



Philadelphia Home and School Council

Home and School Association Operation Basics



Advocate, Educate and Support our Schools, Parents and Communities

Philadelphia Home and School Council

**This Manual is the property of
your Home and School Association.**

**It is to be kept in the Home and School
Association Files, so new or incoming Officers
can read it and refer to it.**

October 1, 2018

About Philadelphia Home and School Council

Mission

The Philadelphia Home and School Council is the trusted autonomous voice, which is dedicated to empowering, educating, motivating and engaging the Home and School Associations (parent groups) to work cohesively with their schools, realizing that the students are the benefactors for all programs affected.

Who We Are, What We Do

We are the umbrella Organization for all Home and School Associations in the Philadelphia Public and Charter Schools. We are the only leadership body that is allowed to form, reinstall, and re-establish Home and School Associations in public schools and public charter schools.

We assist school-based associations by giving them the tools they need to organize and carry out activities important to the education and welfare of public and charter school students.

We are a parent/guardian-based organization that requires our members and stakeholder volunteers to have yearly criminal and child abuse backgrounds checks. We believe in the safety of our children and staff..

We are the only organization that has direct and regular contact with families, students, and staff. We build collaboration within individual schools in every administrative area of the city. This close and continuous contact with families working within so many schools gives us a unique perspective on who they are, what they want, and what they are prepared to do.

We teach parents, guardians, and caregivers how to advocate for their students and staff. We do our best to bring information and updates to all groups regardless if they are a member or parent.

We are committed to representing our diverse parent and student voices.

We have outreach capacity and connections to Philadelphia families, communicating through:

- PHSC Monthly General Membership Meeting
- Web site (www.philahsc.org / www.phillyhsc.org)
- Facebook
- Learning Network Officer Meetings
- Newsletters
- Youtube

We proudly collaborate with The School District of Philadelphia to make public education all that it can and should be.

We are dedicated to the health and welfare of the whole student and their Parent, Guardian, or Caregiver to ensure the lines of communication between the Home and the School is open and mutually responsive.

Philadelphia Home and School Council is here to guide and assist your HSA. PHSC is also here to assist the Principals, Staff, Regional Office, and SDP when issues or problems arise. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Thank you for supporting your Home and School Association!

Home and School Basics

Establishment/Election

- All elected or appointed Home and School Officers ***must be*** a parent or legal guardian of a current student attending that school. An elected or appointed officer has the right to finish out their term in office even if their child no longer attends the school. (Unless the HSA bylaws states otherwise)
- In order to establish a Home and School Association, officers must be nominated and elected by the Parent/Guardian body. Elections are run by the HSA, unless, there is not currently a valid HSA, in which case the Philadelphia Home and School Council (PHSC) will run the nomination and election process.
- An HSA must have at least three (3) Officers to operate: President, Secretary, and Treasurer. If a vacancy occurs during a term, it can be filled through either an appointment by the President with approval by the HSA Executive Board or a special election. (as specified in individual HSA Bylaws).
- In order to gain faculty/staff input and support, we recommend a HSA Faculty Representative be elected to participate on the HSA Board. This representative shall be elected by the faculty/staff with time provided by the Principal, for this representative to attend Board Meetings and General Membership Meetings. This elected Faculty Representative must be able to work with the HSAs Board and attend meetings regularly or another election can be requested. This is a non-voting position unless otherwise stipulated in the HSA bylaws.
- The HSA Board is made up of its' Officers, the school Principal, Faculty Representative, and any Members at Large ***only*** unless an exception is stipulated in the HSA bylaws. The elected officers will be the HSA Executive Committee.
- HSA Elections should be held at minimum, every two (2) years, and should be held in the spring. Eligible parents/guardians must have a child in the school for at least one (1) full year of the term to be served unless otherwise stipulated in the HSA bylaws.

Officer Protocols

- All HSA Officers must complete the SDP background checks and clearances within 30 days of their appointment. These items must remain on file with the individual HSA, school and PHSC.
- The HSA Treasurer **cannot** be a employee of the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). This is a SDP Policy (SDP Procedure #126), as well as a PHSC Policy.

HSA Membership Dues and PHSC Dues

- Home and School Associations can request yearly dues from parents, legal guardians, staff, community members, etc. Many HSAs have benefits of being a member ***but*** some only grant parents and legal guardians voting privileges. The terms and benefits of the membership should be outlined in their request and/or bylaws.
- ***HSA Membership money cannot be collected until HSA Officers are properly in place.***
- All HSAs ***must*** pay their annual membership dues to PHSC in order to be covered by insurance for all fundraisers, activities, and events. Otherwise, the HSA will not be covered by insurance, which is a violation of SDP policy. Any HSA found holding any fundraisers, activities and events supporting HSA causes while uninsured will be reported; PHSC will not accept responsibility or liability for a non-member HSA.
- For established HSAs, membership dues are due by October 15. Newly established HSAs should submit annual membership dues within 60 days of their election. For inclusion in specific PHSC benefits, all membership dues must be paid to PHSC by December 31.

