



Career & Technical Education

Skills for Employment & Lifelong Learning

Advisory Technical Skills Committee Manual

Nevada Department of Education

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NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION/ NEVADA STATE BOARD FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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Introduction

The use of advisory committees is well established in the public school system. The purpose of advisory committees is to provide leadership, guidance and technical assistance to maintain, improve and develop quality career and technical education programs. This manual is written for those planning to form new advisory technical skills committees, wishing to improve those already in existence, and for newly appointed members. Advisory technical skills committees will play a vital role in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in the future.

The manual will assist the user in getting off to a good start in the development of advisory technical skills committees. These guidelines have been proven successful and may be added to and modified for local and present conditions.

Even though mandated, advisory technical skills committees cannot be effective unless they are properly developed with practical working groups. They must be based on the needs of the people and industries they serve. Advisory technical skills committees are established systems for using laypersons to assist professional educators.

With the increased need for rapid change in this technological age, there is a growing appreciation of the help provided by industry representatives serving on local advisory committees. Employment opportunities in CTE are constantly changing. New technologies are continually being developed and incorporated into careers and industries.

Students must be prepared for today's careers as well as for new opportunities that will become available in the near future. There will be an increased need for employees trained in specialized technical occupations. Advisory technical skills committees, when properly used, help teachers stay abreast of changing employment trends and labor market needs. Increased interest in Tech Prep programs that include internships, work-study, and other types of on-the-job training will require close coordination with industry representatives.

We must remember that lay advisory groups have no administrative authority. They cannot establish policy or take the place of the administration or the board of education. Their function is to establish strong linkages between career and technical education programs and the communities they serve. Advisory technical skills committees provide balanced input to local problems and help give continuity and support to programs.

The purpose of this manual is to provide information for career and technical education directors, school administrators, boards of trustees, teachers of CTE and Tech Prep committee members. Technical information and recommendations regarding the formation, functions, duties, and operation of advisory technical skills committees is included in this manual. An outline format is used to make the information easier to find and use.

Forming an Advisory Technical Skills Committee

Much of the success of an advisory technical skills committee is determined by the manner in which it is formed. Based on the experiences of many communities throughout the country, the following steps are suggested:

1. Determine and Verify the Need

- 1.1 There must be a feeling of need and understanding of opportunity if an advisory committee is to succeed.
- 1.2 The advisory technical skills committee can improve the program (or department, division, district), if it serves a usable function.
- 1.3 It can provide continuity of a quality program should teacher and/or administrative changes take place.
- 1.4 It is important that the school administration, CTE staff, parents, and other patrons of the school thoroughly understand the character and purpose of the committee.

2. Nomination of Committee Members

- 2.1 Once approval of the formation of an advisory technical skills committee by the board members is received, nominations should be made jointly by the principal or superintendent, CTE director, and the chairperson of the school board.
- 2.2 Each should have an equal voice in the selections.
- 2.3 Avoid nomination of friends, as they may be less candid and honest in their advice.
- 2.4 The advisory technical skills committee should be truly representative of the district. Members:
 - 2.4.1 Should be successful business persons and/or individuals engaged in local industry.
 - 2.4.2 Must have recent, successful, firsthand, and practical experience in the local industry.
 - 2.4.3 Should exhibit substantial interest in the CTE program.
 - 2.4.4 Should be representative of all the CTE program areas, parts of district, age groups, and professional organizations.
 - 2.4.5 Should be sought as public-spirited individuals who understand a specialized area and are willing to contribute their knowledge and advice as a member of a cooperative, constructive group.
 - 2.4.6 Can be from the general school staff and/or the board when special circumstances warrant their appointment.
 - 2.4.7 Should recognize the time required and express a willingness to serve on the committee.

3. How Many Committee Members?

- 3.1 No fixed number will satisfy all situations.
- 3.2 The group needs to be large enough to be representative of the district and to provide a quorum if several members are absent.
- 3.3 Should not be so large that it is unwieldy or difficult to call together.
- 3.4 Seven to eleven persons are suggested with nine being a workable medium.
- 3.5 Present only the number of names previously decided upon by the local governing board for confirmation. (When more names are presented personalities become involved, yielding undesirable results.)

4. How are Committee Members Notified of Their Selection?

- 4.1 Notification is usually done in writing, by the principal or superintendent, on behalf of the school board.
- 4.2 The letter should:
 - 4.2.1 Indicate that the CTE Director or teacher is supportive.
 - 4.2.2 Indicate that the committee serves in an advisory capacity to him or her, the department, the principal, and to the school board.
 - 4.2.3 Include a request that the member indicate whether he or she will accept.
 - 4.2.4 Urge speed of acceptance to gain an orderly, efficient start.

