

5

Irving Independent Schools Ombudsman

1989

OMBUDSMAN

Ombudsman — “A **neutral** member of an organization who provides **confidential** and **informal** assistance to employees in resolving work-related concerns.”

Irving Independent School District is dedicated to establishing and maintaining communications with all employees. The Ombudsman Program is a part of this effort. IISD has provided an Ombudsman who will meet with employees to work towards equitable solutions for their individual concerns or questions. ALL INFORMATION SHARED WITH THE OMBUDSMAN IS HELD IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE, UNLESS THE EMPLOYEE REQUESTS OTHERWISE.

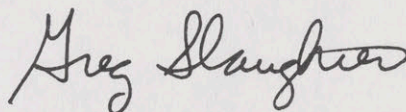
The Ombudsman will visit all campuses on a regularly scheduled basis. Employees are notified in advance of the time, date, and location of these visits. The Ombudsman may also be reached by phone at 254-2464. This is a direct line and is answered by secured electronic recorder if the Ombudsman is not in. Office conferences may also be scheduled at times other than those regularly scheduled for campus visits. Call 254-2464 to arrange for an appointment.

The Ombudsman is in place to be utilized by all district employees, and it is hoped that all employees will feel free to use this program when necessary.

Personal Note From The Ombudsman

In past years, I have been able to help many IISD employees. I do my best to deal with all problems in ways that would be positive and constructive to all involved. Please be aware of my program and use it when you need to. I am here to serve **YOU**.

Sincerely,



Greg Slaughter
IISD Ombudsman

sent to all employees

*additional materials,
some repetition here*

THE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

I. OVERVIEW

The Ombudsman Program is a program found within Project Know of the Irving Independent School District's Communication Model. The program is directed by an Ombudsman, or Employee Relations Specialist, functioning under the auspices of the IISD Department of Human Resources. The Ombudsman is directly supervised by the Director of Human Resources. There is one Ombudsman for the district.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Ombudsman program is a part of Project Know in the IISD Communication Model (see chart). The Ombudsman will be used as an internal management tool in the employee problem-solving procedure. The main purpose is to give all employees of the district (teachers, administrators, and classified personnel) an autonomous source with which to describe grievances, problems, or any other specific employee concerns which may arise. The formal chain of command may be utilized at the discretion of the Ombudsman.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

1. To help provide an internal communication method to aid employees in finding solutions to specific problems or concerns.
2. To increase chances of employees being satisfied with their work and their work environment.
3. To increase instructional productivity.

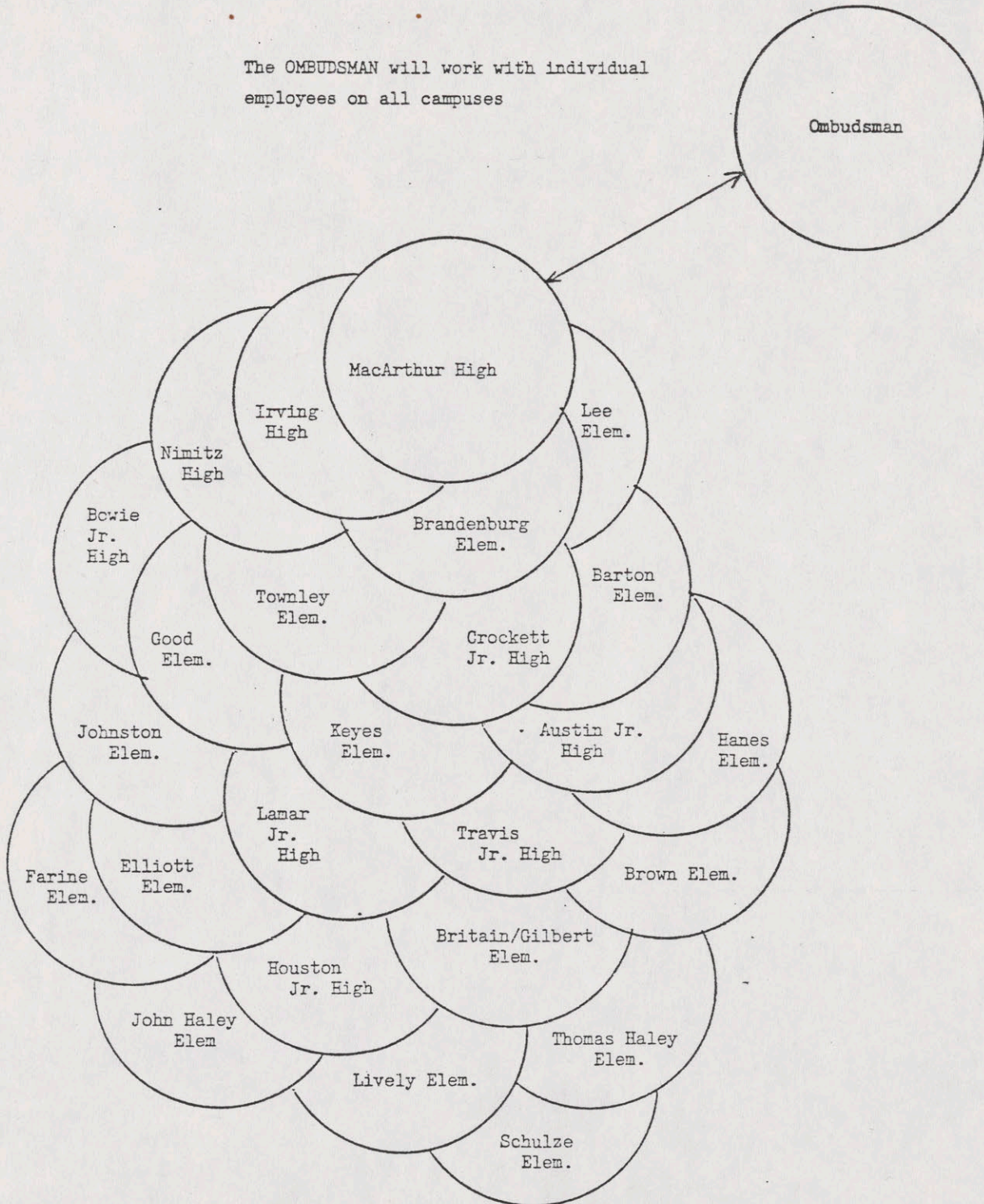
IV. GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. The program will be communicated to employees at all campuses prior to the beginning of each school year.
2. The Employee Relations Specialist will visit all campuses on a regularly scheduled basis during the school year. Schedules of these visits will be provided and updated.
3. The Employee Relations Specialist will deal with all employees. This will include instructional staff as well as support staff.

