

Appendix A

School Community Council Operation

1.0 School Community Council Constitution Template

The following template is designed to help guide a School Community Council as it develops its constitution.

Name: _____ **School Community Council**

Mission

An organization’s mission helps members and others understand its “reason for being”. A mission statement describes, in the words of its members, why an organization exists and what it hopes to achieve in the future. Organizations regularly review and adapt their mission statements to reflect their current circumstances. In developing their mission statement Councils may wish to ask themselves:

- Why do we have a School Community Council at our school?
- What does our School Community Council hope to achieve in the next few years?

School Community Councils may wish to refer to the description of the purpose of School Community Councils in Section 1.2.1 of this Handbook as they develop their mission statement. The School Division may also provide the Council with guidance in this area.

_____ **(name of Council) Mission**

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of an organization are based on its mission, and provide direction for members of the organization in their day-to-day activities and relationships with others. These principles also help others know what to expect in their interactions with members of the organization. In developing their guiding principles Councils may wish to ask themselves:

- What is most important to us as a group?
- What are the basic understandings that will help guide us in our interactions with each other and with others?

School Community Councils may wish to refer to the “School Community Councils Guiding Principles” outlined in Section 1.3.2 of this Handbook as they prepare their guiding principles. The School Division may also provide the Council with guidance in this area.

_____ **(name of Council) Guiding Principles**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Structure and Officers

The structure and the officers of an organization ideally provide support for the organization as it seeks to achieve its mission.

The number, role and responsibilities of officers are usually described in an organization’s constitution. The Provincial Policy Framework for School Community Councils states that a Council’s officers are to be elected from among its Representative Members and will include at a minimum, a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary (required officers).

In deciding on Council structure and officers Councils may wish to ask themselves:

- What will be included in the role and responsibilities of the “required” offices?
- Would our Council benefit from naming other officers? What will the role and responsibilities of these “other” officers include?

School Community Councils may wish to refer to Section 3.2.1 of this Handbook as they decide upon Council officers and their role and responsibilities. The School Division may also provide the Council with guidance in this area.

_____ (name of Council)
Roles and Responsibilities of Officers

Chairperson

The Chairperson will:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

The Vice Chairperson will:

- _____
- _____
- _____

The Secretary will:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Other Officers and their role and responsibilities:

- _____
- _____

Scheduling of meetings are often included in descriptions of an organization’s structure. Recognizing that Councils are required to meet at least 5 times annually as well as hold a general meeting, and keeping their mission in mind Councils may wish to ask themselves:

- How often during the school year will our Council meet?
- Will we hold special meetings? How will we decide if a special meeting is necessary?

_____ **(name of Council) Schedule of Meetings**

- _____
- _____

_____ **(name of Council)**
Provision for Special Meetings

- _____
- _____

School Community Councils may wish to refer to Section 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of this Handbook as they consider their Council structure and officers. The School Division may also provide Councils with guidance in this area.

Means of Public Consultation

Public consultation and communication is important for many organizations and is a key aspect of the vision for School Community Councils. If Councils are to fulfill their mandate they will need to consider carefully how they will consult with parents and community members. There are a number of options Councils may wish to employ such as; telephone surveys or printed questionnaires, personal interviews, public meetings and workshops.

Keeping their mission in mind Councils may wish to ask themselves:

- What areas of our mandate will require public consultation?
- What methods might we utilize in each of these areas to consult with parents and community members?

_____ (name of Council)

Means of Public Consultation

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

School Community Councils may wish to refer to Appendix B, Section 1.1 for more information on methods of public consultation. The School Division may also provide Councils with guidance in this area.

Means of Public Communication

Most organizations have favoured methods of communicating with their public. Because of the nature of School Community Councils choosing effective means to communicate with parents and community is key to their success. Section 3.1.5.3,

Communication Planning and Strategies of this Handbook outlines areas Councils may wish to consider when communicating with others. In deciding on what means they will utilize to communicate with parents and community Councils may wish to ask themselves:

- What areas of our operation may require regular communication with parents and community? How can we best accomplish this?
- What areas of our operation may require less frequent communication? How can we best accomplish this?

