

Module 4: SCC Communication

Welcome to module four, SCC Communication.

Part of the province's vision in creating SCCs (as outlined in the Handbook for School Community Councils and Principals) was that *"The School Community Council is accountable, transparent, and responsive in its relationship with parents and the school community."*

SCCs achieve this vision:

- by actively engaging parents and community members in matters of concern related to public education,
- by reflecting the nature of the community in which it is situated by collecting and sharing appropriate information with others, and
- by regularly reporting on its activities to parents, the school, and the community.

Central to achieving this vision is communication. Communication is simply the exchange of information. It is through communication that SCCs engage parents and community members in school activities, understand the needs of students in the community, and report to parents and community members on council operations.

In this module, you'll learn about:

- Engaging Parents and Community Members,
- Understanding Community Needs,
- Reporting SCC Operations, and
- School Community Council Communications.

As SCC members communicate with parents and community members, they need to ask themselves two questions:

- What information do we need from parents and community members to understand the conditions and needs in our community and to carry out the SCC mandate? and
- What do parents and community members need to know about the SCC and its operations?

Engaging Parents and Community Members

An important part of the SCC mandate is to help engage parents and community members to share the responsibility of supporting students with their academic achievement and well-being. To fulfill this responsibility, parents and community members need to be aware of the role of the SCC and how they can help support student learning.

SCCs provide a link between the school and the community. Therefore, SCCs need to decide how they will speak and listen to parents and community members.

Communication Methods

There are three primary ways to communication with others. They are:

- written communication,
- verbal communication, and
- use of social media.

SCCs decide on the purpose of their communication and the most effective way to provide information.

- Written communication, such as a pamphlet or letter, would be appropriate if there is information to share and no discussion is needed.
- Verbal communication such as holding a meeting or making telephone calls might be warranted if the council needs to discuss a concern or elicit further information from parents and community members.
- Finally, announcements of upcoming events or meetings could be shared through social media.

Communication Ideas

There are many ways your SCC can communicate with your community. As a council, you decide on the ideas that work best for your SCC. Some of these communication ideas include:

- **Host Special Events** – Host special events that bring parents and community members into the school. Events might include a family reading night, family activities in the gym, or bring in a guest speaker on bullying or internet safety.
- **Submit Info to Local Paper** – You can send pictures and activity highlights to your local newspaper, spotlight an SCC member, or announce upcoming meetings.
- **Send Out Mailings** – Regularly send mailings out to parents and community members that include information on the council, its members, and its operations.
- **Make Introductions** – When SCC members attend school functions, take the time to introduce the members formally during presentations and other school functions such as concerts and drama productions.

- **Provide Meeting Invitations** – Invite parents and community members to attend upcoming meetings by placing the invitation in a school newsletter, on social media or posting on the school and/or SCC website.
- **Attend Open Houses and Other School Events** – Set up a table at your school’s open house, parent-teacher conferences, or other school events. Consider creating a poster board or set up a monitor and have pictures of the activities and programs that the council supports on the poster board or rotating through the monitor.
- **Create Pamphlets** – Create a pamphlet about the SCC and include information about your mandate, how you support student learning and wellness, list your committees, and contact information. Include ways others can get involved in the SCC such as attending meetings and volunteering at SCC sponsored activities.
- **Survey Parents** – Send out a parent survey to gather information about their knowledge of the SCC, how they are involved at the school, what activities they support, and find out what they would like to see happening in the school and community related to the learning and well-being of students.
- **Take Photos and Videos** – Take photos and videos of activities that the council sponsors or is a part of. Use these photos and videos at open houses, on social media, to submit to the newspaper, and to put them in the school newsletter.
- **Make Public Service Announcements** – Make use of free services on local TV and radio stations, and in local newspapers to announce upcoming SCC events and activities.
- **Email SCC Highlights** – Once a month send out an email to all the families of your school. Highlight projects and activities that the SCC is involved in. Include a ‘Did you know?’ section that provides one fact each month about the SCC. Facts might include: Did you know the SCC works with the school to support the learning goals of the school? ... or ... Did you know the SCC gets donations of food from local businesses for their breakfast program? Provide more details about these facts.
- **Include Info in School Handbook or Create Handout** – Create a blurb about the SCC to be included in the school handbook or create a handout about the SCC that can be given to families at the start of each school year.
- **Submit Info to School Newsletters** - Send pictures and activity highlights to the school and have them included in the school newsletter.
- **Post on Social Media** – Post the dates of upcoming activities and meetings, along with pictures of activities and programs the SCC is a part of on social media outlets like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

