

notes

Council of School Councils Meeting – Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2013

The following are the responses provided by parents during the discussion.

Group One

Successes

- Changed bylaws to operating procedures
- Great attendance from admin & staff
- All positions on council filled
- Community feel within school
- Active school council with staff/student body
- Contribute to school via fundraising
- First time for key communicator
- Moved to format to categorize fundraising dollars
- Positive relationship with principal

Challenges

- Parent engagement
- Funding
- Transparency among leadership and council
- Communication

Group Two

Successes

- Babysitting services during meetings (volunteer hours from Junior High students)
- Outdoor classroom/learning opportunities
- Support learning initiatives with FRA that cannot be paid by CBE (ie: Nutrition Month activities)
- Cookie Dough (k-5) - \$20,000 funds raised
- Huge drama production – every child who auditions gets a role (council supports)
- Lots of parents who volunteer in school even though not great turnout to council meetings
- Volunteer coordinator attends meetings and liaisons with parents to get volunteers
- Integrating more technology into school
- Interpreters at parent interviews
- Facilitator style meeting (40+ parents)

Challenges

- Communication to parents
- Bylaws/operating procedures and knowing what they are
- Create a way to maintain technology as becomes outdated (sustainability)
- D2L
- Become empowered to act as an advisory to school/principal
- Engage all parents/diversity

Group three

- Having CAPSC and ASCA talk to us to provide clarification on roles
- Meeting with homeowners or residents assoc or community assoc to work together and can then to driveway snow removal and share casinos and traffic issues and common safety concerns
- Education forums advertised thru school councils
- Have the police come out to present
- Have a guest speaker come out to each mtg. ask parents what topic they want to hear about
- A teacher and 2 teachers at each mtg
- Student presentation at mtg lead to increased comm on impact on fundraising
- Issue – time factor
- Need a time keeper and keep them task focused – time allotments
- Language barrier for parents – ELL
- Driving/nondrivers
- Need translation
- Contact language association
- In school settlement worker
- No formal school council – succession plan – doing more informal
- Why is this happening – survey to find out why to get a basis for understanding commitment
- Alternating time – day/evening
- Need increased communication from the school – newsletter
- Security clearances + is a barrier takes too long if new to country
- Should be mandatory in Kindergarten
- Success – 2x/yr run a town hall for a panel w Admin

Group Four

Successes

- Amount of volunteers/fundraising \$
- Successful at separating fundraising from council
- Administrators good about driving educational conversations

Challenges

- Getting real conversations going about issues
- Need to understand assessment/PATs
- How do you measure academic success?
- Less ability to fundraise at higher school levels
- Depends on openness of admin
- Need to improve high school parent involvement
- Participation of principals in discussion
- Concerns about report cards

Group Five

Successes

- Strong executive
 - Stable, long term volunteers
- Good relationship w/ Admin
 - Transparent, honest, listening
 - Active principal, available
 - Supporter of council
- Increased turnout
- Transition to Viscount Bennett (Willow Park)

- Worked closely with Area V
- Fundraising Success
 - letter at beginning of year
 - cheque writing campaign
 - “Wish list” at next council mtg
- Casino
 - Invited volunteers to mtg to discuss where \$\$ go
- Keynote speaker
- Email 1-2 days prior to mtg to remind
 - List the speaker
 - Invite parents to contribute to agenda

Challenges

- Natural disasters
 - Flood, fire, etc
- Vandalism
 - Playground...fundraising
 - Student tires slashed, etc
- Building maintenance
 - Parking lot
 - Upkeep – liability issues to help
 - Gym and office (common areas) volunteer done
 - Classrooms not able
 - Frustrations working within “system”
- Fundraising down
 - People giving less
 - High amount of work
 - Casino restrictions re: spending
- Traffic safety
- Building safety
 - Swipe cards - # of them
 - Location of them
 - Cost of them
- Communication
 - Admin to parents
 - Working to streamline
- How much do you get involved in school “issues”
 - E.g., school changes, designations
- Diversity of parents
 - E.g., dual-stream system, ELL, changing demograph.
- Environment issues
 - Raised from student voices

Group Six

Successes

- Playground built
- Supporting arts program (fundraising)
- Very organized
- Good rapport with principal
- Strong sense of community
- Many parent volunteers
- Signup genius
- Strong traditions
- Great turnout
- Embracing culture (bilingual program)

- Teacher presentations
- Keeping meetings on schedule
- Babysitting provided
- Alternating times between day/evening meetings
- Signing up parents for council updates

Challenges

- Getting parents engaged
- Getting responses from parents
- Not much culturally diversity
- lack of awareness of who can belong to school council
- Q: what can FSAs fundraise for?

Group Seven

Successes

- Spirit days – monthly
- PRIDE – peer recognition of good acts (weekly)
- Good collegial relationships between 2 programs and admin
- Incremental increase in parent involvement – improved communication pting in to direct from s.c. email
- Facebook acc't for school council
- Bringing parents together across the city (All Boys)
- Just invite parents – ask them personally to s.c.
- Food!!
- Opting in to direct communication from s.c. (email) – format 1st meeting
- Leadership group of students with funding from s.c.
- Changed agenda to do presentations at end of meeting to keep parents present
- Update from principal at school
- Activities – weekly email from principal – want it directly to individual parents

Challenges

- ELL parents' involvement in s.c.
 - Cultural groups
- Lack of familiarity with public education and school council role
- Engagement of larger grp. Of parents
- Coordinated messages/info from school cluster (elem → middle school)
- School office admin staff that say “no” to school council members (sometimes principal too)
- Understanding school culture and its unique community
- Hard to initiate change at s.c. and intimidated to suggest differently
- Understanding of role of volunteers at s.c. level
- Amount of time
 - Fundraising amount and responsibility