



# School Governance Councils

Bylaws, Building an Effective Structure and Teamwork

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# Module I

Establishing effective structures and procedures for conducting council business, including bylaws

I. Expectations for school governance councils in terms of how they can help the parents of the children in the school.

## II. Importance of structure, including bylaws

A. If you want to end up with good content, clarity in what you're doing and trying to accomplish, buy in and understanding of the community, Board and staff, you need a process that is fair, inclusive and, to the extent possible, final.

B. Your rules should be neutral, to the extent that they don't bias the results. In other words, they need to allow people to come to the table without preconceived notions and an expectation of what the final result will be.

III. Bylaws, particularly the bylaws that we have provided for you in draft form, are designed to help you move forward through a good process. The bylaws have been sent to your boards of education, with the expectation that each council will determine how best to use them.

Here are some specifics on what is in the bylaws and what you should pay special attention to:



## Article II: Purpose

Council will work in a “spirit of cooperation”

Council brings together parents and the community to “create a better understanding of and mutual respect for each other’s concerns and role, and share ideas for continuous school improvement.”

# Article III: Membership

Section 2 discusses how to figure out who shall serve and for how long. You have the option of the length of time, in an attempt to prevent all board members turning over at once.

Section 4 also discusses removal of a Council member. This should be used sparingly.



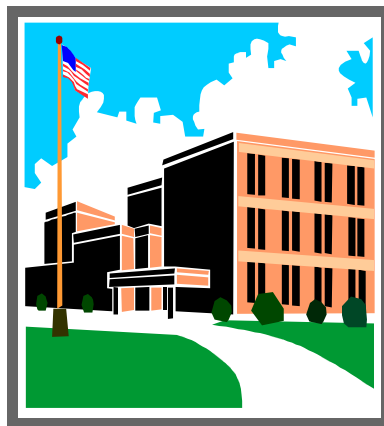
# Article VI: Duties of Council Members

The alternate language to consider is very helpful in spelling out the duties of each of the members of the Council. Very helpful, so that those on the Council know what they are charged with doing away from the table.



## Article VIII: Council Responsibilities

Section III discusses limitations placed on the Advisory Function of the Council. We find with boards of education, that, especially with new members, they do not always understand the limits of their authority.



# Article IX: Meetings of the Council

Section 7 on Meetings Open to the Public/Public Participation is also very important. School Governance Councils hold their meetings in public, but they are not public meetings.



Make sure you start and continue the work of the Council acting under high ethical standards and expectations and you will be successful.



# IV. Teamwork and Effective Meetings

## Ten Areas to Consider:

1. Civility
2. Respect
3. Empathy
4. Active Listening
5. Fair, unbiased and well-understood ground rules
6. Inclusion
7. Treat everyone as equals
8. Aim for everyone to understand issues
9. Create top expectations; climate for learning by all
10. An enjoyable and comfortable climate that you enjoy working in and those who follow you will feel comfortable in.

Remember, as a “founding”  
member of the council, you are  
leaving a legacy....