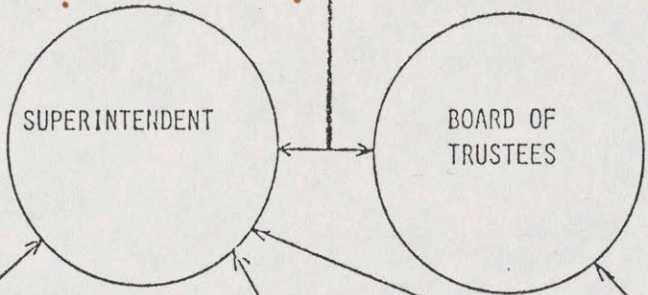
4. The Ombudsman will primarily visit campuses before school, during lunch hours, and after school. Other times may be scheduled by employee request.
5. Quick, confidential methods of contacting the Ombudsman will be established and communicated to all employees. This will include a telephone line, a secured message recording system, and a confidential mail system.
6. Communications with the Ombudsman are privileged. The employee's identity must always be CONFIDENTIAL. This confidentiality may be compromised only at the request of the employee when it applies to situations involving a third party in the problem-solving process.
7. The use of the chain of command is at the discretion of the Ombudsman.
8. The Ombudsman may function within all administrative and management levels of the Irving ISD.
9. After-hours appointments may be scheduled with the Ombudsman.
10. The Ombudsman will deal with employees and their concerns only on an INDIVIDUAL basis.

