



# **THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE HANDBOOK**

**Fresno Teachers Association**



Fresno Teachers Association  
5334 N. Fresno St.  
Fresno, CA 93710  
(559) 224-8430 (voice)  
(559) 224-1571 (fax)  
[www.fresnoteachers.org](http://www.fresnoteachers.org)

The School Building Committee Handbook is for use by the members of the Fresno Teachers Association. It may be freely copied and distributed by them for their school-related uses.

First Handbook Edition, January 1997; Revised 1996, 2007, 2014



---

# Table of Contents

---

<b>The School Building Committee.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Contract Language &amp; Commentary.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Philosophy.....	3
Operating Procedures.....	4
Structure.....	6
Meetings.....	9
Training.....	12
<b>The School Building Committee at Work.....</b>	<b>13</b>
Running Effective Meetings.....	13
Developing Agendas.....	13
Conducting Meetings.....	14
Reporting the Results.....	16
A Duty of Representation.....	16
Grievance Responsibility.....	18
<b>Topics &amp; Issues.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Topics and Issues Considered by School Building Committees.....	20
<b>Suggested Forms and Survey Instruments.....</b>	<b>22</b>
General Concerns.....	22
Semi-Annual Survey.....	23
Reporting Minutes.....	24
Polls and Surveys on Specific Issues.....	24
<b>Article 66, Shared Decision Procedures, SBC....</b>	<b>25</b>





---

# THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

---

The School Building Committee (SBC) can make a difference in the teaching and learning conditions in our schools.

When the provision for SBCs was negotiated into our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), school management was different in many ways. There was no directive to create site-based management; principals had wide latitude to run their school, as long as they did not run too far afield of central administration. The creation of the SBC article in the contract was an important step toward giving unit members a greater voice in their working conditions at the school.

Since its addition to the CBA, we all have seen many changes. Principles were told: “There will be site-based management.” There are more school site councils and school leadership teams. The school sites, and unit members at them, are to be “empowered.”

Nevertheless, the SBC remains vital. Throughout all the changes that can occur at a school – different principals, different theories on school structure, different administration – our contract guarantee unit members a voice and a procedure to address issues at their school.

The principal, as the administrative officer of the school, should welcome SBC participation in decision-making. To exclude participation in this process is to invite opposition and faculty frustration. The SBC has a continuing obligation to represent faculty positions in a fair and reasonable manner.

The most common reasons for the success of the SBC and principal include goodwill, sincere effort at eliciting and considering faculty attitudes and opinions, and fair action, characterized by mutual support. The most common reasons for failure of the SBC and principal include abuse of authority, disregard for reasonable positions of one party by the other, lack of communication and follow through, and political posturing.

---

# CONTRACT LANGUAGE & COMMENTARY

---

## **Philosophy**

We believe all professional educators have the basic responsibility for providing both quality education to the children and youth in the Fresno Unified School District and the best educational climate within their school unit.

We believe that through the School Building Committee we achieve the major goals of education and have a way to provide a democratic school environment where educators are free to discuss and affect change in areas of common interest and concern.

We believe that through the School Building Committee we have a way to promote and maintain unity and harmony between unit members and administrators within the local school unit.

Through mutual respect and purpose, decisions will be made that are in the best interest of the students and the educational program.

## **Article 66 - SHARED DECISION PROCEDURES**

### **Section 2.0 - School Building Committee**

#### **2.1 Operating Procedures**

2.1.1 The primary function of the School Building Committee is to discuss school issues, concerns and/or questions related to the implementation of this Agreement.

*COMMENT:*

*The “discussion of school issues, concerns...” is intended to ensure a joint approach to school problems, as opposed to unilateral action on them.*

*“Questions relating to the implementation of this Agreement” require the SBC to be vigilant and active in monitoring the implementation of the terms of the negotiated CBA and to help avoid violation of those terms by either the administration or the SBC.*

2.1.2 The principal, through the School Building Committee, is obligated to provide for teacher involvement, as requested by either party, in the school's decision-making process, with final school site action being the responsibility of the principal. The SBC is **not** considered a bargaining unit.

