

10 TIPS FOR FOSTERING POSITIVE SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR/PRINCIPAL RELATIONS

1. At meetings, focus on discussion items that positively impact the success of ALL students in the school (e.g., items that are embedded within the School Improvement Plan).
2. Understand the role that each partner plays in the relationship (e.g., principal leads school while the School Council, under the leadership of the School Council Chair, advises the principal on issues that impact student achievement).
3. Build a trusting relationship.
4. Ensure there is a “no surprises” policy in place for both partners.
5. Build the School Council meeting agenda together.
6. Respect each other’s time limitations.
7. Have a plan in place to deal with single issue individuals who may try to derail a meeting to ensure that everyone’s dignity is maintained and the meeting can proceed in a productive manner.
8. Ensure that there is an understanding that individual student, parent, teacher concerns are not discussed at School Council meetings. Such concerns should be directed back to the principal to be dealt with privately.
9. Agree to disagree from time to time and avoid the temptation of “parking lot discussions.”
10. Ensure that there is a constitution or set of by-laws in place but realize that a rigid approach to the structure of meetings often discourages parents and guardians from attending these meetings. Meetings should be inviting so that many parents can be engaged for the benefit of ALL students within the school.

*** A healthy Principal / School Council Chair relationship is a key factor in the effective functioning of any school.**