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Welcome

Thank you for volunteering to serve on the governing body of Sunshine Beach State High School. Your work and ours will strengthen the future development of our school.

Sunshine Beach State High School has served its community for over 23 years. In this time, it has grown with current best practice and a focus on delivering to the needs and desires of our student community.

The partnerships among parents, staff, students, past students and community are potentially a source of great benefit for our students. The School Council brings these groups together around a common purpose focused on improving student learning outcomes. Our aim is to prepare our students for their world of life-long learning and work - to create their foundation of globally aware citizens, who are able to communicate, collaborate and create into their adult lives.

Our Council will work with a focus on the future, not on the past. What opportunities can we create that better enable best practice learning for our students. We will need to combine “head, heart and hand” as we work forward for our students.

As we move into the next phase of SBSHS in 2016, we look forward to our School Council supporting our strategic direction and guiding our values of PRIDE - Purpose, Respect, Innovation, Diligence and Enthusiasm.

Leanne Jensen-Steele
Principal
Introduction

The Sunshine Beach State High School Council is the custodian of the direction and reputation of Sunshine Beach High. It is a forum that plans and reviews the school’s progress towards its vision.

The Council is constituted to improve student learning outcomes by helping to guide the strategic direction of the school.

To carry out this governance role, the Council needs to:
- be well informed about the school;
- share a vision for the school;
- plan to develop strategic initiatives;
- communicate effectively with the school;
- monitor the implementation of school policies and plans;
- provide advice to the principal on strategic matters.

This Policy Manual provides Councillors with information and ideas which will help the Council fulfil its constitutional role.

The first section expands on the Council’s business, as described in the constitution, with the aim of helping the Council function effectively.

The second section brings together the key documents that affect the Council and contains advice on the structural issues that influence the effective running of the Council.
Purpose, Respect, Innovation, Diligence and Enthusiasm

Empower life long learners through a challenging and supportive school community.
A Quick Guide to the School Council

The School Council has four key functions for guiding the strategic direction of the school:

1. **Monitoring** the strategic direction
2. **Approving** plans and policies of the school of a **strategic** nature and other documents affecting strategic matters, including an annual estimate of revenue and expenditure for the school.
3. **Monitoring** the implementation of the plans, policies and other documents **mentioned above**
4. **Advising** the school’s principal about **strategic** matters.

The School Council must perform its functions in a way that achieves the best learning outcomes for students.

The School Council may not:

1. Interfere with the management by the school’s principal of the day-to-day operations of the school and its curriculum.
2. Make operational decisions about the use of teaching or learning resources at the school
3. Make decisions about the individual teaching style to be used
4. Make a decision that is contrary to the law or written policy of the department
5. Have control of funds
6. Enter into contracts
7. Acquire, hold, dispose of or deal with property
8. Sue or be sued.
9. Form sub-committees.

The School Council is not part of the department, is not a body corporate and does not have a separate legal identity. The School Council is a public entity and members are public officials of this entity.

Our School Council comprises:

- Two official members: The Principal and the P&C President
- Two elected parent members - must be parents of current students
- Two elected staff members - at least one teaching and one non-teaching staff member
- Two students
- Two student leader members

The School Council may invite non-voting observers to any meeting.

The terms of office are determined by the council and may be no more than two years. It is possible to be re-elected or re-appointed for further terms of service.

The School Council elects one of the members to be the chair. Students and the Principal are not eligible. The School Council elects one of the members to be the secretary.

Council members must disclose any direct or indirect personal or financial interest in any matter being considered by the Council.

The School Council must meet twice each semester. The quorum for each meeting is two-thirds of the number of members, that is, nine. Only the Principal may attend by proxy.

Questions are decided by a majority vote. The Chairperson has the casting vote. A member abstaining from the vote is counted as a negative vote.

Minutes contain attendance, apologies & the names of those voting against a question.

