

Advisory Committee 101

A functional advisory committee can be a vital asset in helping a teacher set program goals and objectives; identify needs, job opportunities, occupational trends, and new technologies; and evaluate the program. Advisory committees can be your greatest asset; serve as spokespersons for your program and providing a link between your program and the business community.

This document was created to provide simple, concise information for Agricultural Education teachers on the formation, functions, duties, and operations of an advisory committee. Samples of an invitation letter, an agenda, minutes, sign-in sheet, etc. are included for your use.

Definition of an Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee is a group of partners representing education, employers, industry groups, associations, and other stakeholders in the community who provide input for program improvement.

Purpose of an Advisory Committee

The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to provide recommendations regarding the goals and objectives for the program for all three integral components of an Agricultural Education program. The input provided by the Advisory Committee shall be used by the instructor(s) in planning program activities and improvement. The committee assists in identifying community resources and program strategies for achieving the goals and objectives. The advisory committee also assists with the evaluation of the program. The evaluation process is one of reflection as to if goals and objectives have been achieved, and the analysis process used in determining at what level. The Advisory Committee is authorized under Title §780:20-3-1 of the Oklahoma Rules for Career and Technology Education:

Each full-time *CareerTech* program must have an occupational advisory committee that is formally organized and meets at least once annually. The membership of the advisory committee must be diversified with the majority of membership representative of occupations for which the program is training.

Responsibilities of an Advisory Committee

- Recommend changes and improvements which will benefit the program
- Provide guidance of structure of the program
- Review and recommend content for courses
- Assist the teacher in finding placement opportunities for students in production and/or agribusinesses
- Help attract and encourage interested students into the Agricultural education program
- Serve as an advocate for the program
- Promote the Agricultural Education program in the community through presentations at civic clubs, career days, etc.

- Ensure that the course content reflects current workplace needs as defined by business and industry
- Identify opportunities for teacher(s) to upgrade their technical skills through workshops and training sessions
- Help evaluate the effectiveness of the agricultural education program
- Assist in identifying a list of capable resources for presentations, speakers and/or judges for classroom and FFA activities
- Serve as a resource person for classroom demonstrations and/or field trips when appropriate
- Provide the teacher(s) with technical assistance and keep him/her/them aware of new developments in the agriculture industry
- Identify needs of the program and determine priorities
- Provide current resources for teacher to develop agricultural library of visual aids, software, magazines, books, etc.
- The advisory committee does NOT make policy or procedures; only recommendations which the governing body (school board, school administration, teacher) has authority to review and accept or reject.

Operational Guidelines for Establishing an Advisory Committee

- The committee should be large enough to foster diversity and broad-based representation, but small enough to be focused and efficient. Generally, an adequate number would be five to nine members.
- The committee should include representation from education, labor, and business & industry
- Avoid just selecting, “yes men”
- Committee may include representatives of:
 - Education (principal, counselor, school board member)
 - Postsecondary Education (two-year/four-year higher education institution, technology center)
 - Employers (small, medium, and large)
 - Industry Associations
 - Organized Labor
 - Governmental Entities (FSA, wildlife ranger, etc.)
 - Parents
 - Other Stakeholders
- Members should:
 - Be successful agriculturalists (farmers/ranchers/agribusiness)
 - Exhibit substantial interest in the Agriculture Education program
 - Represent the district in agricultural enterprises, age groups, ethnicity, religious group, geographic location within district, education level, etc.
 - Demonstrate ethical practices
 - Provide constructive input
 - Receive approval by the administration and school board

Quick Questions and Answers

- Q.** How many members should we have?
A. Generally 5 to 9 is adequate.
- Q.** How many meetings should we have?
A. Enough to get the job done. No less than two a year, three to six is practical. It's better to have fewer, well planned and attended meetings.
- Q.** How long should a member serve on the committee?
A. A three-year term is recommended, with staggered starting years. When an advisory committee is first formed, identify individuals as members with one-, two-, and three-year terms. A limit should be set on reappointments.
- Q.** How do we fill vacancies?
A. Vacancies before a term is completed should be filled as soon as it is declared vacant. Recommendations or nominations may come from the committee, the teacher(s), administration, etc., and should go through the same administration and school board approval process. A rule should be established that if a committee member misses meetings repeatedly without reason, they be replaced on the committee.
- Q.** Should we elect officers?
A. Yes. A chairperson should be elected by the committee. In addition, a vice chair and recorder should be sufficient. The teacher may serve as the secretary/recorder.
- Q.** Who should get copies to the minutes?
A. Copies should be distributed to all committee members, the principal, the superintendent, the local CareerTech director, the school board president, and all agriculture education teachers.
- Q.** Should a multiple teacher department have multiple advisory committees?
A. That depends. How diverse is your program? It may be necessary to have one general advisory committee, and then subcommittees that focus on animal science and horticulture, for example.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING PLANNER

At least six weeks prior to the meeting:

- ❑ Identify potential committee members. Choose five to nine persons who by position, background, experience or training can offer input for improving your program.
- ❑ Ask your administration to approve your list of prospective members.
- ❑ Make initial contact. Be prepared to explain the duties of advisory members. Secure a current mailing address.

