ABSTRACT
        This inservice program for principals was designed to
assist the development and maintenance of effective Parent Advisory
Councils (PACs), as mandated by Title I of the Elementary and
Secondary Education Act. The manual first introduces the concept of
the principal as a facilitator, outlining the principal's role and
responsibilities within a PAC. The second section deals with
publicity and recruitment of PAC members, meeting the needs of
individual PAC members, representation, communications, decision
making, problem solving, and leadership. The third section discusses
increasing the involvement of parents in school visitations and
monitoring programs. The steps involved in planning and conducting
needs assessments are outlined in the fourth section. The fifth
section covers planning future Title I programs and PAC involvement
in budgeting. (Author/APM)

BUILDING PACs

A guide for Title I principals

Developed By

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BUILDING PACs
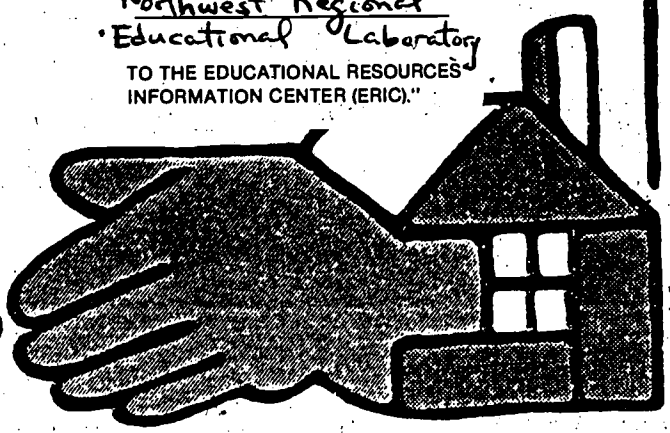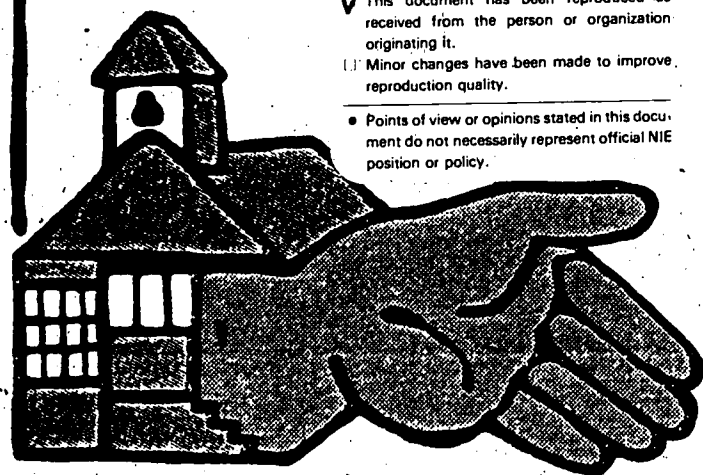
A Guide for Title 1 Principals

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Preface

During the fall of 1977, a team from North-west Regional Educational Laboratory, working with Title I administrators from Portland, Oregon, developed and implemented a Title I principals' Inservice Project. The purpose of this project was to provide an inservice program for principals focused on building and maintaining effective Parent Advisory Councils (PACs).

The inservice began with an overview of the role of principal as facilitator. Subsequently, the project covered activities and procedures for recruiting PAC members, nominating PAC officers, reviewing school programs and assessing student needs. Final sessions dealt with planning future Title I programs and budgets. The emphasis was on building community support through forming a partnership with Title I parents.

This handbook parallels the sequence presented in the workshops and contains many of the materials that were used. It can be used by principals who want some practical procedures for organizing and maintaining Parent Advisory Councils.

Although facilitating PAC development is a time-consuming job, one that is often added to an already busy schedule, we feel that it is impor-tant to the well-being of the school that it be given the necessary time and effort. As you work with the PAC, you are not only working to improve

the Title I program by gaining the support of
parents, you are also strengthening the entire
school by helping citizens discover how they
can have an active role in educational decision
making.

The following materials will help you identify
things you can do to energize the PAC and help the
PAC learn to use effective operating procedures.
Also included are ideas for building citizen support
for your school.

We have included many materials that are
headed "To Use With PAC." These materials are
designed so that you or a PAC chairperson can use
them directly with the PAC. We intend the instruc-
tions on these materials only as guidelines for
your work with your PAC and assume that you will
modify many of the materials to meet your own
specific school needs.

We have used a format which has wide margins
in the hope that you will feel free to make your
own notes in the blank spaces.

7

SECTION 1 - Role of the Title 1 Principal - PAC Facilitator

We hear the word "facilitator" being used a lot these days. It has become a familiar word to those of us who wade through educational jargon. However, "facilitator" is an appropriate word to describe the Title I Principal's relationship with the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The principal is responsible for seeing that PACs:

- are organized, receive orientation and nominate members,
- review the past year's Title I accomplishments and become familiar with this year's program,
- review the Title I needs assessment and make recommendations about future Title I programs, and
- review the Title I application for next year.

To accomplish these tasks is no easy job, especially when Title I, responsibilities are only a segment of the responsibilities of the building principal. But by building parent support through the PAC, the principal can identify school needs and gain community support for needed changes in the school. Most principals recognize that community support of schools increases with community awareness of what the schools are trying to do.

INVOLVING CITIZENS

To put Title I PAC involvement into perspec-
tive, you might consider the following categories
of citizen involvement adapted from "A Ladder of
Citizen Participation," developed by Sherry
Arnstein:[1]

Citizen Control
Delegated Power
Partnership
Involvement
Consultation
Informing
Manipulation

Manipulation: Manipulation is at the bottom of the
ladder of citizen involvement. This is where citi-
zens are involved to meet some mandated requirement
for citizen involvement, but their role is that of
"rubber stamp" for policies and decisions over which
they have limited information and no control.

Informing: Informing citizens of their rights,
responsibilities and options can be the first step
toward actual citizen involvement. However, the
emphasis is frequently placed on a one-way flow of
information--from institutions to citizens--with
no channel provided for feedback.

Consultation: Consultation goes one step beyond
informing citizens, to inviting their opinions.
The most frequent means of consultation are attitude
surveys, needs assessments, neighborhood meetings
and public hearings.

Involvement: In this level of involving citizens,
the citizens serve on boards or committees and
advise the public agency. The degree to which they

_____

[1] Arnstein, Sherry R., "A Ladder of Citizen Partici-
pation," American Institute of Planners' Journal,
July 1969.

2

9

are effective depends upon (1) the amount of information they have, (2) their skill in presenting their ideas, (3) their ability to listen to others, and (4) the degree to which they represent the community.

Partnership: This is where public agencies and citizens' groups are involved in shared planning and decision-making responsibilities. There is give and take, and decisions reflect citizen input.

Delegated Power: This is when citizens have a dominant decision-making authority over a particular plan or program.

Citizen Control: This level of involvement occurs when citizens' groups have direct control of a project. They have full charge of policy and managerial aspects and are fully able to negotiate the conditions under which "outsiders" may change them.

We see Title I PAC involvement as ranging from "informing" to "partnership." To comply with the legal mandates, parents with children in the Title I program must be informed about their child's needs and about the way the school is going about meeting those needs. But the role of the PAC goes beyond simply getting accurate and full information about Title I. Because the PAC reviews the previous year and makes recommendations for the upcoming year, PAC members can be seen as consultants. A truly effective PAC will have citizens actively involved in the needs assessment and in building community support. If this occurs, the PAC participation level falls somewhere between the levels of involvement and partnership.

We think that it is useful for you to explore with PAC members their expectations about levels of involvement. Some members may have been on other citizens' groups before. Their previous experiences

will certainly influence their expectations
about their role as PAC members. If both you
and the PAC have the same level of expectations,
many conflicts can be avoided.

It is also important to examine with PAC
members the relationship between commitment on
the part of members and the level of involvement.
It takes more preparation and commitment to be a
member of a partnership than it does to be a member
of a group that is informed and consulted.

It also takes more work on the part of the
principal to motivate and guide a partnership. We
think that the payoffs make it worth the extra effort.

The following table compares the requirements
established by the government with guidelines for
forming an active citizen participation group:

TASKS AND GROUP BUILDING ACTIVITIES

	PAC REQUIREMENTS	PARTNERSHIP
Size	As many as you can get out	7-15 for decision-making groups
Membership	At least 51% be Title I parents	Membership that represents the school community, with 51% Title I parents
Number of sessions	Enough to complete these tasks: • Review past year's Title I accomplishments and become familiar with this year's program. • Organize the PAC and tell new members about PAC and Title I. • Review the needs assessment and make recommendations about future Title I programs. • Review the Title I application for next year.	Enough to complete these tasks: • Share expectations and agree on the purpose of the group. GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER. • Identify people who are not present who should be if the group is to be representative. • Plan ways to build membership. • Set goals. • Identify activities to meet goals. • Elect officers. • Decide how decisions will be made. • Set a calendar of events. • Build skills to complete tasks (i.e., reviewing budgets, participating in a needs assessment, monitoring school programs, etc.). • Carry out identified activities.

4

11

FOUR FUNCTIONS OF FACILITATION

To build and maintain a group capable of carrying out the Title I tasks in Table 1, you need to facilitate the partnership tasks, also listed in the table. To facilitate this the principal needs to be a

- Catalyst
- Solution Giver
- Resource Linker
- Process Helper

Getting parents to visit the school can require a lot of energy. Frequently, announcements of meetings and letters home do not do the job. The principal, as catalyst, works with the few active parents to help them develop ways of eliciting participation from the less active parents.

catalyst

As principal you have a lot of information that is simply not available to the layperson. You can help parents identify solutions to problems identified in the Title I needs assessment.

solution giver

Your knowledge of school resources can be an invaluable aid to the PAC. You can help them identify ways to conduct a needs assessment (by using the resources in this guide and others that are available to school people), find ways to duplicate materials, or possibly get guest speakers for PAC meetings.

resource linker

This may be your most important skill. If you can assist the PAC (possibly by working closely with the PAC chairperson) to conduct meetings that are friendly, productive and timely, you will be insuring active parent participation and support.

process helper

5

To do this you will need to help the PAC set up
and use effective meeting procedures and help
the PAC set norms where members (especially new
members) feel included and involved.

SUMMARY

In this section we have tried to identify the
parameters of PAC involvement by comparing it to the
broad range of citizen involvement outlined by
Arnstein's ladder. We also examined the role of
the principal as facilitator of the PAC.

In the next four sections we will examine the
following PAC tasks: recruiting and setting up the
PAC; monitoring programs; needs assessment; reviewing
programs. We will focus on practical procedures for
accomplishing these tasks.

6

13

SECTION 2 - Getting Going

To get a PAC organized requires several tasks:

- Publicity/Recruiting Membership
- Orientation
- Establishing Council Membership
- Setting up and Maintaining an Effective Group

PUBLICITY/RECRUITMENT

How to get your PAC going depends on whether or not you have active PAC members from the previous year. If you have no previously active PAC members, the best way to begin is to set up an information session for parents--a session where Title I is explained and PAC council members are solicited from those parents who attend this information session. You might consider the following suggestions for ways to set up an information session:[2]

- Direct mailing to all parents in school attendance area
- Notice in local papers
- Notice sent through the PTA, neighborhood associations, newsletters, flyers, etc.
- Radio or TV
- Bilingual home/school consultants

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[2] This list is from the Parent Advisory Councils in Oregon--Where Do You Fit In? This book is available for PACs in Oregon and we recommend it to all principals. You can order this book through ESEA, Title I, Oregon Department of Education, 942 Lancaster Drive, NE, Salem, Oregon. There are sample letters to parents on pages 57-66.

7

You can also "piggyback" PAC recruitment efforts with other school events:

- Information about Title I can be part of a PTA agenda
- A flyer about Title I can be distributed at sports events
- Open houses can have a special Title I display and demonstration session

However, principals who have had success report that nothing works like personal contact for getting people involved. If you have a few active Title I parents in your school, you could solicit their help in calling parents or visiting parents who do not have a phone. The following is a "script" that a parent can use when phoning:

TO USE WITH PAC

The PAC volunteer phone recruiter can use this script as a guide when calling parents.

When you phone, please introduce yourself immediately:

"This is _____. I am calling to let you know about _____ School's Title I Program. I would like to invite you to a meeting to discuss the present Title I program. The meeting will be at _____ o'clock, _____ night. We will be talking about Title I, the special programs in our school and how parents can be involved to make it even a better program. Do you think you will be able to make this meeting? Will you need transportation?

____(child's name)____ will be bringing home a notice about this meeting. I will be looking forward to meeting you."

Thank the parent for his/her time and leave the school's telephone number in the event there are any additional questions about the meeting.

