

# **Agricultural Education**

## **Advisory Committee**

### **Manual**

**Agricultural Education  
Department of Education**

Revised November 2023

## Introduction

The use of advisory committees is well-established in the public school system. These committees were conceived in the beginning to implement the development and improvement of educational programs. This manual is written for those planning to form new advisory committees, wishing to improve those already in existence, and for newly appointed members. Advisory committees will play a vital role in agriculture programs in the future.

This manual will help prevent unnecessary errors in the development of advisory committees. These guidelines have proven successful and may be added to and modified for local and present conditions.

Advisory committees are useless unless they are properly developed with practical working groups. They must be based on the needs of the people and industry for which they serve.

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. Agriculture is a complex, highly scientific, and technological industry. Employment opportunities in agriculture are constantly changing. New technologies are continually being developed and incorporated into agricultural and educational industries.

Students must be trained for today's jobs as well as new opportunities that become available. Advisory committees help teachers of agriculture stay abreast of these changing employment trends and opportunities. Increased interest in agriculture programs that include internships, work-study, and other types of on-the-job training will require close coordination with agricultural industry representatives.

We must remember that lay advisory groups have no administrative or legislative authority. They can not establish policy or take the place of the administration or the board of education. Their function is to provide understanding between the school and the community it serves. Advisory committees provide balanced judgment to local problems and help give continuity and support to programs.

The purpose of this manual is to provide information for Agricultural Education coordinators, school administrators, boards of trustees, teachers of agriculture, and advisory committee members. Included is information on the formation, functions, duties, and operation of advisory committees. An outline format is being used to make the information easier to find and use.

Finally, a sample of opening session instructions, a sample invitation, sample agendas, and sample minutes are offered for the benefit of those unfamiliar with these procedures.

## Forming an Advisory Committee

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

### Determine and Verify the Need

- ❖ There must be a feeling of need and understanding of opportunity if an advisory committee is to succeed.
- ❖ If with its help, the advisory committee can make the (department, division, district) better, it serves a usable function.
- ❖ It can provide continuity of a quality program should teachers or administrative changes take place.
- ❖ It is important that the school administration, agricultural education staff, parents, and other patrons of the school thoroughly understand the character and purpose of the committee.

### Selection of Committee Members

- ❖ Avoid nomination of friends, as they may be less candid and honest in their advice.
- ❖ The advisory committee should be truly representative of the community.
- ❖ Should be successful agriculturists and/or individual/s engaged in a significant related occupation.
- ❖ Must have recent, successful, firsthand, and practical experience in the field of agriculture
- ❖ Should exhibit substantial interest in the agriculture program.
- ❖ Should be representative of different important agricultural commodities, agricultural sectors, age groups, farm organizations, & ethnic or religious groups.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ General school staff and/or school board members should only be used when special circumstances warrant their appointment.
- ❖
- ❖ Should recognize the time required and express a willingness to serve on the committee.

### How Many Committee Members?

- ❖ No fixed number will satisfy all situations.
- ❖ The group needs to be large enough to represent the district and provide a quorum if several members are absent.
- ❖ Should not be so large that it is unwieldy or difficult to call together.
- ❖ Five to eight persons are suggested

### **How are Committee Members Notified of their selection?**

- ❖ Notification is usually done in writing, by the agricultural department chair.
- ❖ The letter should:
  - Indicate that the committee serves in an advisory capacity to him or her, the department, the principal, and the school board.
  - Include a request that the member indicate whether he or she will accept.
  - Urge speed of acceptance to gain an orderly efficient start.

### **Understanding of Responsibility**

- ❖ Of greatest importance is that the committee is only advisory in character.
- ❖ The advice is to the teacher, school administrator, or school board as appropriate to accept or reject.
- ❖ It has no administrative or policy-forming power.
- ❖ It will make suggestions on policy and procedure, but the source of its influence is the voluntary acceptance of this advice by the proper governing authority.