_____ (name of Council)

Means of Public Communication

School Community Councils

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

School Community Councils may wish to refer to Section 3.2.3 of this Handbook for more information on methods of communication with parents and community. The School Division may also provide Councils with guidance in this area.

Council Code of Conduct

An organization's code of conduct outlines expectations for its members and guides their behavior. A *Suggested practice for establishing a Code of Conduct* is included in this Handbook (Section 3.2.4). Keeping their mission in mind Councils may wish to ask themselves:

- What guidelines will foster positive, cooperative, student-focused and forward-looking relationships among parents, the school and the community?

Code of Conduct _____ School Community Council

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Several examples of Council Codes of Conduct or Codes of Ethics are included in this Handbook. Please see Section 3.2.4 and Section 4.0 of Appendix A. The School Division may also provide Councils with guidance in this area.

Decision-Making Processes

Two commonly used decision-making models used by organizations are those of Majority Vote and Consensus. Depending on their mission many organizations use a combination of both. Providing a description of a Council’s preferred decision-making model will help guide Council Members. The advantages and disadvantages of each model are described in Section 3.2.6 of this Handbook. Councils may wish to outline within their constitution under what circumstances each of the models might be utilized. Councils may wish to ask themselves:

- In what cases might Council use the Majority Vote model of decision making?
- In what instances might Council use the Consensus Building model of decision-making?

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Decision-making processes

- Type of decision - process employed

- Type of decision - process employed

More information related to each decision-making model is included in this Handbook, Appendix A, Section 5.0. The School Division may also provide Councils with guidance in this area.

Complaints and Concerns Procedures

Healthy organizations have accepted ways of dealing with complaints and concerns. In creating complaints/concerns procedures Council Members may wish to ask themselves:

- What kinds of complaints/concerns does the School Community Council have the authority and responsibility to deal with?
- How will Council as a whole and individual Council Members deal with complaints or concerns related to the operation and responsibilities of Council?

_____ **Complaints and Concerns Procedures**

Complaint/Concern	Council authority/responsibility

Process for dealing with Council complaint/concern that falls under Council responsibility/authority.

- _____
- _____
- _____

For more information related to creating Council complaints/concerns procedures see Section 3.2.7.1 of this Handbook. The School Division may also provide Councils with guidance in this area.

Methods for Evaluation of Council Operations

By evaluating its operations an organization helps members focus on what will allow them to fulfill their mission, what they are doing well, and what they may improve upon. When considering what methods they wish to use to evaluate their operations Councils may wish to ask themselves:

- What formal methods do we wish to use to evaluate our day-to-day operations and determine if we are meeting our goals and achieving our mission?

- What more informal methods do we wish to use to evaluate our day-to-day operations and determine if we are meeting our goals and achieving our mission?

_____ (name of Council)

Formal Evaluation Methods

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

_____ (name of Council)

Informal Evaluation Methods

- _____
- _____
- _____

For more information related to evaluating Council operations see Section 3.2.9, Chapter 4, and Appendix A, Section 7.0 of this Handbook. The School Division may also provide Councils with guidance in this area.

2.0 Supporting Council Members and Committees of Council

2.1 Supporting Individual Council Members

School Community Councils will likely be made up of parents and community members, students and staff who come from diverse backgrounds. This diversity can become a very positive resource for the Council to draw on; it can also present a challenge. Some Council Members may need support in order for their strengths to become Council assets.

Some barriers individual Council members may encounter and examples of possible supports are described below:

Barrier: Lack of understanding of the role/responsibilities of the Council

Support: Provide a clear description of Council roles and responsibilities. Match each new Council Member with an experienced Council Member who can help explain the role and responsibilities of Council and answer questions. Boards and their administrations may also help Councils in this regard.

Barrier: Cultural differences

Support: Be sensitive to cultural values, attitudes, manners and views of school that may be different. Learn about religious holidays and observances of different cultures so they can be honoured when scheduling meetings and events. Respect different communication patterns such as pauses, silence and eye contact. Ask questions respectfully.

