

DACx RETREAT REPORT

March 18-19, 2011
Manual Career and Technical Center
Parenting Resource Center
1215 Truman Road
Kansas City, MO 64106

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Summary of Retreat Activities

Retreat Participation

Fred Hudgins (Chair), Candace Koba (Recording Secretary), Bertha Ross (Parliamentarian), and Christine White (Member-at-Large).

There were Executive Committee members of the District Advisory Committee ("DACx") that were not in attendance (Vice Chair and Corresponding Secretary).

Friday, March 18, 2011

DACx Retreat Goals

The DACx working group ("working group") began by developing their own goals and expectations for the two day retreat. This allowed the group to identify shared goals and concerns, and subsequently guide the agenda and discussions over the next two days.

The working group identified the following goals for the retreat:

1. Better Communication Between DACx Members
2. Develop an Implementation Strategy ("Baby Step to the Goal")
3. Develop DAC as a Working Institution that can Pass on Leadership Roles Know Your Role and Responsibility as DACx Officers
4. Assign Tasks to DACx Officers and Hold them Accountable
5. Focus DACx on Action and Performance
6. Learn How to Work with and Listen to Each Other
7. Engender a Better Sense of Cohesion Among the DACx
8. Develop Strategies to Recruit More Parents into the DAC
9. Start a Parent Union that is Autonomous from the Kansas City Missouri School District ("KCMSD")
10. Create a Two-Three Year Strategic Plan
11. Work for the Greater Good



Learning from your Goals

From this list of goals, there several lessons to be learned:

- There appeared to be a need to develop open lines of communication not just from the DACx to the DAC and then on to the School Advisory Committees ("SACs"), but also among the leadership of the DAC. As an all volunteer organization that works to ultimately improve the lives of students, DAC's primary role as an advisory body is to be a conduit of information and communication between schools, teachers, and parents and the KCMSD. Therefore, the DACx must function so that the DAC and SACs can function (*"If we do not move forward, we are not doing our job for our scholars!"*).

- Since the DACx is elected on an annual basis, there is a high rate of turnover, and it is necessary that the DAC learns how to pass on its institutional knowledge to the new leadership each year in order to quickly act on its mission. The DACx must create and then live up to a plan of action over the next year to make real progress in bolstering the DAC as a verifiable institution with written policies and procedures. With this structure in place, the DAC can use these accomplishments to draw in more participation, spread duties among a larger pool of volunteers, and successfully pass the DAC on to the next generation of community leaders.

The Ideal DAC

After the working group identified its goals for the weekend, they began to envision the ideal DAC. This exercise allowed the working group to reframe its thinking about the organization by identifying what the ideal DAC does.

The working group identified the following functions that the ideal DAC is and does:

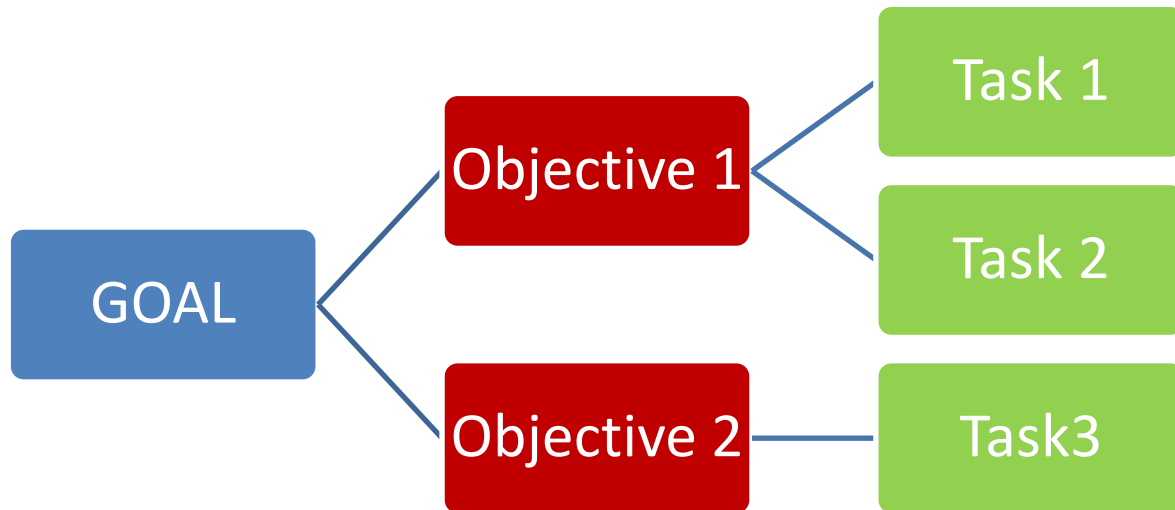
1. Assists Students in Excelling in Life and Achieving their Goals
2. Serves as a Communication Hub and Information Resource
3. Hosts Trainings that Emphasize Leadership, Civic Engagement, and Roles & Responsibilities
4. Facilitates Functioning SACs in All KCMSD Schools
5. Encourages and Assists Principals to Partner with SACs
6. Connects Parents to Teachers
7. Educates Parents About their Responsibilities to Make their Children Better Students and their School Better Places to Learn
8. Holds the Parents, Teachers, Principals and School District Accountable to Performance (Bottom-Up Accountability)
9. Hosts Networking Events to Connect Parents and Create Community Around Schools
10. Advocates for Parents and Students
11. Acts as an Equal Partner with the KCMSD
12. Empowered to Effect Change in the KCMSD
13. Is a Unified Front that is Involved in the Greater Community

