



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY / DIVISION OF LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT
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OVERVIEW OF COUNCIL AND COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Council representation and duties:

- Council membership **must** include: *other representatives of providers and users of library services in the school library system* per Commissioner's Regulations 90.18(b)(2)(i).
- Councils work with the director to:
 - recommend policy;
 - do long-range and short-range planning; and
 - evaluate the system's services.
- **Committees**--either standing or *ad hoc*--help assist in the planning, advising and organizing of council priorities and projects, for example: automation, long-range planning, continuing education/professional development, by-laws, nominating, etc. These committees not only create a structure to help the council's work get done, they enlarge the pool of workers, idea-producers and subject specialists for each project because they **can include** membership from the liaison group, member libraries and other users and providers of system services.
- A council is a **quasi-governing body** and should be structured and run like a board of trustees, with officers, by-laws, official minutes, etc.
- Council meetings constitute official business and are subject to the provisions of the **Open Meetings Law**. The director and the council should review this information carefully and, if necessary, be sure to adopt procedures to meet the requirements of this law.
- Don't forget the **importance of the business** conducted by the school library system council. This is a public trust for which the school library system receives state taxpayer funding. It is therefore essential for school library system councils to operate in a business-like way, demonstrating **accountability** by such means as meeting the Education Department standards, operating under an approved plan of service, holding open meetings, communicating with members, doing an annual evaluation, preparing an annual report and budget, etc.

Communication Coordinators:

- **Communication Coordinators** are a separate group from the school library system council with different roles and responsibilities. The main function of the liaisons (individually and as a group) is to provide **two-way communication** between the member libraries and the school library system. This can be accomplished through:
 - **regular meetings** in which the liaisons discuss how to implement the policies recommended by the council;
 - **sharing information** on system programs (e.g., training), procedures (e.g., interlibrary loan), data collection (e.g., database development, statistics on interlibrary loan, etc.);
 - **developing committees and/or interest groups** (e.g., an elementary school librarians cluster group, automation users group, etc.);
 - bringing the **needs of school library system users** (students, faculty and administrators) to the attention of the school library system council and director;
 - **identifying subject experts** from among member librarians and others and recruiting them to participate in SLS projects and committees; and
 - identifying and recruiting **potential council members**.