The Council’s Constitution contains further detail about the requirements of a Council.
# School Council Work Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Responsibility to submit</th>
<th>Term 1</th>
<th>Term 2</th>
<th>Term 3</th>
<th>Term 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the constitution</td>
<td>Chair/Principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Every 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the Council’s governance/effectiveness including council documents</td>
<td>Chair/Principal</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure membership is current and capable of undertaking all of the required functions</td>
<td>Chair/Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Available</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Opinion Surveys</td>
<td>EQ</td>
<td>EQ</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Term Student Reporting Data</td>
<td>Term 4</td>
<td>Term 1</td>
<td>Term 2</td>
<td>Term 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 12 Graduating Data</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment Data</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td></td>
<td>Estimates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Destination Data</td>
<td>QTAC</td>
<td>MySchool</td>
<td>Next Step</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NAPLAN data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annual results</td>
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<tr>
<td>Headline Indicators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive and discuss the School Performance Report</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Receive, consider and approve the Four Year Strategic Plan</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Every 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve update to Strategic Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Receive Annual Report</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Plans</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive, discuss and approve AIP</td>
<td>School Exec</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Receive and discuss report of progress of AIP</td>
<td>School Exec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Receive and discuss data re student achievement</td>
<td>School Exec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review policies as per Policy schedule</td>
<td>School Exec</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Learning for the Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Induction of new members</td>
<td>Chair/Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal’s Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair receives report on Principal’s Performance Review</td>
<td>Principal</td>
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</table>
### Policy & Planning Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy/Plan</th>
<th>Expected Life</th>
<th>Next Review Point</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>School Philosophy</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Roll forward annually</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Implementation Plan</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>October for February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>End of June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible Behaviour Plan</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment Management Plan</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Policy, incl. Assessment</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior School Academic Policy</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun Safety Guidelines</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform Policy</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Update as Uniform Committee recommends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning Plan</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT Strategy</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Update annually</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Plan</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Plan</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Update annually</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Secondary Plan</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Plan</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Plan</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Plan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>T&amp;L Plan (NPDL, ASOT)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior School Action Plan</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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School Philosophy
Strategic Plan
Annual Improvement Plan
Annual Report
 Responsible Behaviour Plan
Enrolment Management Plan
Learning Policy, incl. Assessment
Senior School Academic Policy
 Sun Safety Guidelines
Professional Learning Plan
ICT Strategy
Student Leadership Framework
Curriculum Plan
Workforce Plan
Junior Secondary Plan
Data Plan
Workforce Plan
Facilities Plan
T&L Plan
Senior School Action Plan
1. **Guidelines for the functioning of the Council**

A process of collecting data and information followed by strategic planning and subsequent monitoring of implementation is required for the Council to achieve its long term goals.

The structured operating framework shown here is designed to:

- Enable all members to quickly engage in the important issues
- Align with the structures of the Department of Education and Training
- Ensure that students, staff and parents have clarity about how to engage with the Council
- Ensure that the strategic plan is ready to implement on time
- Align the budget and school strategic process to support the strategic plan

A cyclic annual approach which involves a clear focus for the major item of business for each of the Council’s four meetings is:

The two major documents produced by the Council are:

- The School Performance Report that reviews the data on school performance for the previous year. This document is the product of the Council’s monitoring function - it informs the School Annual Report published by the Principal in June.

- The Annual Strategic Plan Update provides the focus of the Council’s responsibility to provide strategic leadership for the school and forms the basis of the School’s quadrennial Strategic Plan. This update informs the Annual Implementation Plan for the coming year.
1.1. Understanding the School Environment

This focus will facilitate the new Council becoming well informed about the school. Its setting and needs can be articulated in two sections:

Focus One: Reviewing School Performance

Purpose: A Well-Informed Council

The purpose of this focus is to ensure that Council understands the school’s strengths and weaknesses.

Background:

The school is a complex environment in which an extraordinary amount of information is produced and communicated. Council needs to monitor this information in ways that satisfy the needs of all members of the school community.

Data for the review will include:

- School Opinion Survey data
- Student academic results
- Enrolment & Demographic data
- Destination data
- Report on School Improvement Plan
- Report on other School activities

Actions and Accountabilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collate and present the Annual School Performance Report</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present the School’s Annual Implementation Plan</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present the School’s Annual Budget and Financial Statements</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure all receive information at least one week prior to the meeting</td>
<td>Council Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate open discussion and identification of areas of focus</td>
<td>Council Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish Report - “The School Performance Review”</td>
<td>Council Secretary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1.2. Developing the Strategic Plan

Setting strategic priorities lies at the heart of the responsibilities of the Council and will involve a process of gathering information about potential goals and consultation about implications and priorities.

**Focus Two: Analysing and Consulting to Frame Strategic Goals**

**Purpose:** A Knowledgeable Council

The purpose of this focus is to ensure that Council takes account of all factors that impact on the school’s performance.