The first day of the retreat was designed to allow the DACx to step back from the everyday grind of operating a volunteer organization and gain some perspective by providing all the Officers the space to think aspirationally about the DAC. This visioning process set the stage for day two of the retreat.

Saturday, March 19, 2011

Day Two of the retreat began the process of going from previously-identified general goals to the details of developing an implementation strategy for the next year.

After the first day, the DACx came to understand that they have one primary goal; to make the best school district that produces successful students. From this goal, the group developed objectives to achieve a final set of tasks. In the end, as the DACx works to implement their tasks, it is imperative that they continue to monitor and measure their progress.



Based on the visioning process of the ideal DAC and what it does, the working group began Day Two by developing a list of executable objectives for the next year.

After this brainstorming session was complete, the working group then placed each task under its relevant objective. Many tasks met the criteria for several objectives identified above. These tasks were then noted as strategic initiatives.

Overall, the working group began to see that there were several objectives that almost all of the tasks fit under, including establishing SACs in each school, creating a communication network, and maintaining an up to date calendar of events. These three objectives are traditionally the role of an administrator (i.e. communication, clerical duties, maintaining a calendar, and essentially working with the leadership of an organization to run the day to day activities). What was apparent is that these administrative tasks were bogging down the volunteers and distracting them from their core mission of fundraising, hosting trainings and other events, and advising the KCMSD and School Board.



What became clear was that the DACx needed to create a mechanism to receive funds, fundraise, and then develop a budget to not only host its many events, but to hire an administrator to lessen the burden on the volunteer DACx Officers for the administrative needs of the organization.

Objectives

The working group identified the following eight objectives for the next year (from the date of the retreat through to the 2012 DACx elections):

- A. Establish SACs for Each School in the KCMUSD
- B. Establish a Communication Network
- C. Establish an On-going Training Program and Schedule
- D. Maintain an Up to Date DAC Calendar of all Events (DAC and SAC)
- E. Maintain a Mechanism and System to Measure the Progress of the DAC
- F. Set up a Foundation or 501c3 Non-profit Organization
- G. Complete Internal Procedure Manual and External Policy Document
- H. Hold Robust Elections

Tasks

Once these objectives were developed, the group brainstormed a list of specific tasks that the DACx and DAC traditionally do, as well as what it should do in the future. The working group created the following list of tasks to complete in the next year:

Ongoing Tasks	Events and Trainings	Other Tasks
1) Hold Monthly DAC/DACx Meetings	1) Hold Elections Annually in May	1) Approve Amended DAC Bylaws
2) Attend Monthly Superintendent Meetings	2) Host Annual DACx Election Forum	2) Complete Internal Procedural Manual
3) Properly Post Agenda Notices	3) Host Annual Roles and Responsibilities Training	3) Update and Post SAC Toolkit
4) Properly Post Meeting Minutes	4) Host Annual Roberts Rules of Order Training	4) Develop and Post SAC Bylaws Template
5) Write Thank You Letters	5) Host Bi-Annual Principal - SAC Forum	5) Secure Pro Bono Lawyer
6) Write Acknowledgements	6) Host Quarterly Parent Networking Events	6) Develops and Post Administrative Job Position
7) Write and Post Press and Media Releases	7) Host Quarterly Pancake Breakfast	7) Secure Pro Bono Marketing Consultant
8) Attend School Board Meetings	8) Host Annual DAC Sports/Arts/Sciences Banquet	8) Develop Comprehensive Branding Strategy
9) Write Advisements on Policy	9) Host Annual Outside School District Case Study Training	9) Design and Print Business Cards for all DACx
10) Maintain Social Media	10) Host Annual Live and Silent Fundraising Auction	10) Revise and Print Brochures
11) Set-up then Maintain Constant Contact Account	11) Host Annual Education Expo	11) Buy Additional DAC Shirts
12) Develop a Voter Registration Campaign	12) Host Annual College Day Expo	12) Design and Buy DAC Lapel Pins
13) Advocate for and Facilitate School Field Trips	13) Host Annual College Signing Day Event	13) Buy Tablets/Laptops for SAC Chairs
14) Develop, Maintain, and Post Events Calendar	14) Host Annual Walk for Education Fundraiser	14) Complete Annual Implementation Checklist
15) Create and Maintain DAC-SAC Tracking System	15) Host School Board Candidate Forum	15) Complete Quarterly Progress Reports
16) Utilize Multi-Lingual Communications		16) Complete Annual End of Year Performance Review
17) Ensure Translators Attend All DAC Meetings		17) Complete Annual Quality Survey
18) Encourage All Existing SAC Chairs to Attend DAC Meetings		18) Submit Annual Budget to KCMUSD
19) Identify and Contact Potential SAC Chairs District wide		
20) Transform Parent Groups into SACs		
21) Ensure All SACs Declare		
22) Secure Corporate Sponsorships		
23) Identify and Secure Strategic Partnerships		