## **Functions and Duties of Advisory Committees**

1. Help to determine what type of Agricultural Education program is offered.
2. Assist the teacher(s) in finding suitable work locations (internships, work-study, cooperative learning, partnerships) for students in both production agriculture and agri-industry occupations.
3. Help the instructor establish a curriculum that is hands-on and relevant to the industry.
4. Help to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ag. Education program. Guidelines for evaluation should be developed cooperatively with the advisory committee, administration, school board, and the Agricultural Education Unit of the California Department of Education.
5. Help gain support for legislation and appropriations.
6. Help the teacher(s) develop a list of capable resource persons for use as speakers and judges for contests.
7. Help obtain sponsors for appropriating funds for awards, scholarships, or needed equipment and supplies that are useful in carrying out classroom activities and FFA . or other youth programs.
8. Help unify the activities of the Agricultural Education program with those of other groups and agencies interested in agriculture.
9. 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.
10. When appropriate, serve as a resource person to instructors visiting workplace learning sites of students and participating in classroom instruction or demonstrations and accompanying or hosting field trips.
11. Study and make recommendations on problems presented to it by the school board on which further information is needed.
12. Provide the teacher with technical assistance and keep him/her aware of new developments in the agricultural industry.
13. Identify current standards for new equipment.
14. Assist in procuring opportunities to upgrade the teacher's technical skills and knowledge.

## Operation of Advisory Committee

It is important that correct procedures and rules be established and clearly understood by committee members, school administrative staff, 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:

### Number of meetings

- ❖ Must meet regularly and often enough to carry out their assignment.
- ❖ The minimum number is two per year. Three is encouraged.
- ❖ Necessity should always determine the exact number.
- ❖ Better to have fewer well-planned, well-attended meetings.

### Selection of Officers

- ❖ Generally a chairperson and vice chairperson.
- ❖ The chairperson should be a layperson elected by the committee.
- ❖ It is usually best that the agriculture teacher serves as recorder and general consultant.
- ❖ Agriculture teachers should not be running advisory committee meetings. They should assist the chairperson in creating an agenda for the meeting.

### Length of Service by Committee Members

- ❖ Three-year terms are recommended.
- ❖ Individual preferences in length of service need to be considered.
- ❖ Limitations should be placed on reappointments.

### Length and Place of Meetings

- ❖ For efficient and effective use of time, the agenda for each meeting must be well planned.
- ❖ Ample meeting notice of 10 days to 2 weeks is recommended.
- ❖ A copy of the agenda, minutes from the previous meeting, and any reading material requiring action should be sent in advance of the meeting date.
- ❖ Meetings, not to exceed two hours, , held at a time and date chosen by the committee, are recommended.
- ❖ Usually, the agricultural department of the school provides the best meeting site, allowing members to become familiar with the facilities of the department. Consider giving the committee a tour of your facilities.

### Filling Committee Vacancies

- ❖ Vacancies that occur because of term completion or other reasons should be filled by nomination from the advisory committee or agriculture department.
- ❖ The committee may be asked for suggestions.
- ❖ A committee should not be permitted to choose its own replacements. This would be self-perpetuating and may become unrepresentative.

- ❖ Rules of procedure should indicate that if a committee member misses meetings repeatedly without reason, the position is declared vacant by the chairperson.

### **Distribution of Minutes**

- ❖ All committee members, the career education director, the principal, the school board president, and the regional supervisor when requested.

### **Making Decisions**

- ❖ Currently, many organizations operate by consensus approval of agenda items. When consensus cannot be reached or decorum is in question, refer to Robert's Rules of Order.

## Opening Session Instructions for Agricultural Education Advisory Committees

### Instructions to Your New Advisory Committee

- ❖ You constitute an advisory committee for the (your school site).
- ❖ You are agents of and appointed by the (your school agricultural program).
- ❖ While you are not a policy-making body, you are advisory to (your department) and through channels, to the principal, superintendent, and board. We need your expertise in this area.
- ❖ The (your district) is interested in the best possible Agricultural 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.
- ❖ You will be a working committee and students & school staff expect to benefit from your work.

