

**Blue Oak Charter School
Parent Guild Bylaws
A Supplement to BOCS Bylaws Article 7
Parent Guild, Parent Organization, & Committees**

1. Parent Organization and Parent Guild

All parents are members of the Parent Organization. The Parent Guild, hereinafter the "Guild", is the facilitating body of the Parent Organization.

2. Functions

a) The Guild serves as a forum for the discussion of matters of interest and concern to the parents of the school. These discussions may result in action designed to deal with a situation or recommendations to the faculty and/or administration for their consideration and/or action.

b) The Guild provides a communication channel between the parents and other individuals and groups, both within and outside the school community.

c) The Guild coordinates and sponsors the committees, clubs, festivals, and other activities that contribute to the life of the school (see Appendix 1. Committees, Clubs and Activities)

d) The Guild coordinates fundraising activities and oversees the allocation and disbursement of funds that have been raised; such disbursements are consistent with established principles (see Appendix C, Fundraising and Funding Requests)

e) The Guild oversees the election of the parent representative to the Blue Oak Charter Council. This election takes place in May.

3. Members

The Guild is comprised of a class representative from each of the classes at BOCS. In addition, the school administrator, a Faculty Representative, and a Charter Council representative serve on the Guild.

4. Appointment of Members

a) Class representatives are appointed from each class by a majority vote of the parents of the class.

b) The Faculty representatives and Charter Council representatives are appointed by the Faculty and the Charter Council respectively.

c) Both class representatives and other representatives are appointed for one year terms. The term runs from September-October of the following year.

d) There is no limit to the number of terms a class representative may serve; however, any class representative seeking reappointment is to be approved by the class parents:

e) Temporary appointments

The Guild, with the unanimous approval of the members, may appoint a temporary representative to a vacant position. The temporary representative shall serve until such time as the class parents appoint a permanent representative.

f) Recall of class representatives

If it is determined that a class representative is not performing adequately, the representative may be recalled by a consensus of the voting members of the Guild. The class teacher will be informed that a new class representative is needed. The Guild may appoint a temporary representative.

5. Duties of Class Representatives

a) The primary duty of a class representative is to create and maintain a channel of communication between the Guild and the parents and teacher for the class. The purpose of such a channel is to assure that parents are apprised of Guild and other school activities and that the Guild is informed about class needs, activities, and so forth.

b) In addition, class representatives (1) welcome and provide any necessary orientation for new parents, (2) maintain contact with the class teacher, (3) coordinate classroom parent volunteer schedules with the class teacher, (4) attend all class meetings, and (5) contribute any relevant information to the Acorn Newsletter in a timely manner.

6. Officers, Election, and Duties of Officers

a) Officers

The officers of the Guild are: Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Chairperson does not serve as a class representative due to the time commitments associated with officiating the Guild; consequently, an additional class representative is appointed to replace the Chair. At its discretion, the Guild may waive this section.

b) Election of Officers

Each of the officers identified above is elected by a majority vote of the voting members of the Guild.

c) Duties of Chair

The Chair (1) prepares Guild meeting agendas, (2) facilitates at Guild meetings, and (3) is the contact person for any individual or group which has business to bring before the Guild.

d) Duties of Co-Chair

The Co-Chair (1) maintains the Action Calendar and coordinates the discussion of Calendar items at the appropriate times, and (2) facilitates at Guild meetings in the absence of the Chair, and (3) contributes any relevant information and announcements to the Acorn Newsletter in a timely manner.

e) Duties of Secretary

The Secretary (1) prepares the minutes of Guild meetings and (2) maintains all Guild records, including the minutes.

f) Duties of Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for Guild funds. In this regard, the Treasurer (1) disburses funds as authorized by the Guild, (2) maintains a record of all deposits and disbursements, (3) makes emergency disbursements to a maximum of \$50, in consultation with the Chair, and (4) maintains communication with the fundraising committee chair. Please see Appendix C. Fundraising Principles and Funding Requests

g) Recall of an officer

If it is determined that an officer is performing inadequately, the officer may be recalled by a majority of the voting members of the Guild. The recalled officer will continue to serve on the Guild as a class representative. The Guild will appoint a new officer in the manner prescribed above.

