

## **SCHOOL COUNCILS--A Framework for Planning**

*First of all--*

Some of the essential ingredients of working effectively as a School Council is having--

**clarity of purpose,**

**goals,**

**roles and expectations,**

as well as **trust,**

**mutual respect,**

**honest communications, and**

**collaborative relationships.**

### **On Being a School Council Member**

*The most important question we can ask...*

**“IS IT GOOD FOR KIDS?”**

To guide us in our work as School Council members:---

There must be a dynamic shared vision for education that reflects student needs and community priorities.

We demonstrate our commitment to the shared vision by using it to guide decision making.

We are involved in the development of long and short term plans that are annually revised through a process involving extensive participation, information gathering, research and reflection.

We encourage and support innovative approaches to teaching, learning and the continuous renewal of education.

We celebrate achievements of students and accomplishments of others who contribute to education.

We advocate for children and families and establish and maintain relationships with parents and other mentors to help support students.

We support partnerships with individuals, groups and organizations to promote and expand the educational opportunities for ALL students while continually improving teamwork, problem solving and decision-making skills.

We perform in a fair and responsible manner for ALL students to promote School Council service as a meaningful way to make long term contributions to society.

We need to proactively identify and address issues affecting the education of ALL students.

We need to receive regular reports on student progress and needs based on a variety of assessments to evaluate the quality and equity of the educational program.

We need to evaluate our own performance in carrying out our responsibilities as a Council.

*Adapted by the **Association of Yukon School Councils, Boards & Committees (AYSCBC)***

*from ‘Board Standards - A Framework for Alaska School Boards’ by the*

*Association of Alaska School Boards*

## Review

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL COUNCILS Sec 113 of the Yukon Education Act (1990)**

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*“Improving Schools and student achievement is like a journey—there are many steps and it requires: patience, passion and persistence.*

*An important element of the process involved learning from each other.”*

Eaker, DuFour and Burnette

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### School Mission Statement:

### School Belief Statements:

### Mission, Vision, Values of our School Council:

#### ☛ WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH? ☛

#### 1. CREATING A VISION

-A Vision is a statement of a preferred future, assuming all resources are available.

This may encompass a period of many years.

-A Vision tells students, teachers, parents and community members where you are going.

-To create a Vision, you need the widest possible involvement by all groups in the community. Students need to be involved, it is important to keep returning to the reality of the diversity of students and their needs.

-To develop a Vision, the school community needs to:

-Take a deep look inside

-Take a wide look around

-Take a long look ahead

With these in mind, it is easier to establish priorities and make sure decisions are part of an overall plan.

☛ Do the School Council’s mission, vision and values reflect community expectations and aspirations for student learning and achievement? ☛

☛ In terms of improving student learning and achievement, what are our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges? ☛

**STRENGTHS**

**WEAKNESSES**

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**CHALLENGES/BARRIERS**

## ***ISSUE IDENTIFICATION***

☛ Are there concerns? What are they? ☛

Looking at the issues is about exploring the range of challenges facing the School Council.

This process can help you understand the implications and potential consequences of decisions before they are made. Identifying issues help you consider not only what the problems are, but why they are problems, for whom they are problems and whether they are problems the School Council can solve.

Identifying issues also help you establish priorities.

☛ What are the issues related to public education and our school in this community?☛

☛ How are they related to student achievement? ☛

## ***SETTING GOALS***

-Goals outline purpose and direction

-Goals are what you hope to achieve in order to eliminate a problem or meet a need.

It's important to set realistic goals

Setting realistic goals is based on the nature of the task, the number of participants prepared to work, available resources and available time. Achieving realistic plans provide a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction that can be motivating for further steps.

What goals are we trying to reach?

Where do we want to focus most of our time and attention?

## ***DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES***

These are sometimes referred to as strategies or 'targets'—support tasks that must be completed in order to accomplish a given goal.

## ***TAKING ACTION***

This is the action part of the process, carrying out our objectives as agreed upon.

## ***EVALUATION AND REVIEW***

Looking at what was done, whether goals and objectives were met and what changes might be recommended.

### **SCHOOLS THAT ARE SEEING IMPROVEMENTS IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT HAVE:**

- Vision statements and goals that are clearly focussed on student learning and that are ‘internalized’ at all levels;
- More links with community partners and agencies capable of supporting students;
- A collective culture in which school administrators, teachers, School Council take pride in their school because they shared in its planning, decision-making and achievements;
- Greater emphasis on improving the understanding and use of assessment among school staff, School Council and the community;
- Sharing of results with the community, celebrating accomplishments and reviewing where changes need to be made;
- A positive and supportive school climate

(adapted from the journal *Education Analyst*-Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education)

### **SCHOOLS NEED TO:**

- share decision-making
- work with the community on early learning
- build teacher-student relations
- assess individual learning growth
- encourage parent and community outreach and welcome their involvement
- promote home-based parent involvement
- encourage staff empowerment and collaboration
- be a literacy rich environment
- promote an inclusive environment
- celebrate rituals and ceremonies

### **👤 SOME IMPORTANT ADVICE FROM OUTGOING SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS...**

- 👤 Learn what your role is—know the Education Act! Make the time commitment—being effective on you School Council means putting more than 2 hours (regular Monthly meeting) in a month.
- 👤 Set objectives for yourself. Have a vision of what you wish to achieve during your term.
- 👤 Learn your role, be positive and results oriented, work as a team and stand up for your opinion and ideas
- 👤 Defend the role of being a governing Council—do not fall to the level of being a hot dog lunch provider
- 👤 No personal agendas
- 👤 Contribute what you can—small contributions add up
- 👤 Expect to get a lot of email and do a lot of reading
- 👤 Go in to the Council for positive reasons, not negative; go in with an open mind
- 👤 Place your energy in a couple of big places and don’t get caught up in all the little details.
- 👤 Get involved in the spring & fall school council conferences – they are most valuable! Always be creative in how you can keep parents informed & involved in their school & their council.
- 👤 The learning curve is quite steep during 1<sup>st</sup> term. Expect that 2 terms are necessary to get into the swing of things.