Implementation Strategy

With objectives and tasks defined, an implementation strategy takes shape based on four definitive phases over the next year. These phases include the time between the end of the DACx Retreat and the next DACx election (May 2011); from the May election to the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year; throughout the 2011-2012 1st Semester, and over the 2011-2012 2nd Semester.

The following is the implementation strategy that the DACx will follow over the next year as agreed upon through the Retreat Process. This strategy is both the culmination and combination of all the input and ideas put forth over the two day retreat.

Phase 1 DACx Retreat through May 2011 DACx Elections	Host DACx Pre-Election Forum	Election Committee
	Attend March, April, May KCMSD Board Meetings	Chair/Vice Chair/Recording Secretary
	Approve DAC Bylaws	Task Force/DAC
	Notice and Post Agendas for March, April, and May DAC Meetings	Corresponding Secretary
	Hold March, April, and May DAC, DACx and Superintendent Meetings	DAC/DACx
	Post Meeting Minutes for March, April, and May DAC and DACx Meetings	Recording Secretary
	Write Thank You Letters for Foundation	Corresponding Secretary
	Write Acknowledgement for School Board Efforts in 2010-2011	Corresponding Secretary
	Contact 6 SACs that do not Regularly Attend DAC Meetings	Chair
	Complete DAC-SAC Tracking System	Recording Secretary
	Retain the Services of a Pro Bono Marketing Consultant	Chair
	Retain the Services of a Pro Bono Lawyer	Corresponding Secretary
	Complete Internal Procedure Document	Recording Secretary/DACx
	Issue Press Release for May, 23 2011 DACx Elections	Corresponding Secretary
	Notice and Outreach for May, 23 2011 DACx Nominations/Elections	Election Committee
	Hold DACx Elections at May 23, 2011 DAC Meeting	Election Committee

Phase 2 May 2011 DACx Elections to the Beginning of the 2011-2012 School Year	Host Leadership/Roles and Responsibilities/Roberts Rules of Order Retreat	Members-At-Large/ DACx
	Appoint Events Coordinator to Coordinate Schedule and Chair New Events Committee	Chair
	Complete, Maintain and Post 2011-2012 Event Calendar	Recording Secretary
	Set-up Foundation and/or Non-Profit Organization	Chair/Pro Bono Lawyer
	Notice and Post Agendas for June, July and August DAC and DACx Meetings	Corresponding Secretary
	Hold June, July and August DAC and DACx Meetings	DAC/DACx
	Post Meeting Minutes for June, July and August DAC and DACx Meetings	Recording Secretary
	Hold June, July and August Superintendent Meetings	DAC/DACx
	Attend June, July and August School Board Meetings	Chair/Vice Chair/ Recording Secretary
	Launch Branding Campaign	DACx/Pro Bono Marketing Consultant
	Form SAC Sub-Committee to Complete Bylaws, Revise Toolkit and Set-up/Retain SACs	Vice Chair
	Complete External Policy Document	Chair/DACx
	Complete Convocation Message and Outreach Booth	Chair/Events Committee
	Candace's 30th Birthday Walk for Education Fundraiser	Candace Koba/ Events Committee
	Obtain Tablets/Laptops for DACx and SAC Chairs	Chair/Technology Coordinator
Complete Quality Survey Schedule and Template	Member-At-Large	