9

Another method of recruitment is a telephone
tree. One parent phones two people and requests
that they phone two more. If you use this method,
it is important that each person who is called
repeats the time and place of the meeting. It is
also important to send home a back-up flyer to be
sure that correct information is sent to each parent.

Many Title I principals report that they have
greatest success with meal time meetings and with
meetings that involve the parents' children in a
demonstration or school event. This is only
natural. People are more likely to attend a
meeting that has promise of being a comfortable
social event. A pot-luck or a supper can provide
people with a chance to get to know one another
in an informal environment.

It is also to be expected that a parent is
more likely to attend a meeting where his or her
child has a role. If Title I children explain the
program and show parents how the program promotes
their education, the children will also benefit
from the experience.

The following agenda for an orientation
meeting can serve as a guide for your first
meeting:

telephone tree

potlucks

11

17

TO USE WITH PAC

This is a sample and can be used for discussion.

HILL CREST TITLE I PAC ORIENTATION
MEETING AGENDA

Time		Materials

7:00 **Introductions**

    Principal introduces Title I   Name tags
      teachers and aides

    Principal asks participants to
      introduce themselves to the
      person next to them and share
      how they heard about the meeting
      and what they would like to
      see happen to their children
      as a result of the Title I program

    Principal asks for volunteers to
      share some of the hopes for Title I

      (If there are no volunteers, principal
      and staff can share their expectations)

7:15 **Sharing the Agenda**

    Principal (or former PAC chairperson   Agenda on butcher paper
    or staff member) shares agenda for   or overhead
    the evening and shares expectations
    (parent commitment and active role
    on PAC); question and answer period

7:25 **Orientation to Title I**

    Principal or staff person shares   Information on overheads
      history of Title I and how Title I   or butcher paper or in
      benefits children: booklet

      What Is Title I?*
      How Are Students Selected?

* For an example of one school's summary statement about each of these
questions, see page 144, Parent Advisory Councils in Oregon.

13

Agenda (continued)

What Are the Title I Programs?
How Many Children Are Served by
— the Program?
How Are Programs Evaluated?
Are Title I Funds Supplementary?
How is the Classroom Teacher Involved
in the Title I Program?
What Are the Goals of the Program?
How Are Parents Involved? (If you have
former PAC members, this is an ideal
time for them to share their experiences
and perceptions)

Questions and Answers:

Ask parents to get into groups of
three or four people and come up
with a list of questions. Have
groups share questions.

Principal, staff and former PAC people
answer questions.

8:00   Parent Pledge

Using form (see next page),   Parent Pledge
have parents identify what
responsibilities they can
take on. Collect forms.

8:15   Remind Parents

The next meeting will include
selection of officers. Share
time and date.

Ask parents to try to bring another
Title I parent with them next time.

Pass out evaluation form;   Evaluation Form
explain that you want their
honest feedback so that
meetings can be both interesting
and productive. (If there is a
former PAC chairperson or member,
these last three activities can
be handled by this person.)

PARENT PLEDGE

In order to help my child and other youngsters in our Title I
program, I pledge to help with the following: (Please check one
or more)

	Check
Serve on our school's Parent Advisory Council	_____
Spend a morning visiting a Title I classroom	_____
Attend Title I open houses and teacher conferences	_____
Give other parents rides to PAC meetings	_____
Babysit for parents who attend PAC meetings	_____
Telephone or contact other parents about the next meeting	_____
Other (please describe)	_____

The best time to phone me is _____

The best time to visit my home is _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

TO USE WITH PAC

MEETING EVALUATION FORM

      We like to get information at the end of the meeting that will help us plan for the next meeting.

Please check one:

This meeting was useful.

                  ____   ____
                  yes   no

This meeting was confusing.

                  ____   ____
                  yes   no

Please let us know how we can make the meetings better (Is the time OK? The room comfortable, etc.?)

Suggestions:

21

19

COMPOSITION OF TITLE I PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS
AND PAC SELECTION PROCESSES

The majority (at least 51%) of the Parent
Advisory Council must be Title I parents. A PAC
can have the following composition:[3]

Voting Members

- Parents of Title I children attending
  the eligible school (must comprise at
  least 51% of the total membership).
- Parents of non-Title I children attending
  eligible school.
- Parents of children attending non-public
  schools served by Title I that reside in
  the local public school attendance area
- Any resident of the school attendance
  area, i.e., senior citizens, agency
  representatives, business people and
  other interested citizens

Non-Voting Members:

- Anyone, regardless of residence, with
  interest in the school or who has resource
  capabilities may be invited by the PAC to
  serve as a non-voting member, i.e., business
  people and school staff.
- Full or part-time employees of the school
  district shall not be eligible for voting
  membership or office on any Title I PAC.
- Persons under eighteen years of age

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[3] From: "Local School Selection Process for Title I
Parent Advisory Councils," developed by School District
#1, Portland, Oregon.

District #1, Portland, Oregon has identified
four alternative selection processes. We think these
allow enough flexibility to meet the needs of different
schools. The four alternative methods are:

1. Selection at Open Meeting
2. Open Meeting Election
3. Election by Mailed Ballots
4. Balloting at the School Building

Selection at Open Meeting. Selection of council
members can take place at an open meeting by using
one or more of the following methods. The methods
can be decided by those attending the meeting:

- Nominating committee
- Nominations from the floor
- Selection by consensus (see "Decisions
  by Consensus," later in this section)
- Volunteer service
- Election by ballot
- Nomination by ballot

Open Meeting Election. Prior to the open meeting
the existing PAC can appoint a nominating committee.
The committee should have at least three and not
more than seven members. At least one member should
represent Title I parents and one member should
represent non-Title I parents.

The nominating committee can select at least
one nominee for each position to be filled. Consent
of the nominee must be achieved prior to placement
of the name on the ballot.

The nominating committee will be responsible
for preparing the ballots and having them printed
with blank spaces for write-in votes.

Nominations from the floor are in order
providing the nominee(s) meets the qualifications
for that position. Balloting will take place during
the open meeting.

Election by Mailed Ballots. Prior to the open meeting
the existing PAC can appoint a nominating committee
(three to seven members) with representatives from both
Title I, and non-Title I parents.

The committee selects at least one nominee for
each position to be filled. Consent of the nominee
must be given prior to placement of the name on the
ballot.

In this procedure, the nominating committee
is responsible for writing the ballots and having
them printed with blank spaces for write-in votes.

The school PAC is responsible for mailing the
ballots to parents of all children attending the
school. In addition, the ballot must be made
available to all attendance area residents who
wish to vote by a method decided upon by the PAC.

Balloting at School Building. If your school
decides to use this method, you can follow the
same procedures on the previous option with the
exception that the balloting is held at the school
building for all residents of the community.

Before deciding on any one selection process,
you may want to list advantages and disadvantages
of each method with your PAC. During one of the
workshops conducted with the Portland Principals
we generated a list of advantages and disadvantages
for each method. The following page contains a
summary of that list.

COUNCIL MEMBER SELECTION PROCESS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
1. Selection at Open Meeting	• Broad group from which to select	• Hard to insure over 51% Title I parents
	• Those attending show interest	• Difficult to get representative group
	• Easiest to do	• Attendance at meeting might be off
	• Reduces clerical work	
2. Open Meeting Election	• Pre-selection of candidates insures that the interested ones will be on ballot	• Over-nomination of non-target parents
		• Majority may not know nominees
3. Election by Mailed Ballots	• Those who vote are interested	• Expensive
		• Low response is typical
	• Can reach maximum number of people	• Recipients not familiar with nominees
	• Documented involvement	• Lacks personal contact
4. Balloting in the School Building	• Easy to do	• Difficult to get people out
	• Low cost	• Limited personal contact
	• Opportunity to also have parents visit school	• Inconvenient to come to school building

These lists are by no means exhaustive.
If you use these as a starter for discussion
with your PAC, you will probably be able to
come up with more advantages and disadvantages
for each method. By involving PAC members
in this activity, you will also be building
commitment for whichever method is chosen.

MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Earlier in this section we mentioned that
it is difficult to start from scratch and build a
PAC. For that reason it is especially important
to identify not only what gets people to make an
initial visit to a PAC meeting, but also what
keeps them coming back.

People become involved in anything because
the activity meets one or more personal needs.
Social scientists have identified three individual
needs that must be met if a group is to keep its
membership and continue to work productively.
These are an individual's needs for:

- Inclusion
- Control
- Affiliation

Think back to the last conference you attended.
When you walked into the first session, did you look
for familiar faces? Did you feel a little uncomfortable
until you had been introduced to strangers or had intro-
duced yourself? It is a common human need to have to
feel included in a group situation. You as principal,
working with the PAC chairperson, can identify ways
to make people feel included. Some ways that were
identified by the Portland principals include:

- Having a person designated as "greeter"
  who would greet new parents and bring them
  up to date

inclusion

- Having name tags

- Having a sharing session at each meeting where parents can tell a little about their children, what they are doing in the Title I program

- Having a warm-up activity where parents introduce themselves to the person next to them, and then, in turn, introduce that person to the group

- Having a telephone relay--some parents are responsible for phoning other Title I parents prior to a meeting to invite them to the meeting

control

Another common need of people in groups is the need to feel that they can influence the group--the need for control. Do you remember the last time someone informed you of some new regulation or requirement that you had to carry out? If you had not been a party to determining that this was a necessary requirement, how did you feel? If you are like most of us, you probably felt frustrated. People do not like to feel manipulated or affected by decisions over which they have no control. A strong and viable PAC is one in which members feel that their contributions have influence. The following list contains suggestions for areas where the PAC should have a high degree of decision-making power:

- Determining how the PAC budget will be allocated and monitored

- Determining the role the PAC will have in the Title I needs assessment

- Determining the time, place and agenda for PAC meetings

- Identifying recruitment procedures

- Identifying skill training needs (example: decision-making procedures)

28

27

The third individual need is that of affiliation. People join clubs so that they can say, "I'm an Elk ... a Mason...a PTA member," etc. Belonging is important. This is one reason to consider the social aspect of PAC meetings. The following items that help build a group were suggested by various members in the Portland Inservice Program:

- Pot-lucks
- Meetings with student presentations
- Viewing a film and discussing it in small groups
- Parent needs identification--which parents need babysitting, who would like to pair up for a visit to the school, etc.

If you and your PAC chairperson try to identify ways that the meetings can help people feel included and influential in a pleasant and supportive atmosphere, the likelihood for active participation goes up.

MORE THAN JUST A REQUIREMENT--BUILDING A REPRESENTATIVE GROUP

Citizen involvement is mandated by Title I, but most principals that we have talked to have indicated that they want to have active citizen groups in order to build better communication and support from the school community.

To build a citizen advisory group that can give valuable input to the school requires help from staff, currently involved citizens and the principal. Below is a procedure that you might use or modify in order to build a group that is representative of the school and community.

FORMING A REPRESENTATIVE GROUP

Purpose: To help PAC members (or other involved parents/citizens)
           identify who lives in the community, to identify opinion
           leaders in the community and to take steps to form a
           representative school-community advisory group.

Procedure: Have individuals or small groups fill out Form #1
           "School Community Profile."

           Working as a total group, fill out Form #2, "Representatives
           and Opinion Groups."

           Once you have identified the people who need to be on the
           representative School-Community Group, have your group
           fill out the third form, "Who Can Help." This is a
           planning work sheet for identifying the representatives,
           the groups they represent, how to contact representatives
           and the materials (orientation and awareness materials)
           and skills (example: decision-making skills) that the
           representatives will need to work effectively in the
           School-Community Group.

31

29

SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROFILE

DIRECTIONS: Stop to reflect on the composition of your community.
The worksheet is organized according to several
categories to help you reflect on your school-
community and to develop a community profile.

1. Using former data you've collected, intuition
and your best guesses, estimate the percentage
of the population in the following categories:

AGE CLUSTERS

Under 18 _____
18 - 25 _____
26 - 35 _____
36 - 50 _____
51 - 65 _____
over 65 _____

SEX

Male _____
Female _____

MARITAL STATUS

(Rank order according to size of group, 1 = most populated
group; 7 = least populated group)

With Children   single   _____
married   _____
separated/divorced _____
married (children
over 18).   _____

Without Children   single   _____
married   _____
separated/divorced _____

Form #1 (continued)

HOUSING (use %)

Individually owned homes _____
Rented homes _____
Apartments _____
Subsidized housing _____

Are there any natural boundaries (freeways, apartment
clusters, etc.) within your district? What are they?

EDUCATION

Less than high school _____
High school graduate _____
Some college _____
College graduate _____
Advanced degree _____

POLITICAL PREFERENCE

Liberal _____
Conservative _____
Moderate _____

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

List major religious groups in this community.

