

MEETINGS

There are a number of sections in the *Education Act* dealing with School Council meetings and how they should be conducted.

TYPES OF MEETINGS

Regular meetings: Your School Council must establish by resolution the date, time and place of regular meetings. Once a regular schedule is established, Council members are not required to be notified of meetings. s. 139(1)& (2) A minimum of four regular meetings must be held during the year. s. 137(2)

Special meetings: These may be called by the Chair or majority of Council members by giving seven (7) days' notice to each member along with the reason for the meeting and can include i.e. an organizational meeting. However, the Council may make rules concerning how notice of meetings is to be given and may waive the notice requirements by unanimous consent and hold a special meeting at any time. s. 140(1) & (2)

Open meetings: Council meetings shall be held in public. s. 145 Closed (in-camera) meetings: Council, by resolution, may hold a closed meeting if it is perceived to be in the public interest to do so. When a meeting is held in-camera, no resolution or bylaw may be passed; the Council simply 'rises and reports'. It is advisable to hold an in-camera meeting when discussing sensitive issues such as personal or personnel matters or suspension hearings or appeals. s. 146(1)& (2)

Annual Meeting: Each School Council shall hold an annual meeting of the electors of its attendance area in September of each year. Notice of the meeting must be posted, in at least four places in the area, at least 14 days prior giving the time, date and place. s. 148(1) & (2)

Special meetings of the electors: These may be called at any time by the School Council with posted notices (in at least four places in the area) at least 14 days in advance of the meeting stating the purpose, date and place. s. 149(1)

BEFORE THE MEETING: THE AGENDA

The key to an effective meeting is a well-prepared agenda. It briefly outlines what you want to discuss and in what order. When considering an agenda item, some things to consider are: does this need to be discussed at this time or is it included out of habit; was there enough

preparation time for council members to make an informed decision; is the person available to speak to the agenda item.

Agenda items may come from: Chairperson, school staff, council members, non-teaching staff, students, public, parent(s)/guardian(s) and interest groups. All members should be aware of possible agenda items and work as a group to decide how and if items will be added to the agenda. Council members should receive the agenda at least 48 hours before the meeting so members can do their homework. Members should read any material that is in the agenda package and, if requested, treat items as confidential

THE AGENDA INCLUDES:

Call to Order: Introductions and declare quorum.

Approval of the Agenda: Ask for additions, changes and approval. Identify the important items to ensure there is time for discussion.

Approval of previous minutes: Note changes and corrections to ensure they are an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Community Input*: This is a standing item to acknowledge welcoming of guests from the community.

Business arising from the minutes: Update on action items from the previous meeting.

New business: Items requiring a decision, recommendation or resolution; start with the most important items to ensure enough time for discussion; other items can be deferred to the next

Information items: These may or may not require action.

Reports: Can be written and attached to the minutes.

Correspondence: Usually a summary unless it's an important item that needs to be read in full.

Sample Agenda

1. Call to Order – Chairperson
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Approval of the previous minutes
4. Community input (welcoming of guests/others from the community)
5. Correspondence – Secretary / Treasurer
6. Reports
 - 6.1 Chair
 - 6.2 Secretary / Treasurer
 - 6.3 Others
7. Business arising from previous minutes
8. New business
9. Information items
10. Items for future agendas
11. Adjournment (make sure to end on time)

* It is advisable for Councils to have a standing item at the beginning of their agenda (after approval of previous minutes) for 'Community Input' so there is clear acknowledgement of the Council welcoming 'guests' from the community; it is especially important when agendas are posted for viewing.

DURING THE MEETING

- Council must follow its set rules governing meetings. s.138
- The meeting is open to the public except as defined by sections 146 and 147.
- Motions or Resolutions:
- Participants need to be informed; arrive on time; keep comments brief and on topic; allow others to speak; practice active listening (understand what is being said); and participate by asking questions and giving opinions.
- Motions or resolutions are required when: the council wants to do something, change something already underway, spend money, etc.
- Any member may propose a motion or resolution by stating "I move that..."
- Another member seconds the motion or resolution by stating "*I second the motion.*"
- The Chair states the motion, "*It is moved and seconded that ...*"
- The Chair allows discussion and debate on the motion; amendments may be made at this time without changing the original intent of the motion.
- The Chair puts the amendments (if any) to a vote.
- The Chair puts the main or amended motion or resolution to a vote and asks for "*All in favour*" and "*All opposed*".
- The Chair announces the result by stating "*The motion or resolution is carried or defeated*".

MEETING GUIDELINES

- The Chairperson keeps the meeting focussed on the task at hand.
- Items of business should be taken in the order set in the agenda.
- All speakers should address the Chairperson one at a time.
- Limit the number of times a person speaks to a motion or amendment.
- Discussion usually takes place when a motion or amendment is made.
- A resolution that is passed or rejected is not reconsidered at the same meeting.
- Voting is by a show of hands or by ballot if requested. All members must vote unless excused by a conflict of interest.
- All powers of the School Council shall be exercised by resolution. s.143(2)

DEFINITIONS

Motion: A proposition put before the meeting for discussion and decision. It should be expressed in clear and concise language.

Resolution: Is what a motion becomes once it is discussed and voted.

Amendment: Is a proposed alteration to the terms or content of a motion. It can be moved at any time during discussion of motion, as long as the motion

has not been voted on. It can add, delete or substitute words without changing the original intent of the motion.

A Meeting is considered properly constituted when:

- The person convening the meeting has authority to do so. s.135
- Sufficient notice has been given. s.139
- The rules of procedure of the council are observed. s.138 There is quorum when a majority of the School Council is present. s.141(1)

Quorum for a five-member School Council is three members. It is four for a six- or seven-member council. (Note: a vacancy in the membership of a School Council does not impair the capacity of the remaining members or trustees to act. s.141(3))

- An act or proceeding of a School Council is not valid unless it is adopted at a meeting at which a quorum is present s.141(2)
- If there is no quorum, the Council can decide to adjourn the meeting, have a short recess to see if members are available (i.e. phone), or set a date and time for a reconvened meeting.

Two sets of rules can be used to help develop rules of procedure: Robert's Rules of Order and Bourinot's Rules of Order