Barrier: Language

Support: Arrange for an interpreter. Have printed materials translated.

Barrier: Time

Support: Find a mutually agreeable time to meet. Make sure meetings begin promptly and end when expected.

Barrier: Childcare

Support: Consider providing a room at your place of meeting where children can be cared for.

The process of creating a better education system is not a relay race, but a marathon. We youth are not just passing the baton to adults expecting them to finish the race. We want to be involved in every step and every decision.

John Kohli, Provincial Youth Delegation, 2003 as seen in *Empowering High Schools as Communities of Learning and Support*, Saskatchewan Learning, 2004.

Barrier: Tokenism

Support: Make sure all voices are listened to, and what has been said is taken into account in decision-making. Make sure there are true opportunities to become involved in planning, decision-making and actions of the Council.

Barrier: Assumptions

Support: Sometimes all of us make assumptions based on what we think is true of other people. Sometimes support simply means asking another what is needed in order for them to contribute.

2.2 Supporting Students

High School students will also be included in the membership of many Councils and their inclusion presents a very real opportunity. Students can provide true, down-to-earth insights into way the school is serving the needs of children and youth. They can provide a fresh perspective on educational issues. Sitting on Council can also provide students with valuable experience related to community leadership. Councils who wish to receive maximum benefit of student membership may wish to consider supporting student Council Members in various ways.

In general, Councils can support students by:

- Listening carefully and respectfully to student voices.
- Making sure what adult Council Members think was said, was truly said. Try paraphrasing and encouraging students to elaborate on what they have said.
- Allowing students to present and receive information in a manner that is most comfortable for them. Many students are comfortable using technology to communicate.
- Letting students know they are not “token” Members, that their contributions are expected and valued.
- Being flexible about students’ schedules. Many students, aside from attending school full time, have part-time jobs and other responsibilities.
- Developing a mentoring strategy. Students have not experienced many of the understandings adults take for granted. Councils can support students offering students the opportunity to connect with another adult Member who can provide advice and guidance.
- Asking students what is needed. Councils can support student Council Members by checking frequently to see if they are receiving the support they need.

2.3 Forming and Operating Effective Committees

Some hints for forming and operative effective committees

- Ensure the committee is clear on its role and tasks, and is aware of the larger goals of the School Community Council. The Council may consider creating a written job description including responsibilities involved for each committee.
- Aim for broad representation. This is where the Council can involve more parents and community members who would like to participate but do not have time to become a member of Council.
- Use committees as leadership training ground. Potential Council Members may begin as committee members, gain confidence in their skills and increase their involvement in the School Community Council.
- Establish reporting procedures. It is important that the Council know, and approve of, what a committee is doing. A committee Chairperson may serve as a formal link to the Council.
- Ensure committees set realistic objectives and tasks. Committees may, in their initial enthusiasm, take on too much. The Council can help prevent volunteer burnout and frustration by suggesting committees decide what objectives and tasks are most important and which can wait.

Adapted from Saskatchewan Education. 1997. *Building Communities of Hope: Best practices for meeting the learning needs of at risk and Indian and Metis students: Implementation Handbook.*

3.0 Effective Meetings

3.1 Simple Rules for Chairing a Meeting

- The Chairperson calls the meeting to order
- The meeting's formality depends on the Chairperson, the group's size and the group's preference
- The Chairperson recognizes Members before they speak
- Each item is entitled to full and free debate by individual Members—one at a time
- Each person desiring to speak should be allowed to speak once before anyone speaks for a second time
- The Chairperson is responsible for moving the meeting along and ensuring no one monopolizes the floor
- Only one subject may be discussed at a time
- If time does not permit full discussion of an item, a motion may be made to table the item for discussion at another meeting
- Every member has equal rights

Adapted from Alberta Home and School Councils' Association. 1995.
School Council Resource Manual. Edmonton.