**COMMENT:**

*Take note of this language! It is the expectation that the principal seek teacher involvement in the decisions affecting the local site. The burden is on the unit members and especially on those members of the SBC to be vigilant and aware of the concerns affecting the school.*

*The principal, upon request of the SBC, is **obligated to provide for teacher involvement in school decisions.** When it can be anticipated that the principal's decisions might have impact on either working or learning conditions, the SBC should request teacher involvement through the SBC.*

*It is not intended that routine decision-making between school administrators and the SBC be rigid, adversarial efforts.*

*It is intended that fundamental principles such as mutual respect, good faith and sincere consideration of all viewpoints be followed.*

2.1.3 The School Building Committee and the principal and/or his/her designee, are to strive to arrive at decisions that are mutually acceptable.

**COMMENT:**

*The requirement to “strive to arrive” at mutually acceptable conclusions is significant. Neither the SBC nor the principal should assume a “take it or leave it” stance. Both must make great effort to solve problems. It is not proper for either the SBC or the principal to coerce or intimidate the other party in order to gain an advantage in decision making.*

*While the principal has the responsibility to make school site decisions, such decisions may be appealed to higher levels of the administration by the SBC for review. Should this become necessary, contact your FTA staff member or president at 224-8430.*

## **2.2 Structure**

2.2.1 The School Building Committee shall be created in each school building from the bargaining unit members of that building. The faculty representatives to the Committee shall be elected annually by the faculty. *All elections under this Article shall be conducted by the bargaining unit members within the school (emphasis not in CBA).*

**COMMENT:**

*All bargaining unit members (FTA members and non-members) in each school are eligible to vote for and be elected representatives on the SBC. The election of the SBC members should include a fair nomination procedure and a secret ballot election. **It is the responsibility of the FTA's Faculty Representative to conduct such nominations and elections. Under no circumstances should this be the responsibility of the principal.** If this should happen, it is clear violation of the CBA and will be grieved.*

*While any bargaining unit member may be elected as an SBC member, we suggest that Faculty Reps and FTA members who are generally known to be strong teacher advocates be seriously considered to serve on the SBC.*

2.2.1.1 For faculties (includes all bargaining unit members working at a school site)<sup>1</sup> numbering one (1) through forty (40), the School Building Committee shall have three (3) members.

2.2.1.2 For faculties (includes all bargaining unit members working at a school site)<sup>\*</sup> numbering forty-one (41) through eighty (80), the School Building Committee shall have five (5) members.

~~\* Bargaining unit members not permanently assigned to a school shall have the option of selecting one of the schools at which they work for the purpose of exercising their right to vote for and to hold a committee member's position.~~

2.2.1.3 For faculties (includes all bargaining unit members working at a school site)<sup>1</sup> numbering more than eighty (80), the School Building Committee shall have seven (7) members.

**COMMENT:**

*The above SBC members ratios specify how many SBC members will represent the faculty when the SBC meets with the principal. If the principal agrees, additional SBC members may participate in such meetings. Another option: you may have as many SBC members as desired provided only the number allotted by the above ratios would be eligible to meet with the principal.*

2.2.2 Elections shall be conducted within the first two weeks of school.

**COMMENT:**

*The SBC is a site committee and every effort should be expended to make it successful. Membership on the SBC must have some continuity, and knowledge of the site problems demands more a last minute election of members. The SBC's work is ongoing.*

2.2.3 Vacancies will be filled by election for the remainder of that term.

2.2.4 All bargaining unit members within the school shall be eligible to vote for and hold elective positions on the School Building Committee.

2.2.5 School Building Committee members may be elected to successive terms.

**COMMENT:**

*The FTA Representative(s) should conduct the nomination and election of SBC members. In addition, the Faculty Representative(s) should conduct the election for any vacancies which might occur. There is no limit on the number of terms for SBC members.*

## **2.3 Meetings**

2.3.1 The principal and/or his/her designee of each school shall meet each month during the school year with the Committee to discuss school issues, concerns and/or questions relating to the implementation of this Agreement. Monthly meetings may be waived by mutual agreement of the Committee and principal.

