



SANTA BARBARA CHARTER SCHOOL

PARENT ALLIANCE HANDBOOK

Approved by
SBCS Circle of Trustees
January 13, 2014

PARENT ALLIANCE PURPOSE

The Parent Alliance actively fosters a spirit of cooperation and a sense of support, pride, and enthusiasm, in order to nurture a sense of community within the school. The school community includes the relationships between students, teachers and other staff, and parents

and/or legal guardians, extended families, and patrons, all of whom play an essential role in the success of our children, both today and in the future.

Therefore, through community-based activities, the purpose of the Parent Alliance is to:

- a. Promote positive school/community relationships that enhance our children's educational environment;
- b. Encourage parent and public involvement in Santa Barbara Charter School (SBCS) in appropriate ways;
- c. Provide service for school functions;
- d. Support fund raising efforts that contribute to the well being of Santa Barbara Charter School;
- e. Assist with the improvement and maintenance of the school's physical environment;
- f. Promote open communication between the administration, faculty, parents and/or legal guardians, and the community through established and direct lines of communication;
- g. Bring into closer relationship the home and school such that the parents, legal guardians, teachers, and other school staff may cooperate in the education of children and youth, where these united efforts will secure for all SBCS students the highest advantages in physical, cognitive, social and personal development.

PARENT ALLIANCE MEETINGS AND MEMBERSHIP

Meetings

General Membership Meetings: There will be a general membership meeting once a month, excluding summer vacation. The goal of general membership meetings is to build community, convey information, encourage parent participation and input, and organize fundraising. Meetings may be designated for parent education, voting, social events, and elections. Everyone is welcome at general meetings. Attendance will be taken at all general meetings as noted in the Parent Alliance minutes.

Board Meetings: The Parent Alliance Board (also referred to as the "Board") will meet separately as needed to facilitate the running of the Parent Alliance. A July meeting is optional. They will conduct business in support of the Parent Alliance purpose.

Work Groups: Work groups will meet as necessary to fulfill their charge. Some work groups will be active throughout the year, while others may experience periods of both intense and minimal activity.

Membership

The Parent Alliance fosters a spirit of cooperation and nurtures a sense of community by providing parents a forum for actively participating in the affairs of the school. Membership guidelines have been established to support this special charge.

Regular Members: All parents, step-parents and/or legal guardians of current SBCS students shall be regular members of the Parent Alliance.

Staff Members: One representative from Teachers Council and the Director of Operations will be members of the Parent Alliance. Staff members must attend regularly.

Voting Members: In order to vote, members must attend at least one prior general membership meeting during the school year, with the exception of Board members who may vote at any general membership meeting. Should a vote be required at the first meeting of the school year, all those in attendance at the meeting may vote.

There may be items that only the Board members vote on, as determined by the Chairperson.

Board Members: All board members, the Director of Operations, and the teacher representative will be voting members at Board meetings. All elected Board members will be expected to attend at least eight Board meetings per year. Board meetings may be held during the day or evening, according to consensus of the Board.

Dues: Dues will not be established by the Parent Alliance. Instead, parents are asked to attend meetings, and invest time and energy to meet membership requirements.

PARENT ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP

Parent Alliance Board

The Board will set the direction of the Parent Alliance with input and feedback from the general membership. The Board of the Parent Alliance will be elected by the general membership who are in attendance at that particular PA general meeting before the end of the school year when a slate is presented by the Nominating Work Group. The term of Board members begins and ends with the school's fiscal year, July 1 through June 30. Each Board member's term will be for one year, with the exception of the Chairperson Elect who makes a two-year commitment. Board members may run for the same or different positions in subsequent years with the exception of the Chairperson to allow the Chairperson-Elect to fulfill his or her commitment. However, the Chairperson may run for a different position. If there is no Chair-Elect to assume the Chairperson position, the Chairperson position will be open and included in the voting process.

The overall duties of the Board members are as follows:

1. Attend all General meetings and Board meetings
2. Transact business in the intervals between General Membership meetings
3. Appoint new Board Members in the interim, if and when the need arises, before another nomination and voting procedure can be arranged
4. May serve as authorized signatories for check writing purposes as specified in the description of "Duties" section that follows.
5. **Create** work groups when necessary
6. Draft a yearly budget to be approved by the general membership of the Parent Alliance

7. Keep electronic records of the activities performed while in this position to be passed on the successive Board members and that will become part of the Parent Alliance archives.
8. One rotating Board Member will attend the Circle of Trustees meetings and act as a liaison for the following parent Alliance Board Meeting.

Any elected Board Member is subject to removal who has failed to attend three meetings without adequate excuse or notice and/or is not fulfilling the responsibilities of his or her position. This member may be dismissed by the Parent Alliance Board. If any Parent Alliance Board member engages in conduct deemed injurious to either SBCS or the Parent Alliance, and/or is not adhering to the Parent Alliance Purpose statement(s), the issue will be referred to the Circle of Trustees. Before addressing the issue at COT, there will be a closed session meeting of the Parent Alliance Board to determine what action needs to be taken, and where confidentiality will be expected.

