

Regional School Council

Strengths, Weaknesses, Change

(Discussion from Regional School Council Meeting January 21, 2013)

Category	Strengths	Weaknesses	Change
Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Great for sharing information ⇒ Working on common goals ⇒ Knowing / learning issues in other schools ⇒ Getting to know other staff, parents, trustees ⇒ Parents, Admin, Central Office meet together, get to know who they are, ask questions ⇒ Chance to view alternate perspectives ⇒ Initiatives brought forth have been great; e.g. Student Council Regional ⇒ Variety of roles at the table ⇒ Can put forward group resolutions at ASCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Agenda item submission process - not a lot generates from grass roots ⇒ Overlap with discussion items at school council ⇒ Info given from board hard to give it all to school council ⇒ Because our division is wide spread and diverse there may not be time or ability to address all individual school needs ⇒ Look at bringing in more outside view-points – what is the rest of the world doing? ⇒ Not a lot of resolutions voted on ⇒ Not enough time to discuss with other parents ⇒ Too many downloading of things to take to my parent council (we only get a one hour meeting per month) ⇒ Sometimes I feel the parents are asked to view charts, graphs, statistics and solve problems that are maybe more educationally related ⇒ Too much conversation at the audience ⇒ Not including or allowing informal conversation time ⇒ Parents and individual schools should be providing input in the construction of the agenda. ⇒ Parents should influence the topics and content covered. ⇒ It becomes more of a grass roots way to develop on agenda – not from the board ⇒ Need a process of chairs to make additions to agenda or provide opportunity for input ⇒ Input into agenda by schools – what want to know 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Design agendas to meet existing mandate ⇒ More school council input into the creation of the agenda -from discussions ⇒ Just bantering ⇒ More time for input from school council chairs need time for chairs just to talk and share. This never happens. ⇒ Decrease the amount of items on the agenda identify specific items for different level of councils and stick with it. ie. avoid repetition wherever possible ⇒ Please don't ask for lots of input in November when there's no school council meeting scheduled in December ⇒ Length of meeting too long -more engaging topics ⇒ Make the discussions even more relevant to parents' needs ⇒ Find a way to encourage the involvement and enthusiasm of more parents ⇒ Making it relevant to the diversity of the group time of meetings can be a challenge to keep my mind focused ⇒ Focus more on sharing best practices and issues between individual school councils in meetings. Make that the top agenda activity
Attendance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ 3 meetings a year, missing one can leave big voids ⇒ Geography – some have to travel great distances to go to meetings - VC Helps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Representative Council? ⇒ More parents, fewer administrators

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Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Well thought out ⇒ Good representation ⇒ Roles are outlined and make sense ⇒ Voting procedures are strong ⇒ Background ⇒ Mission ⇒ Understanding of budgets better & where funds are spent ⇒ Free dinner 3 times a year ⇒ Provides sense of community ⇒ Less segmented ⇒ School Councils can learn what's happening at regional office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Continuity of people ⇒ A practical fact: School Council members change every year or two years. ⇒ How to build a team that knows what is going on? And can be productive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Include community representatives ⇒ I would like to see FNMI and Community rep included in membership ⇒ Bring in some topic that involves the community ⇒ FNMI ⇒ Relevance to everyone.
Meetings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Allow for more interaction between parents ⇒ Insuring student representation in membership ⇒ Open the floor with time limit for comments ⇒ If a chairperson not present the forum is not about council agenda, tends to be a bragging discussion ⇒ As per the staff not knowing when to speak when talking about graphs pertaining to academic results...not knowing where they can talk about results because they deal with the results and information taking... ⇒ Clusters school by grade/need/interest ⇒ VC- with this large of forum not effective ⇒ VC or January meeting – weather issues a concern also ⇒ Meetings too long - too many items on agenda ⇒ Not sure a 3 meeting yearly system provides a lot of inter school collaboration ⇒ Give each speaker a time limit ⇒ Facilitating meetings that are conducive to sharing and productive ⇒ Clear goals and work plans ⇒ Parents need to take on leadership in Regional council ⇒ 15-30 minutes of “free time” to have question-answer time between council chairs (new-old) ⇒ Not a lot of opportunity for sharing – when we did share it was what was going on in the whole school instead of school council. Would need a specific format. 	