PROJECT KNOW: THE OMBUDSMAN

The OMBUDSMAN will work with individual employees on all campuses

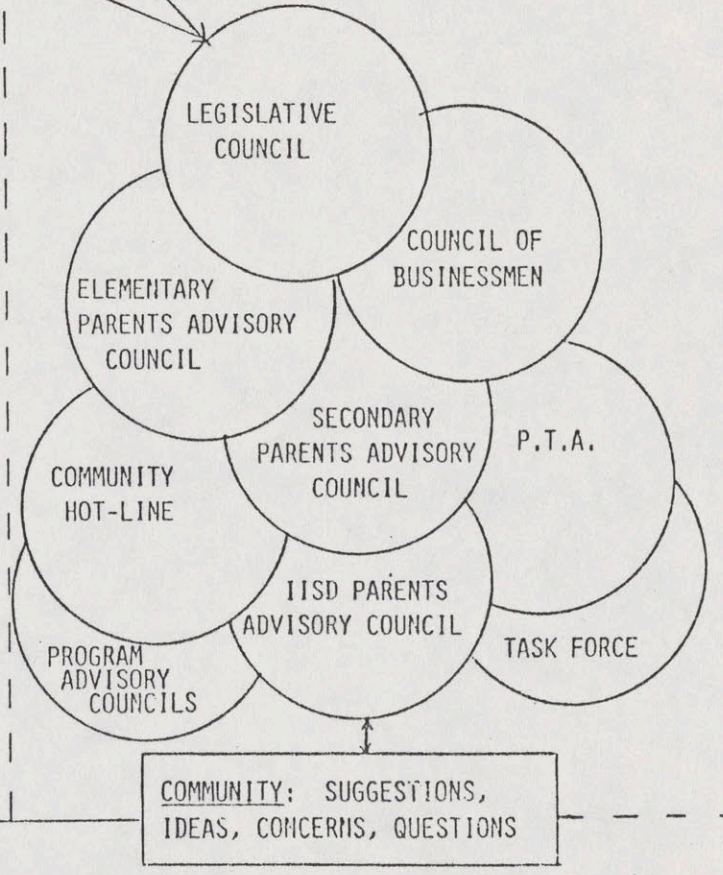
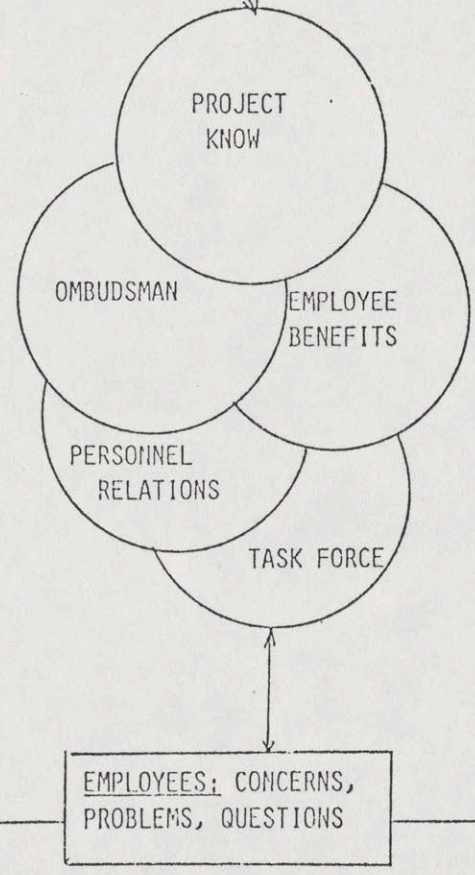
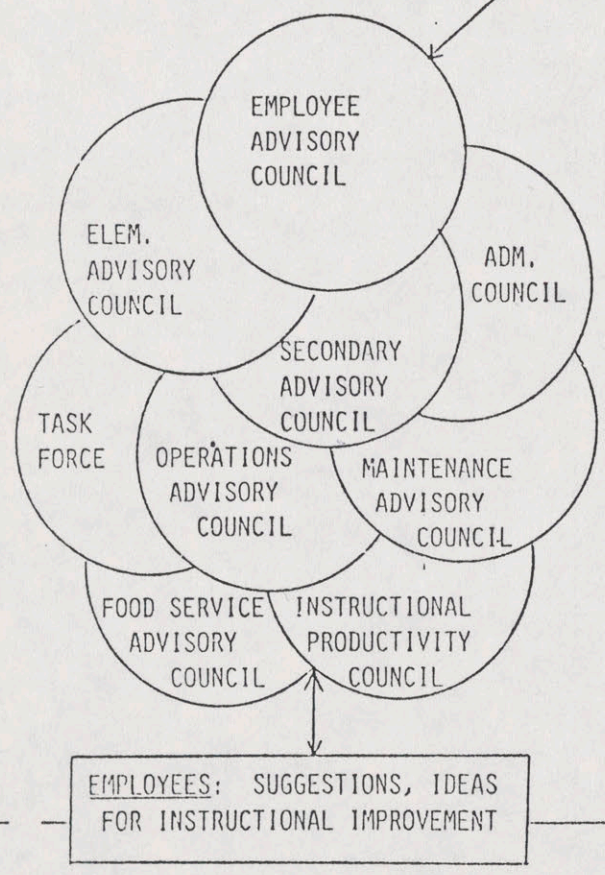


GOALS: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
INSTRUCTIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

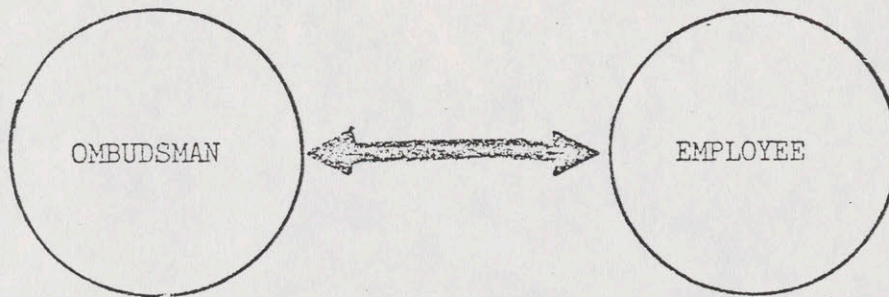


PROJECT PRIDE

PROJECT PLUS



THE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM



The OMBUDSMAN will work with individual employees to solve individual employee problems.. All communication is confidential and privileged.

PROJECT KNOW
THE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

1. What is an OMBUDSMAN anyway?
2. What is an EMPLOYEE RELATIONS SPECIALIST?
3. How can I be sure THIS IS CONFIDENTIAL?
4. How can I get to TALK TO YOU?
5. Who do you meet with?
6. Can you solve ALL MY PROBLEMS?
7. Should I bring EVERY problem to you?
8. Why do we have an OMBUDSMAN?
9. What else do you do?
10. Why did you take this job anyway?

