

GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING DATES

CAC meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Elgin High School library, 1200 Maroon Drive in Elgin.

2006-2007 meeting dates:

September 14, 2006	February 8, 2007
October 12, 2006	March 8, 2007
November 2, 2006	April 12, 2007
December 14, 2006	May 3, 2007
January 11, 2007	May 24, 2007

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

Meetings are held at the U-46 Educational Services Center located at 355 E. Chicago St., Elgin.

2006-2007 meeting dates:

August 3, 2006	January 4, 2007
August 17, 2006	January 25, 2007
August 31, 2006	February 22, 2007
September 21, 2006	March 22, 2007
October 19, 2006	April 19, 2007
November 16, 2006	May 10, 2007

CONTACTS

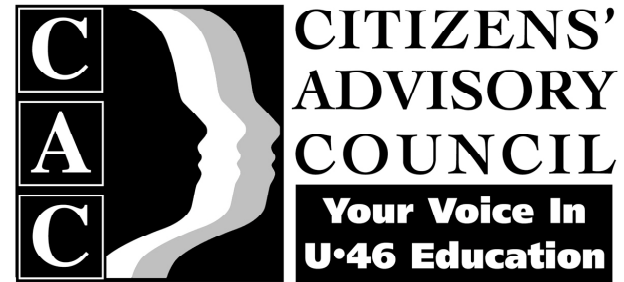
CAC website: www.u46cac.org

U-46 Community Relations: (847) 888-5000, ext. 5040.

CAC Chairperson: Lonnie Williams, cacchair@hotmail.com

CAC Vice Chairperson: Sue Kerr, skerr@theramp.net

*Produced by the Media & Communications Committee of the CAC
August 2006*



Member's Handbook

2006-2007

WELCOME TO THE CAC

Thank you for your commitment to the CAC and for dedicating your time and talents into making School District U-46 the best that it can be for all of its students. The CAC is a unique group in that we have an up-close and personal opportunity to positively impact our district's future through active citizen involvement. There are few other school systems that welcome such direct involvement by parents and citizens.

The CAC is also a great way to keep up to date on what's happening in the district. As a CAC member, you have the opportunity to interact with members of the Board of Education and U-46 staff, as well as other interested citizens and parents, and learn more about district initiatives and happenings at monthly meetings.

The CAC serves as one of the voices for the community at a district level. We represent you, your neighbor, the business owner on the corner, and every student in this district – and your active participation is vital to the progressive success of this district.



School
District
U-46

HISTORY & MISSION

The Board of Education constituted the Citizens' Advisory Council — which is made up of parents and citizens who live within the district — more than 40 years ago to advise and assist the Board of Education and school administration in the ongoing effort to provide the best possible educational opportunities for all students within U-46.

In working toward this goal, the CAC is charged with:

- Developing areas for specific study and making recommendations to the Board on ways to improve the educational process within the district.
- Assisting the Board and administration in identifying ways to achieve district objectives.
- Providing a forum for citizens of U-46 to express thoughts and ideas to the Board.

While CAC recommendations and studies do not have to be accepted or followed by the Board, our work is well received and the district has adopted many of our recommendations. Time and time again, the group's work has made a meaningful contribution in the district.

MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

As a member of the CAC, your primary responsibility is to act as a liaison between the school you represent and the CAC. Your charge is to represent your school to the general membership and leaders of CAC. Secondly, you represent the CAC to your school. You are also encouraged to pursue your individual interests in a more in-depth way by representing your school on a CAC Committee.

REPRESENT YOUR SCHOOL

First and foremost, you are on the council as a representative of your school at a district level. It is your job to make sure that your school's concerns, needs, questions and opinions are shared with the CAC. You are their voice within the CAC.

Each school may have up to seven representatives — parents or citizens that live within the school's attendance boundary — serving on the CAC. School principals, along with input from parent leaders, select up to five representatives and an additional two can be appointed by the CAC leadership to serve as "at-large" members. The only difference between appointed members and at-large members is that at-large members cannot serve as committee chairpersons; all other opportunities and responsibilities remain the same.