5. Understanding of Responsibility

- 5.1 Of greatest importance is that the committee is *only* advisory in character.
- 5.2 The technical advice to the teacher, school administrator, or school board is for them to take under advisement and use as appropriate.
- 5.3 It has no administrative or policy-forming power.

Experience has shown that where all of the steps up to this point have been properly taken, a high percentage of acceptance may be expected.

Functions and Duties of Advisory Technical Skills Committees

1. Help to determine what type of CTE programs are offered.
2. Assist the teacher(s) in finding suitable workstations (internships, work-study, cooperative learning, partnerships) for students in Career and Technical courses.
3. Help the instructor establish curriculum that has a hands-on, technological approach.
4. Help attract and encourage qualified/capable students into the Career and Technical Education and instructional training.
5. Help to evaluate the effectiveness of the Career and Technical education program. Guidelines for evaluation should be developed cooperatively with the advisory committee, administration, school board, and the Career and Technical program. Assessment should also be based on the Nevada Department of Education's Career and Technical Education Skills for Employment and Lifelong Learning Initiative. (Assessment and certification tools will be made available.)
6. Help gain support for legislation and appropriations.
7. Help the teacher(s) develop a list of capable resource persons for use as speakers, and/or judges for both in-school and out-of-school tests and contests.
8. Help obtain sponsors for appropriating funds for awards, scholarships, or needed equipment and supplies that are useful in carrying out classroom activities and career and technical student organizations.
9. Help unify the activities of the CTE program with those of other groups and agencies interested in CTE.
10. Assist the teacher in determining skills needed for particular jobs at entry, technical and professional levels so that he/she may be included in the instructional program.
11. When appropriate, serve as resource person to instructors visiting work place learning sites of students and participating in classroom instruction or demonstrations and accompanying or hosting field trips.
12. Study and make recommendations on problems presented to the advisory committee by the school board on which further information is needed.
13. Provide the teacher with technical assistance and keep him/her aware of new developments in the industries.

14. Provide current resources to develop and maintain a library of visual aids, magazines, and books concerning different careers and occupations.
15. Serve as speakers at civic clubs, open houses, and career days to tell the story of school-industry cooperation.
16. Identify current standards for new equipment.
17. Assist in procuring opportunities to upgrade the teacher's technical skills and knowledge.

SOME HINTS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS
(DO'S AND DON'TS)

DO'S

1. Make a commitment.
2. Attend all meetings.
3. Stick to the agenda; meetings should have a purpose.
4. Align recommendations with available resources.
5. Remember your role is advisory.
6. Advise when improvement is desired.
7. Be a good fact-finder.
8. Make commendations for a job well done.
9. Invite all opinions.
10. Develop group rapport.
11. Consider a variety of subjects.
12. Establish priorities.

DON'TS

1. Wait and see.
2. Have a record of absenteeism.
3. Waste others' time.
4. Add to the "Wish List."
5. Usurp school administrator's or Board's authority.
6. Fail to suggest alternative solutions.
7. Wait to be asked.
8. Be a faultfinder.
9. Be afraid to give recognition.
10. Avoid those who disagree.
11. Wait for others to do it.
12. Impose pre-established, personal opinions.
13. Accept more responsibility than you can handle.

Responsibilities of Officers

The Chairperson

The chairperson normally is the link between the responsible educator and the advisory committee and should have the ability to lead. This person works closely with the educator in the planning and preparation of the meeting and agenda items. The chairperson should be familiar with Roberts' Rules of Order. The chairperson should have prior approval of the members to make appointments to subcommittees and establish dates for completion of subcommittee tasks. The chairperson also has a responsibility to:

1. Establish meeting dates and call the committee together when appropriate.
2. Prepare the meeting agenda with assistance from the school representative and ensure timely distribution to interested persons.
3. Prepare background information and reports as necessary and call on consultants for advice on specific problems.
4. Preside at meetings.
5. Maintain necessary communication with members, school representatives and board members.
6. Determine strategies for completing the plan of work.
7. Membership recruitment for the advisory committee including representation of sexes, ages, ethnic, minority groups and other members of special populations.

The Vice-Chairperson

The vice-chairperson should be familiar with all the duties and responsibilities of the chairperson and be available to assume these responsibilities in the absence of the chairperson.

The Recorder

It is advisable that this position be reserved for the school representative that is most involved with the committee. Among the other duties assigned, this position assures communication between committee members and the school administration and community. The recorder ensures that notices to committee members (including agenda, special materials, for review, meeting dates, times, and places) are prepared and mailed well in advance of meetings. The recorder keeps minutes of meetings and distributes copies to members and all other interested parties. The recorder should arrive early when meetings are scheduled to ensure room arrangements are proper and refreshments for committee members and guests are available.