WHY COMMUNICATE?

PRIMACY

AFFIRMATION

INFORMATION

TRUTH

PARTICIPATION

CLARITY

BALANCE

COMBAT RUMORS

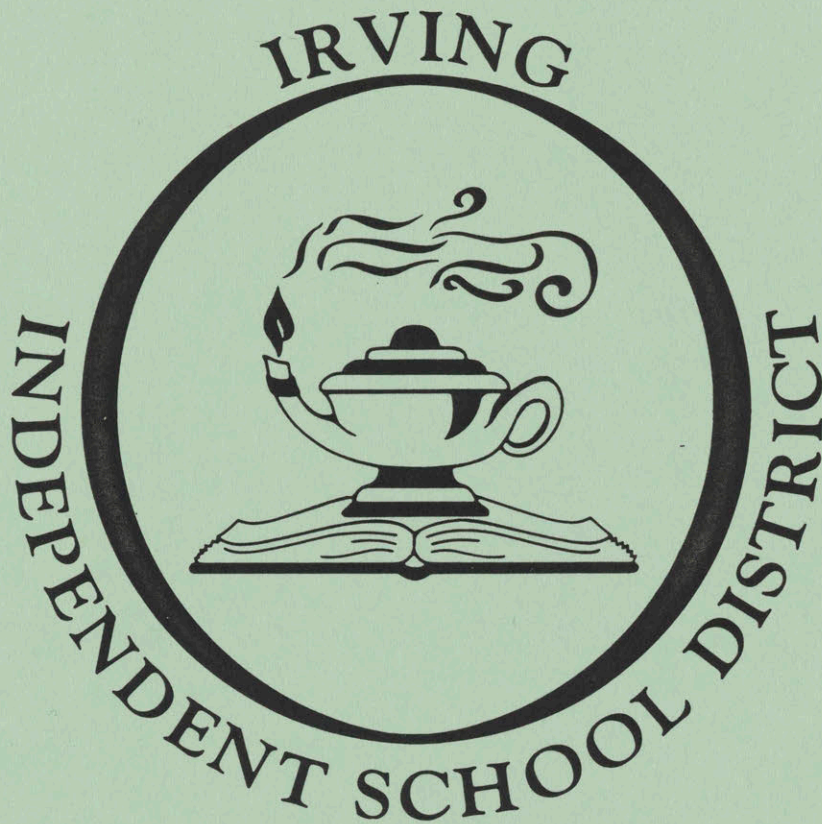
CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

APPRAISAL

WHY COMMUNICATE?

1. PRIMACY- Research has shown that people maintain their first concept of an issue. This first concept is more likely to have a great influence on their opinions. It is easier to shape opinion than change it.
2. AFFIRMATION- Positive statements and solutions show how goals can be achieved.
3. INFORMATION- Informed people are more productive than poorly informed people.
4. TRUTH- Confidence can be gained only if communications are honest.
5. PARTICIPATION- Involvement and interaction at all levels of communication can be very effective in changing attitudes.
6. CLARITY- Information must be presented clearly in order to be understood.
7. BALANCE- A balance must exist between satisfaction with present levels of communication and the desire for continued improvement.
8. COMBAT RUMORS- Rumors can grow and spread when people are poorly informed. Repetition of partial or inaccurate facts occurs when satisfactory explanations are not given.
9. CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION- Perceptions and attitudes evolve slowly as people respond to many messages. Important information must be repeated often to impact attitudes and perceptions.
10. APPRAISAL- Appraisal must be constant in order to discover communication "blocks" or "slow downs."

The Ombudsman Program



"Pride in Learning"

*This is a handout
used at the 1987
state convention of
the Texas Assn. of School Administrators
and the Texas Assn. of School Boards.
I was trying to sell these two rather
large organizations on the need for
ombudsman roles in the public schools
of our state. Your writing helped me
a great deal!*

AGENDA

- I. WHAT IS AN OMBUDSMAN?
- II. HISTORY OF OMBUDSMAN ROLE
- III. RATIONALE FOR AN OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM
- IV. WHAT DO OMBUDSMEN DO?
 - A. Functions
 - B. Types of Problems
- V. DESCRIPTION OF IRVING ISD OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM
 - A. Program Objectives
 - B. Description of Clients
 - C. Specific activities and schedule of Ombudsman
 - D. Program limitations
 - E. Structural imperatives of the program
- VI. EVALUATION
- VII. SELECTION OF AN OMBUDSMAN
 - A. Professional preparation
 - B. Personal attributes/qualifications
 - C. Organizational position
- VIII. QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

