

Module 2: SCC Operations Transcript

Welcome to module two, SCC operations.

The focus of this module is on the different operations of the School Community Council.

In this module, you'll learn about:

- the general practices of the SCC,
- SCC elections,
- the SCC constitution,
- administration of SCC funds, and
- the assessment and appraisal of the SCC and its members.

General Practices

There are several general practice guidelines that focus on different aspects of the day-to-day operations of the SCC. These practices fall into five main categories:

- meetings and other practices,
- Code of Conduct infractions,
- conflict resolution,
- complaints and grievances, and
- disqualification of council members.

It is important to be aware of these guidelines and where to find additional information if it's needed.

Meetings and Other Duties

There are two types of meetings held by the SCC: the annual meeting and regular meetings. Legislation requires that SCCs hold one annual meeting and at least five regular meetings during the school year.

Annual Meeting

At the annual meeting, SCC members review the past year and report on the activities and financial position of the council. The SCC also looks ahead to the upcoming school year and holds elections for council members and officer positions.

The guidelines for the annual meeting are:

- to hold the annual meeting by November 15th of each school year, and

- at the meeting to:
 - elect new members,
 - share the *Annual Financial Report* from the previous year,
 - provide an *Annual Activities Report* of the previous year's activities,
 - conduct council business including the selection of chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer, and
 - provide a forum for open discussion by parents and community members.

Appendix 2.1.1 in the School Community Council Operations Manual contains a sample annual meeting agenda that can be followed to ensure all required actions are covered.

Further information on the annual meeting can be found in the Annual Meeting and Elections Information Sheets found in the Operations Manual.

In addition to guidelines for the annual meeting, there are a number of guidelines for regular meetings held throughout the school year.

Regular Meetings

Guidelines for regular meetings include:

- post SCC meeting information on the SCC section of the school website,
- schedule meetings for the entire year at the first regular meeting,
- use agendas to keep meetings on track,
- review the agenda at the start of each meeting,
- discuss items for the next meeting at the end of each meeting,
- encourage discussions and debate to reach consensus when decisions are needed,
- reach decisions by making motions, discussing, and then voting with a show of hands,
- the Secretary keeps minutes, which are the official records of the meetings, for each meeting and posts them on the school website within five days of their approval, and finally
- the Council Chair starts and ends meetings on time, as well as ending each meeting by asking what went well, how the meeting could be improved, and then reminding everyone about the next meeting date.

For further information about meetings, agendas, minutes, and motions check out the SCC Information Sheets on Meeting Basics that are found in the SCC Operations Manual. A sample meeting agenda and a set of minutes is included in these information sheets.

Other Duties

In addition to holding meetings, there are a few other duties that the SCC must fulfill regarding their regular operation.

These duties include:

- creating and submitting the *Annual Financial Report* to the Board by September 20th and later posting the report on the school website,
- posting the *Annual Activities Report* to the school website, and
- meeting annually with the Board to find out about the division's goals and priorities for the school year.

Code of Conduct Infractions

There is an expectation that all members follow the SCC Code of Conduct. If infractions occur, there is a process to follow.

When an initial or minor infraction to the Code of Conduct is raised, the Council Chair seeks to understand the nature of the allegation or concern. The Council Chair discusses the concern with the SCC member in confidence and seeks to resolve the concern.

If there are repeated infractions or if a major infraction to the Code of Conduct is clearly evident, the SCC will provide the member with a letter signed by the Council Chair. The letter will address the concern and indicate that the action must cease.

If the infractions continue, the council can consider imposing sanctions on the member in question and if further infractions occur the council can ask for the resignation of that member.

Conflict Resolution

Appendix 2.2.2 in the School Community Council Operations Manual outlines conflict resolution best practices that an SCC can adopt in case a conflict occurs.

The first best practice is to build a collaborative climate on the council so that differences of opinion can be dealt with in an open manner. During meetings and discussions between SCC members, all members should agree to the following norms:

- respect the perspectives of others,
- listen to what others have to say, and
- be prepared to problem solve.

Second, the SCC should have a procedure in place in case a difference of opinion can't be resolved. This procedure may involve:

- the appointment of a mediator to develop an acceptable solution,
- the establishment of a panel to make a recommendation or decision that is binding, or
- the development of a plan to refer the dispute to the school administrator or the Board.

The third best practice is to clearly define the problem when it arises so SCC members can begin resolving the issue. When working on defining the problem, it's important that members refrain from giving advice or making judgements.

There are many factors that can result in a dispute. By establishing a collaborative climate, SCCs can create an atmosphere of respect and resolve an issue before it becomes a bigger problem.

A fourth best practice is for the council to work together to find a solution to an issue when it does arise. SCC members can brainstorm and evaluate different options and then work together to come up with a solution. By problem solving together, the council strengthens its ability to work together in the future.

Finally, SCC members can come up with an action plan in the event a conflict arises. The action plan should identify timelines and a list of who is responsible for the different actions.