SOME HINTS FOR EVALUATING ADVISORY TECHNICAL SKILLS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The time spent by advisory technical skills committee members at meetings is a valuable commodity. If advisory committees are to succeed, meetings must be well planned and executed. It is important to determine whether meetings have been successful or a waste of valuable time. Some helpful questions to ask yourself in evaluating the success of an advisory technical skills committee meeting are as follows:

1. What happened at the meeting?
2. Did the meeting produce results?
3. What problems were solved?
4. What decisions did the group make?
5. Were the decisions/solutions innovative?
6. How did the meeting go?
7. How did the problems get resolved?
8. How did decisions get made?
9. How well did the group work together?
10. Did everyone get an opportunity to participate?
11. How did the members feel about the meeting?
12. Was the meeting enjoyable?
13. Were members stimulated or challenged?
14. Did people draw and build on each other's ideas?

Successful Meetings Checklist

- _____ Written Agenda Developed
- _____ Membership Notified
- _____ Facilities and Refreshments
- _____ Subcommittee Assignments Completed
- _____ Instructor Commitments Confirmed
- _____ Agenda Support Material Prepared
- _____ Outside Presenters/Speakers Confirmed
- _____ Calendar Cleared

Criteria for Successful Programs

- _____ Active Advisory Committee
- _____ Qualified, Motivated Instructor
- _____ Strong Administrative Support
- _____ Community Involvement
- _____ Current Equipment and Tools
- _____ Well Organized Facility
- _____ Competency-Based Instruction
- _____ Long Range Plan
- _____ A System for Follow-up of Graduates
- _____ Effectively Address the Needs of Females, Minorities, and Other Members of Special Populations

Operation

It is important that correct procedures and rules be established and clearly understood by committee members, school administrative staffs, and the board of education. These rules should be decided upon by the committee with assistance from the school. All correspondence should be sent to administrators and advisory committee members. Items to be considered are:

1. Number of Meetings

- 1.1 Must meet regularly and often enough to carry out their assignment.
- 1.2 Monthly or bi-monthly meetings are usually the most desirable.
- 1.3 Minimum number is three per year.
- 1.4 Practical number is between three and eight per year.
- 1.5 Necessity should always determine the exact number.
- 1.6 Often the most valuable advice comes from busy individuals.
- 1.7 Better to have fewer well-planned, well-attended meetings.

2. Selection of Officers

- 2.1 Generally a chairperson, vice chairperson, and recorder are sufficient.
- 2.2 Chairperson should be a layperson elected by the committee.
- 2.3 It is usually best that the CTE staff serves as recorder and general consultant.

3. Length of Service by Committee Members

- 3.1 Three-year terms are recommended.
- 3.2 At formation meeting, members draw for one-, two-, or three-year terms to provide for continuity of membership.
- 3.3 Individual preferences in length of service need to be considered.
- 3.4 Limitation should be placed on reappointments.
- 3.5 Nominees should be submitted to board of trustees for approval.

4. Length and Place of Meetings

- 4.1 For efficient and effective use of time, the agenda for each meeting must be well planned.
- 4.2 Ample meeting notice of 10 days to 2 weeks is recommended.
- 4.3 Copy of agenda, minutes from previous meeting, and any reading material requiring action should be sent in advance of meeting date.
- 4.4 Two-hour meetings, held at a time and date chosen by the committee, are recommended.
- 4.5 The meeting place should provide a conference table in a quiet environment.
- 4.6 Usually the CTE department of the school provides the best meeting site, allowing members to become familiar with facilities of the department.

5. Filling Committee Vacancies

- 5.1 Vacancies which occur because of term completion or other reasons should be filled by nomination from the advisory committee, superintendent, CTE director, or principal, and approved by the school board.
- 5.2 The committee may be asked for suggestions.
- 5.3 A committee *should not* be permitted to choose its own replacements.
 - 5.3.1 This would be self perpetuating.
 - 5.3.2 May become unrepresentative and unduly independent of the school administration.
- 5.4 Rules of procedure should indicate that if a committee member misses meetings repeatedly without reason, the position be declared vacant by the chairperson and the school board so notified.

6. Distribution of Minutes: All committee members, the CTE director, the principal/president, and the Perkins regional consultant.

7. Making Decisions: Currently many organizations operate by consensus approval of agenda items. When consensus cannot be reached or decorum is in question, refer to Roberts' Rules of Order.

