



Parents at School

The school bylaws of Berlin offer both parents and students the opportunity to be involved in shaping student life at school. The following information relates to the role of the parents:

Parent involvement is an important component of a democratically-conceived school community. Therefore, it is important that parents contribute their ideas and suggestions to help create an atmosphere that promotes successful learning at school.

At the first parent meeting of the school year, parent representatives for each class are chosen by a vote of all of the parents of that class who are in attendance. The role of the parent representative is to facilitate communication among the parents and between parents and teachers; their responsibilities include planning parent nights and class parties, managing the class finances and occasionally organizing presents for the class homeroom teacher. They are also members of the Parent Association, which meets a minimum of three times per year.

The Parent Association consists of all of the parent representatives of the school; its primary function is the exchange of information and ideas. According to the Berlin school bylaws, the Association is to represent the interests of all of the parents and legal guardians of students attending the school. Representatives of the Student Council, the Council of Teachers and the school Administrative Board also attend the Association's meetings. At these meetings, a variety of issues that relate to student life and the life of the school are discussed and important information is disseminated. At times the Parent Association passes resolutions that are submitted to the school administration, the government or other administrative bodies in an effort to effect meaningful change; these resolutions are met with varying degrees of success.

Furthermore, the Parent Association selects members who will represent it in other important committees, such as the Administrative Board, the Council of Teachers, various departmental committees and the Student Council, as well as the regional Parent Association for Tempelhof-Schoeneberg. Participation in these committees allows the Association to broaden the impact of its ideas, further facilitate communication and support teachers in their work.

Participation is not limited to these administrative bodies; as a member of the regional parent association, one is able to take part not only in the regional Board of Advisors, but also the Parent Association of Berlin and the Berlin School Board of Advisors—and in this way to represent the interests of the parents even at the State level.

It is not necessary, however, to be a parent representative in order to get involved. There are plenty of opportunities to help by volunteering in committees that oversee the school cafeteria, school festivals, etc.

These are all ways in which parents can, in concert with teachers and administration, help to create a healthy, vibrant school in which students can grow and thrive. A good school needs active parents!