The Ombudsman Program

I. OVERVIEW

The Ombudsman Program is a program found within Project Know of the Irving Independent School District's Communication Model. The program is directed by an Ombudsman, or Employee Relations Specialist, functioning under the auspices of the IISD Department of Human Resources. The Ombudsman is directly supervised by the Director of Human Resources. There is one Ombudsman for the district.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Ombudsman program is a part of Project Know in the IISD Communication Model (see chart). The Ombudsman will be used as an internal management tool in the employee problem-solving procedure. The main purpose is to give all employees of the district (teachers, administrators, and classified personnel) an autonomous source with which to describe grievances, problems, or any other specific employee concerns which may arise. The formal chain of command may be utilized at the discretion of the Ombudsman.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

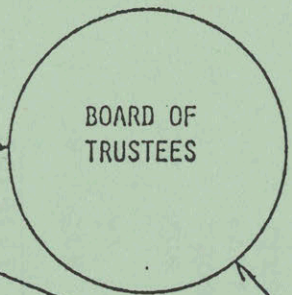
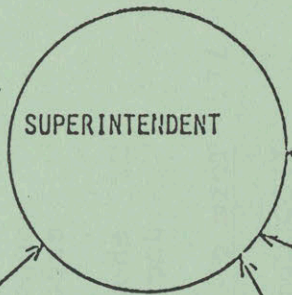
1. To help provide an internal communication method to aid employees in finding solutions to specific problems or concerns.
2. To increase chances of employees being satisfied with their work and their work environment.
3. To increase instructional productivity.

IV. GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. The program will be communicated to employees at all campuses prior to the beginning of each school year.
2. The Employee Relations Specialist will visit all campuses on a regularly scheduled basis during the school year. Schedules of these visits will be provided and updated.
3. The Employee Relations Specialist will deal with all employees. This will include instructional staff as well as support staff.

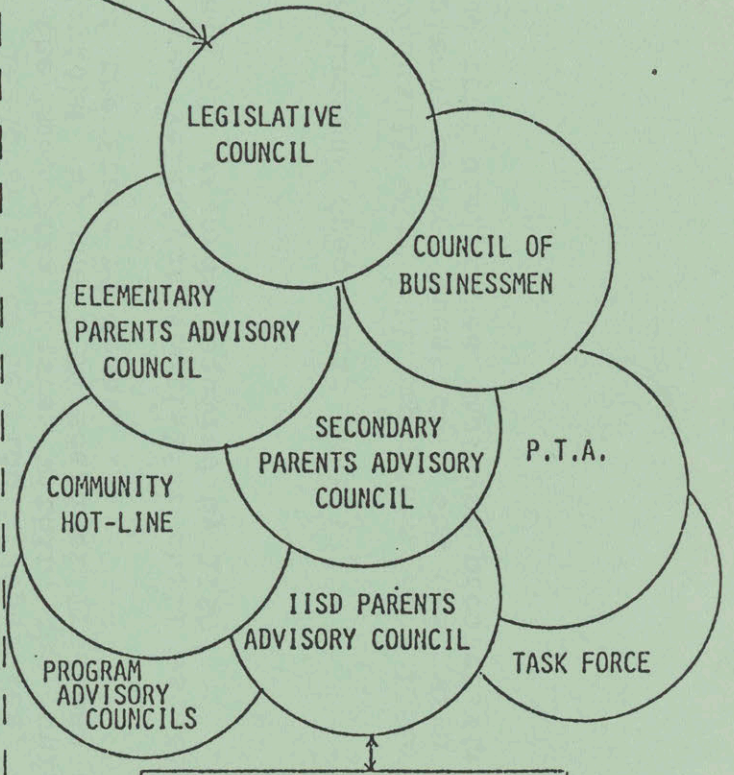
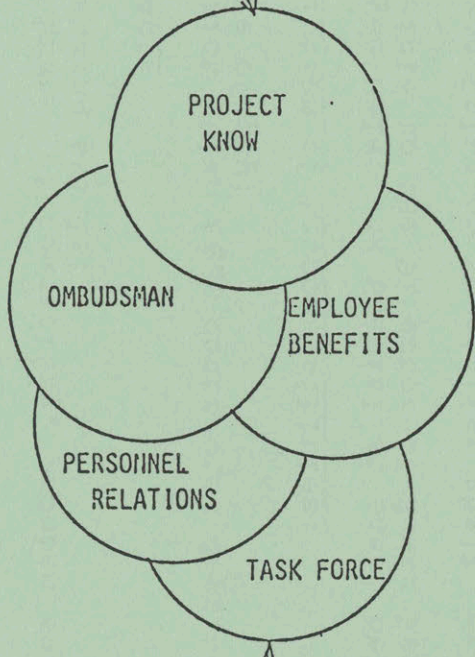
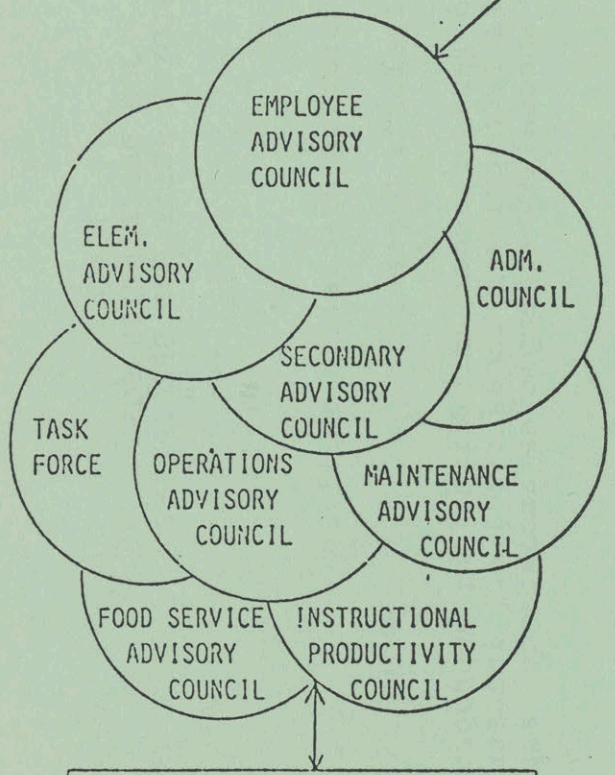
4. The Ombudsman will primarily visit campuses before school, during lunch hours, and after school. Other times may be scheduled by employee request.
5. Quick, confidential methods of contacting the Ombudsman will be established and communicated to all employees. This will include a telephone line, a secured message recording system, and a confidential mail system.
6. Communications with the Ombudsman are privileged. The employee's identity must always be CONFIDENTIAL. This confidentiality may be compromised only at the request of the employee when it applies to situations involving a third party in the problem-solving process.
7. The use of the chain of command is at the discretion of the Ombudsman.
8. The Ombudsman may function within all administrative and management levels of the Irving ISD.
9. After-hours appointments may be scheduled with the Ombudsman.
10. The Ombudsman will deal with employees and their concerns only on an INDIVIDUAL basis.

