

School Community Council Meeting Discussion Guide

Description of School Community Council Responsibilities

Below is a description of the six responsibilities of school community councils (SCCs) as outlined in the *School Community Council Handbook* (2006) followed by four questions that will guide our discussion. When you discuss these topics, please consider your response not only from the perspective as a member of your individual school council, but also as a member of a provincial School Community Council. All answers are valuable as we search for common barriers and solutions throughout the province to more meaningfully engage parents in their children's learning experiences.

Responsibility 1: Understanding Our Community

SCCs should have a community profile that describes the economic, social and health conditions of their community as well as identifies the community's needs and aspirations related to children and youth learning and well-being. The profile would also include the resources available within the community that would provide support for student learning and well-being.

Responsibility 2: Developing and Recommending the Learning Improvement Plan

SCCs are to take part in the development of school improvement plans by working with the principal and staff to assess the needs of the school, identify goals, create an action plan with supports, submit the plan to the Board for approval and evaluate its effectiveness throughout the school year.

Responsibility 3: Provide Advice

Boards of Education may seek advice from SCCs that falls into three broad categories:

1. Division-wide governing policy, operational procedure and decisions including the school division's strategic plan, budget and other specific initiatives
2. Educational program and its delivery and on religious observances and language of instruction within the school
3. The formation, structure, and operations of the SCC.

Responsibility 4: Taking Action on School Council Initiatives

The central purpose of SCCs is to encourage and support the involvement of parents and community as partners to improve student learning and well-being. The actions SCCs take should likewise be centered on supporting, and tracking progress towards achieving, the Learning Improvement Plan.

Responsibility 5: Reporting to Parents and Community

SCCs are an important part of school division governance and a critical connecting link between the school and community. Two-way channels of communication between the following groups are integral in the effectiveness of SCCs: among council members, with the principal, with the community, with other councils, organizations, and agencies, with the Board of Education. SCCs are also responsible for providing an annual report on the progress made towards the Learning Improvement Plan and the activities undertaken to support that plan.

Responsibility 6: Building School Community Capacity

SCCs are responsible for their own growth and improvement. Creating processes that allow SCCs to assess their ongoing operations throughout the course of the year can help them keep track of opportunities for growth as well as areas that may need future attention. Evaluation forms are one suggested tool to help track this progress on the initiatives SCCs undertake.

Conversation Prompts Based on the 6 Responsibilities

1. *Understanding Your Community:*
What concerns do you have for the youth in your school community and what aspirations do you have for their learning and well-being?
2. *Learning Improvement Plan / Taking Action:*
Does your SCC contribute to the Learning Improvement Plan for your school? If so, how do you contribute? If not, what obstacles prevent you from being a part of the Learning Improvement Plan?
3. *Reporting / Building Capacity:*
What communication strategies does your SCC use that work well to share information among council members, school staff, the community, and the Board of Education?
What obstacles prevent effective communication?
4. *Provide Advice:*
As the grassroots stakeholders in your children's education, what advice have you shared with your Board and what advice would you like to communicate to the Ministry of Education?