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Leadership			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ parent leadership ⇒ Regional ⇒ Co-facilitation with parent chair
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Common message & discussion throughout division, all schools hear one message ⇒ P.D. for School Council Chairs ⇒ To bring forth Council's comments and concerns, ie) what works at one ⇒ Support new/old ideas, not reinvent the wheel ⇒ Know faces to names ⇒ Cross reference to the admin group ⇒ Accountability ⇒ Communicate the same message to all groups Student Council involvement ⇒ Opportunity for parents to meet trustees and senior admin ⇒ Opportunity for common understanding of topics like instructional fees ⇒ Supports across the division ⇒ Deepens parents understanding of divisional schools ⇒ Board learns from schools ⇒ Broad base of participants ⇒ Allows board members a broader perspective issues 		
Mandate			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Roles and responsibilities ⇒ More parent driven ⇒ More sharing between schools and less sharing of administrative information ⇒ What is the mandate of the RSC? sharing? information? modeling for Regional Student Council? Maybe we should follow the student lead and be an action group to better our community and LRSD ⇒ Look at mandate and ask if RSC is really meeting the mandate i.e. facilitate sharing (how much sharing is really done?) ⇒ Clarify the purpose of RSC
Mentorship			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Chairs ⇒ Some years have a lot of turnover of the School Council chair position and some schools have a new person as chair frequently. Other school Council chairs have been involved in their position for many years. I think that more time could have been taken to provide mentorship of new people

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Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Modeling of School Council through Regional Council ⇒ Networking beyond your own school ⇒ Networking with the whole School Council ⇒ Jurisdictional Networking 		
Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Hearing things that are happening in other schools ⇒ Networking opportunities ⇒ Sharing among schools ⇒ Issues that other councils deal with ⇒ Working together to communicate successes & failures ⇒ Together parents, staff, trustees: bring together new ideas ⇒ Lots of celebrations ⇒ Sharing of info ⇒ Platform to share best practices ⇒ Meeting as a regional council is great for support and idea sharing. It helps us feel more as a community across the division ⇒ All things mentioned in the mission (terms of reference) although at this time I feel that sharing of relevant information is most common as an agenda item. Gathering or collecting feedback/input is also very valuable ⇒ Sharing across the division ⇒ Clearly defined roles and responsibilities ⇒ Sharing b/w school councils Supporting each other ⇒ Advocates for education ⇒ Accountability ⇒ Sharing concerns across the division ⇒ Sharing concerns and solutions ⇒ Getting together with people who have similar problems, possible solutions and the possibility of sharing those (eg. When we were changing to a synchronized schedule, we all had similar fears ⇒ Information sharing between councils ⇒ Share best practices ⇒ It is a great opportunity to build connections b/w school councils. ⇒ Inform all parties about what is taking place throughout the division. ⇒ It is a great time to celebrate successes and progress. ⇒ Provides a perfect venue for enacting change on a large scale. 		

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VC			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ use VC technology more ⇒ On site meetings ⇒ Not having to travel ⇒ On site VC, all the time ⇒ Mid-winter VC option ⇒ Long meetings, late night - prefer VC ⇒ More VC meetings to cut down on travel time ⇒ VC does not allow parents to collaborate in an authentic way ⇒ 1.5 hour meeting ⇒ VC is not a great discussion enhancer
Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Nice to see more parents voice ⇒ Opportunity for input from all schools and senior staff, board. ⇒ Other schools have student voice Diversity Voice - however need more 		
Next Steps		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Regional Council sometimes seems to be the middle man: Discussion things at that meeting, then discussion it AGAIN at own School Council ⇒ Communication, may be a better way to communicate, collaboration site ⇒ More table talks with school councils ⇒ Info not pertaining to all council groups i.e. More about high school not relevant to elementary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Remember to facilitate in a way that is engaging for parents, students and staff and that provides an opportunity to hear parent and student voices, in particular ⇒ Make a high light communication ⇒ One page of the RSC meeting which can be used to share in the school council meeting ⇒ There have been times when admin was asked to not add input. Then we should only put items on the agenda with all participating