

LEADER-TO-LEADER MEETINGS

An Opportunity to Share, Understand, Align and Make Lasting Progress



Joint Meetings Among Local Government Leaders

In California, local agency service areas often overlap. Elected officials and staff may find meeting on a regular basis to identify opportunities for collaboration and leveraging resources is the best way to effectively meet community goals and needs.

Joint meetings of the elected officials and/or staff members of city, county, school and/or special district agencies provide an opportunity for local officials to get to know one another, understand organizational missions and functions and to build the trust that allows for stronger working relationships. These discussions afford key decision-makers and staff the opportunity to align the important work of their respective agencies.

These leadership meetings can take a variety of forms and go by several different names including Joint City-School Meeting, 2x2, 4x4, Big 6 or 8 Pack. Meetings may be informal and involve a mayor and school board member meeting together, or meetings can be structured, official convenings of a city, county, special district or school district at their chambers. Regardless of the meeting format, the goals are the same: build and strengthen relationships, communicate about constraints and opportunities in the current environment and develop rapport and trust. Over time, these meetings allow for the development of shared goals and priorities and for agencies to share resources, plan activities and jointly coordinate programs or services.

“Working together as city, county and school leaders, we can more effectively improve the lives of children and families in California.”

John Gioia, Past President,
California State Association of
Counties and Supervisor, Contra
Costa County

Leadership meeting participants may include key staff members as well as elected officials representing a city, county, school or special district. Staff may include a superintendent, county or city administrator, executive officer or manager. Depending on the topic, it may be appropriate to invite administrators from specific departments or programs that oversee efforts where there is potential for collaboration between

two or more jurisdictions. Specific participants involved in these joint meetings can be determined by a chair, president or mayor of a board.

Formal and informal meetings may occur annually, quarterly or on an as-needed basis to effectively foster and sustain relationships among the local government and school board leaders. After elections or leadership changes, or when new management or superintendents take the helm, are ideal times to convene the group through the formal or informal approach tailored to that community.

Fostering relationships among those who create or implement public policy and those involved in working through implementation challenges will ultimately benefit their shared constituencies. There may be occasion when an elected official from one entity changes offices and then represents another agency involved in joint efforts. For example, a school board member may become a council member or a county supervisor. This increases understanding of the constraints and opportunities which other community leaders operate in, and helps in developing solutions and strategies for leveraging and maximizing finite city, school and county resources.

Sample Topics of Mutual Interest Among City, County, School and Special Districts

- Annual Enrollment Planning and Facilities Needs
- Gaps in Services for Children and Families
- General Plans
- Homelessness among Children and Families
- Joint Use of Facilities
- Joint Trainings
- Maintenance and Capital Improvement Planning
- Out of School Time Options for Children and Families
- Public Safety and School Resource Officers
- Safe Routes to School /Active Transportation
- School and Public Facility Siting
- School and Recreation Calendars
- Shared Service Contract
- Shared Infrastructure Investments
- Summer Lunch Programs
- Tax Increment Financing
- Youth Employment and Internships
- Youth Engagement and Volunteer/Civic Service

“When agencies collaborate to provide services and information to students and families, the greater community wins.”

Jill Wynns, Past President, California School Boards Association and Commissioner, San Francisco Unified School District

EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP MEETING AGENCIES AND PARTICIPANTS

City ↔ School*	City ↔ County	County ↔ School*
School board members and mayors and/or council members with or without the superintendent or city manager. Key senior staff may attend or participate in future meetings.	Mayors or council members and the chair or members of the board of supervisors with or without the city manager or county administrative officer. Key senior staff may attend or participate in future meetings.	School board members and the chair or members of the board of supervisors with or without the superintendent or county administrative officer.
Elected ↔ Elected	Elected ↔ Staff*	Staff ↔ Staff*
One or two members of each elected body.	Members of the elected body and select staff representing the executive officer or specific departments.	Staff of two or more agencies may convene to further discussions on policies or projects as directed by their agency's leadership.

*May also include representatives from a countywide board of education.

It should be noted that leadership meetings of two or more local agencies may include challenges. From planning a convenient time to preparing an agenda, it is important that elected officials and staff involved in joint leadership meetings understand and respect the unique roles and responsibilities of each of the agencies involved. For example, particular functions or rules may be mandated or required by state law and cannot be altered. In order to craft a shared vision and successfully collaborate, participants should familiarize themselves with the capacity, purpose and leadership of all the organizations involved.

Please note that if a majority council or board members are involved in the joint meeting, it will be subject to the Brown Act requirements and will need to be noticed like other open meetings. For more information about open government laws visit: www.ca-ilg.org/abc.

Resources to Learn More

Cities Counties Schools Partnership

www.ca-ilg.org/ccs-partnership

Stretching Community Dollars Guidebook

www.ca-ilg.org/resource/stretching-community-dollars-guidebook

FORMAL TO INFORMAL: MEETING FORMAT OPTIONS AND TYPES OF DISCUSSIONS

TYPE	FORMAT	DESCRIPTION
Formal	Elected	An example of a formally noticed convening involves the city and school district of Berkeley. The city manager's office takes the lead in organizing the meeting including preparing an agenda. Sample discussion items include: school-police matters, joint use or shared service programs, homeless matters and potential land use items such as enrollment capacity and schedules for facilities. For more information visit City of Berkeley's website: www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/Clerk/Home/2x2_Committee_Homepage.aspx .
Formal	Elected	The City of San Carlos and the San Carlos Elementary School District convene on a quarterly or as needed basis (typically quarterly) to discuss projects of mutual interest for which both agencies are involved. Meetings include elected officials as well as staff. For more information visit www.cityofsancarlos.org/meetings/city_school/default.asp .
Formal	Elected	In Brentwood, the city works with two school districts through a joint inter-agency council that meets quarterly to discuss services and staffing related to school resource officers, emergency trainings, capital improvements, maintenance and more.
Informal	Elected and Staff	Mendocino County and its local schools convene around specific topics as needed such as lunch programs. Counties and schools provide health, human and education services to shared constituencies and may need to work through specific issues as state policies change or provide opportunities to improve or leverage services.
Informal	Elected and Staff	In South San Francisco, the city and school district convene to discuss afterschool programs and joint use of fields and more. The two agencies have applied for, and received grant funding to provide afterschool services on school and city property. City staff works with school district staff to provide students opportunities to volunteer. Additionally staff work together to coordinate summer programs in areas impacted by gang violence. Service coordination is done at a staff level and in conjunction with councilmembers and school board leadership holding conversations through joint meetings.
Informal	Elected and Staff	For decades, the City of San Dimas has partnered with its school district to coordinate mutual items of interest and to work on more effective relationships.
Informal	Staff	The city manager of Campbell is working with the superintendents of the three local districts. The school districts support and encourage youth to participate in the city's efforts around youth engagement activities.