RACIAL MIX

Anglo _____
Black _____
Native American _____
Chicano _____
Other _____

ADDITIONAL INFLUENCE GROUPS

List lodges, major employers, citizens or neighborhood groups
in your community.

REPRESENTATIVES AND OPINION GROUPS

Based on the community profile, identify those persons you would
need to have in a representative problem-solving group. List the
major opinion groups (example: single parent families, Russian
ethnic group, employees of GAF, etc.) on the left of the sheet and
the number of persons that you would need from that group to form
a representative group. (Example: if your district has a very
large Chicano population and a medium size Anglo Baptist group, you
may need two Chicano representatives and only one Anglo Baptist.)
Also list possible representatives of the group if you know them.

Opinion Groups	No. of Reps.	Possible Representatives

TO USE WITH PAC--Form #3

WHO CAN HELP

Directions:

Now that you have (1) developed a community profile and (2) identified significant opinion groups, you will need to consider who can help you reach these people to invite them to join the citizen's group. This list may include teachers, aides, counselors, students, currently active (in PAC) citizens, Title I district staff, parents with whom you have contact.

WHO	TARGET GROUP	HOW CONTACT GROUPS/PEOPLE	MATERIALS/SKILLS NEEDED

These forms are not only for principals who wish to help form representative groups. They can also be used with members of an ongoing school-community group or PAC. Members can use them to determine if the group has representation of all groups and people concerned.

The processes and the procedures that a group
uses will often determine how the group accomplishes
its tasks. We are going to examine four important
aspects of group functioning:

- Communication
- Decision making
- Problem solving
- Leadership functions

Communication

The ways that members in a group communicate
with one another can determine how members feel
about their participation. If members interrupt
one another, or misconstrue statements, or label
each other, there are bound to be problems. Do
you use the time another person is speaking as
time for you to prepare what you are about to say?
Or do you listen actively to what others are saying
to be sure you understand? When you are tired and
exhausted, do you tell the other members of the
group? When members of a group are restless, do
you ask them if it is about time for a break?
All of the above examples deal with communication
or the lack of communication. The following
material can be used as a handout with the PAC
or simply as a review for you of the ways that
communication can be enhanced. By using these
skills you can model communication that helps
groups work effectively.

communica-
tion

TO USE WITH PAC — This can be used as a discussion paper

REVIEW OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Four skills have been identified that, if used consistently and correctly, can aid people in communicating with one another. These are: paraphrasing, perception checking, behavior description, and describing one's own feelings.

PARAPHRASING

The situation: How do you check to make sure that you understand another person's ideas, information or suggestions as he/she intended them? How do you know that his/her remark means the same to you as it does to him/her?

The skill: If you state in your own way what his/her remark conveys to you, the other can begin to determine whether his/her message is coming through as intended. Then if the speaker thinks you misunderstand, he/she can speak directly to the specific misunderstanding you have revealed.

Example: Sarah: Jim should never have become a teacher.
Bob: You mean teaching isn't the right job for him?
Sarah: Exactly! Teaching is not the right job for Jim.

PERCEPTION CHECK

The situation: How do you know how another person is really feeling? You can mentally translate behaviors into your assessment of the other's feelings, but unless you check with the other person, you may be guessing incorrectly.

The skill: You describe what you perceived to be the other's inner state in order to check whether you do understand what he/she feels. That is, you test to see whether you have decoded the other's expressions of feeling accurately.

Example: "I get the impression you are angry with me. Are you?"
(Not: "Why are you so angry with me?" This is mind reading, not perception checking.)

BEHAVIOR DESCRIPTION

The situation: If you and another person are to discuss the way you work together or what is happening in your relationship, both of you must be able to talk about what each of you does that affects the other. This is not easy. Most of us have trouble describing another's behavior; we usually discuss his/her attitudes, his/her motives or his/her traits and personality characteristics.

The skill: Behavior description means reporting specific, observable actions of others without (1) placing a value on them as right or wrong, bad or good, (2) making accusations or generalizations about the other's motives, attitudes or personality traits.

Example: "Bill, you've talked more than the others on this topic. Several times you have cut me and others off before we had finished."

Not: "Jim, you are always so rude! You just want to hog the floor!"

DESCRIPTION OF FEELINGS

The situation: If you wish others to respond to you as a person, you must help them understand how you feel.

The skill: Although we usually try to describe our ideas clearly and accurately, we often do not try to describe our feelings clearly. Feelings get expressed in many different ways, but we do not usually attempt to identify the feeling itself.

Examples:

One way to describe a feeling is to identify or name it. "I feel angry." "I feel comfortable." Another way is to express feelings in terms of similes. "I feel like a distance runner at the end of a race." A third way is to describe the feeling in terms of a wished for action. "I feel like I would like to hug you."

45

37

Decision Making

Decision making is one of the most important
processes that groups undertake. The methods used
to make decisions can tell a lot about a group.
Think back over a group meeting you have attended.
How many times were decisions made simply because
there was a lack of response? Do you remember
times when a group member proposed an idea and was
interrupted by another member? Have there been
times when there was no response to an idea or
proposal? What about times when the convener has
said, "Well, it looks like we want to do such and
such," before really determining the wishes of the
entire group? All of these incidents are ways of
making decisions. When a proposal is made and
either interrupted or not discussed, it is a way
of saying that this proposal is defeated. When
a group leader makes decisions without formally
getting group support, it is a form of authority
rule or one-person decision making.

decision
making

Consider the following ways that decisions
are made:

1. Decisions by Lack of Response ("Plop"):
This is the most common way that decisions are
made. It occurs so often and quickly that it is
often hard to see. Someone suggests an idea, and
before anyone else has said anything about it,
someone else suggests another idea until the
troop finds one it will act on. All the ideas
which have been bypassed have in a sense been
decided upon by the group.

This kind of decision making can lead to
frustration and be very demoralizing for the
people who made the suggestions. "Well, if my
ideas aren't good enough for this group, I'll
just shut up."

47

38

2.   Decisions by Authority Rule: Many groups
set up a system where there is open discussion of
ideas, but the chairman or president of the group
can say after holding a free discussion that he/she
has decided what to do.

     This kind of decision making is very efficient.
However, if the group does not support the decision
made by the authority, it may not work to carry out
the decision. "If he thinks it's such a good idea,
let him carry it out."

     3. Decisions by a Minority: This is when a few
people hold the decision-making power, or when a
motion passes with only support by a small faction of
the group. This kind of decision making has the same
difficulty as authority rule--the silent majority can
get angry and either sabotage the decision or drop
out of the group. "Silence means consent, doesn't
it? Everyone had a chance to voice opposition."

     Decisions by "Hand Clasp": This is another
form of minority rule--one or more members actively
support a course of action; on the basis of this
support, the course of action is chosen. Sometimes
this has been called "railroading."

     4. Decisions by Majority Support: (Voting/
Polling) This is a familiar decision-making process.
One simple way is to poll everyone's opinion following
some discussion, and if some majority feels that same
way, to assume that is a decision. The other method
is the more formal one of stating a clear alternative
and asking for votes in favor of it and votes against
it, and abstentions.

     On the surface, this method seems completely
sound, but surprisingly often decisions made by this
approach are difficult to carry out. The minority
that lost can form a splinter group and either not
support the decision of the majority or actively
work against it. "We'll just form another group."

48

39

5. **Decisions by Consensus:** One of the most effective but also most time-consuming methods of group decision making is to seek consensus. Consensus is a state of affairs whereby a survey is taken to assess everyone's preference. A proposal is made and everyone is again surveyed to see if this is something they can support--not necessarily the first choice of any one participant, but something that can be supported by every member. No decision is made until every member of the group has stated that he/she can "live" with the decision and will not work against the decision. (Actual procedures will be on a separate page.)

The weakness of this decision-making procedure is that it often takes a lot of time. The strength is that when a decision is made, it is one that the total group can support.

6. **Decisions by Unanimous Consent:** This is the logically perfect but least attainable kind of decision. This is when everyone truly agrees on the course of action to be taken.

No one decision-making process is completely good or completely bad. It is important for a group to determine how it wants to make decisions, which kinds of issues need which kinds of decisions and how to monitor the decision-making process. It is also important in a PAC to identify those issues which must be decided upon by authorities from the school and which issues need to be decided by the PAC. One way to do this is to brainstorm the kinds of things that need decisions (curriculum changes, budget, PAC group procedures, etc.) and list the kinds of ways that decisions will be made around these issues.

49

40

It is currently popular to make decisions by
"consensus." There are some very good reasons for
consensus decision making--group support, a decision
that will be carried out with enthusiasm by all
members, etc. However, many decisions that are
supposedly made by consensus are in fact decisions
by majority rule and minority acquiescence. How
often do you see a group leader look around a group,
where a few heads are nodding affirmatively, and say,
" Well, it looks like we are in consensus."? If the
leader were to systematically poll the entire group,
it is very likely that not everyone could support
the decision. It is important if you choose con-
sensus decision making as the appropriate method
for your group that you have an agreed upon procedure
for determining consensus. The following is one
method:

TO USE WITH PAC

This can be reviewed with the PAC and if appropriate, set up as the procedure for making decisions.

PROCEDURES FOR DECISION BY CONSENSUS

1. A person states the decision that is proposed.

2. Someone offers a paraphrase of the decision, that is, puts the decision in his or her own words.

3. The person proposing the decision judges the accuracy of the paraphrase. If it is inaccurate, repeat the process.

4. If the paraphrase is accurate, the person proposing the decision or the chairperson asks each group member, in turn, to state whether or not he or she can support the decision, and if not, to state an alternative, if he or she wishes.

5. If all persons agree to support the decision, consensus exists and the decision is made.

6. If one or more persons do not agree to support the decision, but offer alternatives, test each alternative by asking each group member whether or not he or she can support it. At this point, the decision is made official either by voting or by having group members make some visible sign, such as raising their thumbs, that they support the decision and accept the conditions of consensus.

7. If consensus cannot be reached on existing alternatives, ask if there are other alternatives that anyone can suggest.

8. If no alternative can be found upon which consensus can be reached, try to locate reasons (for example, lack of information, inappropriate time to make the decision, etc.) why persons are unwilling to reach consensus.

9. If consensus is not reached, set a new time to attempt to make the decision.

CONDITIONS OF CONSENSUS

- Everyone agrees to support the decision, though it may not be everyone's first choice.

- Everyone agrees that he or she has had sufficient opportunity to influence the decision.

- Everyone can state what the decision is.

51

42

Problem Solving

The way a group solves problems is also important. Have you been a member of a group that spent most of its time spinning its wheels? You might want to consider introducing the following systematic problem-solving procedure to the PAC.

We have identified a problem-solving model that has five phases:
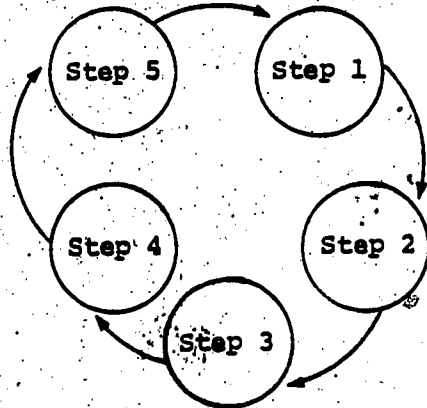
Step 1: Define the Problem
Step 2: Search for Ways to Solve the Problem
Step 3: Make Plans
Step 4: Carry Out Plans
Step 5: Assess Results

Using the need to recruit membership for the PAC as an example, here is how the PAC might go about systematically solving this problem:

Step 1 - The PAC has dwindled to three members over the course of the summer. It is determined that the membership needs a boost very badly. The three remaining members can develop a goal statement: We want our PAC to have a membership of at least ten Title I parents with at least seven at every meeting. The first step of the problem-solving process is completed when the group has identified a problem and has a goal statement.

Step 2 - The group proceeds to search for ways to boost attendance. These might include: providing transportation, arranging for babysitting, potluck meetings, publicity.

problem
solving

over the radio, etc. To identify alternatives, the group might brainstorm ideas and then identify strengths and weaknesses of each proposed solution. Example: babysitting might be a good idea, but not possible because of the limited PAC budget. After the group has assessed strengths and weaknesses, it can then prioritize the list of alternatives and pick the top one or two approaches. In this case the group may choose to have both a potluck and plan some radio publicity. This step is over when the group chooses one or more alternatives.

Step 3 - If the PAC has chosen to have a potluck meeting and arrange for radio publicity, they will need to make plans for both these activities. This is the Who, What, and When. Who will coordinate the potluck, What will be on the menu and the agenda and When does all of this need to take place? Who will arrange for radio coverage, What will be announced (script) and When will it be announced? At this time it is also important to determine how the PAC will evaluate success. Will having an attendance increase of 50% be a success? 80%? Or will the PAC determine success by not only attendance, but how many people volunteer to help Title I?