**Background:**

The school is part of a broader environment. It is part of a local community. It is part of an education sector. It is subject to a structure of policies and governance at local, state and national levels. It also is responsible for understanding the global environment within which its students will become future leaders. Council needs to not only understand these environments and trends, it also needs to understand educational research and practice, ensuring that students at Maroochy High benefit from professional support.

**Actions and Accountabilities:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present a summary of term 1 student data</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present a report on the progress of the school’s AIP</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare updated policies for review as per schedule</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare an analysis of local community issues</td>
<td>Council Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare an analysis of sectoral and educational issues</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare analysis of broader global trends</td>
<td>Council Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite appropriate staff, student, parent and community leaders to present to the Council</td>
<td>Principal/Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure all receive information at least one week prior to the meeting</td>
<td>Council Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate open discussion and identification of trends and impacts</td>
<td>Council Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish working groups to develop options proposals</td>
<td>Chair/Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report - Areas for Development</td>
<td>Council Secretary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3. **Deciding Goals and Initiatives**

The third step in the process is to set the key goals and strategic initiatives. This work updates the strategic plan annually and is different to the quadrennial school review that takes a more overarching look at school direction. These decisions are taken in time for the school to develop implementation plans for the following year.

**Focus Three: Deciding and Communicating Goals and Initiatives**

**Purpose:** A Decisive and Influential Council

The purpose of this focus is to ensure that the Council develops and communicates a strategic plan for the subsequent year and updates its longer term goals.

**Actions and Accountabilities:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present a summary of term 2 student data and the next step survey</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present the annual report</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare updated policies for review as per schedule</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present options proposals</td>
<td>Working Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure all receive information at least one week prior to meetings</td>
<td>Council secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate open discussion and identification of areas of focus</td>
<td>Council Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the strategic goals, consequent initiatives &amp; budget parameters</td>
<td>Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish Draft Report - Updated Strategic Plan &amp; Budget parameters</td>
<td>Council Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare professional learning activity for Council</td>
<td>Council member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4. **Implementation, Review and Evaluation**

The final step of the process involves articulation of the initiatives into the School’s documents. At the same time the Council needs to review its policies and procedures and evaluate its own performance.

**Focus Four: Monitoring Implementation**

**Purpose:** A Practical Council

The purpose of this focus is to ensure that the Council assists with and monitors the implementation of the strategic plan and performs on its capabilities and performance.

**Actions and Accountabilities:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present a summary of term 3 student data and NAPLAN data</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present a report on the progress of the school’s AIP</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare updated policies for review as per schedule</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present draft Updated Strategic Plan</td>
<td>Council chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present draft Annual Implementation Plan</td>
<td>School Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review the Council Handbook for the following year</td>
<td>Council Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council self evaluation</td>
<td>Council Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure all receive information at least 1 week prior to the meeting</td>
<td>Council Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate open discussion and identification of areas of focus</td>
<td>Council Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publish Final Updated Strategic Plan</td>
<td>Council Secretary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4. Meeting Schedule

The following meeting schedule is suggested to provide the Council with a basis for planning:

Meeting Term One
- Councillor induction and training
- Reviewing School Performance

Meeting Term Two
- Analysing and Consulting to frame Strategic Goals

Meeting Term Three
- Deciding and Communicating Goals and Initiatives

Meeting Term Four
- Monitoring Implementation
- Reviewing Council policies and practices
- Performing the Council self-evaluation

1.5. Decision making

The Council focuses on “Ends” decisions rather than “Means” decisions. ‘Ends’ decisions are best understood as focusing on the results the school wants to achieve in major strategic areas. These include priority areas from the system’s strategic plan, requirements set by the Department as well as key areas of the school’s functions. ‘Means’ decisions are those which are related to how results are to be achieved. Typically these are operational decisions e.g. teacher recruitment and performance, budget allocations, use of facilities and resources, student welfare, teaching style, extra-curricular activities, professional development of staff and communication systems.

The Council works collaboratively and on the basis of consensus, where possible. Representatives of the stakeholder groups operate as members of the Council first and foremost providing the wisdom of their unique position, rather than taking a sectarian interest in proceedings. While the Principal is a member of the Council and operates collaboratively, the Council is obliged to make policy decisions only after considering the Principal’s recommendations.

It is a requirement that decisions about the questions raised are made by majority vote. Once made, a Council decision is binding on all Council members whose support for the decision is assumed at all times, until such time as amendments or changes are made.