Phase 3 2011-2012 School Year 1st Semester	Notice and Post Agendas for September, October, November and December DAC and DACx Meetings	Corresponding Secretary
	Hold October, November and December DAC and DACx Meetings	DAC/DACx
	Post Meeting Minutes for September, October, November and December DAC and DACx Meetings	Recording Secretary
	Hold September, October, November and December Superintendent Meetings	DAC/DACx
	Attend September, October, November and December School Board Meetings	Chair/Vice Chair/Recording Secretary
	Host First Semester Principal-SAC Summit	Events Committee
	Host Outside School District Case Study Training	Events Committee
	Annual Budget Summit	DACx
	Complete and Advertise Administrator Job Description	Chair/DACx
	Host Silent and Live Auction Fundraiser	Events Committee
	Host College Day Expo	Events Committee

Phase 4 2011-2012 School Year 2nd Semester	Notice and Post Agendas for January, February, March, April, May DAC and DACx Meetings	Corresponding Secretary
	Hold January, February, March, April, May DAC and DACx Meetings	DAC/DACx
	Post Meeting Minutes for January, February, March, April, May DAC and DACx Meetings	Recording Secretary
	Hold January, February, March, April, May Superintendent Meetings	DAC/DACx
	Attend January, February, March, April, May School Board Meetings	Chair/Vice Chair/Recording Secretary
	Host Second Semester Principal-SAC Summit	Events Committee
	Host DAC Banquet Honoring Sports/Arts/Sciences	Events Committee
	Host College Signing Day Press Conference	Events Committee
	Host School Board Candidate Forum	Election Committee/ Events Committee
	Host Education Expo	Events Committee
	Complete and Post End of Year Review	Chair
	Host DACx Pre-Election Forum	Election Committee
	Issue Press Release for May 2012 DACx Elections	Corresponding Secretary
	Notice and Outreach for May 2012 DACx Nominations/Elections	Election Committee
	Hold DACx Elections at May 2012 DAC Meeting	Election Committee

MOCK Studio Recommendations

1. Follow the Implementation Strategy.

If you work to complete the tasks that you have developed throughout this process, you will set an example to DAC, KCMSD and the School Board. This will build up the institution, develop a positive reputation with the community, and ultimately make better students, schools, and community.

Track your progress and celebrate your success! It is important to develop an understanding of what it takes to tackle your goals, how much time it will take, and what you might have learned to use the next time. Create a system for following your progress and let people know when you have completed tasks. This will also help you build "institutional knowledge" which will be valuable for future generations of leadership.

2. Build a Legacy for the Organization.

Educate the new Leadership on the importance of carrying out the Implementation Strategy. Part of transitioning power is passing on the knowledge of your experiences, good and bad. You have set a course so that they can do the work and take the credit.

Consider inviting current leadership to participate in the first few meetings of the new leadership to help as a resource. Be mindful that a "transition" can also bring new energy and new ideas but that ultimately the goals defined through this retreat will help provide a framework for future success.

3. Empower through Participation.

Set up Sub-Committees to implement the work. Setting up Sub-Committees (Events Committee, Elections Committee, Fundraising Committee) brings in volunteers to work on specific tasks without being distracted by the day to day of the DAC, and allows the DACx to function in an advisory role. It is also good training ("right of passage") for future DAC and DACx members and delegates responsibility to more people. By engaging more people, you are also building your support network for future initiatives and increase your credibility with the broader community.

4. Create Tools for Leadership.

Develop DAC Handbooks for each DACx Officer and SAC Chair so that they have a resource to move forward, and a place to organize their thoughts (include pages for meeting minutes, agendas, templates, notes, bylaws, internal procedures, and external policies). This will help pass on that institutional knowledge, and start a tradition of training the next generation of leaders in the DAC.

5. Communicate and Share Best Practices.

Update the website to be the toolkit for the community. Include links and downloads for the SAC Toolkit, SAC bylaws Template, and other documents that are needed to advance the mission of the DAC. The website should be a resource for everyone involved in the DAC to go and find contact information, learn how to start a SAC, get involved with a DAC Subcommittee, or simply attend an event. The website can also contain "secured" pages that have limited access for important documents that need to be centrally located for the DACx.

6. Maintain Focus on Goals and Tasks.

Don't forget about all the ongoing tasks in the "Tasks" table above. While some of these more important tasks were put directly into the implementation strategies, many of them are the roles and responsibilities of the DACx Officers as outlined by your bylaws. Make sure that these tasks are not filed away with your bylaws once adopted. Consider revisiting this task list at your regular meetings.

7. Evolve with Your Needs.

Use this report as a living document. At the very least, this is a template for change and a means to organize your thoughts and goals. Do not let this report collect dust. Use it and make it your own. Pass it on to the next DACx so that they can use it as they see fit, even if it is only a starting point.

8. Regroup as Necessary.

If you feel like you have lost your way, host another retreat. In the midst of all the work ahead of you, you may lose sight of your goals. Take the time to refocus the group and envision the ideal DAC again. Things change and adjustments must be made.