3.2 Meeting Checklist

- Meeting Date:
- Start time:
- End time:
- Participants: Number expected
- Sign in sheet with meeting, date and location indicated
- Name tags and holders
- Name cards for Council Members
- Facilities: Size of room is appropriate
- Seating arrangement: Fits agenda and encourages open discussion.
- Tables for participants to write on
- Refreshments: Tea, coffee, juice
- Equipment: Projector
- Transparencies
- Extension cord

3.3 Running Meetings

School Community Council meetings offer Councils the opportunity to get together with others who possess diverse thoughts and views to discuss issues and offer suggestions related to Council decisions. In order to take advantage of this benefit, meetings take some planning and effective management to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard with efficient use of time.

Planning the School Community Council meeting is usually the responsibility of the Chairperson. S/he may delegate a number of the tasks described below:

- *Publicizing the meeting well in advance*

This can be done in community calendars, school newsletters, school or Division website, the newspaper, community announcements on television and radio, posters, and phone trees. Make sure everyone is given plenty of notice (two weeks if possible). Try to establish a set meeting day, time and location to help people remember.

- *Arranging the room*

How the room is arranged can add to the success of the meeting. A round table style, rather than a head-table style can be more conducive to discussion. Make sure there is enough seating for everyone and no one feels on the “outside”. Arrange any necessary equipment and supplies prior to the meeting day.

- *Establishing the agenda*

The agenda should clearly outline what will be dealt with at the meeting. Having a standard, yet flexible agenda will help save time preparing for meetings. The Chairperson usually prepares the agenda with input from others. Below is a list of standard items Councils may wish to include in their agenda as well question prompts to help Council as they consider each item.

<i>Agenda Item</i>	<i>To Consider</i>
Record of the previous meeting.	Was follow up action taken on issues of concern? Are there further issues that need to be addressed?
Principal's Report	Will items particular to this month's report require more time or consideration?
Updates on the Learning Improvement Plan and/or other Council action plans	What progress has been made to date? What kind of specific information may be required by Council at this time?
Committee Reports	What committees of Council need to provide a report at this time?
Expenses of Council	What expenses have been incurred to date? (accounts both paid and outstanding) What further expenses might be expected in the near future?
Decision Items	What decisions need to be made at this time? Is Council ready to make these decisions or is more information required? If so, how will Council obtain that information?
Discussion Items	Are there new topics, issues or concerns that merit Council's attention?
Received Items	Are there reports, correspondence etc. that need to be acknowledged?
Items for future consideration	Are there items that need to be highlighted for future consideration?
Date, time and agenda items for next meeting	Are changes anticipated to the date, time or location? What agenda items can be anticipated for the next meeting?

- *Choosing a Consistent Meeting Style*

Councils will want to follow a meeting style that is efficient yet enhances the participation of all.

- *Recording the Minutes*

The Secretary assumes responsibility for recording the proceedings of the meeting. In the absence of the Secretary the Chairperson appoints another Council Member to record the minutes.

The minutes can be recorded in one of three ways:

- Formal minutes: when a Chairperson governs the meeting.
- Semiformal minutes: when a small group is conducting a relaxed discussion.
- Informal minutes: used to record the generalities of a meeting.

Using a lap top computer helps keep information easy to read back and saves time on the final draft of the minutes. Accurate minutes provide School Council Members and others with:

- a clear objective summary of what went on at the meeting.
- a historical account of the decisions of the group and the rationale behind them.
- objective comments, rather than opinions.
- highlights, rather than narrative accounts.
- motions and resolutions recorded verbatim.

Chairperson's Role:

- *The Chairperson invites a wide range of people to speak*
- *All who wish to speak are given the opportunity*
- *If necessary, time limits can be put on each speaker*
- *Invites each person around the table to speak on the issue if they choose (a time limit for individual contributions may be established beforehand).*

Councils may wish to consider placing their minutes on the school or School Division website.

3.4 Ideas for Stimulating Discussion

Strategies:

Pairing: People are randomly paired off to discuss an issue and report back to the group.

Absolute Quiet: Time is provided for participants to think, read or make notes relating to the issue being discussed.

