

Site Based Management Council

Traut Core Knowledge School
Fort Collins, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Sharing decision-making power between parents and families and school personnel is an important way to foster the joint responsibility needed for positive partnerships. At the Traut Core Knowledge School, this shared joint decision making can be seen on the Site Based Management Council, which is the decision making body of the school. The fourteen member Council is split evenly between the Parent Advisory Board and the Teacher Advisory Board. The parent representatives are elected by the parents in the school, and the school's charter sets out the requirements and duties of the position.

Traut has five guiding pillars that they operate under as a school, one of which is the Parent Partnership Pillar. This pillar is the foundation for the Council, and represents a true shared and equal governance structure, which is very unique in the structure of schools. The Council was initiated when the school was established, and has continued since. In addition to the Council, Traut emphasizes supporting families' success, as evidenced by their mentoring program in which families are led step by step through the important aspects of the school.

The school believes that empowering families in this way to be an equal partner in decision-making results in an incredible level of commitment. This commitment means that families often dedicate their time and resources in vast amounts. Staff members are also equally committed, and consistently give their time and resources, above and beyond what is expected. This results in a true, joint partnership in which all parties are contributing to the school and the community.

For other schools that would like to achieve this type of equality, those involved should be aware that the hardest part is the willingness of the school community to relinquish power. However, Traut leadership notes that as their history indicates the results can be very successful, and there is no limit to what they can accomplish when this power is shared and decision-making is truly a partnering process!