**Opening Session Instructions for Advisory
Technical Skills Committees**

EXAMPLE

Instructions to Your New Advisory Committee

1. You constitute an advisory committee for the (your school district).
2. I welcome you on behalf of the board and administration.
3. You are agents of and appointed by the (your school's board of trustees).
4. While you are not a policy-making body, you are advisory to (your department), and through channels, to the president/principal, chancellor/superintendent, and board. We need your expertise in this area.
5. The (your district) is interested in the best possible Career and Technical Education Program. We need to know what is ideal for this program from the standpoint of the community. Bear in mind that what we eventually can do, while we want the ideal if possible, must be compatible with available funds and state rules and regulations.
6. You will be a working committee and students and school staff expect to benefit from your work.
7. We need help to:
 - 7.1 Review existing programs, courses of study, facilities, equipment.
 - 7.2 Propose new programs and/or courses when needed based on solid data for this community.
 - 7.3 Evaluate existing programs and proposed new programs.
 - 7.4 Revise existing programs, suggest changes or deletions, and develop educational specifications for the programs. (For use in building the program and planning for equipment and facilities.)
 - 7.5 Help develop building plans, review architect's plans, etc., where new buildings are being proposed.
 - 7.6 Help point out changes needed for the future in your area of interest. Keep the program up-to-date.
 - 7.7 Help in placement and in evaluating performance of our CTE Tech Prep students at (your school or college).
8. You will be a "helping group" (as well as advisory) to the instructor, as the program is implemented and progresses.

Getting Started:

1. Review present course offerings and majors, catalogs, studies, data, classrooms, labs, and other facilities.
2. Conduct studies, if needed, to get community data on which to base your decisions.
3. Decide areas to study or review, both geographic and educational areas, and determine how to do this (formal study, informal, follow-up studies).
4. Your findings and decisions will be in the committee minutes, which will be distributed to the instructors, administration, and the board.

Here's What You Need To Do To Get Started:

1. Elect a chairperson.
2. The recorder will be an instructor, or department chairperson, and he or she will also be a resource person for you to help interpret educational language and concepts, provide materials, and be the liaison person with the administration.
3. Determine rotation (1-, 2-, or 3 years?). You will also decide length and term and who serves what term. (Subsequent appointments will be 3 years each.)
4. Decide if more than one committee is needed. School districts may have subcommittees.
5. Announce that any member who cannot continue serving for any reason, should notify the chairperson so that a replacement appointment can be made.

Note: Be sure to start and end on time!

WE NEED YOUR HELP. WE APPRECIATE YOUR WILLINGNESS TO GIVE IT AND BE OF SERVICE TO YOUR SCHOOL.

Nevada Advisory Technical Skills Committee Summary of Development and Actions

During the 2005 Nevada Legislative Session, greater clarification was mandated on the structure and duties of local education agencies' advisory technical skills committees. Each district that has a program of Career and Technical Education must have at least one advisory technical skills committee. Some districts have programmatic skills committees that then report to the main advisory technical skills committee; this is the strongest approach for use of advisory technical skills committees and is encouraged by the Department of Education.

The Advisory Technical Skills Committees must consist of representatives from:

Business and Industry in the Community;

Employees of the school district who possess knowledge and experience in CTE. *We would interpret this as CTE Directors, CTE Department Chairs, and CTE Teachers from the balance of your programs;*

Pupils enrolled in public schools in the school district. *This would be a great opportunity for some of their Career and Technical Student Organizations to gain more leadership experience;*

Parents and legal guardians of pupils enrolled in public schools in the school district; and

Postsecondary staff who have experience with career and technical education. *This is an opportunity to strengthen articulation and the Tech Prep program.*

Other interested persons.

The Advisory Technical Skills Committee shall:

Review the curriculum, design, content, and operations of the program of CTE to determine its effectiveness in:

Preparing pupils enrolled in the program to enter the workforce and meeting the needs of supplying an appropriately trained workforce for businesses and industries in the community; and

Comply with the provisions of NRS 388.330 to 388.400, inclusive, and any regulations adopted pursuant thereto. *Nevada Revised Statutes affecting Career and Technical Education.*

Advise the school district regarding the curriculum, design, content, operation and effectiveness of the program of career and technical education.

Provide technical assistance to the school district in designing and revising, as necessary, the curriculum of the program of career and technical education.

In cooperation with businesses, industries, employer associations and employee organizations in the community, develop work-based experiences for pupils enrolled in the program of career and technical education.

The work-based experiences must be designed:

For pupils enrolled in grades 11 and 12, but may be offered to pupils enrolled in grades 9 and 10 upon the approval of the principal of the school where the program is offered;

To prepare and train pupils to work as apprentices in business settings; and

Allow a pupil to earn academic credit for the work-based experience.

The committee must meet at least three times a year.

Provide to the superintendent of schools of the school district any recommendations regarding the program of career and technical education and any actions of the committee.

The board members of the advisory technical skills committee shall serve without compensation.

The local advisory technical skills committee must operate under the provisions of Nevada Revised Statute chapter 241. This section of the NRS defines the rules and regulations regarding the open meeting laws.

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