GOALS: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
INSTRUCTIONAL PRODUCTIVITY



PROJECT PRIDE

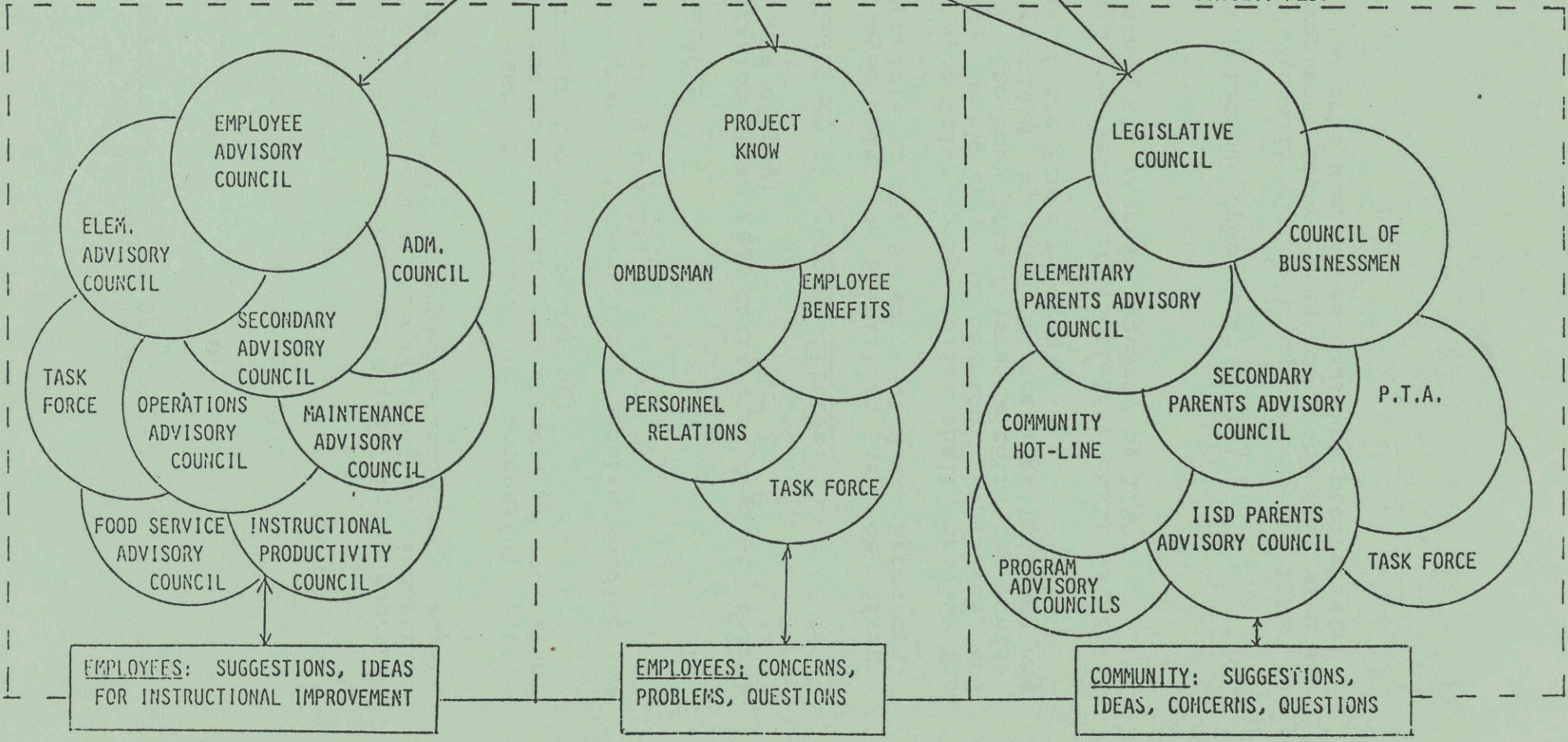
PROJECT PLUS



EMPLOYEES: SUGGESTIONS, IDEAS
FOR INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

EMPLOYEES: CONCERNS,
PROBLEMS, QUESTIONS

COMMUNITY: SUGGESTIONS,
IDEAS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS



JOB DESCRIPTION FOR
EMPLOYEE RELATIONS SPECIALIST

I. Qualifications:

The Employee Relation Specialist shall:

- A. have a Bachelor's Degree;
- B. have valid Texas teacher certification; appropriate credentials from private industry; i.e., industrial relations speciality or employee assistance experience;.
- C. have at least five years of successful public school classroom teaching experience, or equivalent experience in the private sector;
- D. show evidence of counseling, problem solving and decision-making skills.

II. Term of Contract:

IISD Compensation Plan (230 contracted days at teacher's daily rate of pay)

III. General Description of Responsibilities:

- A. The Employee Relations Specialist shall be directly responsible to the Director of Human Resources.
- B. The Employee Relation Specialist shall provide the necessary leadership to develop, supervise, and evaluate the Ombudsman Program within the guidelines provided by the IISD Board of Trustees and the laws of the State of Texas.
- C. The Employee Relations Specialist shall establish and maintain all records required by IISD.

IV. Duties:

The Employee Relations Specialist shall:

- A. work individually with all employees of IISD to solve problems, answer questions, and deal with any other issue that diminishes employee productivity.

- B. channel employee request or complaint to the proper office or administrator for action;
- C. maintain confidentiality of all employee concerns, unless the employee requests otherwise;
- D. maintain a high level of knowledge concerning District and State policies and procedures;
- E. schedule, publicize, and conduct regular visits campus and/or facility in the IISD;
- F. provide leadership in staff development for administrators and others in matters of employee relations, as needed;
- G. respond to employee needs at the time of family death or disaster;
- H. make personal contact with all employees who are hospitalized;
- I. provide several avenues for employee accessibility to, and use of, the Ombudsman Program;
