

School Council Annual Reports – Secondary

2004-2005 System Summary

Number of Reports received	23/27
The average number of school council meetings during the 2004-2005 school year was	8
In almost all cases the parent members of school council were selected by acclamation.	

1. In what ways was your school council *involved in developing or revising the School Plan for Continuous Improvement during the past school year:*

- Consultation (10)
- Opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations (9)
- Explanation and discussion of SPCI (8)
- Advisory capacity in reviewing school activities (2)
- School Council members given opportunity to participate in school committees (2)
- Working with Feeder School Councils (1)

2. What ways has your school council *supported the implementation of priorities and goals set out in the School Plan for Continuous Improvement?*

- Opportunities for input and suggestions (6)
- Advisory capacity/membership on committees on specific school initiatives (6)
- Providing information to parents on variety of topics (3)
- Completing surveys (2)
- Funding of specific initiatives (2)
- Parental presentations to parents/feeder schools (2)
- Financial support for forums/seminars for school community (1)
- Membership on subcommittees (1)

3. Identify documents developed or revised by your school council this year:

- Administrator Profile (19)
- Annual Plan/Priorities (14)
- Council Website (8)
- Constitution and ByLaws (8)
- Code of Behaviour (7)
- School Profile (7)
- Homework Policy (5)
- Dress Code (2)

Other: A&E Policy, Transition, Mathematics Initiative, Character Education, Dress Code, Literacy, Cell Phone and Gambling Policies

4. Identify your council's participation in the following activities:

School council forums (16) Board arranged PD (9)

Family of schools meetings (13) Networking sessions (6)

Other activities include attendance at Quest, School Council Conference and attending the Board Meeting for Applause.

5. Identify successful activities in which the council has been engaged this year, as well as activities that have challenged the council this year.

Successes

60% of secondary school councils noted consultation and input into school policy development and review as being successful, with 45% noting an increase in parental and community support of school activities and programs. 20% saw increased attendance at council meetings.

35% held successful fundraising events, primarily through voluntary donations and 25% noted increased collaboration.

20% supported literacy initiatives, including a Reluctant Readers program and additional library resources. Supports for transition to secondary school were noted by 15% of respondents.

A detailed breakdown of responses is provided in Appendix A of the system report.

Challenges

58% of councils reported attracting and maintaining school council members as their biggest challenge with 42% of secondary councils reporting difficulties with communication and collaboration.

Fundraising presented difficulties for 16% of schools and 11% each noted the lack of volunteers, need for improvements to the school site and more extra curricular activities.

A detailed breakdown of responses is provided in Appendix B of the system report.

6. How have you sought input from parents and the school community?

- Dialogue with/membership on school committees (9)
- Email communication (9)
- Participation at parents' nights/Registration/Open House (9)
- Newsletters/bulletins (7)
- School council meetings (5)
- School message board (2)
- Synervoice messages (3)
- focus groups (2)
- coffee meetings (2)
- Fundraising (1)
- Student Awards (1)
- Surveys

7. In what activities has the council engaged to assist parents in more effectively supporting their children's learning?

- Guest speakers (9)
- Providing resources/information to parents (5)
- Parenting programs (2)
- Fundraising (3)
- Website (3)
- Student speakers (1)
- Parenting Centres (1)
- Raising awareness of programs in the community (2)
- Meeting with Department Heads to discuss various issues (1)
- Drug Awareness (1)
- Advocacy for Literacy (1)
- Mission, Vision and Values (1)

8. List two potential objectives/priorities for next year's school council

- Increase parental involvement (11)
- Meetings/Dialogue with feeder schools re transition (3)
- Fundraising (2)
- Participation in sub-committees (2)
- Support SPCI priorities (2)
- Meet with department heads (1)
- Mathematics initiative (1)
- At Risk initiative (1)
- Provide information/conduct meetings in different languages (1)
- School dress code (1)
- Administrator profile (1)
- Improvement of School Site (2)

9. What strategies has your council used to support a smooth transition from this year's council to the next?

- Communication/meetings with new members (10)
- Encourage consistency in membership (9)
- Past members assist new members (3)
- Attend Board orientation sessions (2)
- Review school activities and events (1)
- Provide information to Grade 8 feeder school parents (1)
- Support from Administration (1)
- Support from Trustee (1)

10. Was your school involved in fundraising this year?

The majority of secondary school councils did **not** participate in fundraising activities.

If yes, please list the types of fundraising activities undertaken:

Fundraising by means of letters to parents requesting donations or a fundraising fee was the most commonly used strategy. Other initiatives included raffles, turkey fundraiser, grocery store receipt incentives and the sale of flowers/plants.

11. What additional support or training would your council like to receive in the next school year?

46% of councils requested additional training and strategies to increase the effectiveness of school councils as areas of needed support.

31% requested the opportunity and financial assistance to attend Board forums and conferences, such as Quest as well as workshops of specific interest.

23% would like the opportunity to collaborate and network with other school councils, including feeder schools, and 15% would welcome guidance on how to increase parental involvement.

A detailed breakdown of responses is provided in Appendix C of the system report.

*“Professional development on major board initiatives and networking with adjacent schools to discuss best practices and directions for future projects”
(Keswick HS)*

“A schedule of events should be established at the beginning of the year so we can attend school council forums.” (Sir William Mulock SS)

12. In which area(s) does your school council feel your school and/or the Board has shown improvement during this school year. Give clear examples to support your statement.

73% of respondents noted improvements in literacy while 40% reported improved communication and consultation. 33% of schools welcomed improvements in music, arts and physical education programs and 20% identified improved relationships with and strong support from school administrators.

A detailed breakdown of responses is provided in Appendix D of the system report.

“Recognition: it is great that the Board is recognizing the contributions of school councils at their Board meetings.” (Keswick HS)

“More transitional support for elementary students entering high school” (Maple HS)

“Communication to parents using the school newsletter, Carvings, and developing our school website has helped the council improve communication with school families.” (Emily Carr SS)

“Increased number of business partners supporting the Robotics team. Improved EQAO results.” (Alexander Mackenzie HS)

13. In which area(s) does your school council feel your school and/or the Board needs improvement? Give clear examples and suggestions.

40% of school councils indicated that improvements were needed in communicating to parents and increased interaction and communication between school councils and the Board.

Improvements to school site were cited by 33% of schools and another 33% would like increased collaboration and parental participation in school events and activities. 27% requested additional funding for literacy and numeracy resources and initiatives.

A detailed breakdown of responses is provided in Appendix E of the system report.

“Our main challenge has always been ‘communication’. Perhaps other schools have experienced greater success in this area and could share some of their strategies with us.” (King City SS)

“Board should allow community input prior to making changes that affect the students.” (Markville SS)

“Thornhill SS is in dire need of infrastructure funding in order to bring the school to the same standards as other schools within the Board.” (Thornhill SS)

“Absences of teachers from the school for board or school sanctioned reasons, with their replacement by substitute teachers. This is not working. Students are not motivated to attend when substitutes are in place. We need to find alternatives to this process and allow teachers to be off when appropriate and to continue to provide students with equally or better quality of relevant learning during the regular teacher’s absence.” (Westmount CI)