

My name is Brad Evans and I have the privilege of serving on Valley High School's School Organization Team as a returning SOT Teacher representative. I currently serve as the secretary on our committee. Another teacher serves as the Vice Chair while our student member serves as the Chair. I was honored that my colleagues elected me because their vote demonstrates their trust in me to serve as their voice.

For example, our math department told me about their need for a greater breadth of classes to support students with developing math skills. I brought this up to our committee. Our principal informed our team of the various budgetary challenges creating more math sections would entail. The combination of administrator, teacher, support staff, parents and student viewpoints came together to brainstorm unique solutions that would not have been possible otherwise. Given that all stakeholders were represented, we found a number of creative solutions such as increasing awareness of our current tutoring programs, offering students incentives for attending tutoring, allocating Victory funds for teachers to provide additional tutoring, partnering with UNLV and community members, as well as increasing our support sections for math.

Improving ACT scores also arose from these discussions. The SOT provided us, again, with a structure to collaboratively problem-solve and implement a series of month-long practice tests embedded within classes. As all stakeholders were present there was a deeper school-wide buy with this process. While we haven't yet reached a point in the year to quantitatively measure the impact of these initiatives, our school community members now have a mechanism in place when they have an idea or want to insight into our schools budgetary process.

In short, the SOT structure makes budgetary decisions equitable and transparent. Stakeholders at Valley periodically attend meetings and approach a member of the SOT with questions instead of garnering frustration. In my experience, each member feels welcomed, valued, and that they provide real contributions into the budget-making process. With regards to improving the structure, I believe we need clarification about staff members who also happen to be parents and their capacity to serve as parent members, clearer, more standardized methods for electing members district-wide, and that member terms should be 2-years, not 1 year long. The onboarding is significant and stability is important to the SOT's success.