

# School Accountability Committees

## *Duties, Powers, and Data Sources*

1. School Accountability Committees were created by the Colorado General Assembly (i.e., the state legislature).
2. Their duties will be familiar to anyone who has served on a Board of Directors. Specifically, these duties and powers are detailed in the Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 22, Article 11, Sections 401 to 408.
  - a. Section 401 details the composition and selection of SAC members: “Each school accountability committee shall consist of at least seven members”, including the principal, a teacher, three parents, one adult member of “an organization of parents, teachers, and students recognized by the school”, and “one person from the community”.
  - b. Section 402 details a SAC’s powers and duties:
    - i. “To advise the principal of the...school concerning the preparation” of the School Performance Improvement, Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan, and “to submit recommendations to the principal concerning the contents” of that plan.
    - ii. “To recommend to the principal priorities for spending school moneys” [i.e., budget recommendations] and “to send a copy of its recommended spending priorities [and, presumably, the logic that underlies them] to the school district accountability committee and to the local school board.”
    - iii. “To meet at least quarterly to discuss whether school leadership, personnel, and infrastructure are advancing or impeding implementation of the school’s performance, improvement, priority improvement, or turnaround plan, whichever is applicable, or other progress pertinent to the public school’s accreditation...”
    - iv. “To provide input and recommendations on an advisory basis to the district accountability committee and district administration concerning principal development plans and principal evaluations.”
    - v. Most recently, SB-193 added the duty “to increase the level of parent engagement in the school”, which “must include, but need not be limited to, publicizing opportunities to serve and soliciting parents to serve on the School Accountability Committee...Assisting the school district in implementing at the school the parent engagement policy adopted by the local school board...Assisting school personnel to increase parents engagement with teachers.”
  - c. Sections 403 through 406 provide more detail about specific requirements associated with each of the four types of plan.
    - i. For example, Section 403 notes that “ A school performance plan shall be designed to raise the academic performance of students enrolled in the public school and to ensure that the public school,

following the next annual performance review, attains a higher accreditation category or remains in the same accreditation category” if it is already at the highest level.

- ii. To attain this goal, Section 403 notes that, “at a minimum, each school performance plan shall:
    1. “Identify positive and negative trends in the levels of attainment by the public school on the performance indicators”
    2. “Set, reaffirm, or revise, as appropriate, ambitious but attainable targets that the public school shall attain on the performance indicators”
    3. “Assess and prioritize the issues and needs at the public school that must be addressed to raise the levels of attainment on the performance indicators by the public school”
    4. “Identify specific, research-based strategies to address the issues identified”, and “identify the local, state, and federal resources that the public school will use to implement the identified strategies with fidelity”
  - iii. Section 403 further states, “The principal, with the approval of the superintendent or his or her designee, shall create and adopt the School Performance Plan, taking into account the advice and recommendations of the School Accountability Committee.” The same section also notes, “the local school board shall consider the adopted school performance plan in developing [its] budget.”
3. The principal sources of data for the work of a School Accountability Committee include:
- a. Previous years’ Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, and/or Turnaround Plans (and the Colorado Department of Education’s very useful guide for understanding them)
  - b. The CDE’s excellent guide to the Unified Improvement Planning Process used by Colorado Schools (e.g., identifying performance gaps and their root causes, and using this analysis to guide the establishment of new performance targets and improvement strategies)
  - c. Comparative school Growth and Achievement data that can be obtained on [www.schoolview.org](http://www.schoolview.org). More detail for different student groups can be found by using the DataLab function on SchoolView
  - d. The TELL Survey asks teachers about organizational issues; individual school reports can be found on [www.tellcolorado.org](http://www.tellcolorado.org)
  - e. Presumably, in connection with their duty to make budget recommendations, SAC members also have the implied right to ask the Principal or district to provide the school-level information they need to perform their duties.