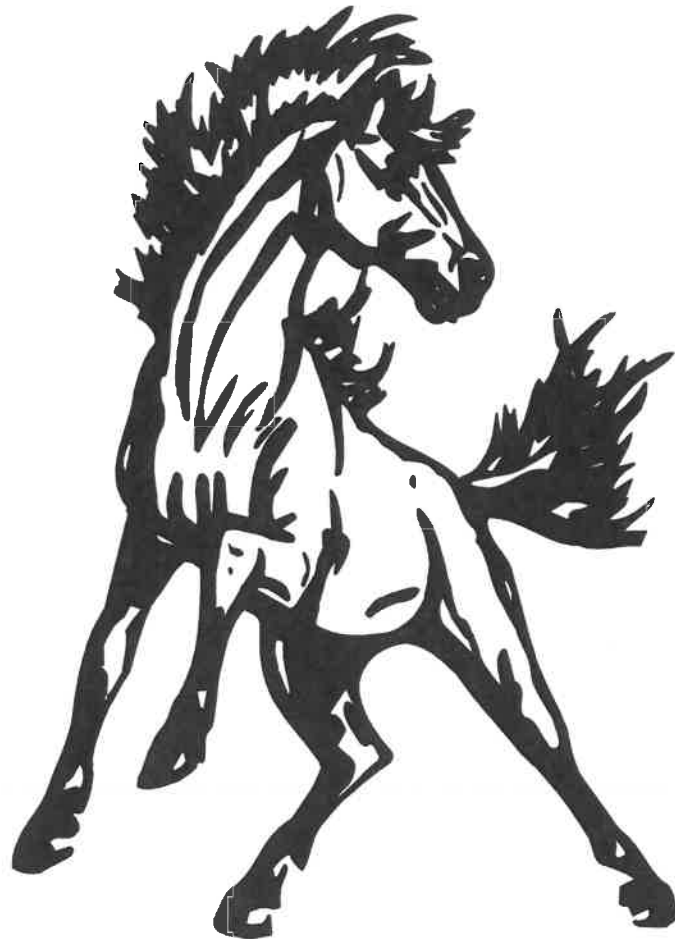


Sweetwater Site Council Handbook

Revised Fall 2017



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I. ARTICLE I. BELIEFS AND MISSION

Section 1 Beliefs

The beliefs of the Sweetwater School Site Council (SWSC) are as follows:

- ◆ We believe that a safe, orderly environment enhances student success.
- ◆ We believe that high expectations produce high achievement for all.
- ◆ We believe that achievement and personal growth should be valued and recognized.
- ◆ We believe that no one should be discriminated against based on race, sex, color, national origin, or handicap.
- ◆ We believe that an effective learning environment places importance on continuous communication between school, home and community.
- ◆ We believe that continuity between grade levels is essential in an effective learning environment in order to maximize student achievement.
- ◆ We believe that in an effective learning environment, students are held accountable for their academic, behavioral and social performance.

Section 2 - Mission Statement

The mission of Sweetwater Site Council is to work collaboratively with students, staff, parents and community in a diverse environment to develop productive citizens and independent life long-learners.

ARTICLE II. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

Section 1 - Responsibilities

1. To participate in short-term decision making activities within the parameters of the SWSC responsibilities.
2. To review and augment the implementation of the School Improvement Plan.
3. To facilitate the interview process and to recommend administrative staff for hire.
4. To promote effective communication among staff, community, students, the superintendent and the governing board.
5. To participate in team growth activities.
6. To conduct other activities as deemed necessary by the superintendent and/or governing board.

Section 2 - Procedures

- I. Short-term Decision Making
 - A. The SWSC will address concerns within the parameters of their responsibilities. The SWSC may discuss the topic, evaluate possible alternatives and reach consensus of possible solutions. Issues of concern may be brought to the SWSC
 1. Public Participation for non-SWSC Members
 - a. Non-SWSC members must complete and submit the "SWSC Request to Address" form. The person submitting the request must be in attendance at the SWSC meeting to address his topic. Failure to do so will delay hearing the issue and place the issue on a future agenda.
 - b. The SWSC will listen to issue(s) of concern and ask only clarifying questions.
 - c. Issues which are in the parameters of the SWSC may be placed on a future agenda and must be studied a minimum of two agendas prior to approval.

- d. If the request is denied, the facilitator will notify the originator of the rationale for denial.
- 2. SWSC Member
 - a. SWSC members need to contact the facilitator so a decision can be made whether an issue is in the parameters of the SWSC responsibilities so it will be placed on the agenda.
 - b. If the request is denied, the facilitator will notify the originator of the rationale for denial.

B. Resolution

The SWSC will discuss the topic and provide a response to the originator after reaching consensus. If the issue is placed on an agenda, the resolution will be published in the minutes.

II. Long-term Planning and Implementation

The SWSC may provide ideas in the planning, development and implementation of the Sweetwater School Improvement Plan as directed by the District Superintendent and WESD Governing Board.