Complaints and Grievances

Councils may receive complaints or grievances about their operations or the broader operations of the school.

Complaints or grievances fall into two main categories – informal and formal.

Informal Complaints or Grievances

If you are approached in your role as an SCC member with an informal complaint or grievance, you should immediately refer the individual to the Council Chair. The Council Chair will respond to the complaint or grievance. If the individual is not satisfied with the response, the concern or grievance can be brought to the council in a more formal manner.

Formal Complaints or Grievances

Formal complaints or grievances are brought to the SCC through a letter written to the Council Chair or by requesting a meeting with the SCC to discuss the concern. If a meeting is requested, the individual bringing forth the concern should request the meeting through the Council Chair.

Once a formal complaint or grievance has been made, the SCC provides the individual with a written response of how the matter will be addressed.

If an informal or formal complaint or grievance is made against a staff member or student, the individual should be immediately directed to the school principal.

Your SCC constitution outlines the procedures for handling these complaints or grievances. The SCC constitution can be found in the School Community Councils Operations Manual. Please refer to the constitution for more information on these processes.

Disqualification of Council Members

There is legislation provided in section 140.1 of *The Education Act* that states that an SCC member will vacate their seat if the member:

- is convicted of an indictable offense,
- is absent from 3 or more consecutive SCC meetings without authorization from the SCC, or
- if the member ceases to be eligible to serve on the SCC based on the regulations or policies of the Board.

SCC Elections

General Requirements

There are a number of general requirements for SCC elections.

- Members are elected for two-year terms and are elected in staggered terms with half of the members being elected each year.
- Elections occur at the annual meeting by secret ballot.
- The returning officer for the election is appointed by the Board and is an employee of the School Division. For example, the vice principal, the school administrative assistant, or any other staff member that is not on the SCC could potentially be the returning officer.
- The returning officer provides the public with at least four weeks' notice of an upcoming election by posting a call for nominations.
- The notice of elections must be accessible to parents, guardians, and community members. It could be posted on the school website, in a school newsletter, or by sending it in a synervoice message.
- Information in the notice of elections should include:
 - the purpose of the meeting,
 - the attendance or geographic area of the SCC,
 - where the policies and procedures for the election can be viewed, and
 - the date, time, and place of the public meeting.
- In addition to posting the notice of elections, the returning officer:
 - distributes and collects the ballots,
 - arranges for the ballots to be counted in the presence of the Council Chair, and
 - announces the outcomes of the election.

- Parents and guardians of students at the school and community members can run to be an SCC member and can vote in an SCC election.
- If fewer than 5 members run for council, members can be appointed to fill vacant positions.
- The results of the election can be contested within four days of the annual meeting.

Additional information about elections and samples of the forms needed can be found in the Annual Meetings and Elections SCC Information Sheets found in Chapter 4 and in the forms section of the SCC Operations Manual.

SCC Constitution

When your community council was first set up, a constitution was created that now governs your SCC. A copy of this constitution should be posted on your school website. If you can't find the constitution for your SCC, please contact your principal.

It's a good idea to keep a copy of the constitution handy so you can refer to it as needed.

Before we look at the different components of the SCC Constitution, let's define what a constitution is.

A constitution is a set of fundamental principles or rules that govern the operation of an organization.

The SCC Constitution contains different components that help guide members in the operation of their SCC.

We will take a closer look at the 9 general components of an SCC Constitution. Each SCC creates their own constitution, so your constitution might look a little different from the constitution of another SCC, but both should contain these 9 components.

General Components of the SCC Constitution

1. **Mission Statement** – The mission statement guides the SCC. It includes the purpose of the SCC and should be reviewed and amended if circumstances change.
2. **Guiding Principles** – Guiding principles align with the mission statement and give direction on how the SCC should operate. Examples of guiding principles might be that all viewpoints need to be considered before making decisions and that action plans need to focus on improved student learning and well-being.
3. **Membership** – A list of the different types of members on the SCC, how each type will be elected or appointed, and the number of each type of member is also included in the constitution. The SCC decides how many elected representative members will be on

their council, between 5 and 9, and records that number in the constitution. Different members will include representative members, student representative members, First Nations representative members, permanent members, and a list of other representative members that the SCC decides are important to include on the council based on the needs of their community.