Step 4 - This is the step where the plans for the radio announcements are made and carried out and the potluck is given.

Step 5 - The PAC will need to get together again to determine the success of the two chosen alternatives. Had participants heard the announcement on the radio? Did people not only attend the potluck, but express an

54

interest in being involved with Title I?
Here too, the PAC can evaluate its effec-
tiveness at making plans and carrying them
out. Did those people who made commitments
to either plan the radio announcements or
prepare for the potluck live up to their
agreements? Does everyone feel that the
work was worth the effort? How can the
group work more effectively together?

Problem solving is a cyclical process. After
one problem is solved, the problem-solving group
may go on to identify additional problems. It is
by constant monitoring of a group's effectiveness
that groups thrive.

Leadership Functions

Leaders are generally considered to be those
persons who work well with the members of the group.
The function of the leader is to help members gain
skills and have meaningful involvement. The
following are components of leadership. You might
use this as a discussion list when working with
the PAC convener.

**leader-
ship**

Provide Leadership. People come to groups
with certain expectations. One expectation is
that someone will be in charge and will start
things off. Therefore it is important for the
leader to clarify with the group the goals and
purpose of the meeting.

Identify Successes. It is not bragging to
comment occasionally on the successes the group
is experiencing. Building morale is important
for group functioning.

Share Leadership with Others. One sign of
a leader is his or her ability to share leader-
ship. If the leader supports different members
in assuming responsibility for tasks, the group
members will also assume more ownership.

Support Total Participation. Different people
like to participate in different ways. The person
who enjoys greeting people and helping people feel
included may not be a person who enjoys convening
an entire meeting. If the role of greeter is
accorded the same amount of legitimacy (or prestige)
as the role of convener, then people will have the
opportunity to do what they enjoy doing. The Trail
Blazers win because they are a team!

Leadership is a shared function. Each member
of the PAC can have a leadership role. The following
handout describes specific roles that PAC members
may want to assume.

TO USE WITH PAC

This material can be used for discussion with PAC members.

LEADERSHIP ROLES

The Convener

The convener makes arrangements for the meeting, presents the agenda and conducts the meeting. This person keeps the group on task and encourages participation.

It is difficult to be both the convener and a major participant in discussions. As convener, you need to focus much of your attention on group process. If you have a lot of ideas you want to present, questions to ask or issues to raise, you may wish to ask someone else to temporarily act as convener.

Participants in meetings should feel that the time they spent was worthwhile. Although no one can guarantee that every meeting will be regarded as meaningful, the convener can take some steps to address people's concerns. This is done by assuming certain responsibilities before, during and after a meeting.

Secretary/Recorder

The group's recorder keeps track of what topics are covered and particularly what decisions are made.

The recorder should keep the following information:

- The name of the group
- Meeting place, date, time
- Participants, convener
- The proposed agenda
- The decisions made and agreements for follow-up activities
- A summary of the evaluation of the meeting

Process Observer

The role of the process observer is to watch and report the way the group operates.

The observer does not participate in the discussion. He or she sits apart from the group in order to gain a more objective view of what is happening within the group. When a discussion becomes hopelessly

Leadership Roles (continued)

bogged down or whenever the group members want to make use of the observer, he or she may be called on to give feedback on what has taken place. At the end of the meeting, the observer shares his or her perceptions of the group's process and behaviors with its members.

Process observers look for the following things:

- Does the group keep to the agenda?
- Does the group start on time? End on time?
- Is there balanced participation?
- What is the emotional atmosphere?
- Is the group dependent on one or two people?
- Do members help others communicate by paraphrasing or summarizing?
- Do members build on others' contributions?
- Do people actively listen and ask for clarification if needed?
- Do members summarize and check for understanding?
- Are points backed up with data and reasons?
- Are decisions made? How?
- Does everyone have a chance to get in on decision making?

The observer should be prepared to give feedback in terms of behavior descriptions--"Three members were late to the meeting"--not in evaluative terms--"Bill and Tom are never on time because they are disorganized!"

Because the observer does not enter into the discussion, rotate this role from meeting to meeting or ask a person outside the group to assume this role.

Summary. For most people reading this paper, meetings are probably a common everyday occurrence. To keep meetings interesting, on target and to build a base for productivity, pay attention to pre-planning the meeting, using an agenda and clarifying roles.

Once roles are identified, you may want to
work with the convener, the recorder or the
process observer to help them establish procedures
for carrying out their roles. The following hand-
outs can serve as models or guides for these
roles.

TO USE WITH PAC -- This can be used as a discussion paper.

HOW TO CONDUCT SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

"Meetings! I hate 'em."

"Nothing ever gets done."

"Everybody sits around and argues."

"I wouldn't mind the meeting so much if the same people didn't always do all the talking."

If these comments sound familiar, the suggestions listed below may be helpful to you to bring your meetings out of the doldrums.

The three keys to a successful meeting include (1) pre-planning, (2) using an agenda and (3) clear roles of the people in the meeting.

1. <u>Pre-plan the meeting</u>. One of the most important ingredients of a good meeting is that people mutually understand the purpose of the meeting. Meetings will generally fall into one of these five categories:

    - information sharing
    - decision making
    - problem solving
    - skill building
    - bull/social session

Many complaints about meetings can be prevented if people know what they're coming to do. If early in the meeting someone states the purpose, it can help others see the direction and goal of the meeting.

2. <u>Use an agenda</u>. An agenda is an effective tool for identifying issues to be covered in a meeting, checking progress throughout the meeting, keeping a record of what was done and insuring followup on each item discussed. Better meetings can be planned if people who wish to be on the agenda complete a form that identifies the topic they want to talk about. Below is a sample form.

SAMPLE AGENDA--BUILDING FORM

Meeting of:_____

Meeting date:_____   Convener:_____

Submitted by:_____

1. Brief description of the item:

2. Action required (check ones that apply):

    _____to inform   _____to vent   _____to build skill

    _____to decide   _____to discuss   _____other:

Sample Agenda--Building Form (continued)

3. Materials to bring to the meeting:

4. Presenter:

5. Who else should be present:

6. Time required:

7. Any other information:

If each participant submits an agenda item on this form, the convener can use these forms to build the meeting agenda. A sample agenda appears below.

SAMPLE AGENDA

Group Meeting:_____

Date:_____   Convener:_____

<u>Item</u>   <u>Presenter</u>   <u>Action</u>   <u>Item</u>   <u>Followup</u>

51

TO USE WITH PAC

This check list can be used by the convener and the process observer.

		Arrangement Complete (✓)
I.	**BEFORE THE MEETING**	
A.	Arrange for adequate facilities	____
B.	Prepare a tentative agenda	____
C.	Circulate the agenda in advance	____
II.	**DURING THE MEETING**	
A.	At the beginning of the meeting	
	1. Call the meeting to order at the designated time	
	2. Be certain that there is a recorder	____
	3. Be certain there is a process observer	____
	4. State the purpose of the meeting	____
B.	During the meeting	
	1. Keep the group focused on its purpose and tasks	____
	2. Monitor the discussion so that everyone has a chance to speak	____
	3. Clarify and summarize when appropriate	____
	4. Assist the group in using agreed upon procedures	____
	5. Bring out all sides of an issue	____
	6. Move the group toward decisions	____
	7. Use knowledge and skills of group process and communication	____
C.	At the end of the meeting	
	1. Make sure assignments and agreements are clear	____
	2. Announce the date, time and place of the next meeting	____
	3. Identify the purpose of the next meeting and any items that will be on that agenda	____
	4. Hear the report from the process observer	____
	5. Evaluate the meeting	____
III.	**AFTER THE MEETING**	
A.	Check with the recorder to be sure that the minutes are clear	____
B.	Help others carry out the decisions made	

67

52

BUILDING A TITLE I CALENDAR

Another task for getting started is building
the Title I Calendar. Each school will need to
create a unique calendar to meet specific needs.
The two calendars on the next two pages are from
the Parent Advisory Councils in Oregon, Where Do
You Fit?

The items are listed according to school
events and PAC events. You will need to work with
the PAC in your own school to set up definite dates.
You may also find that you need to work with the
district administration to come to agreement on dates
for the school events.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR EVENTS FOR <u>PARTNERS</u> IN A TITLE I PROGRAM[4]

<u>Role of the School</u>

August	Carry out staff training
September	Begin project. Select students and inform parents. Help PAC get started.
October	Test students. Plan students' programs. Tell regular staff about project plans. Give information and resources to PAC. (Specific plans and how-to suggestions come later.)
November	Orientation/training programs are conducted for the PAC. Judge how well students are doing in current project.
December	Plan activities, using parents, senior citizens, and other community members as resources.
January	Select eligible school(s) for next year.
February	Decide upon major student needs for next year's program.
March	Choose project schools. Plan projects for the next year.
April	Continue planning for the coming year.
May	Turn in application. Choose probable students for program. Test students in current program. Gather data on success or failure of program.
June	Get state approval of next year's application. Turn in report to state on current project. Do inventory of Title I equipment and materials.

[4] From <u>PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS IN OREGON</u>,
Title I, ESEA, Oregon Dept. of Ed.
942 Lancaster Drive N.E., Salem, Oregon,
Page 14

Role of the PAC*[5]

Contact and involve parents.	August
Continue making contacts.	September
Sponsor get-together for parents. Work with staff to tell parents about the program. Nominate and select PAC members.	October
Plan meetings as parents desire-- possibly with health, police, and education leaders. Hold workshops.	November
Plan on-site visits. Check on progress of school's program.	December
Collect information on needs in target school(s).	January
Help develop statement to staff or board on next year's needs.	February
Give suggestions for project schools and plans.	March
Review and judge Title I applica- tion, and program budget.	April
Go over program data and year-end report (when available). Compare with program reports for other years.	May
Judge PAC performance. Begin plans early for fall program.	June

*The role of the PAC continues all year, so this timetable may vary slightly.

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[5] Ibid., page 15

55

The most important thing to remember in
building a PAC calendar is to involve the PAC
members in determining dates. You can share
with them your expectations--"We need to select
PAC members by the end of November, and we need
to involve PAC members in the needs assessment
by the end of February"--and work with them to
determine interim dates for preparation.

SUMMARY

In this section we have covered many topics
that together go into starting work with a PAC.
We have discussed publicity and recruitment.
We have presented some alternative ways to
select PAC members and explored the pros and
cons of each approach. We have also examined
the processes and procedures that need attention
if the PAC or any other group, for that matter,
is to function well: meeting needs of individual
members; representation; communications; decision
making; problem solving; and leadership. Finally,
we have included a sample timeline and calendar.
We hope that this material is useful to you in
starting up your PAC. We also hope that some of
the material helps you with work with other
groups--PTA groups, citizen advisory groups and
staff groups.

Material in the next section is focused on
developing some procedures that enable PAC mem-
bers and other parents to visit the school,
observe Title I classes and feel comfortable in
the school environment.

73

SECTION 3 – Visiting the School & Monitoring Programs

One of the minimum Title I requirements is for PAC members to become familiar with the current program activities. One of the most effective ways for this to take place is for parents to visit the Title I programs in the school and observe how the program is being carried out.

Here are several ways that a PAC person can monitor the Title I program:

PAC Members Can:

- Visit a Title I class

- Talk to other Title I parents who are not on the PAC to tell them about the program(s) and solicit the parent's perceptions

- Talk with Title I teachers to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the — current program

Reports of these activities can be considered data that can be reported to the local PAC and the district coordinator, the school principal and Title I staff, so that improvements or changes in the program can be made.

Why Aren't Parent Visits Always Effective?

Most principals say they would welcome parent involvement in monitoring; however, few parents actually come into the school to observe. The situation is understandable. From the principal's point of view the visits are time consuming, potentially disruptive or overly routine, and the outcomes of visits not clear.

75

From the Title I teacher's point of view
parent monitoring can be a nuisance. Classroom
instruction is interrupted when strangers come into
the classroom, and a child will behave differently
when mom or dad is in the classroom than at other
times. For the teacher, too, the visits are time
consuming. When the teacher asks parent opinions
about Title I programs, the response is often,
"I don't know. You are the expert. You know more
about teaching than I do."

From a third point of view there is the
Title I Parent. Frequently the parent is uncom-
fortable in the school. Perhaps he/she didn't do
well in school, as a child. The school can be a
foreign and formidable place. Offices may be
difficult to find. Transportation to and from the
school can pose a problem. The school can be seen
as filled with "educated" people who have judged
that the parent's child is failing. And educators
talk funny! The following clipping from Erma
Bombeck is humorous, but is also all too familiar
to parents and other lay people dealing with
educators.