**COMMENT:**

*The principal is required to meet each month with the SBC, unless the meeting has been mutually waived. If you do not mutually agree to waive a meeting, either party can insist that a meeting take place.*

*It is helpful to establish a regular meeting time, but the SBC and the principal should meet as often as necessary. The word “discuss” has often been interpreted by principals as definitive of the role of the SBC. But the requirement to “discuss” school issues, concerns, and/or questions relating to the implementation of the CBA goes deeper. The term “discuss” includes “strive to arrive at decisions” (see section 2C).*

*Final decisions and action by principals on matters which have been discussed with the SBC should reflect the feelings and desires of the unit members as well as the responsibilities of the administration.*

2.3.2 All agendas for the Committee meeting with the principal should be prepared jointly by the principal and/or his/her designee and the Committee Chairperson.

2.3.2.1 The principal shall not be responsible for seeking input for his/her decisions on topics that are not placed on the Agenda.

2.3.2.2 Any decisions that are made may be put on a future Committee Agenda for discussion.

**COMMENT:**

*The Agenda for SBC meetings is a mutual agenda. Neither party should be allowed to prevent the other from placing items on the agenda and speaking to those items at the meeting.*

*Since the meetings of the SBC with the principal are designed to provide an efficient, continuing relationship, it is important that both parties have the opportunity to recommend agenda items. One practice used successfully is to circulate a proposed agenda sheet to all members of the SBC and to the principal for their additions. "Pressing" problems should be considered as early as possible in each agenda.*

*The SBC should attempt to anticipate principal's decisions which might be of concern to the faculty and place such issues on the SBC's agenda. If such action cannot be anticipated, the principal's decision can be taken up at the next meeting of the SBC.*

2.3.3 The principal or the Committee may have up to three (3) additional representatives at meetings between the principal and the Committee. This number may be exceeded upon mutual agreement.

**COMMENT:**

*Essentially, this section is provided to show interest of the Association and Administration in the success of the SBC operation. The Association president and staff members may serve a resource function if needed or may want to attend a SBC as observers.*

2.3.4 The Committee has the right to meet without management personnel being present.

**COMMENT:**

***The SBC has every right to meet without administration present.*** *As a practical matter, the SBC should meet separately to clearly identify problems and recommend solutions. When this is done, the SBC should be well prepared to meet with the principal and make good use of the meeting time available.*

*The SBC is free to invite any number of the bargaining unit members to any separately held meetings.*

2.3.5 Results or minutes of the Committee meetings with the principal should be prepared jointly and the cost assumed by the District.

**COMMENT:**

*The minutes of the SBC meetings should be prepared and distributed soon after each meeting. The minutes are a report of discussion and action by the SBC and the principal, as such they should fairly and objectively reflect that discussion and action. Minutes should not be used as “cheap shots,” “sour grapes,” personal attacks, literary essays, sarcastic wit, or other inappropriate abuses.*

*One successful approach includes initial preparation of the minutes by the SBC members and the principal; typing and distribution to unit members by the school secretary.*

## **2.4 Training**

An annual workshop experience for School Building Committee members and principals shall be made available on a voluntary basis by the Association and the District.

---

# THE SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE AT WORK

---

## **Running Effective School Building Committee Meetings**

### **Developing Agendas**

The agendas for each meeting of the SBC with the principal are to be **jointly developed**. The intent is not to restrict topics, but to ensure both parties have equal opportunity to suggest topics. Unit members should be careful though, to assert themselves when the agenda is developed so that their issues are properly framed and discussed in a timely manner.

The CBA requires that the SBC **meet each month**. However, monthly **meetings may be waived by mutual agreement** of the SBC and principal. A practical approach should be to waive the monthly meeting when there are no issues with which to deal.

Should a serious problem arise, the SBC might suggest three meetings in one month.

In preparation for the regular monthly meeting, the Chairperson of the SBC should prepare a list of agenda items gathered from faculty and other SBC members and submit the agenda items to the principal for possible additions. Normally this can be done several days before the SBC meeting. The **principal should provide for printing and distribution of the agenda** to SBC members not later than the beginning of the meeting.