Brainstorming: Spontaneous discussion related to a problem or issue. Brainstorming ground rules include:

- the Chairperson makes sure everyone is clear on the issue to be discussed

- participants can choose priorities
- no criticism is allowed
- every idea is noted
- emphasis is on quantity of ideas, not quality
- ideas can be modified and combined
- visual aids are useful

Round Table: Similar to brainstorming, however, the group is subdivided into small groups of four to six people. Flip charts are used to record all ideas. Each group is given a time limit. All ideas are recorded and brought back to the main group.

Brain Writing: Similar to the “round table”, but with more individual participation. Each member has index cards and writes down one idea on each card. Cards are exchanged and new ideas or comments are added. A facilitator records ideas.

Pro/con Analysis: Participants focus only on the pros and cons of an issue. After all items have been listed, each member votes on what he or she considers the three or four best ideas. Coloured stickers or differently coloured felt markers could be used to rank ideas in order of importance.

Value Voting: useful to get feedback when time is limited. The Chairperson asks people to take a position on the issue (strongly agree through strongly disagree). Each category is tallied to arrive at a direction, rather than a decision.

Adapted from Alberta School Council Resource Manual, Alberta Education, 1995

4.0 Examples of Codes of Conduct/Ethics

- The (Name of School Community Council) is not a forum for the discussion of individual school personnel, students, parents, or other individual members of the school community.
- A Council Member who is approached by a parent with a concern relating to an individual is in a privileged position and must treat such a discussion with discretion, protecting the confidentiality of the people involved.
- A parent who accepts a position as a School Community Council Member:

Upholds the constitution and bylaws, policies and procedures of the School Community Council.

Performs his/her duties with honesty and integrity.

Works to ensure that the well-being of students is the primary focus of all decisions.

Respects the rights of all individuals.

Takes the direction from the Council, ensuring that the representation processes are in place.

- Encourages and supports parents and students with individual concerns to act on their behalf and provides information on the process for taking forward concerns.

Saskatchewan Association of School Councils
<http://www.sasktelwebsite.net/sasc/>

Suggested Code of Ethics Community School Council

As a Member of the Community School Council and/or volunteer,
I shall:

- Be guided by the policy, vision, goals and principles of the Community School program;
- Know and work toward the vision for the _____ Community School;
- Endeavour to be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them;
- Practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth;
- Encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued;

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- Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community;
- Apply democratic principles;
- Consider the best interests of all students;
- Respect and maintain the confidentiality of student information;
- Limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole;
- Use the appropriate communication channels when question or concerns arise;
- Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community;
- Accept accountability for the decisions of the Community School Council; and,
- Declare any conflict of interest.

Saskatchewan Education. 1997. *Building Communities of Hope: Best practices for meeting the learning needs of at risk and Indian and Metis students: Implementation Handbook.*

5.0 Decision-Making Methods

5.1 Majority Vote Model of Decision-Making

Simple Rules of Order for Decision-Making

Making a Motion:

- Stating the motion – a member must formally let the Chairperson know that s/he would like to make a motion and the Chairperson must “recognize” the person making the motion. Once acknowledged by the Chairperson the individual making the motion “has the floor” S/he may make a formal proposal beginning with the statement, “I move that...”
- Seconding the motion: Before the motion can be considered another person must “second” the motion by saying “I second the motion”. This means s/he agrees the motion is worthy of discussion. A seconder is not normally required for regular Council meetings however, at larger meetings like the Annual Meeting, motions should have a seconder.
- Stating the Question: Once a motion has been made the Chairperson restates the motion so that everyone clearly understands what is being proposed. From then, until voting occurs all discussion is focused on the proposed motion.
- Discussion: The Chairperson opens the floor to discussion of the motion. If no one wishes to discuss the motion it is put to a vote. If Members of the Council wish to discuss the motion, the Chairperson opens the debate. Each member may speak to the question twice, but no one member may speak a second time until everyone has had a change to speak once.
- Declaring a vote: If no one wants to speak further to the issue, the Chairperson asks the Council if it is ready to vote on the proposal. The Chairperson repeats the question and conducts the vote by asking for those in favor and those opposed.
- The majority needed to pass a motion needs to be stated in the Constitution. In the case of a tie the motion is defeated.