58

At Wit's End: Facilitators learn best in Educationese

By ERMA BOMBECK

I stopped volunteering in my children's school when I was giving a reading and comprehension test one day to a group of 7th-graders and discovered I was reading on a 5th-grade level.

Not only that, but one of them came to me later and advised, "We were like you before our teacher participated in an inservice training program in pupil diagnosis and prescription and measured us on a set of criterion-referenced tests covering interim performance objectives."

Somehow between Spot chasing those lousy sticks all day and Show and Tell, education lost me.

I now go to parent-teacher conferences only for the bridge mix and the punch. To tell you the truth, I can barely remember when objectives weren't back to basics, classes "structured," teachers in teams and interaction didn't sound dirty.

Educators have become so proficient at speaking Educationese that I find myself having to translate for my son's teacher.

"Hello, Miss Sawyer," I said the other night, "I'm Wesley's mother."

She frowned. "The home authority figure?"

"Of course."

"Please have a seat."

"I see by Wesley's report card that he's been goofing off while you're out of the room."

She was straining to comprehend. "Translation: Rodents in the absence of their feline adversaries are prone to divert themselves."

"An excellent analogy."

"At home, we either threaten him by turning off 'Laverne and Shirley' or give 'im a rap. Translation: Motivate him through fear or eliminate an electronic visual completely."

She nodded.

"Perhaps it would be less sweat if we could work together." Miss Sawyer winced. "Or to put it another way, a combination of the facilitator and the facilitatee feeding into the learning program that is designed to enhance the concept of the learning program with a minimum of perspiration."

She smiled. "Articulation between the non-academic community and the postsecondary world is one of the classic unsolved education problems which we seem to have alleviated."

I'm not sure, but I think Miss Sawyer just said she favors birth control.

PROCEDURES FOR INVOLVING PARENTS IN SCHOOL
VISITATIONS

This material is intended to describe a way
in which the principal can work with the Title I
PAC to design and carry out a Title I parent
visitation program.

The Problem: According to state guidelines,
two of the four major PAC tasks are to: (1) review
the needs assessment and make recommendations about
future Title I programs, and (2) review the Title I
application for next year. (The other two tasks
are to review the past year's Title I accomplish-
ments and become familiar with this year's program,
and to organize the PAC and tell new members about
the PAC and Title I.)

As has been repeatedly pointed out, one of the
biggest problems with Title I is that it is so darn
hard to get people interested in serving on the PAC--
at all! A Title I principal reading this material
might ask, "How am I going to get a nonexistent PAC
to design and carry out a Title I visitation program?"
The next question is, "How can the PAC carry out the
tasks of reviewing and making recommendations about
the needs assessment of next year's application if
they've not been involved in observing the school
programs?"

So we're back to the old problem, "How to get
the Title I parent involved?"

Alternatives: Various alternatives have been
explored, including conducting an open house, meetings
that include a lunch or dinner, inviting parents to
programs that feature their children, building the
skill of members to participate effectively, and
so on.

These materials are about another alternative:
a Title I parent visitation/observation program.
We believe that such a program could greatly assist

79

the Title I principal in promoting an active, growing, functioning PAC. It builds and expands the knowledge of Title I parents to participate effectively in the major tasks, reviewing needs assessment and the Title I application.

Some of the materials may appear overly simple. Others may seem to deal only indirectly with the problem of program monitoring. It is our belief that in working with Title I parents, typically the educationally and economically disadvantaged, it is necessary to start with the basics. That is, you need to get the parents into the school and involved in a meaningful way.

The following materials present guidelines and suggestions for ways to develop a Parent Visitation Program. It is our notion that this can become a PAC project with guidance and assistance from the principal, but with primary responsibility falling to the PAC members. One PAC member is all you need to begin to use this material.

A caution about using the material. At several points, the parents are expected to interact with teachers. The PAC members working on this project should be aware of the advantages of working collaboratively with the teachers who will be involved in the project. Encourage both your staff and the parents to work to establish a give-and-take approach.

Developing a Parent Visitation Program

Items 1 through 8 below outline a sequence
of activity for planning and carrying out a Parent
Visitation Program. The column on the right identi-
fies resources that are a part of this packet of
materials. The resources are meant to be used as a
starting point, modified and revised in order to
fit the unique needs of PAC planning such a program.

SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITY	MATERIAL IN THIS PACKET TO ASSIST IN CARRYING OUT THE ACTIVITY
1. PAC planning meeting	1. Purposes and Value Involving Parents in Observation Visits
2. Deciding about team visits	2. Why Visit in Teams
3. Selecting a time	3. Selecting a Time for the Team Visits
4. Deciding activities for the visit	4. Activities for Parent Visits (suggestions about places, purpose and materials)
5. Planning the invitations	5. Phoning Parents (items to cover in a phone invitation, sample conversation)
6. Making the master list	6. The Master Plan
7. The parent's visit	7. Guidelines for Title I Program Observation (Principal)
	Suggestions for Title I Program Observers (Parents)
	Glossary
	Observation Instrument
	Evaluation of the Parent School Visit
	Sample Outline for Parent Report
8. Reporting the data	8. Using the Information

Purposes and Value of Involving Parents in Observation Visits

It is useful when planning any activity to focus on the purpose(s) of the activity. We have generated several reasons for involving parents in observation visits. We have clustered them according to reasons for parents to value this, reasons for students to benefit, reasons for the PAC to be involved and reasons why the school staff might value visits:

Parents:

1. Become familiar and comfortable in the school
2. Have the opportunity to see their children in the school environment
3. Become involved with their children's education
4. Meet Title I teachers, administrators and other staff
5. Get to know other parents of Title I students
6. Learn about the current Title I program
7. Learn some of the language of the school
8. Become better prepared to participate in reviewing needs assessment data and Title I application

Students:

1. Show off their school
2. Demonstrate reading, writing, math and other skills
3. Display their work
4. Show off their parents
5. Introduce their teachers and friends

The PAC (even a one- or two-person PAC):

1. Organizes a meaningful and worthwhile PAC activity
2. Builds ownership of the Visitation Program
3. Builds interest and support for the activities of the PAC
4. Introduces Title I parents to others
5. Collects information to use in reviewing the needs assessment and evaluating next year's application

<u>Title I Staff</u> (administrators, coordinators, etc.):

1. Gains active, meaningful parent involvement

2. Shares information about the school and Title I program

3. Makes parents feel comfortable and welcome in the school

4. Builds momentum for easy recruitment for next year's PAC

5. Improves school-community relations

<u>Visiting in Teams</u>

The goal of the Parent Visitation Program is to have every Title I parent visit the school. If at all possible, <u>every Title I parent should be involved</u> in the Parent Visitation Program. The chance of reaching this goal is increased if the parent visits are planned for groups of people rather than single individuals.

From a parent's point of view, the advantages of having team visits are that parents can come with their friends and build new acquaintances among other people like themselves. People talk more freely and comfortably with others they perceive to be like themselves. Visiting in a team can build the individual's sense of inclusion and belonging.

By having several people visit at the same time, you increase the chance for common needs and solutions to common problems to be identified. Transportation is easier to arrange if you plan for team visits.

From a principal's point of view, the advantages of team visits include the fact that it will take less time. Also, by increasing the number of eyes and ears in a team visit, you increase the number of points of view that get reported about the effectiveness of the Title I program. More data gives better grounds for decision making. By including a number of people in the observation, you build a spirit and momentum that can be used when setting up next year's PAC.

83

64

Finally, when people visit in a team and have an opportunity for informal communication, perception, comprehension and memory seem to increase. Besides, it's just more fun!

Consider the following criteria when identifying the teams of parents to come together to visit the school.

- Parents whose children are in the same class
- People who live in the same area and can arrange transportation together
- People who already know each other
- A mix of a few outgoing people with a few shy ones
- Mix people who are already familiar with the school with others who have seldom or never been in the school

Selecting a Time for the Team Visits

When the PAC considers the time to schedule the parent visits, they should ask themselves these questions:

1. What are the options?
   a. All parents visit in a few days
   b. Conduct the visits in one or two weeks
   c. Have a few people visit every week
   d. Visits only in the morning
   e. Visits only in the afternoon
2. What are the advantages/disadvantages of each option?
3. What is the PAC planning team's first and second choice?
4. Present the preferred time to the principal and Title I teachers whose classrooms would be visited. Negotiate a time schedule that best fits everyone's needs.

Planning a Schedule

The sample schedule on the next page can be used as a guide by you for structuring visitations. We have indicated not only the time and the place, but the purpose of the activity and resources you might consider having on hand.

85

TO USE WITH PAC

SAMPLE PARENT VISIT AGENDA

TIME[a]	PLACE	PURPOSE	USEFUL RESOURCES
10-20 min.	Principal or Title I coordinator's office	1. To review plans for the visit 2. To pick up materials 3. To review observer guidelines 4. Answer questions	1. Time 2. Coffee 3. Maps of the school 4. Names of teachers and other significant staff 5. Observer guidelines[b] 6. Observation instrument[b] 7. Glossary of terms
15-30 min.	Gymnasium, playground, cafeteria, library, teachers' lounge special facility classrooms	1. To become familiar with the school 2. To learn about school resources 3. To build a feeling of importance, inclusion	
20-60 min.	Title I classroom	1. To observe Title I program 2. To observe own children in school 3. To meet teachers and other students 4. To review Title I materials 5. To collect data to evaluate Title I program	1. Observation instrument[b]
15-30 min.	Principal or Title 1 coordinator's office	1. To talk about the observations made during the visit 2. To return data forms 3. To create a feeling of importance, valuing, appreciating parent involvement	1. Comfortable conversation space 2. Refreshments 3. Evaluation of parent school visit[b]

[a] Minimum parent time: 1 hour
Maximum parent time: 2 hours, 20 minutes

Minimum principal time: 1/2 hour
Maximum principal time: 1 hour

[b] Indicates a sample is included in this packet of materials

87

Planning the Invitations

We strongly suggest that invitations be extended by telephone or in person. Written material is often ignored because it doesn't carry the same message of interest and caring that a personal phone call does.

Here are three alternatives for conducting the phone invitations:

1. PAC planning members get a list of names and phone numbers of all Title I parents, divide up the list and place the calls.

2. PAC planning members select three or four Title I parents who would be willing to help with phoning. Ask these three or four people to be "hosts" for the Parent Visitation. The person who phones Title I parents will be at the school to greet them when they come to visit.

3. Telephone tree. If your PAC planning team is very small, have each one of them call enough people to make up one visiting team. After conducting the parent visit, ask one or two of the team members to become hosts for the next round of visits. Repeat the process until most Title I parents have visited the school.

The chart below identifies the items to cover in the phone call and gives a sample conversation to use with kids or parents who feel particularly uneasy about telephoning a stranger.

TO USE WITH PAC

PHONING PARENTS

Items to Cover	Sample Conversation
1. Identify yourself	Hello, my name is ____. I am also a parent with a child in (name of school). I'm a member of a group called the Parent Advisory Council or PAC for short. (At this point you can explain briefly what a PAC is.)
2. Reason for the call	The Parent Advisory Council and (principal) the principal, would like to invite you to come and visit (son or daughter's name)'s school.
3. Reason why your visit is important	(Student's name) is in a special (name of program) program and we would like you to be able to visit the program and let us know how you feel about it. The visit would take about (fill in time).
4. Date and time	I hope you could come to school on (day of the week) at (time) to meet me, and (the principal or coordinator), tour the school building and visit (student)'s (Title I program) class.
5. Alternative date and time, if needed	Could you make it then?
6. Transportation Parking Front entrance or place to meet	Do you need transportation?
7. Summary	O.K. then, (parent's name), I'll plan to meet you on (date and time) when you come to visit the school. I'm very happy you can come. 'Bye.

91

69

You may want to make a master plan for
parent visits. Include the information listed
below.

Date: Time of Visit

Host/Hostess:

Student Host or Hostess:

Names of Visiting Parents	Phone Number	Names of Children	Grade	Needs Transportation

Who is responsible for transportation?

Who is responsible for child care?

Schedule of Activities

Time	Place	Person in Charge	Has This Person Been Consulted About the Visit?

93

70

Guidelines for Title I Program Observation
(Principal)

Since some of the parents visiting the school
may be there for the first time and be unfamiliar
with "educationese," it would be helpful if the
principal or Title I coordinator could provide
visitors with a brief summary of the Title I program
and some suggestions for what to look for when they
visit and observe the class. A one-page handout
might include:

1. Title of the class
2. Instructor's name
3. Names of assistants
4. Purpose of the class
5. Teaching strategies being used
6. Special equipment
7. Strengths of the class
8. Potential trouble spots
9. Special vocabulary
10. How this class relates to information
    gathered in last year's needs assessment.
    (Have needs assessment data available, in
    an understandable one-page summary form.)
11. Things to look for
12. Suggestions for a successful visit (see
    sample on following page)

94

71

SUGGESTIONS FOR TITLE I PROGRAM OBSERVERS (PARENTS)

The following tips are intended to make your visit at the school pleasant and productive. We hope you'll feel comfortable and enjoy your visit.