At least four week prior to meeting:

- ❑ Prepare a letter for your administrator's signature. This letter should congratulate committee members for agreeing to serve on the program advisory committee and be signed by your school superintendent.

Three weeks prior to meeting:

- ❑ Send a letter from you, the teacher, to the committee members about the first meeting. Include a draft of the agenda, inviting suggestions. (Make sure meeting time is convenient for members.)
- ❑ Make arrangements for room, audiovisual equipment, and refreshments.

Two weeks prior to meeting

- ❑ Compile folders for each committee member with the following materials:
 - Agenda
 - Name Tag
 - Roles and Responsibilities of Advisory Committee
 - List of advisory committee members and their contact information
 - Teacher(s) and administrator(s) contact information
 - General Information on program/school
 - Program budget summary (including sources of funds)
 - Contact information for each local legislator
 - Calendar of upcoming events
 - Pencil and Note pad

Three days prior to meeting:

- ❑ Call members individually as reminder.

During meeting:

- ❑ Have refreshments ready when they arrive.
- ❑ Begin and end meetings on time.
- ❑ Ask the principal or superintendent to give a welcome.
- ❑ Stay on subject; be organized and to the point.
- ❑ Bring in key people on special problems--outsiders who are not part of the regular committee.
- ❑ Elect a chairperson and a secretary.
- ❑ Take pictures for publicity.

Three days after meeting:

- ❑ Publicize the meeting in local paper and on chapter/program webpage.
- ❑ Send thank you letter and copy of minutes to members.

Two weeks to one month after meeting:

- ❑ Keep all members up to date on events and happenings regarding action taken on recommendations made by the committee members.

SAMPLE LETTER TO A SELECTED ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

September 21, _____

Mr. Alexander Webb
America Plant Company
P.O. Box 617824
Oklahoma City, OK 73101

Dear Alex:

On behalf of the NameOfTown school board, administration, and the Agricultural Education department, welcome as a member of the Agriculture Education program Advisory Committee. While not a policy making body, you are advisory to the agriculture education department, and through the channels, to the principal, superintendent, and school board. We need your expertise and are glad you are willing to serve in this capacity.

Our Advisory Committee will meet every other month to look at the program and make recommendations about curriculum, equipment, activities, and any other areas of the program that could be improved. The committee's capacity is to advise, not direct, the actions of the program.

We are well underway in the 200_-200_ school year and the program is going well. Enrollment in our agricultural education program is full, and the interest level of those students is excellent. I believe we have unlimited potential with this group of students.

We will be holding our first advisory committee meeting at TIME, (a or p).m. on WEEKDAY, MONTH DATE, YEAR, in the AgEd classroom. A light snack will be available. An agenda is enclosed. Please give the topics some attention so we can discuss them at the meeting.

Your cooperation and support of our program is commendable. Thank you for your dedication to furthering agriculture through education. I'm looking forward to working with each of you during the school year.

I plan to see you WEEKDAY, MONTH DATE, at TIME (a or p).m. Thanks again for your support!

Sincerely,

Guy Great
Agricultural Education Teacher and FFA Advisor
NameOfTown High School

HYPOTHETICAL THOUGHTS FROM A POTENTIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER

Dear Educator:

I am pleased to serve as a member of your advisory committee. I am delighted to accept your invitation--if you can assure me that I will be involved in an activity that is going to make some worthwhile and important contribution to the education of young people.

Please note that if you tell me the committee will meet only two or three times a year, let me know what we will be doing when we are together is worthwhile!

If I occasionally drop in for a visit, give me a few minutes of your time. Your courtesy will be well repaid. I would not come if I were not interested. I will appreciate receiving a special invitation to attend a school function or a board of education meeting.

Hopefully, I will become identified with you and the school. I am asking you as the professional educator to provide me, the interested layman, with counsel and leadership for my committee responsibilities.

When you ask me to attend a committee meeting, I want to know beforehand what will be on the agenda. I will want a brief background statement of the problems we discuss. Give me at least two weeks' notice of the meeting date. Do not hesitate to remind me about it by letter, phone, email, or text.

I am used to crisp, business-oriented procedures during meetings. I will want to know as soon as possible after the meeting what did, and will, happen as a result of our advice and services.

I would like to meet more than once a year with the students in the program my committee services. I want the students to know this committee exists. I want them to tell me to what extent we are succeeding.