Decisions are taken at each of the stages in the cyclical planning approach:
### 1.6. Communication

In addition to regular reports from the Council Chair to the school community via the newsletter, the Parent Representatives to the P&C Association and the Principal, the Student Representative to the student body and Staff Representative to Staff, the regular forms of communication relate to the stages in the cyclical planning approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Communication Inward</th>
<th>Communication Outward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1: Reviewing school performance | • Data sources  
• Induction/Training package | • School Performance Review  
• Approved AIP & Budget |
| 2: Analysing & consulting to frame strategic goals | • Department requirements  
• Educational research  
• Local community trend  
• Global/ futures trends  
• Presentations from leaders  
• Data sources  
• AIP progress report | • Collated information for strategic plan working groups  
• Feedback to Executive, HODs, P&C Executive & Sub-committee chairs about direction and information gaps |
| 3: Deciding & communicating goals and initiatives | • Options proposals from working groups  
• Data sources | • Proposed priorities and projects for next year including a roll forward of the Strategic Plan  
• Budget parameters for HOD planning. |
| 4: Monitoring implementation | • Data sources  
• AIP progress report  
• Draft updated Strategic Plan | • Council self-review  
• Updated Council Policy Manual  
• Draft of AIP |

Whilst Council members will communicate broadly to be knowledgeable contributors, the Council’s formal relationships with the school or school staff are through the Principal.
1.7. Appraisal of the Principal

Introduction:

At Sunshine Beach SHS there are high expectations of the performance of all staff. In addition, the school has set out a challenging vision for the future. As it is, the roles of staff are increasingly complex. The Principal’s role is complex and demanding. To this end, the identification of particular development needs for knowledge, skills and attitudes is fundamental to the leadership growth and personal development of Principals. A performance appraisal process provides the means to achieve this in a productive way for both the school and the Principal.

Purpose:

The primary purpose of the appraisal is to facilitate the ongoing improvement of the Principal and the school. For the Principal it provides information for use in professional and personal development and for career planning. For the Council it provides an opportunity to work more effectively and efficiently with the Principal toward the achievement of their mutual objectives. For the school it provides a basis for the improvement of educational programs.

There are elements of both appraisal (a process for development) and review (a process for accountability) in the appraisal process at Sunshine Beach SHS. However, the focus is more heavily weighted on the former but with a view providing the greatest chance of deep learning by having little tension between the two elements.

In particular, the purpose is:

- provide professional challenge for and feedback to the Principal;
- align professional performance with Departmental and school strategic directions;
- promote growth and development for the Principal and the Council;
- assist the Principal in the pursuit of professional goals.

Principles:

The Principal is currently directly supervised by the Deputy Director-General. However, the Developing Performance Planning process is enhanced by the involvement of the School Council Chair. A fundamental principle is that the Principal and Council Chair operate in partnership during all aspects of the appraisal process. The appraisal will therefore be consultative and cooperative. To ensure its integrity, the appraisal will be based on procedures and criteria known and agreed by the Principal and Council. It will be tailored to the school’s context, the Principal’s responsibilities and the school’s goals. The Principal retains control over the direction and pace of his/her professional development.

- An effective school correlates closely to the role of school-based administrators and the quality of the leadership they provide.
- Appropriate appraisal processes contribute to the improvement of school leaders and thereby the effectiveness of the school.
- Principals are accountable for their performance.
- Appraisal is performance based, objective and include local performance expectations.
- Appraisal process will respect the dignity of all participants.
- The appraisal process will closely align with the Principal’s job functions and the school’s core business.
- The appraisal system will have some flexibility in design.
- The appraisal system will have the results addressed in some way matching the purpose.
Actions and Accountabilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine process for the year’s appraisal, consulting with the Council Chair</td>
<td>Principal &amp; DDG in consultation with Council Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare presentation and discussion of the school’s performance - Term 1 Council meeting - see #1 below</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake review process determined by the Education Department - see #2 below</td>
<td>Principal, &amp; DDG in consultation with Council Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek input from the Council Chair in the annual appraisal</td>
<td>Principal</td>
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</table>

1. Annual presentation and discussion of the school’s performance. The Principal presents school performance information to the Council during the meeting based around Policy 1. This is a data rich discussion with explanations of where the school exceeded, did not meet or varied targets and strategies. The Council has the opportunity to discuss this presentation and provide feedback to the Principal. Follow up from this process is a report of the Council’s deliberations in the School’s Performance Review or in direct correspondence with the Principal, as appropriate.