7. Meetings

a) Meetings

The Guild shall host "Community Gatherings" as needed during the school year. Community Gatherings include Guild officers, the Parent Organization, and all Blue Oak Charter School staff members. In addition, the Guild shall schedule at least four 'business' meetings as needed.

b) Order of Business

The normal order of business is as follows:

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
3. REPORTS
 - Guild Officers
 - Committees
 - Representative from Charter Council
 - Director
 - Staff
4. ACTION ITEMS
5. DISCUSSION ITEMS
6. NEW BUSINESS
7. ANNOUNCEMENTS/ NEXT MEETING DATE
8. ADJOURNMENT
9. EVALUATION OF MEETING

8. Voting and Quorum

a) Voting members

The voting members are the appointed class representatives, including those whose appointments are temporary. The school administrator and the representatives of the faculty and the Charter Council do not vote. However, opinions of all present at Guild meetings must be considered when building consensus.

b) Quorum

A quorum, both for the Call to Order and for matters requiring a vote, consists of a majority of the voting members.

c) Consensus

The preferred decision making process for the Parent Guild and the committees is one that results in a consensus among participants. Please see Appendix A, "On Consensus Decision Making".

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF "ON CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS" by C.T. Lawrence Butler

Foundations of Consensus

- Trust
- Respect
- Unity of Purpose
- Nonviolence. "It is violent to use power to dominate or control the group process without mutual consent. The power of revealing truth is by itself sufficient force to persuade others that your point is in the best interests of the group."
- Self Empowerment (participate!)
- Cooperation (open minds!)
- Conflict Resolution (respectful disagreement brings diverse viewpoints toward acceptable, creative solutions)
- Commitment to the Group (put the group's needs before individual needs)
- Active Participation
- Equal access to power (creatively share power, skills and INFORMATION)
- Patience. no matter what the process, easy decisions are easy, difficult decisions require more time.

Levels of Concern

- Minor concern (person supports proposal but has an idea for improvement.)
- Reservation (person disagrees in part, but generally supportive of idea)
- Non-Support/ Standing Aside (person does not agree with proposal, but will stand aside and agree to disagree with the group)
- Blocking Concern (person blocks consensus due to a valid concern based on a generally recognized principle- the group must have accepted the validity of the concern and attempted to resolve it)

Roles

- *Agenda Planners*- assign presentors for each item, group discussion techniques, and time limits. Some guidelines:
 - alternate long and short, heavy and light items
 - reports come before related proposals
 - old business before new
 - consider placing items which might generate a sense of accomplishment early in the meeting
 - alternate presentors
 - be flexible

- *Facilitator*- facilitate means "to make easy"
 - non-directive leadership (do not give personal opinions without temporarily relinquishing role)
 - clarity of process- everyone present should be aware of the process and how to participate
 - focus on and honor the agenda
 - good will toward all present
- *Vibe Watcher*- someone who can remain somewhat aloof from the discussion and who is not personally invested in the topics. If tension increases, or anger enters the conversation, the vibe watcher interrupts briefly to remind the group of its common goals, most commonly by calling for a few moments of silence. The v.w. is the only person with prior permission to interrupt a speaker or speak without first being recognized by the facilitator.
- *Advocate*- If someone becomes emotionally overwhelmed, the advocate invites the individual to step outside the discussion and explain their concern. Then the advocate returns to the group and clearly presents the concern, without the emotional charge. This technique is used as a last resort, not to avoid conflict without offering everyone the opportunity to hear the concern
- *Timekeeper*- reminds people of time limits. It's fine to exceed time limits if everyone is aware and agrees.
- *Note Taker(s)*- everyone hears and expresses information differently, so two are better for larger groups.
- *Door Keeper*- prior to meeting: welcomes people, distributes handouts; after meeting has started: welcomes people at door, briefly explains what has happened so far and where the meeting is on current agenda.

Facilitation Techniques

- ensure equal participation
- one person speaks at a time, everyone listens
- listing- person wishing to speak silently raises hand and is put on list to speak
- stacking- if many people wish to speak at once, have them count off and speak in that order
- pacing- if pace is too slow, or folks are bored, "stretch, or rearrange the agenda"
- break- if discussion is too heated, a five minute break may save a "frustrating half hour or more of circular discussion and fruitless debate"
- call for consensus- ask if there are any more concerns which remain unaddressed.