- J. interpret Board Policies and Administrative procedures accurately and effectively to all employees;
- K. provide leadership in goal-setting for the Ombudsman Program;
- L. actively market the benefits of the IISD Communication Program to all employees;
- M. encourage all employees to communicate effectively, utilize proper channels whenever possible;
- N. function autonomously within all administrative and management levels by IISD;
- O. engage in activities for professional growth and personal development;
- P. adhere to high standards of professional ethics and integrity;
- Q. perform any other duties as assigned by the Director of Human Resources.

The Ombudsman Program

The Ombudsman Program is intended to improve communications in our district by providing employees the opportunity to express their concerns, questions, or ideas about their working environment. The Ombudsman will meet with individual employees to help find solutions for their particular concerns or questions. ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE OMBUDSMAN ARE PRIVILEGED AND THE EMPLOYEE'S IDENTITY IS ALWAYS CONFIDENTIAL. CONFIDENTIALITY WILL BE COMPROMISED ONLY AT THE EMPLOYEE'S REQUEST AND ONLY IF A THIRD PARTY IS REQUIRED TO HELP SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

The Ombudsman visits all campuses and work locations in the IISD. Schedules are sent to all campuses to inform employees of upcoming visits. Notices will be sent to all campuses to remind employees of the date, time and location of the scheduled visit.

Employees may contact the Ombudsman by telephone to discuss a problem or to set a personal appointment. The Ombudsman's direct number is 254-2464. The direct line is connected to a secured recording system enabling employees to establish contact after hours or whenever the Ombudsman is not in the office. Calls may also be placed through the switchboard at 259-4575, extension 296. Office visits may be scheduled Monday-Thursday from 4-6 p.m. and from 8-4 on Friday. Please call in advance to schedule office appointments. The Ombudsman office is located in the Administration Building at 901 O'Connor Road. Written communications to the Ombudsman should be sent through the US Postal Service to:

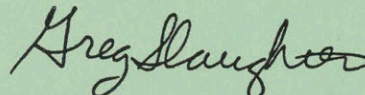
Greg Slaughter, Employee Relations Specialist
Irving Independent School District
901 O'Connor Road
Irving, Texas 75061

All inquiries are confidential.

