Meeting Facilitation

How to encourage and engage membership on your

School Council

Creating An Effective School Council

- Focus on student learning and the best interest of ALL students

- Set school priorities for improving student achievement

- Have a clear understanding of the role of School Councils and its mandate

- Have a clear and *consistent* process for making decisions

- Communicate with members of School Council

Setting Priorities

- Have a general idea of what topics will discussed at School Council for the entire school year before the first meeting

➢ September- Elections, EQAO results, $500 PIC Funds, Goals for the year

➢ October/November- School Improvement Plan and how Council can help

➢ January/February- Policies under review with DSBN, Draft School Year Calendar

➢ April/March- PRO Grants

➢ May/June- Assessment of School Council, finance wrap up, Annual Report

Why an Agenda is Important

- Ensure items requiring an official decision are on the agenda

- Set a clear start time and *start at that time*

- Distribute agendas in advance of the meeting

- Know approximately how long each agenda item should take, and stick to that time frame

Setting the Stage for a Successful Meeting

- Arrange seating to encourage dialogue
- Have extra copies of agendas and previous meetings minutes or other items that will be discussed at the meeting
- Ensure the room is big enough and there are enough chairs (even for late comers)
- Have light refreshments
- Consider childcare
- Allow a few minutes for members to introduce themselves

Setting the Tone

- Seeking to elicit the opinions and expertise of others before speaking to the matter

- Ensure items stay within the mandate of School Council

- Encourage members to share thoughts

- Be respectful of others thoughts

- Repeat statements if need be or ask follow up questions to ensure the point is clear to everyone

Decision Making

- Two accepted forms of Decision Making- Roberts Rules and Consensus
- Roberts Rules make decisions clear, are easier to use when opinions vary drastically
- Roberts Rules are formal and can be intimidating
- Consensus Decision Making encourages all members share opinions and ideas
- Consensus requires more thought and time

Decision Making

- Consensus requires a Chair to be observant and sensitive to body language

  - ❖ Look around at members as they speak, and observe body language, facial expressions and tone of voice. If you think it's settled, you can achieve a consensus decision by saying something like "sensing agreement, we'll proceed with Plan X" and continue to observe for reactions.

  - ❖ If you observe that members do not agree once all ideas are on the table, you can encourage someone to make a motion and call for a vote. By process of elimination, you can reach the outcome most people approve.

Meeting Minutes

- Ensure your minutes accurately capture the meeting
- When decisions have been made note the method used to reach that outcome
- Review minutes before distribution
- Make minutes available to members and school community at large
- Approve minutes from last meeting at the start of your next meeting

Building a Sense of Teamwork

- Learn names of members

- Engage in "Think/Pair/Share" activities

- Create subcommittees

- Be adventurous and try a team building activity
  https://www.huddle.com/blog/team-building-activities/

Setting Yourself Up for Future Success

- End every meeting positively thanking people for giving their time and ideas.

- Encourage feedback and suggestions for future meetings.

- Follow up with individuals after the meeting if there are people who didn't get their questions answered or whose ideas were not in line with the rest of the group.

Share Your Thoughts

- How have you made your meetings welcoming?

- How have you dealt with a "Lisa-Know-It-All" type person?

- What tools do you find most effective for communication?

- Ask your colleagues for advice