Setting Up an Advisory Committee

An advisory committee consists of volunteers who agree to provide advice on skills, knowledge, and attitudes required for the Pre-Professional Teaching Practicum. Members may include former practicum teachers, guidance counselors, K-12 teachers and administrators, and post-secondary instructors, training professionals, and administrators. Committee members should have a genuine interest in the program and students involved.

Why an Advisory Committee

Your program will benefit from having an advisory committee in a number of ways. This group will help enhance the program quality by:

- Providing up-to-date information related to emerging trends, current trends, current and future employment needs, and future direction of the education career pathway

- Identifying the needs for training programs and helping modify and revitalize existing programs as needs change

- Pinpointing current specific skills, knowledge, and student attitudes that should be included in the program

- Recommending program quality measures and standards

- Assisting in evaluating program effectiveness

- Fostering public awareness

- Offering career awareness and guidance to the students in the program

- Strengthening ongoing partnerships between elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education in the community

- Evaluating facilities, program equipment, and resources and comparing these with current standards

- Evaluating course content (including software packages, textbooks, and other resources) as well as instructional methods (e.g., field experiences, occupational training) to ensure essential areas are covered for students to successfully pursue a teaching career

- Championing your program and building interest and understanding among schools and community organizations

Establishing Your Advisory Committee

First you will need to develop a list of prospective committee members. Plan for a maximum of 15 members, with two or three being "ex-officio education members" (CTE and academic teachers) and the rest being former cadet teachers, guidance counselors, and K-12 teachers and administrators). Ensure that those you invite understand what will be required of them (see table 1 below) and adequately represent the geographic area served in terms of race, gender, and ethnicity. Invite these prospective members to come to an initial meeting, assuring those you contact that their input will be utilized to make the program stronger.

Tip: Make sure you understand local policies regarding advisory committees and inform proper school administrators of your plans.

Tip: Focus on the expertise of the members you invite. Think about who will be most committed to the students and their success: Have they contributed to education initiatives in the past? Do they know about emerging career opportunities in your area?

Table 1. Typical Requirements for Advisory Board Members

- Specific term of service (one, two, or three years)
- Member replacement (on a staggered basis so there is continuity from year to year, prevention of "burn out," and increased program awareness by regularly recruiting new members
- Regular meeting attendance
- Following parliamentary procedure
- Recording and dissemination of minutes
- Possible need to assign subcommittees to further explore issues arising during meetings
- Decision-making by quorum vote

Preparing for the First Meeting

Develop a thoughtful, well-structured agenda to make the advisory committee a meaningful experience for everyone involved. Have the committee chair and a school representative identify and prepare the agenda and distributed it to members before the meeting. Meeting agenda items typically include:

- Roll call and agenda additions (if any)
- Introduction of guests
- Approval of previous minutes
- Special presentations
- Communication
- Committee reports
- Old business
- New business
- Adjournment

At the first advisory committee meeting allow members to introduce themselves and give their backgrounds – the school representative will provide an explanation of the program background. Elect a chairperson and other officers identified as needed, establish a procedure for developing committee by-laws, and determine number and schedule of future and annual meetings to hold. Table 2 (on the following page) summarizes typical officer responsibilities.

Elect officers at the first or last meeting of the school year. The first meeting of each new year can be reserved for orienting new members and for establishing the program of work.

Table 2. Typical Officer Responsibilities

Committee Chair	Vice Chair	Secretary
• Work with school and community representatives to plan and carry out the program. • Prepare agendas handle meeting details. • Preside at meetings. • Keep group efforts focused. • Delegate tasks and follow-up. • Represent the committee at official meetings and functions. • Submit recommendations to appropriate groups. • Follow-up on committee recommendations.	• Fill in for Chair whenever necessary • Same responsibilities as the Chair	• Take, prepare, and distribute minutes. • Mail agenda, announcements, minutes, and other information to members. • Help assemble and distribute necessary background information to members. • Correspond with the school and community as needed.

Operating Your Advisory Committee

Five elements are key to the ongoing operation of an effective advisory committee:

1. Utilizing by-laws or policies and rules that specify purpose and scope of responsibility for the committee as well as member expectations. By-laws should reflect program requirements and the needs of the school district/school in which the program operates.

2. Maintaining a focus on helping programs and schools improve CTE instruction quality in CTE with serving the needs of business and industry as secondary goals.

3. Recognizing member participation and enthusiasm

4. Reviewing progress in terms of whether or not annual priorities were met, program of work was realistic, and impact of the committee on the CTE program.

5. Holding regular advisory committee meetings to provide recommendations and assist with action planning to help coordinate the program's ongoing needs.

Advisory committee recommendations are advisory only, but can carry weight in program development.