Disaggregation: The processing of breaking apart data so “average” performance is not able to mask poor performance of identified subgroups. The subgroups identified for QPA are: ethnicity, low socio-economic status, English as a Second Language (ESL) and special education. School buildings are allowed to address other subgroups, such as gender, as well.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): A piece of federal legislation that directs much of the federal involvement in public education. Originally passed in 1965, it is revisited by Congress and revised every 5-10 years. The most recent revision was passed in 2002.



North Central Association – Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA): Founded in 1895, the NCA is a non-governmental, voluntary organization that accredits 8,500 public and private schools in 19 states, the Navajo Nation, and the Department of Defense Dependents' Schools worldwide. For over 100 years, the focus of NCA has been to advance the quality of education, by accrediting a range of schools from pre-kindergarten through post-secondary, including: early childhood, elementary, middle, secondary, adult/vocational, college preparatory, special purpose, unit (K-12), and non-degree granting post-secondary schools.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB): A name that is synonymous with the current Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It gained the name as a result of President George W. Bush's involvement and support.

Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA): The state process by which school buildings are accredited. Current regulations were implemented in 1992, with a revised edition taking effect July 1, 2005.

Results-Based Staff Development Plan (RBSD): Part of the School Improvement Plan, RBSD connects adult learning to student learning. The new licensure system, which took effect July 1, 2003, rewards teachers who can demonstrate student learning has improved as a result of professional development activities.

School District Finance and Quality Performance Act: Passed by the Kansas Legislature in 1992, the law substantially changes the level of state involvement in schools, including school funding and operation. It also requires the establishment of a building site council.

School Improvement Plan (SIP): A written document that describes conditions, goals, responsibilities, strategies and time lines to guide school improvement efforts.

Standard of Excellence: The state of Kansas defines Standard of Excellence as having a minimum percentage of students scoring in the Exemplary performance level on state assessments, which is the highest level of learning. In addition, no more than a maximum percentage of students is allowed in the Unsatisfactory performance level.

Standards: Usually paired with benchmarks and performance indicators, standards are curriculum-based learning objectives designed to clarify educational goals and learning initiatives, while ensuring a balanced, realistic, and aligned curricula.

Technical Assistance Team: External to the school, the team provides advice and assistance; a quality indicator criterion in the new QPA.

Title I: Title I is one part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It identifies the federal funds for students affected by poverty that are available to public schools and how they are to be spent.



Appendix D

35 Things You Can Do to Help Your Children Succeed in School *A Practical Guide to Promoting America's Public Schools, Learning First Alliance*

FOR STUDENTS OF ALL AGES

At Home:

1. Ask about your children's homework – what it is, when it's due – and check to make sure they do it.
2. Provide a quiet place – with good light and away from distractions – for your children to do homework.
3. Make sure your children get a good night's sleep each night and eat a healthy, substantial breakfast each morning.
4. Talk to your children about school for at least a few minutes each day to let them know you're interested and you think school is important.
5. Teach your children respect for others and responsibility for their own behavior.
6. Make sure your children get regular health and dental checkups.
7. Limit children's exposure to TV and video games.
8. Be positive about school. If parents say "I wasn't good at school" or "I really didn't like school," this can turn children away from learning.
9. Check your children's school websites regularly to keep informed.

At School:

1. Attend back-to-school nights and parent/teacher nights to meet your children's teachers.
2. If you are concerned about something, meet with your children's teachers promptly, before a minor issue becomes a major problem.
3. If possible, volunteer – regularly or even just occasionally – at your children's schools. You will get to know the school better and show your children that you consider education very important.

FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

At Home:

1. Read to your children or look at a book with them for at least 5-15 minutes each day.
2. Have books and magazines appropriate to your children's reading level available for them.
3. Use routine household events to teach about numbers and colors – shopping for food, using a recipe, sorting laundry, etc.
4. Give children small rewards for success (either behavior or academic) at school.



5. Praise them when they get good grades or do their homework completely and without complaint.
6. Take your children to the special programs for youngsters at your local public library.
7. Make sure your child has all necessary childhood immunizations.

At School:

1. Join a parent-teacher organization (PTA or other parent group) and attend meetings.
2. Talk to the teachers to find out what your children will be learning each year.
3. Ask the teachers for suggestions about how you can help your children at home.
4. Make arrangements to visit your children's classrooms at least once during school hours, just to observe. Talk to the teacher later about anything you didn't understand or were concerned about.
5. Ask about after-school programs or extra-help sessions if you think your children could benefit from these.

FOR MIDDLE and HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

At Home:

1. Continue to encourage your children to read. Don't let TV, video games, or friends absorb all their free time.
2. Talk to your children about their specific interests related to school – subjects or teachers they like, clubs or extracurricular activities, books they are reading, projects they are working on, etc.
3. Discuss their choice of courses with them so that they are well prepared for different options after high school.
4. Begin discussing with them what they might like to do after they graduate.
5. Know your children's friends, where they live, and, if possible, their parents.
6. If your children work part-time, make sure this doesn't interfere with schoolwork or getting a good night's sleep during the week.
7. Continue to celebrate school successes with appropriate rewards. Even though they may seem embarrassed, your children will appreciate your enthusiasm for their good work.

At Work:

1. Get a copy of your children's schedules each semester.
2. Find out what guidance is available to your children in choosing a college, applying, and finding scholarships and loans.
3. Volunteer for school activities – chaperone a school dance or field trip, help with sporting events, etc.
4. Serve on school committees that involve parents.

For more ideas and resources, visit the National PTA website at <http://www.pta.org>.