4. **Officers** – A list of the officers found on the SCC is recorded in the constitution. SCCs may also choose to list the primary roles and responsibilities of these officers. Officers include the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, etc.
5. **Committees** – A list of the standing committees the SCC wants to establish might also be included in the SCC Constitution. The purpose for including this list is to promote stable, ongoing operations. One of the committees might be a fundraising committee. Fundraising is NOT a mandate of the SCC but may be part of the action plan. A committee can be formed to raise the money needed to achieve the goals in the SCC's action plan.
6. **Meetings** – The SCC Constitution includes details about the annual meeting and regular meetings. Details are provided about how the meetings should operate and how decisions will be made. You can find more information about these details in Chapter 5 of the SCC Operations Manual.
7. **General Operations** – Included in the general operations section is:
 - the SCC Code of Conduct,
 - means of communication with the different stakeholders,
 - expectations for conflict of interest, and
 - the processes for dealing with complaints and grievances.The Code of Conduct must be included in the SCC Constitution as it gives members direction on how to fulfill their roles on the SCC.
8. **Assessment of Operations** – The SCC may choose to build a formal assessment of their operations into their constitution. If the SCC includes assessment in their constitution, details about how the assessment will be conducted should be included. The SCC Operations Manual includes sample assessments that the SCC might want to use.
9. **Amending the Constitution** – Finally, as we know, things change. A process for how and when amendments can be made is included in the constitution, so members know the process for making these amendments.

SCCs should regularly review their constitution and make amendments as needed in order to be as effective as possible in fulfilling their mandate of improving the learning and well-being of the students in their school.

More information on the SCC Constitution can be found in Chapter 5 of the SCC Operations Manual. In addition, an outline for a constitution can be found in Appendix 5.2.1 of that same manual.

Administration of SCC Funds

SCCs are provided with an annual operating grant, and they must account for the funds they receive. Chapter 6 of the SCC Operations Manual provides information on the administration of these funds.

Let's look at the accounting guidelines.

Accounting Guidelines

General accounting guidelines include:

- The Board is ultimately responsible for all revenues and expenses related to the community council.
- Councils are accountable to both the Board and the public and need to ensure that their funds are managed according to Board policy.
- SCCs must keep complete and accurate records and be ready to make them available.
- SCCs must follow general accounting practices as outlined in the SCC Operations Manual.
- The fiscal year for councils is from September 1st to August 31st.
- A year-end report must be submitted to the Good Spirit School Complex by September 20th.

Bank Accounts and Investments

The SCC Operations Manual outlines the steps SCCs must follow regarding bank accounts and investments.

1. A single bank account must be used.
2. Cheques should be pre-numbered and include the school and council names.
3. Unused cheques should be kept in a safe place with someone who has signing authority.
4. Voided cheques must be kept and filed in numerical order.
5. Two people need to sign the cheques.
6. Funds collected need to be deposited in their entirety.
7. Extra funds can be invested for short periods of time in guaranteed investment certificates covered by Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation.
8. Disbursements must be supported by original invoices or receipts showing the amount and purpose of payment.
9. Disbursements must be made by cheque when authorized.

10. Blank cheques must not be signed.

Assessment and Appraisal of SCC and Members

Chapter 7 of the Operations Manual deals with the assessment and appraisal of SCCs. Assessment is an evaluation of the quality of a program or process. An appraisal is the act of assessing the program or process.

Monitoring the progress and effectiveness of a council will help the SCC to support its contribution to improving the student learning and well-being of the students at their school.

An assessment of your council will do two things:

1. it will provide SCC members with an opportunity to strengthen their roles and responsibilities on the council, and
2. it will provide the council with the opportunity to gather and interpret information about the effectiveness of their work so they can improve their operations.

From the assessment, SCCs can:

- determine promising practices,
- understand current strengths and weaknesses, and
- identify realistic directions for improvement.

Assessments

There are several assessments that SCCs can use to assess and appraise the effectiveness of the council and its members.

The first is the School Community Council Effectiveness Rubric and Planning Template.

1. **School Community Council Effectiveness Rubric and Planning Template** – This template is found in Appendix 7.2.1 of the Operations Manual. There are two pieces to this self-assessment – a rubric and a planning template.

The rubric helps councils to review their effectiveness. It compares their current level of functioning to criteria the council wants to achieve. It looks at five areas:

- council development,
- school learning plan,
- community development and partnerships,
- communications, and
- monitoring results and planning to improve.

The planning template helps SCCs use information from the rubric to set goals to improve SCC operations.

A second assessment is the SCC Self-Monitoring and Improvement Survey.

2. **SCC Self-Monitoring and Improvement Survey** – This survey asks council members to reflect on the SCC operations in five areas:
 - council development,
 - school learning plan,
 - community development and partnerships,
 - communications, and
 - monitoring results and planning to improve.

SCC members read each statement on the survey and then indicate whether they think the statement applies to their council always, usually, sometimes, never, or not sure.

A third type of assessment is the SCC Self-Appraisal of Specific Areas of Interest Self-Assessments.

3. **SCC Self-Appraisal of Specific Areas of Interest Self-Assessments** – If SCCs want to conduct an assessment of a specific area of council performance, they can create or use assessment tools that will generate the information they need. Two appraisals are included in Appendix 7.2.3 of the Operations Manual – the SCC Member Self-Appraisal and the SCC Meeting Appraisal.

That's it! We're done! You've now completed Module 2 on the operations of the School Community Council. If you have any questions, please contact your school principal. Have a great day!