- summarizing- focus what has been said with a summary, this helps avoid circular, repetitive discussion
- reformulating the proposal- new information may change a proposal during discussion- check for consent of original presenter.
- stepping out of role- if facilitator has strong feelings or wants to participate in the discussion on a particular item, they relinquish facilitator position to another member.
- pass clipboard- to collect info, such as who is in attendance.
- polling- use a quick poll to clarify the relative importance of several issues.
- censoring- if someone speaks out of turn consistently, ask them not to speak for the item, or longer if necessary.
- expulsion- only if someone has been very, very naughty

Group Discussion Techniques

- whole group- everyone encouraged to speak, one at a time.
- small group - break into small groups, report back to whole group.
- brainstorming- call out, gather all ideas, even crazy ideas.
- go-rounds- facilitator states question and then goes around the room inviting everyone to answer briefly.
- fishbowl- several members representing different points of view form inner circle for discussion.
- checking the process- use a different technique if meeting is breaking down or being dominated.
- active listening- listen carefully and repeat back what was heard. Then ask speaker if this is what they meant.
- silence- call for silence to calm and refocus energy.
- caucusing- group together people with similar viewpoints so that they may unify or define specific points of departure.

Evaluation-

Take time at the end of the meeting to evaluate the process. This is not a time to discuss agenda items or make decisions but to get feedback on how well the meeting functioned, how to replicate successes, and how to improve on weaknesses.

APPENDIX B COMMITTEES, CLUBS, AND ACTIVITIES

Committees

- Committees are parent-driven organizations which contribute to the life of the school.
- The standing committees of the Parent Guild are:
 - Acorn Newsletter
 - Festival
 - Outreach
 - Site
 - Election
 - Fundraising
 - Book Club
- The committee chairperson serves as the contact person and liaison to the co-chair of the Parent Guild.
- The list of standing committees may change from time to time at the discretion of the Parent Guild.

Clubs

- Clubs are student-driven organizations which are sponsored by the Parent Guild and contribute to the life of the school.
- The clubs currently sponsored by the Parent Guild are:
 - None to date
- A faculty member, parent, or Charter Council member is assigned to each club; this individual serves as the club advisor and contact person.
- The list of clubs may change from time to time at the discretion of the Parent Guild.

Activities

- Activities include those tasks and functions which are best dealt with by an individual as opposed to a committee.
- Current activities include: None to Date
- The individual coordinating the activity is the Activity Coordinator. The Activity Coordinator is responsible for reporting all goals, timelines, and activities to the co-chair of the Parent Guild.
- The list of activities may change from time to time at the discretion of the Parent Guild.

APPENDIX C FUNDRAISING PRINCIPLES AND FUNDING REQUESTS

Fundraising Principles

- All class fundraisers shall be coordinated with the Fundraising Committee Chairperson.
- All proceeds from class fundraisers go to the class.
- The Parent Guild's Fundraising Committee conducts fundraisers with the proceeds to go to the Guild.

Funding Requests

- As a guiding principle, funding requests which benefit larger numbers of children are given higher priority.
- Funding for programmatic and site improvement needs (festivals that are elements of the curriculum) should be covered by the school budget. Funding requests will be considered and funding approved on a funds available basis.
- Festivals should be financially self-supporting. Funding requests will be considered and funding approved on a funds available basis.
- Requests for funding should be submitted in writing.
- Requests should include the name of the person or group requesting funding, the purpose of the funding, the amount requested including sufficient details to support the amount requested, and any other sources of funding.
- Requests should be submitted to the Chair of the Parent Guild by 3:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding the Parent Guild meeting at which the request is to be considered. The request will then be added to the consent agenda for the next meeting.
- Requests from a standing committee of the Parent Guild should be made by the Committee Chair.

APPENDIX D COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

Overview

The Parent Guild serves as the coordinating agency for all the committees of the school, ensuring continuity, consistency, and coordination among the committees. The Chairperson of each committee will report committee activities to the Co-Chair of the Parent Guild.

The Committee Chairperson will activate their assigned committee and facilitate setting the goals for the year, passing information to and from the Co-Chair of the Parent Guild.

The Parent Guild develops the description for each committee and receives from each committee its implementation goals and the timeframe in which it will implement those tasks.

The committees may also have a Faculty or Charter Council representative to help the committee maintain congruency with the Vision and Mission of the school. A Faculty representative will report information from the committee to the Faculty at their weekly meeting, seeking approval when necessary for committee activities. A Charter Council representative will report committee information to the Charter Council, seeking approval when necessary for committee activities.