A Personal Note

I encourage employees to make use of the Ombudsman Program. My sole purpose is to help employees deal with their questions and concerns in positive and constructive ways. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need to. Working together we can have better informed, more satisfied employees who will be able to effectively meet the needs of our students.

Sincerely,



Greg Slaughter
IISD Ombudsman

LET'S COMMUNICATE!

The Ombudsman Program

Visiting Schedule

The Ombudsman will visit campuses as shown by this schedule, unless an emergency arises. There are two time slots used by the Ombudsman for regularly scheduled visits. Regularly scheduled times are:

Morning----- 8:00 -- Noon

Afternoon----- 1:00 -- 4:00 p.m.

Other times during the day or after school hours may be arranged by employee request.

<u>DAY</u>	<u>MORNING</u>	<u>AFTERNOON</u>
Sept. 1	Austin	Irving
Sept. 2	Good	Barton
Sept. 3	Lively	Crockett
Sept. 4	NO REGULARLY SCHEDULED VISITS	
Sept. 8	Hanes	Keyes
Sept. 9	John Haley	Houston
Sept. 10	Tom Haley	Johnston
Sept. 11	NO REGULARLY SCHEDULED VISITS	
Sept. 14	Lee	Travis
Sept. 15	Brandenburg	MacArthur
Sept. 16	Farine	Alternative
Sept. 17	Bowie	Britain/Deaf Ed.
Sept. 18	NO REGULARLY SCHEDULED VISITS	
Sept. 21	Gilbert	Nimitz
Sept. 22	Townley	Schulze
Sept. 23	Lamar	Brown
Sept. 24	Elliott	IMC
Sept. 25	NO REGULARLY SCHEDULED VISITS	
Sept. 28	Maintenance	Maintenance
Sept. 29	Irving	Austin
Sept. 30	Barton	Good

Please post this schedule in prominent locations so ALL teachers and staff may see it.

Please call 254-2464 to schedule visits at times other than the regular schedule.

LET'S COMMUNICATE!

Bibliography

- Deane, W.B. & Robbins, L.P. (1986). The corporate ombuds: a new approach to conflict management. Negotiation Journal, 2 (2), 195 - 205.
- Rowe, M.P. (1987). The corporate ombudsman: an overview and analysis. Negotiation Journal, 3(2), 127 - 140.

Special thanks to Carole Trochhio of the Corporate Ombudsman of America for her assistance in providing background information for this topic.

THE OMBUDS: A FIRST YEAR PERSPECTIVE

There are several aspects to the role of ombuds which can show as problems to those who practice this particular field of dispute resolution. These brief remarks serve only to point out areas that have concerned me during my year as a practicing ombuds in a public school district. As the role of ombuds expands, the dispute resolution community will surely need to recognize and develop the awareness of this specific area of endeavor.

Isolation is a main concern for me. Due to constraints of confidentiality, it is often difficult to get various perspectives of a problem when trying to solve it. Having few contacts with others in my particular position tends to compound this problem. It proves extremely difficult to compare methods and "talk shop". Hopefully, groups such as SPIDR can prove a valuable aid in this process. [↖] substitute COA

I took my present role with some vague misunderstanding of just exactly what an ombuds is and/or is supposed to do. There is no real body of training or recognized credentials that qualifies a person to assume such a role. Some particular traits and training could be useful, to be sure, but is there a recognized, standardized training or certification program in the ADR community for the ombuds? Also, is it possible that the earning of a credential in this field could improve the ombuds' credibility with prospective employers as well as with the clients served?

Ethical questions are very important to this role, as well as all others which would be deemed as professional. Poorly defined ethical constraints could be disastrous to this role. An unscrupulous person, unbridled by ethical considerations and not threatened by professional sanctions, could indeed be a "loose cannon" in a highly autonomous, unsupervised position typical of most ombuds. As ADR services continue to gain recognition, perhaps such codes can be created/re-defined to attend to these particular needs.

Confidentiality in the ombuds role is paramount. Most positions depend upon it. There are problems that can arise when attempting to resolve disputes when one party wishes to remain anonymous to the other. What particular constraints of confidentiality should the ombuds adhere to? There will always be extreme cases when the absolute maintenance of confidentiality could have disastrous effects on all parties involved. The ombuds community needs to address such issues, if they haven't already.

Ombuds need to continue to establish themselves as a legitimate, highly functional branch of ADR. It is reasonable to expect that an ombuds may get several opportunities to refer clients to ADR services. It is also feasible that many ombuds can hone their skills with certain trainings in dispute resolution techniques. It is hoped that as the roles of ombuds continue to grow and realize their full potential, both private and public organizations will begin to accept and utilize ombuds as valuable, legitimate employee benefits.

Sue Slaughter

*This was written in May, 1987
or
June*

*I had been invited to speak at
a regional SPIDR conference.*



Department of Distinctive Collections
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307
libraries.mit.edu



The remaining contents of this folder have been redacted.

If you would like to see the full folder, please email the

Department of Distinctive Collections at

distinctive-collections@mit.edu