As a matter of fact, I would like to have each graduating class elect one of its members to serve as an ex-officio member on our committee to tell us, in the first year after graduation, how relevant their training was in terms of real jobs and/or continuing education.

I would like some expression of gratitude for my volunteer services and contributions. If I donate a piece of equipment, put my nameplate on it. At the banquet at the end of the year, recognize all of us committee members. At some point in time, present me with a framed certificate of appreciation for my services.

I know I am asking a great deal of you, but I am willing to give a great deal in return. And the more you get from the committee, the better your program will be. The same is true for us, of course. All the committee members, as well as the businesses we represent, will benefit with a continuing source of qualified workers available and get a good return from our tax dollar. It is up to you to decide whether you want me to serve on your committee. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,
A Potential Advisory Committee Member

**Agriculture Education
Advisory Committee
Program Assessment**

As an advisory committee member, your input is greatly needed to insure that the program maintains a correlation with industry and meets the community's needs. To better serve the industry and community, please make any suggestions or comments that you have for the areas indicated.

Curriculum:

Do you feel the curriculum is satisfactory for the subject matter being taught?
_____ yes _____ no If no, please make suggestions for improvement.

Equipment:

Do you think the equipment is representative of the industry, and is their sufficient quantities?
_____ yes _____ no If no, please make suggestions for improvements.

Facility:

Do you think the facility is adequate? (space, lighting, power requirements, storage etc.)
_____ yes _____ no If no, please make suggestions for improvements.

Student Activities:

Do you think the activities the chapter participates in are adequate? (number of activities, variety, participation, etc.)
_____ yes _____ no If no, please make suggestions for improvements.

Other:

Please list any other concerns you would like to discuss about the program?

Name _____ Company _____

Position _____

Suggested Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda Items

- Welcome and introduce members
- Explain purpose of program advisory committee
- Give brief overview of total Agricultural Education program discussing three circle model and including courses offered and CDE contest in which program participates
- Tour facilities (if applicable)
- Review new curriculum materials (if applicable)
- Display new textbooks
- Discuss core academics integrated into Agricultural Education curriculum
- Discuss enrollment – number of males and females and minorities being served
- Discuss department and equipment – department improvements, new equipment including equipment used to integrate technology into classroom instruction, needs, etc.
- Discuss program visibility in community
- Ask for suggestions for guest speakers, field trips, teaching resources, community service projects, judges for district competitive events, etc.
- Discuss committee concerns and recommendations
- Develop a five-year strategic plan for the program

NameOfTown High School Agriculture Education Sample Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

DATE: January 22, 2007

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

PLACE: Agriculture Education Building

1. Review and approve minutes of the previous meeting
2. Call for additional items to be added to the agenda
3. Committee and progress reports
4. Review revised course syllabi
5. Report of FFA activities
6. Tour of upgraded facilities
7. Program assessment
8. Set next meeting date
9. Adjournment

NameOfTown High School Agriculture Education Sample Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes January 22, 2007

The NameOfTown Agriculture Education program held an Advisory Committee meeting in the Agriculture Education classroom at NameOfSchool on Monday, January 22, 2007. Meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Chairperson Mary Haddalamb. Members attending were:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Sherry Butter | Principal, NameOfSchool High School |
| Clayton Lender | Ag Loan Officer, Banking First Bank |
| Josephine Wood | Safety Officer, Wecutum Forestry Products |
| Brad Daddy | Parent and School Board Member |
| John Greens | Grounds Keeper, Timber Creek Golf Course |
| Lloyd Prez | FFA President |
| Troy Farmer | Manager, Hillcrest Orchards |
| Mary Haddalamb | Auctioneer, NameOfTown Sale Barn |

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as read. The agenda was reviewed and no additional topics were added.

A program update was presented by Guy Great, Instructor. Item of discussion included:

- Program Enrollment
- Curriculum changes
- Career Passport program for students
- New equipment from program assistance dollars
- Additions/improvements to the facilities
- Instructor professional development (PQA training)
- SAEs update
- Upcoming FFA activities

Mr. Guy Great shared copies of the course syllabi with the committee. With no further recommendations of changes, the new syllabi will be printed for this fall.

Lloyd Prez, FFA Chapter President reported on the MFE and ALD Conferences and upcoming activities. He was commended by Chairperson Haddalamb for his leadership and hard work.

Advisory members toured the facility and were shown new storage areas and the new plasma cam. Ira Student, who is enrolled in the Ag Power and Tech II class, demonstrated the PlasmaCAM for the committee.