One person should be designated to announce your school's vote. No one representative has the authority to out-vote another representative from your school. If members cannot come to an agreement, that vote must be abstained. Remember that when you are voting, while what is best for your school and community are important, the final objective is what is best for the district as a whole.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committees are governed by the same rules as the General Meetings. It is important that meetings focus on achieving the goals of the committee. These rules will help keep meetings on track.

Each committee will set goals for the school year. It is important that the committee works to be progressive on their goals. As a committee member you have the ability to achieve, adjust or propose additional goals. Keep in mind that goals should be district-orientated.

Voting on a committee is much like voting at a General Meeting; again there is just one vote per school. You should go to your school and community with the information prior to meetings when voting will occur. Gather feedback and vote accordingly. Voting should not be your personal opinion, but the opinion of those you represent. Sometimes this may be different from your own. To reiterate, the final objective is what is best for the district.

Thank you again for your participation on the CAC. If you have any additional questions, please contact the CAC Chair or Vice Chair.

"Most school systems in America have involvement opportunities for parents and community members as well as district-wide advisory groups to address specific programs, issues or initiatives. However, CAC is unique. As an official arm of the Board of Education, CAC committees are involved in review and recommendations for policy and/or practice that impact the district's overall program and make a significant contribution to student achievement. We greatly appreciate the special volunteers who have made CAC a long-standing tradition of excellence at U-46 for almost half a century."

– Superintendent Connie Neale

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

CAC GENERAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Open Discussions

The General Council Meetings are the best way to stay informed about what is happening on a district level. It is important to remember why we are there. The CAC is here to be the voice of the community. Open discussions give members a chance to let their concerns and comments be heard. Every member has the right to be heard.

Please keep in mind that meetings need to run in a productive manner. Members should conduct themselves with rules of common courtesy, such as showing respect for one another, allowing a member to finish his or her remarks, refraining from inappropriate language or from just speaking out; please be respectful and raise your hand. Comments should be in good taste and demonstrate consideration for others. Comments regarding specific individuals are inappropriate and will be ruled out of order.

The CAC is governed by the Open Meetings Act, Robert's Rules of Order and the CAC By-Laws during meetings. Copies of meeting rules are available at the CAC website at www.u46cac.org.

Agendas

Agendas are available at least 72 hours in advance of scheduled meetings and are also available before each meeting in the lobby before you enter the library. It is your responsibility to be informed and understand the night's agenda. It is also important to stay on the subject of discussion. If there is a subject that you feel needs to be brought up during New Business, please let the CAC Secretary know as soon as possible. While it is acceptable to bring up personal issues that you may have with the district, the CAC cannot resolve personal issues. If appropriate, the subject may be directed to a specific committee, or you may be asked to work directly with district staff.

Voting

Each school is allowed only one vote and that vote should be based on the consensus of your school, not on your personal opinion. When preparing for a vote, it is your responsibility to bring all information related to the voting issue back to your school for feedback prior to voting. This includes explaining the goal of the study, initiative or issue at hand as well as the district-wide impact of what is being proposed. After soliciting input from the families and staff at your school, you will then represent their opinion back to the CAC. Discussions should be held with every member of your school's CAC representation when preparing for a vote.

All of your school's CAC members collectively represent the school at monthly CAC meetings and as a group, have one vote during voting sessions. It is your responsibility as a group to find out what issues are important to the families and staff at your school and what their opinions are on upcoming votes and then represent their desires to the CAC.

CAC meetings are generally held the second Thursday of each month at 7pm. The current school year's meeting dates are printed on the back cover of this handbook.

Attendance is based on your school's participation. As long as one member from your school is in attendance, your school is participating. Non-participation notices will only be sent to a school's principal when no members have been present for two consecutive meetings.