1. Be friendly. School staff are glad you've taken the time to come and visit the school. They'll welcome you.

2. Ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask about people, material or activities you don't understand. We may not always know the answers to your questions, and we'll do our best to explain what we know.

3. Ask, "What do you mean?" Sometimes we use jargon and forget that others have no way of knowing what some of the words or abbreviations mean. Stop us when we slip into technical talk. Say, "Wait a minute. What do you mean?"

4. Stay on schedule. If you're expected at a certain time, be there! If you'll be late, let the people expecting you know.

5. Enjoy yourself. The school belongs, in part, to you. Enjoy your stay while you're here. We encourage smiles and good will. Have a good time and pass it along.

95

TO USE WITH PAC

SCHOOL VISITATION OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

Purpose. Two purposes of this questionnaire are: (1) to get Title I parents' observations about their children's classroom and (2) to establish two-way communication between Title I parents and the school.

Use. The information will be tallied by the PAC, summarized and given to the principal, Title I coordinator and classroom teachers. It will be reported at the PAC meeting. Some of the information may be used to plan next year's needs assessment or to evaluate the Title I application.

Directions. The following statements are to help you describe the Title I classroom you visit. Mark the statement to describe what you see or feel. Read each statement carefully. If it describes what you see, draw a circle around it. If it does not describe what you see, cross it out. If you are not sure, just pass it up and go on to the next statement.

Teacher _____

Grade _____ Date _____

Room

1. The room is pleasant.
2. Student work is displayed.
3. There is a feeling of order.
4. Chairs are sized for the comfort of the student.
5. Lighting is good.
6. The temperature is comfortable.

97

OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT (continued)

Materials

7. There are extra books around the room.

8. There are interesting displays, such as fish tank, rock collection, pictures, etc.

9. There are enough materials for all students.

Students

10. My child seems to enjoy the activity I observe.

11. My child participates.

12. My child seems to understand directions given.

13. Rules are clear. (To me)

14. Students seem to do what they are expected to do.

15. Students seem to like this class.

16. Students work alone.

17. Students work in small groups.

Myself

18. I think I would like to be in this class.

19. I feel welcome during class visit.

Comments:

EVALUATION OF THE PARENT SCHOOL VISIT

1. How do you feel about your visit today?

    Very   1   2   3   4   5   Very
    Disappointed   Pleased

2. How much did you learn from your visit?

    Very   1   2   3   4   5   A Great
    Little   Deal

3. What did you like best?

4. What, if anything, would you change?

101

Using the Information

The report should be kept brief and interesting.
The PAC should be responsible for preparing the
report with assistance available from the princi-
pal or Title I coordinator.

Once all the parent visits are completed, the
PAC can use the data (information gathered from
the observation sheets and parent conversations)
to:

1. Compile a report

2. Publish a summary of the findings in the
   PAC newsletter

3. Share the idea of the project with district
   and state Title I offices

4. Share the summary report with the principal
   and Title I staff

5. Use the information as a basis for deter-
   mining needs assessment, program plans
   and/or next year's budget

6. Keep the parents who were involved up-to-
   date and involved in Title I activities.

The report of the Parent Visitation Program
should record the steps of the project so they
can be used again next year, point out the
strengths and weaknesses of the project, make
suggestions for modification and change. A
benefit of compiling a report is that it helps
people recognize their accomplishment, and it
gives closure to the project.

SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR PARENT REPORT

When preparing a report, it is a good idea to use an outline to come to agreement about the content of the report. Below is a suggested outline for a parent visitation report.

OUTLINE	SAMPLE REPORT
1. Who the report is to	TO: Principal and school staff FROM: Title I PAC
2. What the report is about	RE: Title I Parent Visits
a. The purpose of the report: - to inform - to decide - to problem-solve - to make recom- mendations	The purpose of this report is to inform the principal and school staff about Title I visits and to present recommendations.
b. A description of the task	Description of the task: To plan and carry out a Title I Parent Visit Program as part of monitoring the school program.
c. Procedures used to carry out the task and date completed	Procedures: 1. Met with principal to plan parent visits, 2/12 2. Planned visiting schedule, 2/13 3. Presented plan to teachers: modified, accepted, 2/20-22 4. Invited parents, 2/23 5. Conducted visits, 1st and 2nd week in March 6. Collected and summarized data from Observation Instrument, 3/12 7. Presented data to PAC, 3/14 8. Made recommendations listed below, 3/15
d. The results	Results: 3 PAC planners (Martha Hill, James Smith, Hilda Jones). 25 Title I parents scheduled for visits. 22 invited by Phone: 3 unable to reach. 14 parents participated in Parent Visit. 12 completed Observation Instrument.
e. Summary of data	Data summary: (fill in from Observation Instrument)
f. Recommendations	Recommendations: 1. 2. 3. 4. (etc.)

77

SUMMARY

The previous material on visiting the
school was designed to give you some hands-on
material to use with the PAC to make monitoring
the Title I program more meaningful. The
material followed a sequence similar to the
problem-solving sequence.

<u>Identifying the Problem</u>: the need for more
parents to visit the school

<u>Searching for Alternatives</u>: teaming for
visits; a planned agenda, etc.

<u>Planning</u>: planning sheets for the visi-
tation agenda

<u>Carrying Out the Plans</u>: this occurs when
the parent visits the school

<u>Assessing the Results</u>: feedback forms,
evaluation instruments; parent
report

We hope this material will be useful
to you and serve as a guideline for making
school visits more useful to you, your
staff and parents.

78

SECTION 4 - Needs Assessment

Planning and carrying out a needs assessment
is the first step in most systematic problem-
solving processes. To adequately assess needs it
is important to include those people in the needs
assessment who will benefit from any solutions
that are chosen as a result of the needs assessment.
For this reason we advocate having parents involved
in developing and carrying out part of the Title I
needs assessment.

Therefore in this section we will outline a
sequence of steps of a needs assessment and
present some guidelines for preparing instruments
that you may want to use with the PAC.

STEPS OF A PAC NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The following eleven planning steps can be
considered for preparing PAC volunteers who are
interested in designing and conducting a needs
assessment. You may want to review the list
with the PAC chairperson.

1. PAC members decide together what they want
   to know. Do they have a list of a few
   (3-6) priority items of their own that they
   want to check with the community?

2. PAC members consider and decide if they want
   identical information from the parents and
   from the students or if they want somewhat
   different information. It helps to clarify
   purposes by asking how different information
   would be used.

109

79

3. The PAC identifies the kind of instruments
   required for the kind of needs assessment
   the group wants to do. The differences
   between an interview schedule and a question-
   naire may require explanation.

4. The PAC decides who will build the instrument
   and who will receive skill training. Perhaps
   the entire PAC would like to attend a meeting
   where creating and testing questions are
   covered. Or perhaps a task force of two or
   three persons are interested. If some form
   of interviewing is to be done, plans should
   be made for as many persons as possible to
   practice interviewing.

5. Skill training can be provided by the principal,
   with the assistance of any people who know
   about the topics at hand--a math teacher,
   a counselor or a parent with related experience.

6. Sample or preliminary questions are constructed.
   This may be done by members or by a task force.
   Assemble the sample questions into a sample
   instrument.

7. The sample instruments are tested in a manner
   as nearly like the way they will be used as
   possible. If they are to be mailed or distrib-
   uted, questions need to be tested by having
   a few persons attempt to write answers with
   no guidance. If they are to be used with an
   interview or in a group meeting, test them that
   way even though the test may involve only a
   small role play of the situation.

8. Information from the trial of the sample
   questions can be tabulated and sorted. This
   will give the participants some idea if the
   construction of the instrument really gets
   the information for which it was intended.

9. The data reduction procedure can be planned
   now.

10. The questions are revised, and the final
    instrument is reviewed.

11. Training in the use of the instrument is
    conducted. As mentioned earlier, if inter-
    viewing is to be done, many people will need
    to be involved to cover the community
    adequately. All people who will help are
    likely to do a better job if they receive
    some training. Telephone survey, recording

of information from discussion groups,
and other techniques are also most success-
ful if the people to be involved can practice
what they are going to do.

In step #1 of this sequence we stated that
the PAC might want to identify some target needs.
The following material can be used by the PAC at
a PAC meeting to conduct a mini-needs assessment
to identify those target needs.

111

HOW TO CONDUCT A MINI-NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This activity is a sample needs assessment done with any group of persons who represent a larger group. The mini-needs assessment often forms the basis for an expanded needs assessment.

Any group polling method can be used: e.g., questionnaires, interviews, speakups. The method described here, a form of speakup, results in a prioritized list of items.

Step 1 Each person writes on a small piece of paper or 3x5 card his or her primary concern about the topic at hand--schools, health services, etc. It is permissible to write two concerns if one cannot be quickly selected. (5 minutes maximum)

Step 2 People move into groups of three and share items. After a few minutes of discussion, they build combined lists of their top three items in prioritized order. (10 minutes)

Step 3 If the group is made up of 18 or more, two small groups now meet together sharing their lists, building a combined list in prioritized order, and eliminating duplications. (15 minutes maximum)

Step 4 The leader and recorder assemble the entire group. They then solicit and record the top item from the first group, then the top item, if different, from the second group, until all items are covered. The reporting group must agree that an item is a duplication before it can be eliminated. Items should be recorded where all members can see them. (15 minutes)

Step 5 Time is allowed to discuss any items for clarity of meaning (not for evaluation). (5-10 minutes)

Step 6 At this point, the leader discusses the fact that a rough prioritization exists in the list as it now stands. The group decides whether to do a more detailed prioritization.

Step 7 If the group wants to go on, each person lists the numbers of all items on a piece of paper and marks each with a score of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 beside item numbers they feel are the top five items (5 = top item). The leader collects these papers.

Step 8 The group takes a break while two or more volunteers write down scores for each item below the item number (read all scores from one paper, move to the next paper). The leader adds scores for each item and creates a new list of the top five items, with the highest in first place.

Step 9 The new list is posted; the group reassembles and discusses it briefly.

CONSTRUCTING QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

If the PAC has decided to construct its own
questionnaires and interviews, the following
handouts may be helpful. The first handout
deals with a set of procedures for designing an
instrument, either an interview or a written
questionnaire. The next two handouts identify
strengths and weaknesses of interviews and
questionnaires and give some guidelines for
development.

The fourth handout identifies some errors
common to interview and questionnaire
construction.

You may either distribute these handouts
directly to the PAC or to the task force working
on the needs assessment, or you can use them
yourself as guides for a discussion with the
PAC.

Two valuable resources are also available
to the Title I Principal.

1. The Parent Advisory Councils in Oregon
   contains a chapter, "Overview of Needs
   Assessment," (p. 182) that has many useful
   procedures and instruments.

2. The Comprehensive Student Needs Assessment
   published by Portland Public School
   District #1 has a wealth of information
   and evaluation/needs assessment forms.
   To avoid duplication we have not reproduced
   instruments from either of these sources.

CONSTRUCTING QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

The first task for a group constructing a questionnaire or an interview
is to decide the topics of the questions to be asked. The results of
a brainstorm session can serve as the basis for generating questions.
After the focus of the data is decided upon, instrument construction can
begin.

To develop or improve skills in instrument construction:

● Divide the group into trios. Have each trio take one or more ideas
or issues from a pre-existing list such as a brainstorm list, or
have all groups work with the same broad focus.

● Distribute samples of various types of questions. The most helpful
are "rating" questions, "prioritizing" questions, open-response
questions, and multiple-choice questions.

● Study the samples, then individually try to write one question about
each topic in each of the sample patterns.

● Share your sample questions; discuss which style seems to work best
for each topic or type of information wanted.

● Jot down the insights or agreements you reach on why one kind of
question is better than another for one or more kinds of topics.
List pitfalls of some methods.

● Work together to construct one good question for each topic.

● In a large group, have each trio share ideas about good question
formats for particular types of topics. Have a group recorder
write these where they can be seen, eliminating overlaps from the
groups. Share your "best" questions--write these on a blackboard
or newsprint so the group can see them together.

● Discuss together how the data from the various types of questions
would look. Ask yourselves if the data would be clear. Could it
be interpreted? Could you make recommendations from it?

● Review the work to this point--is there a good question for each
topic or type of data wanted, or is more work needed?

● Decide whether to continue to work in the large group or to turn
all work done at this point over to a small task force for
completion of a preliminary instrument.