Preparing the agenda ahead of time gives the proponents of a particular point-of-view time to prepare adequately for presentation of that view at the SBC meeting. Faculty members may want to hear the discussion of a problem they have presented to the SBC for consideration and action.

One good reason to hold a monthly meeting is to review the implementation, or lack thereof, of decisions made at previous sessions. It should be emphasized that a clear, total lack of need for discussion of agenda items should be the only reason to waive a regularly scheduled meeting. In fact, the SBC meeting schedule should be a prominent notation on each site calendar.

Frequently, one meeting may not be sufficient to cover all agenda items. Additional meetings should be held as soon as possible to complete the agenda. It is helpful to agree on a time for continuation of the meeting before concluding the main session.

### **Conducting Meetings**

The Chairperson of the SBC should open the meeting and direct discussion on each agenda item. Discussion should be frank and open to ensure communication

of a problem, but **discussing personalities and accusations is generally inappropriate.**

After the party placing the agenda item has had an opportunity to present the item, subsequent discussion should include administrative input as well as input from other SBC members. It is desirable to formulate a plan for dealing with each agenda item. Often, the principal may be able to act during the meeting. If not, the SBC Chairperson should continue to monitor any planned action to its conclusion.

A common mistake made by SBCs and principals is delaying action too long. Never defer action to another time on an issue that can reasonably be addressed in the present.

Extremes in behavior should be avoided. It is equally as wrong to “badger” a principal into action as it is to remain silent when reasonable statements made in an atmosphere of mutual respect might solve a problem. Part of the communication process is missing when SBC members fail to articulate their concerns **during the meeting.**

Since each agenda item is important to somebody, each topic should be given fair and adequate consideration. **It should never be assumed that because an item was submitted by one person or a small group of unit members that it is unimportant.** It is inappropriate to assume that interest by only a few allows the SBC and the principal to be arbitrary. The A guide for consideration is whether the item is reasonable and important and not the “number” of people who brought it up for consideration.

## **Reporting the Results**

The SBC and the principal have the responsibility to report the results of each meeting to the faculty.

**Minutes should be jointly prepared and distributed to the faculty.**

Generally, minutes should be concise and to the point. They should always be in good taste and written in a manner that will strengthen faculty confidence in the SBC as well as communicate results. The Chair of the SBC or SBC secretary should create a draft of the minutes. The draft should be approved by the Chair, the principal and possibly each member of the SBC, if time permits and the members want this opportunity for approval.

When the draft is approved, it should be typed and distributed by the school secretary or other appropriate person. **All costs for printing and distribution are to be borne by the District.**

Occasionally an item may be of such importance that the results should be discussed at a faculty meeting. The Chairperson of the SBC should arrange for the faculty to be informed of such items and then make whatever presentation is appropriate at the faculty meeting.

## **A Duty of Representation**

The SBC is **elected to be a representative of the faculty** to speak with the principal on matters of concern and routine operation of the school. As is true in any field of representation, the representative must gain and maintain the confidence of those who are being represented. The SBC must work hard at the representation function because failure to achieve true

representation status may result in poorer communications, lower staff morale and less effective education.

A procedure should be established in each school for easy communication between unit members and the SBC. The importance of communication between unit members and the administration, through the SBC, demands that the relationship not be left to chance.

Periodic surveys, short and objective in nature, can be an effective way to keep track of faculty feelings and attitudes. **Some examples of forms for this use are available in the back of the handbook.** SBC members could divide the faculty, for communication purposes, with each SBC member contacting a certain group of unit members weekly or as appropriate.

Faculty members should be encouraged to communicate their concerns and be assured that consideration and appropriate action will be taken.

When the SBC is uncertain of faculty feelings on a particular issue, a poll may be taken. Any such polls taken should be worded carefully to accurately reflect attitudes being sought, and not attitudes arising from unrelated problems or issues.

A vital part of the representative function of the SBC is effective communication of results. **In addition to the normal reporting of action through minutes, unit members placing items on the SBC agenda should be personally advised of the results.** This can be done by the Chairperson or any member of the SBC. Such communications should be made in writing almost immediately, with an offer for personal discussion in the near future.