2. The Developing Performance Plan contains some identified areas of focus for the year and the specific plans the Principal has to achieve these goals. The Principal determines means of obtaining feedback on his/her performance. Some of these means may be:

   A. 360° feedback of generic leadership skills package from an accredited provider (this feedback is from a supervisor, peers and staff/parents);
   B. 360° feedback (as above) that includes specific questions about aspects of school performance;
   C. an external consultant examines a selected aspect of school performance;
   D. a Principal’s peer/s is/are asked to provide feedback on a selected aspect of school performance;
   E. staff/parents/students are asked to contribute written responses about a particular aspect of school performance or against specific criteria;
   F. direct observation of aspects of performance by selected observers;
   G. other, as agreed by the Principal and the Council Chair.

The Council Chair is consulted in this process.
2. **Councillor Training - Role for the School Council**

Each member of the School Council will have access to induction and training. This training comprises of an orientation and ongoing development. The orientation process may occur in a group or on an individual + mentor basis. The ongoing development is built into the annual cycle of council operations.

The orientation package comprises a visual presentation, information sheets, worksheets and group activities and educational research material.

**Resources:**

- **Visual presentation:** School Council Training
- **Information Sheet 1:** Principles of Good Governance
- **Information Sheet 2:** Roles of Council Members
- **Information Sheet 3:** Making the School Council’s Role Meaningful
- **Information Sheet 4:** Education Thinking for the 21st Century
- **Information Sheet 5:** Team Building/Consensus/Decision Making
- **Information Sheet 6:** Marketing
- **Information Sheet 7:** Strategic Planning
- **Work Sheet 1:** Strategic vs Operational Matters
- **Work Sheet 2:** Deciding which issues belong with the School Council
- **Work Sheet 3:** Thinking Strategically
Sunshine Beach State High School
Information Sheet 1: Principles of Good Governance

Why have a School Council?

The research says that School Councils can:
- improve efficiency in decision-making
- enhance parental support of the school
- increase client satisfaction
- increase the sharing of information
- democratise the workplace
- help teachers feel that they have a greater impact on decision making.

Currently, the research does not provide evidence that School Councils positively impact on teaching and learning. Following principles of good governance will, however, increase effectiveness and may lead to the School Council having a positive influence on student outcomes.

Good Governance Principle 1 - Strategic Orientation

The business of the Council is rightly that of setting strategic directions for the School which elaborate its purposes in clear policies which guide the Principal and the professional staff in leading and managing the schools’ daily work.

Understanding the important distinction between a council's involvement in strategic matters, and the school leader's responsibility for operational matters is critical to good governance. Clear definition of the difference, and therefore of the roles and responsibilities of School Council, School Principal and senior administrators is fundamental to the first principle of good governance. The following descriptions of activities commonly encountered in schools may assist members of the council in determining which matters are the responsibility of the School Council and which are matters for school management. See Worksheet 1.

For some of the activities listed above, it is not immediately apparent in which of the two categories they should be placed. Nevertheless, it is important for a council to take the time to reach agreement with its principal on matters such as these so that all council members come to the council table with common understandings. The following definitions can help by providing the criteria by which activities such as those listed can be distinguished as matters for the attention of a council or matters for attention by the principal and the school staff.

Definitions of Strategic and Operational Matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic</th>
<th>Operational</th>
<th>Operation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• long term: directed towards aims, priorities, future developments</td>
<td>• engaged or involved in operations</td>
<td>• the action or method of working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• able or ready to function</td>
<td>• the act of functioning</td>
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In summary, strategic matters can be defined as long-term and policy directed; operational matters as day-to-day and action oriented.