Banking Best practices

- When opening/establishing/altering a bank account on behalf of your HSA, you must contact the PHSC Treasurer for necessary documentation for bank and records.
- Your HSA ***must*** have a Checking Account. There must be two (2) signers on all HSA checks (three (3) signers named on file at the bank. The signers on checks or signatures on file at the bank – ***MUST NOT BE RELATED OR FAMILY MEMBERS!*** There is still a prohibition on any further use of credit and debit cards until a full policy can be drafted.

Conducting HSA Membership Meetings

- HSA should hold public General Membership (GM) Meetings ***monthly***. The minimum number of meetings held should be set at no less than 5. Meeting dates, times, agendas, etc. are decided on, and scheduled by the current Executive Board with consideration of the school calendar. PHSC recommends varying times to accommodate families' different schedules.
- HSA Meetings should not be combined with other group meetings, unless there are distinct agendas and sign-in sheets.
- Sign in sheets are to be labeled as a HSA Meeting. A copy of the sign in sheet should remain on file with the HSA, school Principal and PHSC. It ***should not*** be distributed to any other party.
- HSA Executive Boards must give a monthly Treasurer's Report to members at all General

Membership Meetings and must provide a copy to their Principal and PHSC as well.

- The HSA General Membership Meetings are for members and it is the Presidents' and Officers' responsibility to run the meetings. The Principal is invited to attend and to be on the agenda to share information, however, they may be asked to leave the room during the HSA Meeting if the Executive Board or parents feel that it is necessary to discuss certain issues or concerns.
- Per SDP policy, HSAs are entitled to 30 hours per year for use of the school building without cost. Once your calendar is set, any times and dates for events outside of building operation hours, should be discussed with your Principal and if required you **must** complete the Use of Facilities Form and submit it by the allotted deadline. This can be used for Meetings, Dances, Family Nights, Fundraising, Workshops, etc. The Principal can only deny the use for a legitimate reason, which they must share in advance with the HSA. The Principal is not required, but is encouraged to attend HSA events.

Fundraisers and Assets

- The only fundraising that an HSA can hold before their dues are paid are only held to raise funds needed to support the cost of membership. This is assist in paying the HSAs' dues to PHSC in order to be covered by insurance and affirm their membership.
- Fundraising should be done through the HSA as much as possible. However, due to budget restraints, when school run fundraisers are held, they should coordinate with their HSA (and vice-versa) in order to not overburden families, or hurt each other's sales.
- All fundraisers must have a purpose, whether they are run by the HSA or the school, and families have the right to know what the money is used for. The overall focus of HSA spending must be to benefit the students.
- Funds raised by HSA or collected on their behalf must be turned in to an authorized HSA officer and deposited into the HSA bank account within 24 hours after the close of the event. No funds should be kept on school property nor given to Principal to place in safe in lieu of depositing.
- Event funds collected or monetary donations should have a receipt and/or record in HSA files. The amount for said protocol should be outlined in HSA bylaws.
- HSA funds **should not** be depleted at the end of the school year. As a non-profit organization, it is important to retain funds on hand for operating costs and HSA approved spending. Any remaining funds should be reported in the year end report.
- All fundraisers, activities, and events run by the HSA are scheduled and planned by the HSA, and are subject to cancellation or change at the discretion of the Executive Board. The HSA must coordinate their events schedule with the Principal.
- HSA purchases are at the discretion of the HSA. There are no required purchases that they have to provide for the school, and Principal and staff cannot tell them how to spend HSA funds. Principals should be meeting with the HSA EB to discuss financial needs and goals that the HSA can assist with that are not covered in the school budget. This should be done prior to the HSA EB

finalizing the annual budget. For staff/classroom needs, we recommend the use of *Staff Request for Funding Form* and establishing a procedure for consideration. Be sure to discuss the request procedure with the Principal, and clearly communicate process to staff.

- Purchases for the HSA, made by the HSA, are the property of the HSA, **not** the Board Members. **No Principal nor SDP employee or representative has any right to any property of the HSA.**
- If no HSA Executive Board is installed all property of the HSA goes into the care of PHSC until a new HSA is formed. When the new Officers begin their term, they must be given possession of and access to all of those items.