Committee Activation

The Committee Chairperson is responsible for setting meeting dates and times, as well as contacting all members (old and new) to inform them of the meeting date. The Committee Chairperson should reserve the meeting date on the Meeting Calendar in the school office and also submit the date to the Acorn Newsletter. Prior to a first meeting, all committee members should read the Committee Guidelines. Pertinent information and procedures need to be conveyed to the committee.

At the meeting:

- review the committee description (on the sign-up sheets and in the Parent Handbook)
- generate goals for the year
- take each goal and brainstorm methods of implementation
- determine the timeframe for implementing goals
- select a Chairperson or Co-Chairs (if needed) and someone to keep minutes
- Budget- have the committee submit its monetary requirements for the year, including copying costs. The committee is also responsible for submitting ideas for internal fundraising in order to cover these costs

Description, Goals, Timeline and Budget

Each committee needs to have a working description that evolves from the Vision of the school. From this description (to be found in the Parent Handbook) the committee will, in its first few meetings, develop its specific goals for satisfying the mandate and create a timeline within which it will implement the goals. These will be presented to the Co-Chair of the Parent Guild by the Committee Chairperson.

Committee Internal Organization

To keep from having inordinately long meetings, committee meetings can primarily be used for planning, delegating and review. It helps to decide what the outcome of the meeting needs to be before setting the agenda. Specific meetings can always be designated as work meetings.

Delegated work can be done outside of the committee meetings. Subcommittees can be formed to expedite work, especially in committees with a large number of people. In many cases, smaller groups of people can accomplish tasks more quickly, although the work should be reviewed by the entire committee. It is usually good to have at least two people work together to review each other's work as it develops. Any subcommittee or workgroup that forms is responsible for keeping minutes of their meetings (see the section Minutes as it applies to subcommittees).

Chairperson and Co-Chairperson

Each committee should choose a chairperson and a co-chairperson, so that there is a clear contact person for the committee, and the job of holding the committee does not fall on one person. The chair and the co-chair are responsible for:

- setting meeting times and announcing them in The Acorn Newsletter
- checking the signup sheets for new members
- welcoming new members
- ensuring all committee members are informed of meeting times and locations
- distributing a copy of the mandate, goals, and timeline to every committee member
- making sure an absent member receives information distributed at the meeting
- working with the committee to set and implement goals within the agreed upon timelines
- setting the agenda

Committee Phone Tree

Determine a method of communication, e.g. a committee phone tree, to make sure that members not present at the current meeting are informed of the next meeting.

Attendance

It is most effective for members of committees or subcommittees to attend each meeting. It is the responsibility of the member and the chairperson to ensure that an absent committee member is kept up-to-date and receives any information distributed at the meeting.

Communications

All written and verbal communications from the committee chairperson represent the entire committee and not the individual presenting the communication. Communications, such as a submission to the Acorn Newsletter, should be reviewed by the entire committee before the submission. The committee name should be indicated on any written document.

As a basic courtesy to our community, questions that arise as a result of a person's or committee's actions should be directed to that person or committee chairperson.

Types of committee information to be communicated

- Meeting times

Future meeting times should be given by the chair or co-chair of the committee to be posted on the Meeting Calendar in the school office and also in the Acorn Newsletter.

- Minutes

At each meeting someone must be delegated (for one or all meetings) to take minutes. It may be necessary for the person taking the minutes to refrain from participating in the meeting. To expedite distribution, the minutes can be reviewed by the committee at the end of the meeting. Please include in all minutes:

- Name of person taking the minutes
- List of participants
- Next meeting date and time
- Agenda items, decisions made or conclusion for each item.
- List of actions to be taken and the member responsible for each action

In the minutes for work meetings (of either the whole committee or subcommittees) there may not be an agenda, and so simply include the goal(s) and results of the work meeting in the minutes.

The person taking minutes is responsible for preparing and distributing the minutes to the committee members and for inserting a copy in the Committee binder in the school office.

- Monthly Summary

A written paragraph summarizing the month's activities and plans for next month should be prepared by the Committee Chairperson to be read at the Parent Guild meeting and published in the newsletter.

Committee Representative to Faculty and Administrative Committee

Committee members are invited to meet with the Faculty and/or Administration when the committee's work has evolved to a point where it would be beneficial to provide a clear picture of the committee's plans and decisions.

Communication to the Parent Organization

Committee members must be aware of all communications that go out to the school body from that committee. Such a communication, such as a submission to the Acorn Newsletter or posted announcement, must also be submitted for approval by the Parent Guild before being presented to the school body.