A. School Improvement Process

- 1. The staff will develop the School Improvement Plan based on the District Goals for Learning.
- 2. The School Improvement Plan will be presented to the SWSC each fall.
- 3. The SWSC will receive reports on the implementation of the School Improvement Plan from the Leadership Team.

B. Selection Process for Administrators

- 1. Invite candidates with the highest scores to return for a second interview.
- 2. Develop second interview questions.
- 3. Conduct second interviews (with superintendent involved).
- 4. Come to consensus or re-post the position and the process begins again
- 5. If consensus is reached, complete a minimum of 3 reference checks.
- 6. Recommend candidate to Governing Board.

III. Effective Communication

- A. Communication between the school, home and community is essential in the operations of an effective school. The SWSC will maintain open communication with the parents, staff and the community to ensure that quality education and services are provided to all students. The SWSC will serve as a catalyst for its constituents in meeting the needs of all students.
- B. Effective communication will be fostered through a variety of mediums that include:
 - 1. Oral communication
 - 2. Newsletters and memos
 - a. Weekly staff bulletin
 - b. School/PTO
 - 3. Meetings
 - a. Staff
 - b. SWSC
 - c. PTO
 - 4. Parent-Teacher Conferences
 - 5. Phone Calls/Phone Master Out-dials
 - 6. School marquee
 - 7. School events and programs
- C. School and Community Issues
The SWSC will provide the opportunity for non-members to address questions, concerns and general input through the following:
 - 1. SWSC monthly meetings
 - 2. Phone messages
 - 3. Written school surveys
- D. Pertinent information will be relayed through agenda items to the SWSC.
- E. Minutes from each site council meeting will be in the school office and made available to the public upon request.
- F. Pertinent information will be summarized and printed in the school newsletter and/or weekly staff bulletin.

IV. Involvement and Team Building

- A. Involvement and team building are essential qualities needed amongst the members of the SWSC. To develop a more effective SWSC, each member should strive to:

1. Facilitate cooperation between community and school in order to provide a productive learning environment.
2. Be a model citizen that makes a positive contribution to the community.
3. Work to achieve the goals of the mission and belief statements.
4. Present ideas to the council.
5. Become informed participants who contribute and make decisions in the process through research, investigations and involvement in the school and community.
6. Promote community participation in the educational process for all students

B. The SWSC will be introduced each year through the school newsletter.

ARTICLE III. COUNCIL ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

Section 1. SWSC Composition

- A. The SWSC will consist of a maximum of nineteen members, each with a voice in consensus. A change in this number will require an amendment to the SWSC Handbook.
- B. The members of the SWSC may include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:
 1. **Administration**-The principal of the school will have a permanent seat on the SWSC with one vote.
 2. **Certified Personnel**- There will be up to five voting positions on the SWSC for any full or part-time certified personnel employed at Sweetwater School.
 3. **Classified Personnel**-There will be up to two voting positions on the SWSC for any non-certified employee of Sweetwater School.
 4. **Parent/Guardian**- There will be up to five voting positions on the SWSC for parents/guardians. The parent/guardian must have a child currently enrolled at Sweetwater School and cannot be an employee of the Washington Elementary School District.
 5. **Patron/Community Member**- There may be up to one voting position on the SWSC for any patron/community member interested in assisting the Sweetwater School. This member will not be included in one of the other member categories.
 6. **Students** - Up to Five students from fifth grade to eighth grade may be members of the Site Council. They each have one vote.

- C. Members of the SWSC will be selected after the successful completion of the application process.
- D. The SWSC will make every effort to abide by the guidelines as set forth by the WESD and the Arizona Revised Statutes 15-351.
- E. Every effort will be made to fully staff the Site Council.
- F. Active membership will be defined as members who have consistently attended meetings (ie. Two out of three meetings – see section 2D).

Section 2 - Terms of Membership

- A. Terms will commence at the beginning of the school year. Membership on the SWSC will be for a term of two years, except for the principal who will serve continuously during his/her tenure in the position.
- B. Former council members may reapply.
- C. If a member resigns before the end of his/her term, the replacement will serve the remainder of that term and be eligible for one additional full term.
- D. In the event that a member of the council is absent for three consecutive regular monthly meetings, the council will review their membership and decide by consensus the continuation of his/her term.
- E. Terms should be staggered so that approximately half of the SWSC members are in the second year of their term.
- F. Positions for new SWSC members will be advertised in the March/April school newsletters. Elections will occur in May.

Section 3 - Election and Replacement Procedure

- A. Applicants may be self or group nominated for the positions for the Parent/Guardian, Certified Personnel, Classified Personnel, Patron/Community and the student members.
- B. Election of the Parent/Guardian members will be held through the school newsletter, with parents to return their selection to the school office for tally.
- C. Election of Certified Personnel members will be held within the school faculty group.
- D. Election of the Classified Personnel members will be held within the school classified staff group.

Section 4 - Positions and Duties

- A. The positions of the SWSC will consist of the following:
 - 1. **Facilitator**- Sets the agenda and conducts the meeting.
 - 2. **Secretary**-Takes meeting minutes and publicizes information pertaining to SWSC.
- B. SWS will annually elect/approve parent, teachers and/or support staff member to serve on district committees or councils. These representatives will seek input as needed from the SWSC.