Coordinating with Your School and Principal

- The most important thing a Principal can do to assist their HSA, and vice-versa, is to develop a professional working relationship with the Officers. Communication is key, and it is important to realize that your major goals are the same, with the best interest of the children coming first. Active parents can be important partners to the school administration, and can affect positive change. An effective HSA supports the students, assists the administration and staff, and empowers the parents of their school, and, in doing so, strengthens your school's community.
- The Principal and members of the HSA EB should meeting on a regular basis. This will ensure that communication is open and information is being shared regarding the school climate, needs and upcoming events.
- The Principal cannot confiscate or audit HSA Records or Financial Books. If there are questions of impropriety, please contact PHSC.
- All HSA mail and/or packages are to be opened **only** by the current HSA Officers. A secure mailbox or basket should be provided for the HSA in the Main Office.
- When in need of parent volunteers, it is important to make the HSA aware, as they can support in the effort through additional communication and recruitment.
- All HSA Officers must have their Child Abuse and Criminal Background Clearances completed and on file with PHSC and the school within 60 days of their appointment. All Officers and HSA volunteers must follow the SDP policy for volunteering in each respective school. This includes the established 2017 FACE Volunteer Procedure.
- As the elected parent leaders HSA Officers should be involved in the Budget Process, in the School Improvement Plan, Parent Involvement Policy, Title I Audits, etc. Any documents to be signed by an HSA Officer or parent must be given to them with time to read, and ask questions and when needed present to the HSA members before signing if acting as a full parent body representative. They are acting as Parent Representative representing Parents in the same way a Building Representative is representing the Staff Members. The Parent Representative decisions need to reflect the opinions and input of their members within the HSA – **not** their personal opinion.

- Per the 2013-2020 PFT SDP Contract, an elected HSA Officer is required to be a part of the Site Selection and Hiring Process. Your HSA EB will choose the Parent Representative to participate on the Site Selection Committee. The HSA should also choose an alternate, in case the Parent Representative is unable to attend an interview or meeting. The Parent Representative can be an Officer or an HSA member.
- If there is a School Advisory Council (SAC) at your school, it is encouraged that an Executive Board Member serve on the SAC. There should be HSA representation at every meeting as the HSA Officers are the elected parent leadership body of the school representing all voices.
- HSA Officers should be invited to attend and speak at some of the school's Staff Development Days. It is an important way to keep your staff informed and connected with your Parent Leaders. Staff should be encouraged to join your HSA and support their efforts.
- HSA Officers must have the Principal's approval when sending out information to parents' via promotional posters hung on school grounds, classroom distribution or phone blasts, however it is coming from the HSA, and is not to be re-written by the Principal or Staff outside of spelling or grammatical changes. Any changes made should be approved by the HSA EB.
- The Principal and HSA EB should establish a protocol for communication review and dissemination at the beginning of the year (or when appropriate). This should be in writing and placed on the HSA files. A Principal cannot stop information from being sent out on events or causes that impact the school community without a legitimate reason.
- HSAs have the right to send out information off grounds to parents, staff, and other stakeholders via email, social media, etc.
- HSAs have the right to host fundraisers offsite and promote accordingly.
- With the School Office Staff assistance, HSA can and should make use of Parent Portal for meeting, activity and fundraiser announcements.
- Although PHSC understands that space is practically non-existent, PHSC encourages schools to provide some kind of space for your HSA. This should not be a shared space that is unsecure. Preferably a space with a lock, that is not accessible to many other people, for security purposes.

Coordinating with PHSC

- PHSC will facilitate several Officer Training Workshops, as well as other Parent Trainings, and we encourage all HSA Officers and members to attend.
- PHSC Representatives hold HSA Officers Meetings (bi-monthly). Your entire EB can attend this meeting, however, all HSAs are required to send at least one (1) person to represent their school, obtain information provide, and turn in required reports.

Each HSA representative must bring or send copies of the following for their school:

1. Monthly Meeting Agenda*
2. Minutes of your meetings held (General Membership and Executive Board)*
3. Sign-In Sheet (General Membership and Executive Board)*
4. Monthly Financial Statement or Treasurer's Report*
5. Monthly Bank Statement (Given to the PHSC Rep **ONLY!**)*
***required monthly regardless of meeting schedule**

You may pony, mail, fax or share via email/google docs to Philadelphia Home and School Council, Education Center, Room 115 – attention Membership Chair, or bring them to the next Officer or General Meeting within 15 days of the start of the new month.

Important information is distributed for the parents and schools, along with officer trainings and guest speakers. It is also a good way for HSAs to share ideas and best practices with each other. Remember – information *must* be taken back to the HSA EB and when appropriate shared with members at the HSA Monthly Meeting.

**** Know that we will do our best to assist you with an issue that may arise; however, please remember that we are all volunteers, and we volunteer at our children's schools, as well as addressing the entire Academic Division/Region.**

Thank you for your cooperation, and have a great school year!