● Complete a first draft instrument.

● If it is an interview and contains open-response questions,
develop some neutral probes to be used when response is
insufficient.

CONSTRUCTING QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS (continued)

- Try out the instrument in circumstances similar to its intended use. (Practice interviewing one another.)

- Manipulate the data resulting from the draft instrument. Is it manageable? Useful? Informative?

- Revise questions that are difficult to use or produce difficult or obscure data.

- Construct the final questionnaire.

CONSTRUCTING INTERVIEWS

Advantages of Interviews

- Response is guaranteed.
- There is ample opportunity to clear up misunderstandings.
- The interviewer can assess the usefulness and quality of responses.
- Data are more likely to reflect the kinds of information the interviewer wishes to get.
- Verbal responses tend to be more natural than written ones.
- Interviews are useful with people who do not like to write.
- The interviewer obtains data when desired.

Disadvantages of Interviews

- The interviewer must be well prepared.
- Conducting interviews is difficult with widespread or large audiences.
- Verbatim recording may intimidate respondents.
- Getting together with people at convenient times can be a problem.
- It is easy for the interviewer and respondent to get off track.

Factors to Consider in Designing Interviews

1. **Sequencing**

   The question of sequencing items is more important in interviewing than in questionnaires. Experienced interviewers suggest moving from indirect to direct questions because indirect questions are less threatening. Once the respondent is at ease, more direct questions may be posed.

2. **Wording of Questions**

   Questions should be clearly understood by respondents. Long, complex questions and leading questions should be avoided. For example, asking "What is your attitude towards vocational education?" is preferable to "Do you prefer vocational education to the present curriculum?"

3. **Types of Questions**

   The construction of questions for interviews is not much different from questionnaire item construction. Both fixed-alternative and open-ended questions may be used (see "Constructing and Using Questionnaires"). Another useful tool in interviewing is the so-called "probing question" (a question that asks for clarification)

121

For example:

Primary Question: What is your attitude towards vocational
                    education?

Answer: I like the idea.

PROBE: I'd like to know more about your thinking
                    on that . . .

Other examples of probing questions would be:

          What do you mean by that?

          I'm not sure I understand; could you
          explain further?

          Why?

          What is the cause of that?

          Do you have other reasons?

          Anything else?

These questions may not be on the interview itself, but it is per-
fectly okay to ask them AS LONG AS THE QUESTIONER DOES NOT INFLUENCE
THE ANSWERS OF THE RESPONDENT.

The interviewer should also guard against expanding upon respondents'
answers in such a way that new information is provided.

4. Recording Data in an Interview

One of the most important tasks facing an interviewer is to record
faithfully EVERY WORD the respondent says. It is not enough to jot
down "the content" or the "main points." You would be surprised to
find how much is lost whenever the interviewer changes, modifies
or interprets the responses. Faithful recording is difficult and
takes some practice.

If at all possible, recording should take place immediately follow-
ing the response. The respondent should be asked to repeat some-
thing, if necessary. Postponing the recording nearly always results
in lost information and makes the respondent lose confidence that he
or she is being accurately represented.

It is helpful to provide the respondent a copy of the questions being
asked. This frees the questioner to write and gives the respondent
more involvement.   Also, respondents may return to previous ques-
tions and elaborate on their answers as new thoughts occur to them.

Sometimes, a tape recorder can be used so that the interviewer can
pay full attention to the respondent and record the interview data
accurately. Of course, respondents should be made fully aware that
what they are saying is being recorded and every effort should be
made to ensure that they are not intimidated by the presence of the
tape recorder. If a respondent is uncomfortable, the recorder
should not be used.

87

TO USE WITH PAC—This can be the basis of discussion on needs assessment methods.

CONSTRUCTING AND USING QUESTIONNAIRES

<u>Advantages of Using Questionnaires</u>

● You can easily contact large numbers of people spread over a wide area.

● They are less costly than person-to-person contacts over wide areas.

● Fewer persons are required to conduct a survey.

<u>Disadvantages of Using Questionnaires</u>

● Often, questionnaires are not returned.

● In bicultural areas, use of questionnaires requires proficiency in, and willingness to use, a common language.

● They are often impersonal. It is difficult to communicate purpose, goals and uses.

● Respondents often choose not to follow directions.

● A mailed questionnaire may be completed by someone other than the intended respondent.

<u>How to Construct Questionnaires</u>

The following statements are intended to be helpful to the principal who is faced with the task of helping a PAC to construct a questionnaire. Rather than being prescriptive statements, they are guiding principles which may be modified to existing conditions.

1. Appropriateness of questionnaires—decide whether a questionnaire is an appropriate way to get the information.

   a. The questionnaire should be valid—it should provide the kinds of answers you want.

   b. The questionnaire should be reliable—it should <u>consistently</u> provide the kinds of answers you want.

   c. The questionnaire should be representative—it should offer the respondent a chance to address all aspects of the problem.

   d. The questionnaire should be written in language that communicates with respondents simply and directly. Any technical words should be explained.

   e. The questionnaire should not request irrelevant information. Just because you have seen many questionnaires that ask "age, sex," etc., this does not mean you need this information.

125

88

2. Things to consider in getting started:

a. Information about respondents such as age, sex and race. If used at all, such data should be appropriate to the problem at hand. All requests, even for something as simple as the respondent's name, should be made explicit.

b. Formulating questions

(1) All questions should be phrased in a way that does not suggest or influence answers. Simple, factual questions should request information that is readily available to the respondent.

(2) Types of questions are:

(a) Open-ended questions--those in which the respondent is free to write any answer. For example: "Will you please describe your feelings about Title I math program?"

Advantages:

● tends to produce honest answers

● useful in obtaining judgments or opinions

● does not suggest answers

● reveals reasons for respondent's feelings

Disadvantages:

● takes longer to tabulate than fixed-alternative questions

● tends to reveal more emotion than fact

(b) Fixed-alternative questions--those in which the range of response is controlled. For example:

Do you think the math program is

____ good?

____ bad?

____ no opinion

Check one of the above.

Advantages:

● responses are easy to classify

● data are easy to manage

● answers are simple and factual

Disadvantages:

● range of alternatives might be insufficient

● the question suggests the answer

● responses need careful consideration to yield desired information and this can be time consuming

(3) It may be desirable to start with broad, general questions and then proceed to more specific ones. Other kinds of sequences may be possible, but the principal should be able to help the PAC with the matter of sequencing.

3. Validating a Questionnaire--When working with a PAC on question- naire construction, it might be a good idea for PAC members to try filling out the questionnaire to see how it works. One useful way to check out a questionnaire is to try to tabulate the data generated in a trial run. If the data are usable and easily managed, the questionnaire is probably good. If not, revisions may be called for.

4. Ethics--In conducting a questionnaire survey, you want to get as much information as you need, but you do not want to offend or violate the rights of the respondent.

A cover letter clearly stating the purposes of the questionnaire and telling who is doing the survey, what the problem is, how important it is, and how the data will be used can serve as an effective way to guard against infringement of personal rights. This cover letter should also state that individual responses are to be held confidential. If it is possible for respondents to get the results, the cover letter should state this, as well as provide clear instructions, perhaps including a stamped addressed envelope, for return of the completed questionnaire.

5. Format

a. Instructions should be clear and explicit

b. Enough space should be provided for responses.

c. Overall size should be convenient for handling and mailing.

Common Errors in Questionnaire Construction

1. Failing to pretest to check for unintelligible, ambiguous or objectional questions

2. Asking too many questions—thus making unreasonable demands on the respondent's time, producing more data than is usable or manageable, and causing a dropoff in the quality of later responses

3. Overlooking gross errors of format and grammar which might make an unfavorable impression

4. Selecting questions that are easily answered but do not serve the original purpose of the survey

5. Constructing questions so that biased results are obtained (leading questions, socially desirable responses, no negative response boxes, etc.)

6. Not planning the analysis until after the survey is conducted, which can create a format that makes tabulation cumbersome and slow

Common Errors in Interviewing

All of the above, plus:

1. Not writing the interview guide in enough detail

2. Insufficiently practicing needed skills of interviewing

3. Failing to establish safeguards against interviewer bias

4. Using language in the interview that is not understood

5. Asking for information the respondent cannot be expected to have or may reasonably fe   is confidential

131

91

Testing the Questionnaire

We recommend testing out any questionnaires or interview forms that the PAC intends to use. We have also developed a checklist for reviewing the instrument. This handout "Questionnaire Review Criteria," can be used by the PAC and might also be of use to staff persons who are involved in questionnaire construction for needs assessment.

92

Questionnaire* Review Criteria

Purpose: A check list to help review either questionnaires or interview
         forms for needs assessment.

How to use with PAC: The principal working with PAC members can use
         this form to examine any proposed needs assessment instrument.

Directions to Reviewers

> Please respond to the following questions by
> checking "yes" or "no" for each question. If
> a particular question is not appropriate for
> the questionnaire under consideration, write
> "NA" after the question rather than checking
> "yes" or "no."

	Yes	No	NA

A. Questionnaire Purpose and Administration

   1. Does the questionnaire have a clear

     a. purpose? _____ _____ _____

     b. instructions? _____ _____ _____

   2. Has PAC practiced using the questionnaire? _____ _____ _____

   3. Are adequate procedures outlined adminis-
     tering the questionnaire? _____ _____ _____

   4. If training is required, can we provide
     it? _____ _____ _____

B. Concern for Respondents

   1. Are instructions clear? _____ _____ _____

   2. Is the amount of time required of
     respondents reasonable? _____ _____ _____

_____

* This criteria checklist can also be used with an interview form.

Sample Criteria for Reviewing Questionnaires (continued)

		Yes	No	NA

3. Do people have the information being
   asked of them so they do not have to
   guess?

4. Is the questionnaire simple?

5. Is the format (e.g., checklist,
   interview schedule) appropriate?

6. Has adequate consideration been given
   to avoiding racial, sexual or cultural
   bias?

7. Are the uses to be made of the infor-
   mation and procedures for maintaining
   confidentiality adequately established
   and fully explained to those being
   questioned?

8. If people are to provide their names,
   is a space provided or if they are not
   to give their names, are they so
   informed?

9. Has adequate attention been given to
   the physical appearance of the ques-
   tionnaire (e.g., format, size of print,
   color of paper, illustrations)?

C. Objectivity - (the extent to which scoring
   procedures are easily understood)

   1. Does a scoring key exist with its use
      clearly explained?

   2. Will responses be interpreted the same
      way by all scorers/coders?

   3. Will all or most respondents understand
      the question to mean the same thing?
      (Are the questions clearly and
      unambiguously stated?)

137

94

Sample Criteria for Reviewing Questionnaires (continued)

	Yes	No	NA

D. **Efficiency of Data Collection, Analysis,**
    and Record Keeping

1. Has duplication been avoided in the
    data collected

    a. within this questionnaire? ___ ___ ___

    b. between this questionnaire and
        other instruments used in the
        needs assessment? ___ ___ ___

2. Has the page been laid out to
    facilitate scoring (e.g., all responses
    on the right-hand side? ___ ___ ___

3. Is a space provided for the date of
    instrument completion? ___ ___ ___

4. Is the source of information and type
    of instrument identified (preferably
    in the title)? ___ ___ ___

95

139

HANDLING THE DATA

The time to plan how to use the information
the PAC will collect is before you and they
collect it.

Plans need to be made (see item 8, page 110)
dealing with how and who will tabulate data.
If you are planning to collect open-ended
response data, there need to be agreements
about how to categorize data. For example:

A question on a questionnaire reads:
"What do you think is the most needed
improvement for Title I in this school?"

Answers may read:
"More math"
"Better math"
"Geometry courses"

The group needs to determine if these
are all similar responses. Two of the
answers indicate adding curriculum ("more
math" and "geometry courses"), while one
comment refers to increasing the quality
of math courses.

The following handout gives some guidelines
for planning for handling data. This handout
can be used at a planning meeting with the PAC
and re-examined at the time the PAC is reducing
data.

TO USE WITH PAC

ANALYZING AND REDUCING DATA FROM A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Purpose: to review some simple methods for handling data that has been generated from questionnaires and interview forms.

HOW TO USE WITH PAC

This can form the basis of planning how data will be used once the interviews or questionnaires have been completed. Note: PLANS FOR REDUCING DATA NEED TO BE MADE BEFORE IT ARRIVES!

1. Tabulating data:

If you have used an interview form or a questionnaire where the person interviewed fixed-choice questions (scaled items, yes/no items, etc.), two people can tally the responses. One can read the responses and the other can keep a tally.

Example:

If you interviewed 17 people on the following item, you might get something like this:

How important is it to learn writing skills?

Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
〜〜〜〜〜 〜〜〜〜〜 /	////	//	0
(11)	(4)	(2)	(t)

2. Getting the percentage:

If you have several items on your needs assessment that are scored like the above item, you might want to get the percentage of people who scored very important, somewhat important, etc.

The percentage is computed by dividing the number of people scoring an item by the total number who participated in the interview question:

        Very important = 11
                        __divided by
                        17 people who responded to the item
                        or
                        65 percent

3. Open-response data:

When you ask questions that are not fixed (not true/false or scaled), you can get a wide range of answers. You may want to group responses by categories. For example, suppose you get the following responses to the question:

> Do you think that the school is providing a good math
> program for students in the fifth grade?

Answers:

1. Somewhat, but my child still has difficulty with addition

2. No, we got a better program in the school that Jimmy attended last year

3. Yes, fine

4. Sure, I can see changes every day

These could be grouped according to Favorable, Unfavorable, and Adequate:

Unfavorable	Favorable	Adequate
/	//	/

If this were the case, 2 out of 4 responses were favorable, or 50% is favorable (2 divided by 4 responses = 50%)

4. Reporting findings:

When reporting or displaying data there are several things that need to be included:

1. The focus of the needs assessment. Was this an instrument to gather general data, or specific data? Example: an overall needs assessment about student needs or a needs assessment that looks at math specifically. A good descriptive purpose statement should be included in any report of the needs assessment.

2. How was the data gathered? Inverviews or questionnaire? If a written form was used, it is good to include the form.

3. Who was interviewed or received a questionnaire? Did you interview 20 parents, 30 students, and 4 teachers? It is important to be specific when identifying the audience.

You may want to prioritize your data. This means grouping data according to what came in as the first need, the second, etc. You can prioritize by the highest score. If 80% of parents think that the school needs additional math programs, and 40% think that additional reading is important, while only 16% think that there needs to be more emphasis on physical education, you could prioritize according to needs:

    1st - Math   2nd - Reading   3rd - Physical Education

145

REPORTING THE FINDINGS

After the data has been collected, reduced
and analyzed, the PAC can have a meeting to
share the results with all PAC members. The
agenda for this meeting can include:

- A description of the events of the needs
  assessment--how it was developed and
  carried out; who participated
- the findings of the needs assessment
- how the PAC can participate in
  reporting the data

The PAC may want to work with you to prepare
the final report. The following is a table of
contents from a Comprehensive Student Needs
Assessment[6] prepared by the Detroit School
District 123J:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">CONTENTS</td></tr>
<tr><td>INTRODUCTION ....</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>GOALS ....</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>PROCEDURE ....</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>   Informing the Community ....</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>   Selection of Respondent Groups ....</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>   Selection of Administration Groups ....</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>   Gathering the Information ....</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>   Prioritizing the Information ....</td><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td>   Using the Information ....</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td>PROJECTS PROGRAM/NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN ....</td><td>11</td></tr>
<tr><td>INSTRUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT METHODS ....</td><td>12</td></tr>
</table>

[6] Parent Advisory Councils in Oregon, Title I,
ESEA, Oregon Department of Education, 942 Lancaster
Drive, NE, Salem, 1977, pp. 201-221.

147

The report prepared by the Detroit School
District listed the goals of the needs assessment;
described the methods used to inform the community
about the needs assessment; described the methods
used to identify the people to be surveyed and how
the data was gathered, and prioritized; and finally
the report described how the information from the
needs assessment would affect the Title I program.

The Detroit report also included sample instru-
ments and questionnaires. We feel that the PAC will
have a greater ownership of the program if they also
have a role in reporting the findings of the needs
assessment. One way is to have a role in the
preparation of the report. This role can range
from identifying contents of the report to actually
writing sections of the report.

SUMMARY

In this section we have outlined the steps
involved in planning and conducting a needs assess-
ment. We have also identified some things to consider
when choosing to use a questionnaire or an interview
format. We have not tried to include needs assessment
samples as these are available in both the resource
book for parents, Parent Advisory Councils in Oregon,
and in the Comprehensive Student Needs Assessment
produced by the Portland School District.

We have tried to organize the materials in such
a way that needs assessment is seen as a task in which
PAC members can participate effectively. It is our
contention that if more Title I parents are involved
in identifying student needs, the school will receive
better information about student needs and the community
will be more supportive of the solutions that are
chosen by the school to meet those needs.

The final handout in this section is a needs
assessment planning sheet you may want to use with
the PAC.

TO USE WITH PAC

ASSESSMENT PLANNING SHEET

Activity	Procedure (steps)	Person Responsible	Materials	Start-up Date	Due Date
Orient PAC to needs assessment					
Plan method of needs assessment					
Conduct needs assessment					
Reduce data/analyze data Display data					
Report findings					

SECTION 5-PAC Involvement With Budgets

The Guidelines for Title I include as one
of the minimum requirements: "A meeting to
formally review the proposed Title I application
for next year." Budgets are an integral part of
any application, but to review a budget in any
meaningful way requires skill. A parent with
no previous budget experience cannot be expected
to view a school budget with any comprehension
at one meeting.

If we consider Arnstein's ladder of involve-
ment (Section I), to review a budget with no
understanding is the first level of citizen
participation--manipulation! In this section
we will outline a procedure whereby parents can
first have actual experience in building a
budget--the PAC budget--and can work with the
principal to understand the overall Title I
budget and its relationship to student needs
and benefits. The outcome of this procedure
is that parents will have greater comprehension
of the task--reviewing the proposed Title I
application.

BUILDING A BUDGET

Most Title I schools have some limited
funds allocated for running the Parent Advisory
Councils. The amount of money in this budget
can range from one hundred dollars to a thousand

103

dollars or more, depending upon the size of the
school. Most schools use this money for a variety
of things ranging from duplication of Title I
materials--agenda, etc.--to providing babysitting
for children, which enables single parents to attend
and be active in the PAC.

Since this money is allocated to the PAC for
the PAC, we propose that the PAC have a major role
in determining how the money will be spent. To do
this will require that the PAC, working with the
principal, determine priority needs and how using
the money in the budget can meet these needs. The
planning sheet on the next page can serve as a
guideline for the principal working with the PAC
to build the PAC budget.

TO USE WITH PAC.

PLANNING SHEET FOR TITLE I BUDGET PREPARATION

The following procedure can be used by PAC members working with the principal to determine the way PAC monies will be budgeted.

1. Amount of money in PAC budget _____.

2. Brainstorm and list possible items that need to be covered by this budget. Examples include: cost of luncheon meetings, travel expenses, babysitting. (Remember, brainstorming is just listing--not discussing.)

Possible Items to be Covered	Cost	Benefits	Priority
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

3. In the next column, list the cost. Example: Luncheon might be $2.00 per person times 20 people or $40.00.

4. Next, discuss each possible benefits to the PAC program. Example: babysitting might make it possible for parents who normally could not attend meetings to attend.

5. After a thorough discussion--each person has had time to say whatever he or she feels is important--prioritize the items for expense according to which is most important (#1), next important (#2), and so on. Prioritizing can help you identify which is the most important expenditure for the PAC budget.

6. If you have two priority items that take up all the PAC budget, discuss with the group if this is the best way to spend the budget. After discussion, you can call for a vote or see if there is consensus on the budget.

7. When you have an agreed-upon budget, how the money is to be spent, you will need to determine who will monitor the budget. Whoever monitors the budget will need to collect receipts for expenses and report back to the group at future meetings how much money is left in the budget.

Preparation of the PAC budget can occur
early in the school year. If members are kept
up-to-date on expenditures they will have ongoing
direct experience with a budget and this will be
helpful for their understanding of the school
budget.

Reviewing the School Budget

Whereas we think that the PAC is in many
ways responsible for building and monitoring
the PAC budget, the principal is responsible
for the school budget. Again referring to
Arnstein's ladder, the PAC may be in a partner-
ship relation to the school when dealing with
the PAC budget, but because of the different
level of accountability, the PAC can be seen as
in an "informing-consultation" relationship
with the school regarding the Title I school
budget. This switch in expectations regarding
the PAC role in the different budgets may
need clarification. To do this the principal
can at the application review meeting explain
that the purpose of the meeting is to review
the school Title I budget and get input and
suggestions that can influence the application.
In order for the PAC to have the skills to give
meaningful input, you may want to consider the
following activity for reviewing a budget:

106

TO USE WITH PAC.

TITLE I: BUDGET WORKSHEET

Purpose: To familiarize PAC with budget, to build understanding and
support of school.

HOW TO USE WITH PAC:

This is a mock-up for a fictitious school. You can prepare a similar
budget for your PAC, using your current fiscal allocations.

- List the line items in the column on the left
- List the allocations in the second column
- Describe each line item more fully in the third column
  (Example: Supplies; Reading and Math = 35 textbooks,
  4 slide tape sets, 4 teacher workbooks, 50 student workbooks.)
- In the final column, describe how the item directly benefits
  students. (Example: The money allocated for aides means that
  X number of aides are in the school for X number of hours.
  They work with the children in the following ways. They also
  free up the teacher to do the following tasks.)

KING SCHOOL

DETAILED ITEMS	ALLOCATION	DESCRIPTION	STUDENT BENEFITS
Instruction			
Salaries:			
Teacher, 4.5 FTE			
Aides, 5.0 FTE			
Employee Benefits			
@ 22%			
Supplies/Materials:			
Reading/Math	2,013		
Capital Outlay:			
Instructional	350		
Equipment			

REMEMBER TO REVIEW ALL TERMS--FTE, Capital Outlay, etc.

With an understanding of the budget and
budget building procedures, the PAC will have
a better understanding of the application.

However, it is also important to review
with the PAC the entire application process.
We have also listed a sample agenda for reviewing
the Title I application. This procedure can be
modified to be more congruent with individual
school or district application processes.

108

● Describe the procedure that was used to identify the special educational needs--ASK FOR COMMENTS FROM PARENTS WHO WERE INVOLVED IN THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT; ASK PARENTS IF THERE ARE ANY SIGNIFICANT NEEDS THAT THEY FEEL ARE NOT BEING ADDRESSED

C. Project Participants

● Describe the method used for selecting Title I students

● Explain how this project is a supplement to the regular instruction

D. Project Goals and Performance Objectives

● Identify the major goals for students

● Explain what will be going on in the school to meet these goals

E. Instructional Activity

● Explain how students will be taught--A TITLE I TEACHER COULD BE A GUEST PRESENTER

F. Inservice

● Describe types of training or education planned for Title I personnel

● If you have aides, describe how they will be trained

3. Ask parents for any questions.

4. Ask parents what they think is especially good about the program.

5. Ask parents how they think the PAC can help with the Title I project. (Examples: help inform parents who are not present about the Title I program and how parents can help children at home.)

REVIEWING PROGRAM APPLICATION

Purpose: To meet minimum Title I requirements and to build parent under-
standing and support of school programs.

The following guidelines may be used by the principal to explain the
Title I application and application procedure:

1. Explain the application procedure (may use overheads/butcher paper):

   WHO develops the application (role of principal, staff, PAC).

   WHEN it is developed. When it is submitted. When it is approved.

   HOW information is gathered for the application (needs assessment,
       information about students, etc.).

   WHAT is included in report.

2. Review categories of information that will be included in the report.
   (The examples we have included were from last year's report and may
   not be exactly the same as those included in this year's report. You
   will need to have your own list.

   Example:

   ___(Name of School)___ Title I Program Planning Sheet

   Program Description:

   A. Community Involvement

      ● Describe work of the parent advisory committee--ASK FOR PARENT
        INPUT

      ● List composition of PAC--ASK FOR PARENT INPUT

      ● Describe anticipated parent participation in project--YOU CAN
        BRAINSTORM WAYS THAT PAC CAN BE INVOLVED

   B. Educational Needs

      ● Identify the educational needs that this project will try to
        meet

SUMMARY

The review of the Title I application
signals the end of one school year and the
beginning of the next. If PAC members feel a
sense of accomplishment at the end of the year
and can see that their involvement has an impact
on the application for the following year, the
first step for building the next year's PAC
is accomplished.

We have written this guide to help the
Title I principal build a PAC that has owner-
ship of its tasks. Title I requirements outline
four tasks that could conceivably be accomplished
in just four meetings, but it is our impression
and the impression of the principals with whom
we worked that to actually build a Parent
Advisory Council that works in a partnership
relation with the school requires more. We have
therefore developed this guide to parallel the
activities of the PAC with procedures and guide-
lines for building PAC skill and ownership. We
believe that effective citizen involvement
requires commitment and time on both the part
of the school and the parents, but we also
believe that the pay-offs are worth the effort.
We hope that this guide will help you in your
work with your PAC and that some of the materials
will be of use to you with other groups with
whom you work.

111