The Board will consist of a Chairperson (Facilitator), Chairperson Elect, Treasurer, Secretary, Events Co-Coordinator, Member at Large, Director of Operations, and Teachers Council Representative.

Duties of the Chairperson

1. Presides at all Board Meetings and General Membership meetings.
2. Creates meeting agendas in conjunction with the Secretary and Chairperson Elect.
3. Coordinates the work of the Parent Alliance Board and the various work groups in order that the objectives of each may be accomplished.
4. Acts as primary contact for Parent Alliance members and SBCS staff who identify needs of the school that come under the purview of the Parent Alliance.
5. Refers any needs, questions, or concerns outside the purview of the Parent Alliance to the Director of Operations, Director of Education, Teachers Council, or Circle of Trustees.
6. May delegate duties as appropriate to other Board members.
7. Signs checks as needed.

Duties of the Chairperson Elect

1. Works alongside the Chairperson to learn the position for one year.
2. Presides at Board meetings or General Membership meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.
3. Creates meeting agendas in conjunction with Chairperson and Secretary.
4. Chairs Nominating Group.
5. Will serve as Parent Alliance Chairperson the following year.

Duties of the Secretary

1. Records meeting minutes for both the general meetings and Board meetings.
2. Prepares and distributes the unapproved minutes to the Board, along with a summary of the minutes, in a timely manner for their review. This is soon followed by submission of the summary to the school newsletter. After Board members review the unofficial minutes, comments are taken into consideration and incorporated into the minutes to be distributed again to PA Board members before the following Parent Alliance meeting.
3. Posts approved minutes on ParentSquare.

4. Archives approved minutes on school website.
5. Creates meeting agenda in collaboration with the Chairperson and/or Chairperson Elect.
6. Submits Parent Alliance news to school administrator to publish in school newsletter.
7. Takes attendance at all meetings.

Duties of Treasurer

1. Maintains Parent Alliance bank account.
2. Keeps an accurate record of receipts and expenditures.
3. Presents financial statements as requested at general membership and Parent Alliance Board meetings.
4. Makes or ensures that reimburses will be made within 30 days of presentation.
5. Provides books to be audited annually by the Administrative Coordinator.
6. Serves as liaison to the SBCS Budget Advisory Group.
7. Prepares projected spending plan at PA Board direction annually in April for approval by voting members.
8. Signs checks as needed.

Duties of the Events Co-Coordinator

1. Creates a projected annual events calendar for presentation to the Board, the PA general membership, and the COT.
2. Co-coordinates events/event work groups.
3. Helps to recruit volunteers for Parent Alliance and/or school events.
4. Maintains SBCS Facebook page and/or other social media communications.
5. Supports public relations efforts.

Duties of Member-at-Large

1. Volunteers as needed.
2. May serve no more than two terms in this position.

Duties of Director of Operations

1. Represents the school's administrative and operational point of view to the Parent Alliance.
2. Signs checks.

Duties of the Teachers Council Representative

1. Facilitates communication between Teachers Council and the Parent Alliance.
2. Represents the Teachers Council point of view to the Parent Alliance.

NOMINATIONS

1. Any current SBCS parent or legal guardian is eligible to be a candidate for a position on the Parent Alliance Board except for the positions of Teachers Council Representative and Director of Operations.

2. A Nominating Group chaired by the Chairperson Elect will create a ballot of candidates to be voted on by the General Membership.
3. The Nominating Group will consist of the Chairperson Elect, a Parent Alliance Board member or general member, and one teacher (preferably the Teachers Council Representative).
4. The Nominating Group will publish at least two notices in the school newsletter asking for nominations, including self-nominations.
5. Candidates will be nominated by the Nominating Group based on self-nomination or suggestions by teachers, staff, or parents/legal guardians.
6. An effort will be made to nominate candidates who do not serve on the Nominating Group.
7. Nominations made by the Nominating Group must be accepted by the nominees before a ballot is created for the general membership to vote on.
8. When there are multiple candidates for the same position, the candidate with a plurality of votes will be elected by the General Membership.

ELECTIONS

1. All Parent Alliance voting members are eligible to vote for members of the Board. No more than one vote per member.
2. In the event that a staff member is also a Parent Alliance member or member of the Parent Alliance Board, they do have a vote.
3. All members of the Board will be elected by ballot prior to the end of the school year.
4. Elections will be held at PA General Membership meetings.

PARENT ALLIANCE WORK GROUPS

Parent Alliance will establish a variety of work groups as determined by the Parent Alliance Board. They report directly to the Board. These may include those mentioned below, along with other possible work groups, the descriptions of some that can be found in PA archives.

Nominating Group: Creates slate for the next Parent Alliance Board. Consists of Chairperson Elect, 1 other Parent Alliance Board member or 1 general member of the Parent Alliance, and 1 teacher (preferably Teachers Council Representative).

Garden Club: Participates in the maintenance and improvements of garden spaces throughout the school.

Orchard Care Takers: Focuses on maintenance and improvements in the school orchard.

Arts: Supports visual and performing arts programming at SBCS and offers arts-based opportunities for children and their families with a special focus on community events such as the Family Contra Dance, the Family Dance, Arts Café, and the Family Music Celebration.