WHICH ONES ARE STRATEGIC TASKS FOR SCHOOL COUNCILS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic</th>
<th>Operational</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Co-opting a new member to the School Council</td>
<td>• Appointing a new Teacher Aide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Approving a School policy on staff development</td>
<td>• Approving Staff attendance at in-service education activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Revising the School’s Philosophy Statement</td>
<td>• Authorising expenditure on class text book sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Monitoring the School’s test results</td>
<td>• Signing cheques for classroom equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Monitoring information on literacy levels in the School</td>
<td>• Deciding on content of the School’s Annual Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Debating the student behaviour code (Code must be approved by both Council and P&amp;C)</td>
<td>• Initiating policy discussion amongst the School’s staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adding a new goal to the Strategic Plan</td>
<td>• Implementing new student reporting procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Introducing a new Maths Teacher to the School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Producing the School timetable</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Selecting new computing equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Advising on the use of School buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussing views on alcohol sale at School functions (This is a responsibility of the P&amp;C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Signing a construction contract for a new building (P&amp;C)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When council members understand the strategic/operational divide, they are well placed to respond to questions or inquiries from members of the school community. From time to time, parents or community members will raise issues with individual council members at school functions. Council members should quickly be able to identify these matters as either strategic or operational. More often than not, when parents seek out or ‘button hole’ council members, the issues will be operational. A standard reply is available to council members in these cases: ‘You should discuss this matter with the principal and the professional staff at the school.’ Responding in this way ensures that parents are not under any misapprehension about where school leadership authority and responsibility lies. Taking an operational matter ‘on board’ personally creates the impression that the council is in control of the everyday running of the school. It also contributes to an unconscious undermining of the leadership authority of the principal.
Good Governance Principle 2 - Council Power

The power of a Council is exercised when it speaks with one voice which captures the shared wisdom of the members. The second guiding principle concerns the matter of the power of the council and the contribution of council members to the exercise of that power. It is salutary to consider the claim that an individual council member has no power at all. A council member may have knowledge, expertise, opinions and views which are potentially influential at the council table, but as an individual he or she has no power either formally or informally. The power of the council rests in its collective action. Given this assertion, it is important for council members to recognise what might seem like an old-fashioned concept - 'shared wisdom'. This is a concept which recognises that each individual brings a certain amount of knowledge and understanding (wisdom) to the council table. This is a significant aspect of the 'common wealth' of a council.

The Concept of Shared Wisdom
- To each is given a piece of the wisdom.
- To no one is all of the wisdom given.
- We all have different pieces.

It is the final point in this simple summary which emphasises the importance of the voice of each member of a council. When a new matter is being discussed, it behoves the council to listen to the ideas, opinions and concerns of each member with all 'suspending judgement' on the outcome until such time as everyone's views have been canvassed. Suspension of judgement is a companion concept when shared wisdom prevails. To accommodate the concept of shared wisdom in the workings of a council, members must recognise that personal positions will often need to be modified in the light of the views presented around the table. When this is accepted, it is more likely that the council will move together towards an outcome which taps the shared wisdom of all members. In doing so, council members are assisted in the struggle to transcend what might otherwise become the dominance of self-interest.

Good Governance Principle 3 - Council Solidarity

Once made, a Council decision is binding on all Council members whose support for the decision is assumed at all times, until such time as amendments or changes are made.

The third principle concerns what, in political circles, is known as 'cabinet solidarity.' The concept of 'Council Solidarity' is consistent with Principle 2 which recognises that the power of the council is exercised through the members speaking with one voice. If this power is to be sustained, then it is essential that council members abide by and work with decisions that are made by the council as a whole, even though they may retain personal reservations about particular decisions.

There is nothing worse in governance/management relationships than a council member who consciously or unconsciously 'white ants' the decisions of the council. It is a natural human characteristic to talk about and defend personal positions in the face of collective views, but it requires discipline on the part of council members to acknowledge and advocate what are made by the council as a whole, even though they may retain personal reservations about particular decisions.

There is nothing worse in governance/management relationships than a council member who consciously or unconsciously 'white ants' the decisions of the council. It is a natural human characteristic to talk about and defend personal positions in the face of collective views, but it requires discipline on the part of council members to acknowledge and advocate all council decisions, whether recorded by majority vote or consensus. Doing so demonstrates a sense of loyalty to the wisdom of the group, but it also assists in developing trust by management in the actions of council members and the council as a whole.

Other Principles

It is possible to develop a number of other principles to guide the work of a School Council and to help council members make their own unique contributions. However, it is argued here, that any additional principles must build on the three that have been placed in the foreground. Returning to them from time to time, when matters which raise confusion or ambivalence appear on a council's agenda, is a useful exercise for all concerned with good governance. These three principles can also form the basis of a performance review of a council's activities. The perceptions of council members, together with those whom council decisions affect, are useful indicators of the extent to which councils have lived out these principles in carrying out their governance functions.

