

SP HO2: The role of the school council president

Scenario	Considerations / response
<p>Scenario 1:</p> <p>Your school council meeting is about to start. Your membership according to the council Ministerial Order 1280 Constitution of Government School Councils is 14 (seven parent members, four school employee members including the principal, and three community members). Two of your parent members are department employees at other schools and one community position remains unfilled. Present at tonight's meeting are the principal, three teachers, two community members (including the president) and four parents, one of whom is a department employee. Do you have a quorum?</p>	<p>Response:</p> <p>Your council must have at least half the members currently holding office present and non-Department members must be in the majority. Parent members who work for the Department elsewhere are considered Department members for the purpose of a quorum.</p> <p>There are 10 members present out of 13 current members, so the total numbers are satisfactory for a quorum.</p> <p>However, of the 10 members present, 5 are employed by the Department (the principal, 3 teachers and 1 parent). This means that the non-department members are NOT in the majority.</p> <p>There is no quorum.</p>
<p>Scenario 2:</p> <p>Your school council has been considering a contentious issue for several meetings. Finally, a motion has been put and the voting sees five votes for and five against. As president and chair, your vote went for the affirmative. Now what do you do?</p>	<p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the event of a tied vote, the chairperson gets a casting vote, even if they have already voted • The chair's casting vote can be different to their original vote • Given the closeness of the vote, council might consider developing a communication strategy for how this decision is to be communicated outside of council • Remind the council that the decisions made by council must be those of the group rather than of an individual. Council members contribute their individual perspectives to discussions and thereby assist the council to come to an informed decision.

Scenario 3:

A school councillor feels disgruntled because they have not been selected as a parent helper for their child's upcoming school camp. They approach you just prior to the Council meeting and state they would like the matter (how parent helpers on camps and excursions are selected) discussed at the meeting.

Response:

- Explain to the councillor that whilst you understand their disappointment, this is not a school council issue but an operational issue and therefore the responsibility of the Leadership Team.
- Remind the councillor of the correct process for raising agenda items.
- You might also want to consider asking the principal to advise council (at a future meeting) of how the parent helper selection process works whilst stressing that council do not get to set the process – rather, in the spirit of open communication and transparency, the processes is being shared.