## **Grievance Responsibility**

In most CBAs, the principal way to resolve disputes between employer and employee is a grievance procedure. The CBA between the Fresno Teachers Association and the District contains such a procedure. In addition, the CBA has provided for a SBC at each school.

Part of the SBC's responsibility is to deal with "questions" relating to the implementation of the CBA. The SBC, in some cases, can be a vehicle to initially deal with a potential violation of the CBA which might become a grievance. Although there is a "15-day" timeline within which a formal grievance must be initiated, this 15-day limit begins with the act or occurrence giving rise to the grievance and *includes* any attempt at informal resolution. A call to the FTA is strongly recommended. This in no way limits the right of unit members to use the grievance process, although an effort by the SBC might solve the teacher's problem short of filing a grievance. The SBC will confront grievance situations from time to time. When individuals ask the SBC for help, the SBC may elect to discuss the situation with the principal with a view to relieving the situation or may recommend that the individual discuss the problem with the FTA staff. Problems of a personal nature, (i.e. evaluation, discipline, transfer, assignment) should not be handled by the SBC. Problems such as hours, extra duty assignments, instructional supplies, etc., might be appropriate areas for the SBC's initial attempt at resolution. Such SBC consideration would only constitute an "informal" level of grievance consideration. Be aware of the time limits (currently 15 days) for filing "formal" grievances.

A “gripe” should be distinguished from a real or suspected violation of the CBA. “Gripes,” if aired by the individual or by the SBC, can usually be settled without the use of grievance procedure.

The grievance procedure is essentially a process to resolve disputes in a rational way. The grievance procedure should not be viewed as a threat by either the principal or the bargaining unit member. It is simply an instrument of due process and conflict management.

The SBC, while normally conducting its business with the principal outside the grievance procedure, might properly use the grievance procedure in the following situations:

1. When, after discussion with the principal, a school situation persists that the SBC feels is contrary to the CBA, the SBC should contact the FTA staff to file a grievance for relief.
2. When a school situation deteriorates because of prolonged inability of the SBC and principal to communicate their views, the SBC should use the grievance procedure as an alternative to continuing decay of staff morale. Under such circumstances the SBC should contact the FTA staff.

---

# TOPICS & ISSUES

---

## **Topics and Issues Considered by School Building Committees**

Teachers' workload	Site discipline procedures
School safety	Student deployment
Support personnel services	Teacher/pupil relations
Daily schedules	Money raising activities
School maintenance	Yard duty
Staffing	Adequate teacher parking
Staff development/in-services/Buy Back	Collaboration time
Excessive paperwork	Lost books
Year-end activities	Use of student body funds
Assertive discipline	EPES contracts

## Topics and Issues, continued

Faculty meetings	Extracurricular activities
School calendar	Non-instructional classroom assignments
Teacher morale	Library schedule
Report cards	Restroom facilities
Field trips	Testing/Test schedules
Misuse of school inter-com	Use of teachers' aides
Principal/staff relationships	Site procedures/rules
School supplies/budget	Noontime activities
Inclement weather days	Site Communications
Class-size issues	Deficiency notices
Attendance	Faculty room use
Role of department chairperson	Respect for teachers
Homework policies	Teacher vacancies
Assemblies	Substitute teacher issues
Compensatory time	Technology Issues
Safety patrol	

---

# SUGGESTED FORMS AND SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

---

## Form for Seeking General Concerns

This form might be used weekly or monthly as a general pulse of teacher attitude as well as to identify concerns.

### Teacher Concerns

To the School Building Committee:

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Teacher

Please give this form to a member of the School Building Committee.

# Form for Semi-Annual Survey

This form could be used for a general survey conducted once or twice a year by the SBC. It covers school operations and the operation of the SBC. *These are sample issues only; feel free to design a custom survey that covers your school's issues.*

Your School Building Committee asks that you complete this survey and return it to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

The Committee appreciates your time as this will help us be more responsive to your needs.

