

School Council Chairperson: Part Two video script

Part Two: Managing Meetings

As School Council Chairperson, you are responsible for facilitating the meeting in a way that provides all members with an opportunity to participate. Here are some useful tips on how to effectively manage a meeting.

On Topic and On Time

Acknowledge additional items that arise, and add them to the “Parking Lot” for the next meeting. This allows everyone to be heard and the meeting can remain focused on the topics and timeline set in the agenda.

At the end of the agenda, you should go back to the parking lot and have the council decide to discuss or defer any topics listed there. That decision should be based on the urgency or importance of each item as well as the remaining meeting time

Discussion and Decision

When preparing to discuss an item on the agenda, one strategy to encourage participation is to ask your council members to write down their discussion points first to get them thinking. Then ask them to share these ideas with another person or in smaller groups. This helps to generate lots of discussion! If your group cannot reach a decision, find out if you need more information. You may also wish to watch our video on Making Decisions by Consensus.

Differing Opinions

When dealing with differing opinions during discussions, remind people about your group norms. If discussions become personal, or if people are being attacked by others, it is important to intervene immediately.

Rules of conduct or group norms should be established at the first meeting of the year. Find suggestions in the tips and templates sections of the School Council Support Guide, or the School Council Section of the school board website.

Good intentions gone awry

When a school council member tries to re-open a closed or previously agreed-upon item, you can ask if any new information has become available, but otherwise refer to the minutes, and confirm that the issue is closed.

If someone has brought a new item to the meeting and in their enthusiasm tries to push it through too quickly without discussion, slow them down by inviting input.

Minutes

Meeting Minutes should be detailed enough to provide council members with information down the road. Your School Council Secretary will draft the minutes, and it is your responsibility to approve the draft minutes and ensure that they are distributed or posted in a timely fashion. This is important as some of the tasks will require action before the next meeting.

In summary, here are a Few Things to Remember:

- Have your Rules of Conduct or Constitution at all meetings. It will give you the support you need to stay on track.
- Refer to the agreed-upon agenda and identify the impact of any lengthy discussions.
- Use the rest of the committee- defer to them for support and input when needed.
- Defer items where more information is needed; and
- Watch the clock and stay within your allotted timelines!

Our last video is about Sharing the Workload.