- **Send Synervoice Messages** – Create a synervoice message that can be sent out by the school announcing an upcoming SCC meeting or activity.
- **Make Telephone Calls** – Make personal phone calls to parents and community members and invite them to an upcoming SCC meeting. You don't have to call every parent or community member for every meeting ... maybe make it a goal to invite 10 or 20 or 50 parents or community members to each meeting ... whatever you decide is appropriate for the size of your school. Just make sure that each parent or caregiver is called at least once during the school year. Create a telephone tree and divide the list up among the council members.
- **Volunteer in Classrooms and at School Events** – As a council member, volunteer at school events and in the classrooms to be visible and get people to know that you are an SCC member. Consider having name tags made up for your members with the title of "SCC member" under your name to help people get to know you.
- **Create an SCC Website** – Create an SCC website and post the Annual Activities Report, the Annual Financial Report, reminders of upcoming meetings, and photos and videos of SCC activities.
- **Submit Info to School Website** – If you don't have an SCC website, you can post the Annual Activities Report, the Annual Financial Report, reminders of upcoming meetings, photos, etc. on the school website.
- **Post Notices** – Create notices for upcoming meetings and events and post in churches, community centers, and local businesses.

Understanding Community Needs

As an SCC member, you'll develop a deeper understanding of your community as you interact with parents and community members, work with the learning plans of the school, and develop action plans to support the academic achievement and well-being of students.

By understanding the economic, social, and health conditions of the community, and the aspirations of parents and community members for their children, SCC members become more knowledgeable about the supports and resources needed for school success.

The economic, social, and health conditions of a community provide members with a better understanding of the environment in which the students live and learn.

Understanding the aspirations of parents and community members allows the SCC to look at challenges students might face in attaining these goals. Once challenges are identified, councils can find ways they can support students to be successful.

There are a few different ways that SCCs can develop this understanding of their community and its needs as it relates to student success. To gather information, councils can:

- send out emails or printable surveys,
- conduct in-person or telephone interviews, or
- hold meetings with parents and community members.

In addition to understanding the conditions and needs of the community, it is important for SCC members to be knowledgeable about the supports that are offered both in the school and the community. This information is important for two reasons:

1. First, the information can be shared with both parents and community members when needed, and
2. Second, gaps in support can be identified and the SCC can work towards developing the resources or supports needed to fill these gaps.

Communication with both parents and community members will help the council to understand the challenges that are facing the students in their community and how they can best support the students.

Reporting SCC Operations

There are two different types of reporting required by the SCC. The SCC must:

- provide formal reports on their activities and operations, and
- informally report on the progress of their action plans and other information useful to parents and community members.

Formal Reports

The two formal reports that SCCs need to create and share with parents each year are the Annual Activity Report and the Annual Financial Report. The Annual Activity Report provides information on the actions of the SCCs and the outcomes of those actions. The Annual Financial Report provides an accounting of all the funds and how they were used over the course of the school year.

Informal Reporting

Throughout the school year, SCCs report to parents and community members about the progress of their action plans and their support of the academic and wellness goals of the

school's learning plan. Updates are given at council meetings and recorded in the minutes which are posted on the school's website. In addition, highlights can be shared in newspapers, on SCC websites, through social media, etc.

School Community Council Communication

There are several different stakeholders that SCC members need to communicate with in their role on the council. These communications are outlined in the SCC Operations Manual.

Stakeholders include:

- the Board,
- school staff,
- senior administration,
- and the community.

Communication with Board Members

- The Director and Board Chair will develop a procedure that allows for two-way communication with SCC members.
- Council members will meet at least annually with the Board.
- The names of board members and meetings dates will be made available to all SCCs in the school division.
- Board members may attend SCC meetings to foster communication.

School Staff Communication

- The principal will initiate activities that encourage communication between home, school, and the community.
- The principal will present the learning improvement plan at an SCC meeting and encourage discussion and input from its members.

Communication with Senior Administration

- The Director of Education/CEO or designate will provide a means of communication with senior administration staff and may attend council meetings to share or gather information related to the school, school division, or progress related to the School Division Strategic Plan or other initiatives.
- If an individual council wishes to meet with the Superintendent of Education, the principal will invite the individual to attend a meeting.

Communication with Community Members

- Council will initiate activities that encourage communication between home, school, and the community.

You did it! That's it for module four. If you want more information on SCC communication, check out Section 2.4 of the SCC Operations Manual or ask your principal.