Some of the following may be considered for inclusion as principles of good governance:
- **Principle 4**: The Central functions of councils are to provide advice to management, to approve policies which define the limits of management actions and to monitor the impact and effects of a policy in practice.
- **Principle 5**: Council members have an obligation to focus their decisions on the interests of the school and to act ethically within the law.
- **Principle 6**: The council agenda should concentrate on discussions on 'ends' decisions and stay out of discussions about the 'means'.
- **Principle 7**: Cohesiveness is maintained in Councils when members have a commitment to consensual decision-making on contentious matters.
- **Principle 8**: A Council should develop policy and procedures to review and evaluate its performance regularly.
- **Principle 9**: Council members have an obligation to ensure that no item designated as confidential will be discussed outside the governing body.
- **Principle 10**: The annual use of strategic and operational planning tools helps councils and principals maintain effective working relationships.
COUNCIL FUNCTIONS

There are three general functions which all councils service. These are:

- to advise the principal and senior administration on any matter brought before it where that advice is considered useful and appropriate;
- to approve particular policies, positions or strategic directions that work in the interests of maintaining and improving the school’s overall performance profile; and
- to monitor the council’s policies, positions and strategic directions to ensure that the school is working in harmony with council intentions.

These three general functions are defined and elaborated in a more precise way below:

| to advise | • recommend  
| advice | • words offered as an opinion or recommendation about future action or behaviour  
| to approve | • confirm  
| to approve of | • pronounce or consider satisfactory  
| to monitor | • maintain regular surveillance  
| | • check  
| | • warn about a situation

Common-sense would suggest that the usual sequence in the application of these functions is advising, then approving, followed by monitoring. The principal of a school should be free to bring any matter to the School Council about which advice is felt helpful. This does not mean to say that the principal need accept that advice. The council provides one source of advice amongst a range of other advisory sources. It should be up to the principal to decide where advice on any operational matter may best be gained. It might be available within the expertise of the school staff, it may be available from other schools or it may be available from consultants of various kinds. There should be no restrictions (other than budgetary) on a principal as to where he or she goes to gather the information a school needs.

However, if the matter is of a strategic nature which may ultimately result in policy, it is likely that the advice of the council will be taken into policy drafting procedures within the school by the principal, so that, through an iterative process, advice is eventually translated into approved policy.

When policy is developed, it should also be clear what kinds of monitoring processes are considered appropriate and at what times they will be called for by the council. Again, it is important that monitoring be carried out within the school by the principal and senior staff so that data are gathered and presented to the council in a form which enables it to make judgements about policy effectiveness.
Introduction

Under the Education Act the reason for the establishment and operation of School Councils is ‘to improve student outcomes’, and ‘the council must carry out its functions in a way that achieves the best learning outcomes for the school’s students.’ This is a very useful benchmark to refer to when making decisions about the role of council members.

If this objective is central to discussion and decision-making at the council table, it will act as an evaluative yardstick against which most council decisions can be assessed. In other words: is what council members do in the best interests of the students (and will it improve student outcomes) a first priority?

Each member of a council, whether elected, co-opted or appointed, by virtue of his or her position in the school, has a responsibility to bring to the council table his or her talents and experiences to work towards the school’s overall mission and purpose. To this end, there is an obligation on council members to gain an intimate knowledge of the school’s history, its educational philosophy and its likely future directions. Council members should be seen as active advocates for the school’s educational philosophy and this advocacy should be carried into discussions at the council table. In short, council members are there to maintain, enhance and extend the school’s capacities in the pursuit of its mission to improve student outcomes.

In particular, for State School Council members their role is to:
- monitor the school’s strategic direction;
- approve plans and policies of a strategic nature, including Partnership Agreements, Annual Operations Plan, Budget and Annual Report;
- approve documents affecting strategic matters e.g the budget;
- monitor the implementation of the plans, schools policies and other documents;
- advise the principal about strategic matters (although the principal is under no obligation to take that advice).

All of the above should be viewed with regard to how they enhance student outcomes.

Sub-committees

The Act states that ‘a School Council must not establish a committee or subcommittee’. This does not, however, preclude the council from establishing Task Groups for a specific purpose, provided such groups have no executive powers. That is, the role of the Task Group is to bring forward advice or recommendations for action to the council in order for the council to carry out its collective decision-making processes. No council member should ever expect to be delegated executive control or executive power that is rightly the business of the council as a whole - and, in fact, this is forbidden under the Act.