**I. School Operation** YES      NO

1. Do the school discipline rules at \_\_\_\_\_ meet the needs of our school? \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you receive adequate notice of school meetings? \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. ...

4. ...

**II. School Building Committee**

1. Do you feel the School Building Committee is responsive to your concerns? \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Are the School Building Committee minutes complete enough to keep you informed? \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. ...

4. ...

**III. Additional concerns:** \_\_\_\_\_

Address specific concerns to member of the SBC or in writing to the Chair.

\_\_\_\_\_ School Building Committee Minutes  
 (Date of Meeting)

Persons present at Meeting:

Agenda items considered:

Action taken on agenda item:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures:

School Building Committee Chairperson  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Principal  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(School Building Committee Members Optional)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

## Form for Reporting Minutes

This form can be used for the reporting of minutes of the SBC.

Survey on *(Faculty Meetings)*

The School Building Committee needs your input on the following item(s).

I prefer faculty meetings to be held

before school \_\_\_\_\_

after school \_\_\_\_\_

day of week \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to \_\_\_\_\_

by \_\_\_\_\_ . Thank you.

## Form for Polls and Surveys on Specific Issues

This form might be used to solicit either objective data or an overview of teacher attitudes on a specific issue.

# **Article 66 - SHARED DECISION PROCEDURES**

## **Section 2.0 - School Building Committee**

### **2.1 Operating Procedures**

2.1.1 The primary function of the School Building Committee is to discuss school issues, concerns and/or questions related to the implementation of this Agreement.

2.1.2 The principal, through the School Building Committee, is obligated to provide for teacher involvement, as requested by either party, in the school's decision making process, with final school site action being the responsibility of the principal. The Committee is not considered a bargaining unit.

2.1.3 The School Building Committee and the principal and/or his/her designee are to strive to arrive at decisions that are mutually acceptable.

### **2.2 Structure**

2.2.1 The School Building Committee shall be created in each school building from the bargaining unit members of that building. The faculty representatives to the Committee shall be elected annually by the faculty. All elections under this article shall be conducted by the bargaining unit members within the school.

2.2.1.1 For faculties (includes all bargaining unit members working at a school site)\* numbering one (1) through forty (40), the School Building Committee shall have three (3) members.

2.2.1.2 For faculties (includes all bargaining unit members working at a school site)\* numbering forty-one (41) through eighty (80), the School Building Committee shall have five (5) members.

2.2.1.3 For faculties (includes all bargaining unit members working at a school site)\* numbering more than eighty (80), the School Building Committee shall have seven (7) members.

2.2.2 Elections shall be conducted within the first two weeks of school.

2.2.3 Vacancies will be filled by election for the remainder of that term.

2.2.4 All bargaining unit members within the school shall be eligible to vote for and hold elective positions of the School Building Committee.

2.2.5 School Building Committee members may be elected to successive terms.

\*Bargaining unit members not permanently assigned to a school shall have the option of selecting a school in which they work for the purpose of exercising their right to vote for and hold a committee member's position.

## 2.3 Meetings

2.3.1 The principal and/or his/her designee of each school shall meet each month during the school year with the Committee to discuss school issues, concerns and/or questions relating to the implementation of this Agreement. Monthly meetings may be waived by mutual agreement of the Committee and the principal.

2.3.2 All agendas for the Committee meeting with the principal should be prepared jointly by the principal and/or his/her designee and the Committee Chairperson.

2.3.2.1 The principal shall not be held accountable for lack of provision for input to any decision he makes that has not been placed on the agenda by either party.

2.3.2.2 Any decisions that are made by the principal that have not been put on an agenda may be put on a future agenda for discussion.

2.3.3 The principal or the Committee may have up to three (3) additional representatives at meetings between the principal and the Committee. This number may be exceeded upon mutual agreement.

2.3.4 The Committee has the right to meet without management personnel being present.

2.3.5 Results or minutes of the Committee meetings with the principal should be prepared jointly and the cost assumed by the District.

## 2.4 **Training**

2.4.1 An annual workshop experience for School Building Committee members and principals shall be made available on a voluntary basis by the Association and the District.