### We need help to:

1. Review existing programs, courses of study, facilities, and equipment.
2. Propose new programs and/or courses when needed based on solid data for this community.
3. Evaluate existing programs and propose new programs.
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.)
5. Help develop building plans, review architects' plans, etc., where new buildings are being proposed.
6. Help point out changes needed for the future in your area of interest. The goal is to keep the program current.
7. Help in placement and in evaluating the performance of our Agricultural Education 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:

- ❖ Review present course offerings and majors -- catalogs, studies, data, classrooms, labs, and other facilities.
- ❖ Conduct studies, if needed, to get community data on which to base your decisions.
- ❖ Decide areas to study or review (both geographic and educational areas) and determine how to do this (formal study, informal, follow-up studies).
- ❖ 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:**

- ❖ Elect a chairperson.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Determine rotation (1-2- or 3 years?). You will also decide the length and term and who serves what term. (Subsequent appointments will be 3 years each.)
- ❖ Announce that any member who can not continue serving for any reason should notify the chairperson so that a replacement appointment can be made.

## Sample Advisory Invitation

October 1, 2023

Dear (Future Advisory Committee Member),

(Your School District) is committed to providing its students with many opportunities and experiences through which to become aware of, explore, and plan for a career in Agriculture. To improve our programs, curriculum, and delivery strategies, we are creating an Agriculture Advisory Committee. To be effective and relevant, we believe it is critical that representatives from local businesses, industry professionals, and community leaders all have the opportunity to provide input and service on this committee.

We invite you to serve on our Agriculture Advisory Committee. You have been recommended as a person with respected knowledge and experience, and as one who will make a valuable contribution to this committee. By serving on this committee, you have the opportunity to guide the (Your High School) Agriculture Department, prepare students for their future, and promote and advocate the importance of agriculture awareness, exploration, and planning.

The Agriculture Advisory Committee meets three times each school year. The first meeting will be held on November 1, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 404 at Your High School. Dinner will be provided, so please bring an appetite!

We look forward to hearing from you and appreciate your dedication to the Agriculture Advisory Committee. If you have questions, or concerns, or are not interested in serving on the committee please contact (Department Chair), [departmentchair@school.org](mailto:departmentchair@school.org) or 123-456-7890.

Sincerely,

Your Name  
Your High School  
Agriculture Department Chair

## Sample Advisory Agendas

**These agendas are to help guide agricultural departments in topics of discussion.**

### Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda

November 1, 2023 @ 6:00 pm

Room 404

- I. Call Meeting to Order
- II. Introductions of Members/Roll Call
- III. Approval of Minutes from May 25, 2023
- IV. Old Business
- V. New Business
  - A. Professional Development Plan
  - B. Grading Policy for FFA and SAE
  - C. Freshman Retention
  - D. Graduate Survey
  - E. Pathways, Courses, Class Size, and Enrollment
  - F. Facility and Equipment-Facility Plan and Acquisition Plan
  - G. Department Goals
  - H. Staff Responsibilities
- VI. FFA Update - Awards and Conferences
- VII. SAE Update
- VIII. Department Update - New Equipment and Federal/State Funding
- IX. Committee Recommendations
  - A. Classes/Pathways
  - B. Department
  - C. FFA
  - D. Other
- X. Upcoming Program Activities
- XI. Next Advisory Committee Meeting
- XII. Adjourn Meeting

Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda  
February 1, 2024 @ 6:00 pm  
Room 404