Amending a Motion:

- Until the Chairperson states the question (repeats the motion) for a final vote, the person who made the motion may change it (in this case the original seconder may choose to withdraw, in which case another seconder would be required).
- Once the Chairperson has repeated the question in readiness for a final vote the motion can be amended in one of the following ways:
 - The person making the motion may ask to change the original wording. The Chairperson will ask if anyone objects. If no one objects the wording of the motion is changed. Debate continues on the amended motion.
 - If someone does object, the question of whether to allow a change in the wording of the motion is put to a vote. If the group consents to the change, debate continues on the motion as amended.
- Someone else may also amend the motion by saying, “I move to amend the motion by...”. The normal process for making a motion is then followed (see above).
- An amendment to an amendment may also be proposed but a third amendment is “out of order”.
- If an amendment is defeated, discussion continues on the original motion.

Withdrawing a Motion:

- At any time before a vote the person making the original motion may ask to withdraw it. This does not require a seconder. Once a motion is withdrawn it is as if it never existed.
- If the Chairperson has already “stated the question” in preparation for voting and a request to withdraw the motion is made, the Chairperson asks if there is any objection. If there is none the motion is withdrawn. If someone objects the request to withdraw the motion is put to a vote.

Motion “To Consider at a Later Date”

† A motion to “consider at a later date” means to set an issue aside to discuss at another time so more pressing business can be discussed, or so more information about the issue can be obtained.† The following rules apply to a motion “to consider at a later date”:

- The motion “to consider at a later date” takes precedence over the discussion of the motion
- The motion “to consider at a later date” requires a seconder.
- There can be no debate on a motion “to consider at a later date”.

5.2 Consensus Building Model of Decision-Making

Basic Steps to Arrive at Consensus

- Identify the issue or problem.
- Relate the issue to identified goal and/or Council roles and responsibilities.
- Open the floor to suggestions. If necessary brainstorm for alternatives.
- Discuss each suggestion, clarify; don’t jump to conclusions.
- Weight the suggestions in terms of reconciling or solving the issue.
- Select the suggestions member think most worthwhile.
- Use consensus voting:
 - How many are all for it? Believe in it so much they could be leaders on the issue.
 - How many are for it? Would lend support?
 - How many need to talk about the issue further?
 - How many are not sure, “but can live with it”? Encourage such Members to describe their reservations and as if they would like their reservations formally recorded.
 - Record the consensus decision of the Council (and reservations).
- Suggested phrases for Chairpersons to use as Council Members try to reach consensus:
 - Let’s begin by getting a reaction from everyone in the group.
 - Let me summarize what I hear you saying.
 - Let me repeat what I think I heard you say.
 - Let me ask you . . .
 - Have everyone had the opportunity to express an opinion?
 - Let me see if I can pull this together in a recommendation.

6.0 Understanding and Resolving Conflict

6.1 Understanding Conflict: Team Building

Building positive working relationships among School Community Council Members can also strengthen and promote teamwork. As trust and respect develop, Council Members will likely become more open about sharing opinions, taking risks, and resolving conflicts in a positive manner. It is also important to remember that teams are not formed overnight. Groups, on their way to becoming working teams may behave in their own, often perplexing, fashion. People who study group dynamics suggest that groups go through four common stages on their way to becoming a team:

Stages in Team Development ¹

Stage One: “Forming”

Getting to know one another and the issues in a polite and guarded way.

Stage Two: “Storming”

Beginning to air differences and sort out difficulties. Confrontations may occur and some people may opt out of the group.

Stage Three: “Norming”

Getting organized. The group develops procedures, acquires skills, and feels comfortable confronting issues. Members give feedback in an open and constructive manner.

Stage Four: “Performing”

Beginning to work together effectively to accomplish goals and objectives.