Section 5 - Sub Committees

- A. Sub-committees may be formed or dissolved at the discretion of SWSC (consensus).
- B. Sub-committees will be formed to handle a one time specific issue.
- C. The composition of sub-committees will be determined by SWSC or its chosen designee.
- D. Sub-committees may be composed of SWSC members, staff, and/or community members.
- E. Membership will be on a volunteer basis.
- F. Should the number of volunteers exceed the number of sub-committee positions, a lottery will be held.

Section 6 - Meetings Guidelines

- A. Regular meetings will be held monthly, during the school year. Day and time will be determined at the beginning of each year by SWSC.
- B. If business requires, special meetings may be called by SWSC.
- C. The SWSC will meet at the Sweetwater School site.
- D. Each SWSC member will be responsible for managing his/her own calendar.
- E. In the event that a special meeting is called when a SWSC member is not present, the secretary shall notify the absent member(s).
- F. The school marquee will be used to advertise upcoming SWSC meetings.
- G. The meeting will not exceed two (2) hours unless a time extension is approved by a consensus at each affected meeting.
- H. The facilitator will assign time limits to each agenda item.
- I. SWSC meetings will be open to the public.

- J. Attendance:
 - 1. If a voting SWSC member misses three consecutive, regular meetings, the current Facilitator will contact the member to determine his/her intention toward fulfilling his/her council obligation.
 - 2. The SWSC will recognize extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the council.

Section 7 - Meeting Norms

The SWSC members will abide by the following norms at each SWSC meeting:

- A. Begin and end meetings on time.
- B. Listen with respect. If it is good enough to say, say it here. Limit related side bars.
- C. Stick to the agenda.
- D. Respect confidentiality.
- E. Each person is responsible for calling the norms.

Section 8 - Meeting Agenda

- A. The agenda will be set utilizing the SWSC Agenda format.
- B. The agenda will be set by the Facilitator for the upcoming meeting.
- C. Agenda items will also come from the SWSC members, the Washington Elementary School District and from the "Request to Address" forms.
- D. The agenda will be set and posted 24 hours prior to the next meeting.
- E. The agenda will be available in the school office, and displayed on the outside of the school office for public viewing.

Section 9 - Meeting Minutes

- A. SWSC minutes will be taken by the SWSC secretary and distributed to the SWSC members through the school office.
- B. One copy will be placed in a master notebook in the school office, which is available for public viewing.
- C. The minutes will be returned to the school office within 72 hours after the meeting.

Section 10 - Quorum

- A. A quorum will be defined as $\frac{3}{4}$ of the SWSC active membership, when the SWSC is fully staffed.
- B. Items requiring a vote will be postponed until the next scheduled meeting if a quorum of the SWSC is not present.

Section 11 - Public Input

- A. All SWSC meetings are open to the public.
- B. Each agenda will include an item entitled "Citizen Comments" (usually the first fifteen (15) minutes of each meeting), at which time non-SWSC members may state their opinions, suggestions or concerns during this opportunity for public participation.
- C. Members of the public will complete a "Request to Address SWSC" form and submit it to the facilitator prior to the start of the meeting.
- D. The citizen comments section will be approximately 15 minutes. If the number of requests exceeds five, the facilitator will lead a SWSC discussion to determine any extensions.
- E. Citizen comments on agenda items will be heard prior to the topic that will be under discussion.
- F. Non-members of the public will complete a "Request to Address SWSC" form and submit it to the facilitator no later than 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting.
- G. Completed "Request to Address SWSC" forms will be filed with the minutes in the school office.
- H. Citizen comments should be limited to the SWSC responsibilities.

Section 12 - Decision Making

- A. Decisions will be made using the "Thumb Up, Down, Sideways" consensus seeking technique.
- B. If the facilitator determines that a consensus cannot be reached, the facilitator or a SWSC member may call for a vote or to table the issue.
- C. All issues that require a vote for decision will be decided by a majority vote. A majority vote shall be defined as $\frac{1}{2}$ plus 1 of those voting SWSC members present.

Section 13 - Amendments

- A. Amendments to the SWSC Handbook must be submitted to SWSC members.
- B. If the proposed amendment is to become an agenda item, it must be submitted ten days prior to the next meeting for consideration at that meeting.
- C. The proposed amendment will be attached to the agenda for discussion.
- D. The amendment originator will present the written proposal and rationale.
- E. Presentation shall be limited to no more than five (5) minutes.
- F. The proposed amendment will be discussed by the SWSC and a decision made by consensus.
- G. The SWSC Handbook may be amended at SWSC meetings using the decision-making procedure in Article III, Section 12.
- H. Notice of the proposed amendment will be given to SWSC member and will be posted in the faculty room and the front office at least 10 school days prior to the meeting. At the next scheduled SWSC meeting, a consensus/vote will be taken of the proposed amendment.