The committee returned to the classroom and members were given a program assessment instrument to fill out. Comments were favorable, with most members making very positive comment about the facility, equipment and curriculum. Recommendations were made as follows:

1. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for the new greenhouse chemicals need to be included in the MSDS book posted in the class.
2. Work ethics should be a strong part of the curriculum in every class.
3. Addition of precision agriculture should be considered in Plant Science due to the increase in use of this equipment in the industry.
4. Consider rotating an Ag Leadership class in place of the Plant Science class ever other year to provide more curricular opportunities for students.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2007, at 6:30 in the Agriculture Education building.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 P.M. by Chairperson Haddalamb.

Respectfully submitted,

Clayton Lender,
Advisory Committee Secretary

Sample Advisory Committee Bylaws

(Each advisory committee should develop their own set of written rules, polices and procedures, including only the sections necessary to meet the local needs.)

I. Name

The name of this organization shall be the ____ Agriculture Education Local Advisory Committee hereafter referred to as the Advisory Committee.

II. Purpose

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III. Organization

- A. Membership. The committee shall consist of a sufficient number of members to provide a representative cross-section of the labor market served by the _____ school district. The committee shall have at least five and no more than eleven members.
- B. Terms of Appointment. Appointments shall be for three-year terms. Appointments shall be staggered so that one-third of the members' terms expire each year. At the time of the initial organization, terms shall be determined by drawing lots among the members. Members may succeed themselves for no more than two terms before laying out a term. The term of a new Advisory Committee member shall start on August 1.
- C. Officers. The committee shall elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary/recorder. The responsibilities of the officers include:

Chairperson – Shall preside at meetings, serve as the chairperson of the executive committee, direct external relations and legislative activities, and appoint standing and special committees as the need arises. The chairperson shall develop the meeting agenda in cooperation with the Agriculture Education teacher(s).

Vice Chairperson – Shall preside in the absence of the chairperson, direct committee program planning, chair the annual evaluation committee, and assist the chairperson as requested.

Secretary/Recorder – Shall direct the recording of the minutes of the meeting, the transmittal of all reports to members, and maintain a permanent record file of Advisory Committee activities. The secretary shall coordinate all correspondence on behalf of the Committee.

- C. Executive committee shall consist of the officers plus the chairpersons of any established committees. The established committees shall be:

- D. Officers shall be elected by the members annually. Other members of the executive committee shall be appointed annually by the elected committee officers. A replacement for a vacancy in a committee office shall be elected at the next regular meeting of the committee after the vacancy is created.

IV. Meetings

- A. The advisory committee shall meet a minimum of ___ times annually. The executive committee shall meet a minimum of ___ times annually.
- B. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson.
- C. The chairperson, after consultation with the advisory committee membership or the executive committee, shall establish the schedule of advisory committee and executive committee meetings. Meetings may be postponed or canceled by the chairperson.
- D. Written notices of committee meetings shall be mailed/emailed to all members at least ___ days prior to the meeting by the committee secretary. Written notices of executive committee meetings shall be mailed/emailed to all executive committee members at least ___ days prior to such meetings.
- E. Each meeting will begin at the planned time and will continue for no more than ___ hours unless a majority of the members present vote to extend the meeting.
- F. A quorum shall be deemed to exist if at least 50percent of the members of the advisory committee are present.
- G. Members who are absent for ___ consecutive meetings shall lose their membership unless the Executive Committee votes to extend their membership.

V. Reporting and Dissemination

Minutes, reports, and recommendations shall be forwarded to the committee members, the Agriculture Education teacher and Board of Education by the secretary within ___ days following each committee or executive committee meeting.

VI. Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed for conducting business within the committee.

VII. Working Rules

The committee shall establish a set of working rules to govern its operation. Items to be included are committee structure, meeting arrangements, annual priorities for committee work and other organizational details.

VIII. Funding

Expenditures of the committee shall be assumed by the (school/school board/Agriculture Education department) upon the approval of the appropriate board or committee.

XI. Amendments

Bylaws may be amended by two-thirds vote of the committee provided the following conditions have been met:

A. The proposed amendment shall have been proposed by the executive committee and distributed to each committee member ___ days prior to the time of voting.

B. The proposed changes shall have been approved by the (school/school board/Agriculture Education department).

Agricultural Education Program Advisory Committee Report Form

School _____ Program _____

Instructor _____ School Administration Present _____

Date of Meeting _____ Time of Meeting _____

Location of Meeting _____

District (check one) Northwest Northeast Southeast Central Southwest

Agenda of Meeting

Minutes of Meeting (use additional pages if necessary)

| | Name | Program Advisory Committee Members Name of Firm, Position | Present | |
|---|------|--|---------|----|
| | | | Yes | No |
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |
| 5 | | | | |
| 6 | | | | |
| 7 | | | | |

Complete one form for each meeting. File one copy and give one copy to administrator.

Instructor's Signature

Administrator's Signature