Enrichment Programs: Serves as a contact point for people with ideas, evaluates, generates, coordinates, and may organize extracurricular student programs (After school classes, for example) in collaboration with the Director of Operations.

PARENT ALLIANCE ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Parent Alliance actively fosters a spirit of cooperation and a sense of support, pride and enthusiasm, in order to nurture a sense of community within the school. To this end, the Parent Alliance focuses primarily on parent participation and community building, while supporting fund raising efforts.

Relationship to Circle of Trustees: The Parent Alliance operates under the auspices of the Circle of Trustees. As such, the Circle of Trustees has ultimate authority over the Parent Alliance activities and funds.

Consistent with the SBCS philosophy of empowering individuals and groups throughout the school, it is the intention of the Circle of Trustees to provide the Parent Alliance with as much autonomy as possible over their activities and account. A Parent Alliance Board member will be designated as a liaison between the Circle of Trustees and the Parent Alliance. There will also be a Parent Alliance representative (the Treasurer) on the Budget Advisory Group.

The Events Calendar must be submitted to Circle of Trustees for annual approval, and other projects must be approved as they are generated.

The Parent Alliance will keep money that has been budgeted by COT for PA line item use during the year in a Parent Alliance checking account.

Relationship to Teachers Council: The Parent Alliance recognizes the authority of Teachers Council over educational decisions, and strives to promote positive school/community relationships that enhance our children's educational environment.

A member of the Parent Alliance will be identified to serve as a liaison to Teachers Council as needed. This person will be responsible for soliciting input from Teachers Council and sharing it with the Parent Alliance, as well as sharing information with Teachers Council. Similarly, Teachers Council will appoint a representative to serve as liaison to the Parent Alliance on an annual basis. This teacher will serve on the Board. When establishing their budget priorities, Teachers Council may refer to the budget priorities expressed in the parent survey. When the Parent Alliance representative wishes to attend part of a Teachers Council meeting, he/she will request time on the agenda. It is recommended that time on the agenda be requested at least two weeks ahead of time.

The Teachers Council representative will share information from Teachers Council at Parent Alliance meetings. The Teachers Council representative will serve as a Board member and attend Parent Alliance meetings on a regular basis.

Relationship to the Administrative Staff: The primary administrative liaison with Parent Alliance will be the Director of Operations. All administrative support requests will be channeled through the Director of Operations. The Administrative Coordinator who does the overall bookkeeping will reconcile Parent Alliance and general fundraising accounts.

Relationship with Students: One of the many goals of the Parent Alliance is to facilitate a closer relationship between home and school. Parents and school staff cooperate in the education of SBCS students to secure the highest advantages in physical, cognitive, social and personal development. The Parent Alliance will serve the interests of all SBCS students in an equitable manner. At times, the Parent Alliance may target services to students in a particular grade or program to help realize the overall school mission.

Relationship with Parents: Parent Alliance will encourage parent participation by inspiring and recognizing the magnificent contributions of our parent community to SBCS. The Parent Alliance will organize parent participation, support fundraising activities, and provide an additional forum for parents to express their voice. The Parent Alliance is not a school oversight committee.

Budget Advisory Group: Refer to the Guidelines for the Budget and Parent Alliance.

BUDGET GUIDELINES

The spirit of these guidelines is to provide parents with a voice in the budgeting process through the Parent Alliance. The Parent Alliance will have input into the general budgeting process and sole discretion over the funds allocated to the Parent Alliance by COT. The Parent Alliance operates under the auspices of the Circle of Trustees. Therefore, the Circle of Trustees has ultimate authority over all funds. As with all other SBCS budget line items, the COT may decide to reallocate Parent Alliance funds in the case of dire financial need, unexpected loss, or large capital expenditures. The Parent Alliance works to further the goals of the entire SBCS community with the intention of best serving SBCS students.

General Budget Process for Parent Alliance

- The Treasurer of the Parent Alliance (PA) will also be a member of the Budget Advisory Group (BAG).
- All parents will have input regarding budget priorities via a survey. There may be an additional community meeting sponsored by the Parent Alliance to identify priorities.
- PA representatives will represent the interest of the Parent Alliance in context of the needs of the entire school when serving with the Budget Advisory Group and Circle of Trustees.
- The Budget Advisory Group and Circle of Trustees will set aside a portion of previously fund raised monies to be used, when available, to further specific priorities set by the Parent Alliance. Allocation of these funds will be made by the Parent Alliance. Input may be solicited from Teachers Council and/or Circle of Trustees. It is understood that only fundraised monies (and never State funds) can be set aside for this purpose. Historically, PA funds have purchased equipment and educational materials, and supplemented salaries for specialists, among other things.
- The following Board members shall have check signing authority for the account that has been allocated to the Parent Alliance: The Director of Operations, Treasurer, or Chairperson.
- The Parent Alliance will need to have COT execute any contract on behalf of the Parent Alliance.
- Each year, the Parent Alliance will create a projected line item spending plan to be completed before the end of the school year for the incoming Board.