REPRESENT THE CAC

In addition to being the voice for your school, you are also its eyes and ears. Every general meeting, as well as through email or other written communication, you will be brought up to date on the latest issues, district initiatives, committee work and findings, and much more. It is then your responsibility to bring this information back to your school and share it with administration, parent leaders and the students' families. Issues of discussion within the CAC should never be a surprise to any member of the CAC or to their schools.

We count on you to relay to your school:

- What the CAC is and how parents can get involved on a district level
- The CAC's mission and focus for the year
- The ongoing work and issues related to committees
- The overall focus and progress of district objectives
- Detailed information regarding upcoming CAC votes

MAKE A DIFFERENCE ON A COMMITTEE

To truly effect change within the district, committee work is crucial. It is the committees that study, develop, debate and make recommendations to the board. By the time a study or recommendation gets to the general membership for discussion or approval, the nuts and bolts of the work is completed. So to make a direct impact on recommendations with your ideas and resources and your school's opinions, you've got to get involved at the beginning and be actively involved in the work.

In recent years the School Board has adopted many recommendations brought forth by committee work.

Committee involvement typically includes one meeting each month in addition to the general meeting. The general focus of each committee's work is initially directed by the CAC Executive Committee based on the district's initiatives for that year. From there, each committee develops its goals and work plan for the year and can add additional focuses for study.

Committee work becomes so important because it is the collective work of the diverse families, concerns and opinions throughout the district. To get involved in a committee, please contact the committee chairperson or Community Relations at U-46, (847) 888-5000, ext. 5040.

REQUIRED COMMUNICATIONS FOR MEMBERS

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY

The best way for CAC Representatives to be in touch with their school and community is through open and deliberate communications. Since members represent their school and its community, it is important to have an ongoing relationship with them. While every school may operate differently, each member will have to find the best way to communicate with them.

Every month following CAC General Meeting, a summary will be emailed to all school principals and registered CAC members. Please encourage the school to publish this information in school publications, post in public areas and keep on file in the main office for reference.

Other recommended paths of communication with schools are:

- Work with your school's Parent Organizations (varies by school). Having open communications with your school not only gives you the opportunity to get feedback from the community, but to inform them of subjects they may have questions on.
 - Have a dedicated time before, during or after organized school meetings.
 - Ask for the CAC to be a part of the school's parent/teacher board meetings.
 - Request dedicated space in a parent group newsletter or bulletin board.
- Have regularly scheduled contact with the School Principal in which you can discuss CAC business and address any concerns that may need to be brought to the CAC's attention.

- Work with your school to publish CAC information and monthly updates. It is your responsibility to bring all CAC-produced materials back to your school for review and/or feedback. This would include reports, information regarding upcoming votes and monthly updates.
- Actively promote meeting days and times. Everyone is welcome.
- Promote the CAC website (www.u46cac.org) and the district website at www.u-46.org for additional information.
- Other ideas include: creating surveys or questionnaires for certain topics, or developing other ways to let your parents and community members have input; requesting space dedicated to the CAC on a bulletin board or public posting spot; providing a CAC notebook that contains all meeting minutes, news releases, studies, etc. that can be kept in the main office so parents can have easy access to further information.

YOUR SCHOOL'S REPRESENTATIVES

It is very important that CAC Representatives from your school are in frequent communication with each other. Since you collectively represent the school, it's crucial that you know where the others stand on important issues. While there is time for some discussion at CAC General meetings, it is best to meet with other representatives to discuss current issues/concerns and prepare for upcoming meetings and matters that require voting, prior to the general meetings. These can be informal meetings to keep each other informed and to determine who is responsible for which communication functions or responsibilities. The use of e-mail is an excellent way to communicate with fellow representatives.

GENERAL COUNCIL/COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Communication is a two way street. If your school doesn't have representation at a meeting, they may be missing important information. Likewise the CAC may be missing important information from your school. Make sure that if you can't make a meeting, that you get information from another member. Check the website regularly and read meeting minutes. If you have important information for the CAC from your school, contact the CAC Officers, or a committee member. It is your responsibility to be well-prepared for meetings with the Council, committees and with your school.