

SCHOOL COUNCIL PROFICIENCY

A Definition from the Kentucky Association of School Councils

FOCUS

A proficient school council keeps its focus on:



1. Student achievement

Kentucky has high standards and goals for students. It is the council's responsibility to make sure that all students reach these seven goals:

1. *Use basic communication and mathematics skills for purposes and situations they will encounter throughout their lives;*
2. *Apply core concepts and principles from mathematics, the sciences, the arts, the humanities, social studies, and practical living studies to situations they will encounter throughout their lives;*
3. *Become self-sufficient individuals of good character exhibiting the qualities of altruism, citizenship, courtesy, hard work, honesty, human worth, justice, knowledge, patriotism, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline;*
4. *Become responsible members of a family, work group, or community, including demonstrating effectiveness in community service;*
5. *Think and solve problems in school situations and in a variety of situations they will encounter in life;*
6. *Connect and integrate experiences and new knowledge from all subject matter fields with what they have previously learned and build on past learning experiences to acquire new information through various media sources; and*
7. *Express their creative talents and interests in visual arts, music, dance and dramatic arts.*

The council's focus on student achievement is evidenced by the council's work on:

- a. Individual Students: the number of students not performing at grade level and/or not meeting the expected standards
- b. Achievement Gaps: the number of students broken down by group — gender, free/reduced lunch, minority groups, and disabilities
- c. Continuous Assessment: analysis of regular classroom work and statewide test results



2. Research-based practices and programs, including those outlined in Kentucky's Standards and Indicators for School Improvement

- a. All school programs and initiatives are based on reputable research.
- b. All school programs and initiatives are focused on your school's student achievement goals.
- c. The council uses the school's resources (people, time, and money) to ensure that research-based programs are successful for kids.



3. Community-wide participation in understanding and meeting school challenges

- a. The council invites wide representation on committees and listens to all shareholders.
- b. The council communicates decisions and builds support in the community.
- c. The council works with the local board of education, the superintendent, and the central office staff as partners in improving student achievement.



4. Positive relationships that support effective teamwork

- a. The council creates an environment where adults and students are respected, cared for, and appreciated.
- b. The council involves all shareholders in working together toward clear goals and positive results for students.

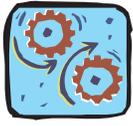
DECISIONS

A proficient school council makes DECISIONS that create or sustain:



5. A school improvement plan that is clear, complete, and credible.

- a. The school improvement plan follows the district planning policy, including form and function.
- b. The school improvement plan includes only items that directly impact students or will immediately have a direct impact on students such as ongoing professional learning.
- c. The school improvement plan includes things that teachers can do for students to raise achievement on a consistent basis.



6. A planning process of needs assessment, plan development, implementation, monitoring, and revisions.

The Planning process involves the following steps:

- a. Assessing needs
- b. Prioritizing needs
- c. Analyzing causes
- d. Setting goals
- e. Developing activities to achieve goals
- f. Using resources effectively
- g. Monitoring impact on student achievement
- h. Evaluating effectiveness of the plan



7. Professional development/learning that supports school strategies and individual needs.

- a. Professional development/learning is designed to meet the goals in the school improvement plan and individual professional growth plans.
- b. Professional development/learning is based on Kentucky's PD Standards.
- c. The council uses three scheduled professional development days (or equivalent flexible time) and any early-release time to support the school improvement plan and individual growth plans.
- d. Data about student performance is used to revise professional development/learning plans.



8. Budgets that use all school resources to support school strategies.

- a. The council's budget determines spending decisions in the following areas:
 - number of employees
 - student support services
 - textbooks/instructional resources
 - instructional materials
 - professional development/learning
- b. Council budgets support the school goals.
- c. The council seeks available Section 7 funding to support school needs.
- d. Each year the school council reviews the budgets for all categorical programs and provides comments to the local board prior to the adoption of the budgets.
- e. The council reviews monthly spending reports and adjusts spending plans.



9. Policies that support school strategies.

- a. Policies reflect explicit focus on improving student performance and building a collaborative school culture.
- b. The council has all policies required by law:
 - Alignment with State Standards
 - College-level/Advanced courses (Secondary 6-12)
 - Committees
 - Consultation
 - Curriculum
 - Discipline & Classroom Management & Safety
 - Emergency Management Plan
 - Enhancing Student Achievement
 - Extracurricular Programs
 - Instructional Practices
 - Instructional & Non-Instruct. Staff Time Assignment
 - Parental Involvement (Required for Title I Schools)
 - Program Appraisal
 - School Day & Week Schedule
 - School Space Use
 - Student Assignment
 - Technology Use
 - Wellness (K-5 schools & all schools participating in Free & Reduced Lunch)
 - Writing Policy
- c. The council writes policies for important decisions even if a policy isn't legally required.
- d. Each policy provides clear information on:
 - How that part of the school's work will be done
 - Clear roles in implementing the policy
 - How the policy will be monitored, evaluated, and revised.



10. A consultation process that supports school strategies and sound personnel practices.

- a. The council's discussion of candidates focuses on who will move their school forward.
- b. The council follows a consultation policy with clear provisions on:
 - Applications
 - Interviews
 - References
 - Timelines
 - Procedures for when the council is unavailable
- c. Diverse candidates receive fair treatment.
- d. The principal selects the person to be hired after completing consultation.



11. Principal selection based on school needs and sound personnel practices.

- a. The council follows a clear principal selection policy.
- b. The council receives adequate training in the principal selection process and understands how to conduct interviews effectively and lawfully.
- c. Diverse candidates receive fair treatment.
- d. The council chooses a principal who will move their school forward.
- e. The council seeks and considers input from the school community and district leaders when selecting a principal.

PROCESS

A proficient school council does its work through a PROCESS that includes:



12. Meetings that are inclusive and lawful.

- a. A regular schedule of monthly council meetings is easily available to the public.
- b. Special meetings are called by the chair or a majority of the council, with written notice of date, time, place and agenda delivered to all members and posted at the school.
- c. Shareholders can easily have items placed on the council agenda.
- d. The council approves its agenda at the beginning of each meeting and revises it as needed.
- e. Parents, staff, and other members of the public have opportunities to speak on all council decisions.
- f. All parts of all council meetings are open to the public except for closed sessions to discuss individual job applicants or litigation.



13. A decision-making process that is clear and participatory.

- a. The council makes most decisions by consensus.
- b. Procedures for consensus, options for voting, committee advice, public input, and publicizing decisions are clearly defined.
- c. Council decisions are communicated to shareholders.



14. Records that are complete and accessible.

- a. Council minutes record all motions made, who made them, and what action was taken.
- b. Minutes of council decisions are taken at each council meeting, communicated as soon as possible, and approved at the next meeting.
- c. Records of all council work are kept in an accessible location.



15. Committees that operate lawfully, collaboratively, and effectively.

- a. Committee work is focused on the school improvement goals.
- b. Each committee reports to the council on a regular basis.
- c. Each committee:
 - sets a regular meeting schedule
 - follows legal procedures for calling special meetings
 - keeps minutes
 - makes minutes accessible to others



16. Ongoing learning about effective SBDM practices.

- a. All council members complete required training within the legal deadlines.
- b. Council members use varied resources to expand their SBDM knowledge.
- c. School councils collaborate with district leaders and other school councils to build capacity, share resources, and support each other's work.
- d. School councils work to build understanding and capacity among shareholders.

Questions? Suggestions? Please share your thoughts about this definition by sending e-mail to kasc@kasc.net or by calling us at 859/238-2188.