- I. Call Meeting to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Minutes from November 1, 2023
- IV. Old Business
  - A. Professional Development Plan
  - B. Grading Policy for FFA and SAE
  - C. Freshman Retention
  - D. Graduate Survey
  - E. Pathways, Courses, Class Size, and Enrollment
  - F. Facility and Equipment-Facility Plan and Acquisition Plan
  - G. Department Goals
  - H. Staff Responsibilities
- V. New Business
  - A. Officer Elections
  - B. Recruitment
  - C. SAE Periods/Extended Contract
- VI. FFA Update - Awards and Conferences
- VII. SAE Update
- VIII. Department Update - New Equipment and Federal/State Funding
- IX. Committee Recommendations
  - A. Classes/Pathways
  - B. Department
  - C. FFA
  - D. Other
- X. Upcoming Program Activities
- XI. Next Advisory Committee Meeting
- XII. Adjourn Meeting

Advisory Committee Meeting Agenda  
May 25, 2024@ 6:00 pm  
Room 404

- I. Call Meeting to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Minutes from February 1, 2024
- IV. Old Business
  - A. Professional Development Plan
    - 1. Update and recommendations for next year
  - B. Grading Policy for FFA and SAE
    - 1. Spring Semester Update and Recommendations for next year
  - C. Freshman Retention
    - 1. 2023-2024 Update and recommendations
  - D. Graduate Survey
    - 1. 2023-2024 Update and recommendations
  - E. Pathways, Courses, Class Size, and Enrollment
    - 1. Next Year sections
  - F. Facility and Equipment-Facility Plan and Acquisition Plan
    - 1. Update on items and facilities
  - G. Staff Responsibilities
    - 1. Recommendations for next year
  - H. FFA Officer Election
    - 1. Update and recommendations
  - I. Recruitment
    - 1. Update and recommendations
  - J. SAE Periods/Extended Contract
    - 1. Update and recommendations
- V. New Business
  - A. Job Market
    - 1. What does this look like in the community?
  - B. Target Occupations
    - 1. What are the agriculture jobs in the area?
    - 2. What skills are employers desiring for these jobs?
- VI. FFA Update - Awards and Conferences
- VII. SAE Update
- VIII. Department Update - New Equipment and Federal/State Funding
- IX. Committee Recommendations
  - A. Classes/Pathways
  - B. Department
  - C. FFA
  - D. Other
- X. Upcoming Program Activities
- XI. Adjourn Meeting

Agriculture Advisory Committee Minutes for  
\_\_\_\_\_ High School

Committee Members Present:

Committee Members Absent:

Agriculture Teachers Present:

Others Present:

Meeting Date:

Meeting Location:

Time Meeting Began:

Called to Order by:

**Action Item: Professional Development Plan for all teachers**

Committee Recommendation/Motion:

Result of Vote:

**Action Item: Grading Policy FFA/SAE**

Committee Recommendation/Motion:

Result of Vote:

**Action Item: FFA Officer Election Process**

Committee Recommendation/Motion:

Result of Vote:

**Action Item: Freshmen Retention**

Committee Recommendation/Motion:

Result of Vote:

**Action Item: Graduate Survey**

Committee Recommendation/Motion:

Result of Vote:

**Action Item: Agriculture Class Size/Enrollment**

Committee Recommendation/Motion:

Result of Vote:

**Action Item: Award Applications, State & American Degrees, Proficiency, etc.**

Committee Recommendation/Motion:

Result of Vote:

**Action Item: Parity (enrollment, participation both local & above local level)**

Committee Recommendation/Motion:

Result of Vote:

**Action Item: SAE Periods/Extended Contracts**

Committee Recommendation/Motion:

Result of Vote:

**Action Item: Facility and Equipment (Five Year Plan)**

Committee Recommendation/Motion:

Result of Vote:



Action to be taken by Committee Members before the next meeting:

Action to be taken by Ag Teachers before the next meeting:

Local issues that were addressed during the meeting:

Date of Next Meeting:

Time of Next Meeting:

Time Meeting Adjourned:

Name of Person Taking Minutes:

Signature of Person Taking Minutes: \_\_\_\_\_