¹Hergert, Phlegar, & Perez-Selles, 1991. *Kindle the spark: an action guide for schools committed to the success of every child*. Andover, MA: The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast & Islands.

Councils may recognize these stages as they begin to work together. Understanding group dynamics can help Council Members overcome some of the frustration and confusion that they may encounter in their first year together. Each stage is important. Some groups may move quickly through, others may have more difficulty.

Communication skills are important at all stages, but imperative during “storming”. An open and respectful communication climate with conflict resolution procedures will help Councils move through the stages with more confidence.

Communication Skills ¹

- Stop talking - to others and to yourself - and learn to still the voice within: listening is an equal partner in communication, but it can't be done while you are talking.
- Carefully examine the other person's viewpoint. See if you can effectively summarize the points. You may find more to agree with than you imagine.
- Look, act and be interested.
- Observe nonverbal behaviour such as body language to grasp meanings beyond what is being said.
- Don't interrupt. Sit still *past* your tolerance level. Listen between the lines for implicit meanings as well as for explicit ones. If you must interrupt, speak only affirmatively. Resist the temptation to jump in with an evaluative, critical or disparaging comment while someone is expressing his or her point of view.
- To ensure understanding, at key points in the conversation, rephrase what the other person has said.
- When you speak, speak clearly and only to the issue being discussed. If you have several points to make, jot them down ahead of time to help keep you focused.

¹ Alberta Home and School Councils' Association. 1995. School Council Resource Manual. Edmonton.

Adapted from Alberta Home and School Councils' Association, 1995

6.2 Resolving Conflict

The following steps may be helpful in resolving conflict:

Build a collaborative climate. The Council establishes a collaborative climate so that differences in opinion can be dealt with in an open manner and everyone's views are valued. All Members should agree to:

- respect the perspective of others,
- listen to what others have to say,
- prepare to problem solve.

Be Prepared: If differences of opinion cannot be worked out, have a procedure in place.

Conflict resolution procedures may include the use of:

- a mediator to develop a solution that will be satisfactory to both sides;
- a jointly agreed-upon panel to make a recommendation or a binding decision; or,
- a plan to refer a dispute to school administrators or the board of education.

Identify the Problem: Only by clearly defining the problem can a group begin to resolve it and the underlying issues. Disputes usually occur because of disagreements on:

- facts
- resources,
- perceptions,
- values and beliefs, or,
- styles.

Defining the problem involves: clearly stating views, listening to others, trying to understand their views, and asking questions to clarify. At this stage, participants should avoid giving advice or judgments.

Brainstorm and Evaluate Options and Solutions: by working together to find a solution to the problem, individuals and groups can create a win-win situation.

Create an Action Plan; the plan should identify timelines, who is responsible for what actions, and who will follow up.

Adapted from: Alberta Home and School Councils' Association. 1995.
School Council Resource Manual. Edmonton.

7.0 School Community Council Meeting Evaluation

Sample School Community Council Meeting Evaluation Form

Adapted from Alberta School Council Resource Manual: Alberta Education, 1995

School Community Council Meeting Evaluation Date: _____

Please take the time to complete this survey.
This is your opportunity to improve future meetings.

<i>Evaluation Scale</i>	Not at All		Very Much So		
	1		5		
1. Was the agenda of this meeting clear to you?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Were you encouraged to contribute as much as you wanted?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Did the atmosphere allow for free discussion?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Was there enough time for discussion?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Are you clear on what, if any, decision(s) was reached?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Are you clear on the next steps being taken?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Are you clear about who is responsible for taking the next steps?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Do you think the purpose of this meeting was fulfilled?	1	2	3	4	5
9. What aspects of this meeting were most appealing to you?					
10. What aspects of this meeting were least appealing to you?					
11. Any comments for the Chair on how the meeting was conducted?					
12. Do you have suggestions for improving future meetings?					

Name: _____

(You do not need to sign this sheet.)

Parent Student Teacher Community member

(Please check appropriate space(s).)

If you would like to connect with a School Community Council Member please

Phone: _____ e-mail _____