

A HEAD START FOR YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL

--Some Good Practices To Use--

1. **Raise awareness and involvement.** Encourage parents and other community members to come to School Council meetings. Students and staff as well. Welcome all who attend and make sure you do introductions. The experience of being a Council member and/or attending meetings can provide important information and each one of us can contribute to student success.
2. **Communicate.** Frequent and open communication between your Council and your school community is a critical element of carrying out your role. Gathering input as well as sharing information will help ensure you are truly representing the parent, student and community views in planning and decision-making. Use newsletters, noticeboards, as well as other face-to-face and technological avenues for circulating information.
3. **Inform and educate.** Provide parents and other community members with the information they need to participate in Council meetings. Explain the roles of the Council, what they are responsible for and the important part Councils play in student success. Let parents know how they can be involved with the Council even if they are not sitting members.
4. **Organize.** Aim to ensure that meetings are well-managed, efficient and productive, all attendees will appreciate it. Some tips:
 - have an agenda prepared as well as any pertinent background material and circulate it to members ahead of the meeting time so they will be familiar with items for discussion/decisions;
 - establish a start and end time for meetings and work to adhere to it;
 - keep discussions on topic;
 - be open to differing points of view;
 - speak simply and clearly, listen carefully to every speaker.
5. **Guide.** Decide how you will make decisions and resolve conflicts. Make sure that everyone knows how to express an opinion, share ideas and discussion, and come to a decision. By establishing these guidelines early on in your term, confusion can be eliminated which should allow you more time and energy to focus on the important issues.
6. **Prioritize and share the workload.** Through discussion, set priorities for what you want to accomplish, and be advised that the Council does not have to do all work—subcommittees can be set up for specific initiatives and individuals in the community may very well step forward when they know there is a task to be done.
7. **Record well.** It is important that good records are kept. Make sure they capture decisions made. Meeting minutes should be posted in the school once approved. Ensure proper financial records are kept as well. Both types of documents will help with compiling the annual report for your AGM.