The role of the Council Chair

The Act is generally silent about the role of Council Chair except with regard to his/her role in presiding at council meetings and receiving the resignation of a council member. The role of the Chair is, however, critical. First and foremost the Council Chair is appointed to ensure that the council works well and to see that the relationship between the council and its principal is supported and sustained over time. The interface between governance and management through the principal is foundational to good governance. Both chair and principal should enjoy the trust and confidence of each other. Without that trust and confidence, the principal is unlikely to be able to carry out the leadership and management role within the school without feeling undermined.

The Chair must also have harmonious working relationships with other council members. The Chair needs to know each member and to understand the distinctive skills and abilities that each member brings to the council table. Once at that table, the Chair’s role is to draw from each member, his or her views, to provide sufficient opportunity for those views to be discussed and debated with due recognition and respect, before bringing the council to appropriate decision-making points. The Chair also has the responsibility to be the spokesperson for the council when called upon at particular public events and ceremonies where the broad policy and directions for the school should be communicated.

Furthermore, it is the Chair who should be concerned with the internal good health of the council. People undertaking voluntary work should feel that their contributions are valued, that there is personal satisfaction in what they do and that they are able to enjoy the company of the colleagues with whom they work. It is up to the Chair to ensure that there is appropriate recognition of council members’ efforts and that, from time to time, these are celebrated formally or socially.

Some of the specific tasks usually undertaken by the Chair are to:
- set the Council Agenda, in discussion with the principal;
- plan the annual agenda in discussion with the principal;
- plan and keep good order in meetings;
- ensure participation of council members in and between meetings;
- ensure all decisions are understood, and that necessary action is taken;
- ensure that council members receive relevant information in a timely fashion;
- report decisions of the council to parents and staff where appropriate;
- represent the school as appropriate.
The Council Agenda

Dr John Carver (1994), an international authority on organisational governance by councils, particularly those in not-for-profit organisations, suggests that the focus of council agendas is often troublesome. The actions of councils can fall somewhere along a continuum with ‘rubber stamping’ at one end and ‘meddling’ at the other. Carver says that School Councils need to develop clear understandings with the principal about agenda setting and the conduct of meetings. Without clarity there is potential for a see-sawing effect between ‘rubber stamping’ and ‘meddling’ by councils.

The Act is very clear with regard to what School Councils can do and specifically precludes council members from interfering with the principal’s day to day management of the school or making operational decisions about the use of teaching and learning resources in the school and individual teaching styles used. These are not matters for the Council Agenda. It is the school’s strategic priorities, goals and objectives that are the important matters for the council and are central to the agenda. How they are achieved is the responsibility of day-to-day management. In other words, School Councils should concentrate their agendas on ‘ends’ not on ‘means’.

Unfortunately, in Carver’s estimation, too many council activities are directed towards ‘means’ decisions, with little or no effort being directed to the more important and enduring area of ‘ends’. Making ‘ends’ decisions is the hard part of the council agenda but this is where its emphasis should lie.

‘Ends’ Decisions

‘Ends’ decisions are best understood as focusing on the results the school wants to achieve in the major areas of its operations. These include priority areas from the Council’s strategic plan, requirements set by government authorities or by legislation which applies to schools. In addition, ends decisions apply in key areas of the School’s functions such as:

- curriculum;
- student welfare;
- extra-curricular activities;
- finance and funding;
- facilities and resources;
- staffing and staff development; and
- school community communication.

Taken together, strategic directions in these matters combine to form an answer to the key question for a School Council, namely:

What kind of school do we want?

This is the question which provides the umbrella for the ‘ends’ agenda with which the Chair and members of the council should grapple.

‘Means’ Decisions

‘Means’ decisions are those which are related to how results are to be achieved. They involve those in school management, principal and staff, in operational decisions related to the policy areas such as those listed above. It is unlikely that a School Council will be able to avoid including some ‘means’ decisions on its agenda. When this happens, it should be clearly understood by all that the outcomes of discussion are advisory.

It is a useful exercise for a council periodically to examine the minutiae of its agenda to see whether or not that agenda is falling across the line from strategic into operational matters. All should be on the lookout to see that a council remains true to its strategic or ‘ends’ role. It is important also to discuss this issue when new council members take their place at the table. From time to time, matters will arise where the lines between strategic and operational definitions seem somewhat blurred. It is essential at these times for the council and the principal to discuss each issue to ensure that any ambiguities in whose responsibility the matter is, are ironed out at the earliest possible opportunity.
Best practice in School Councils

Chait (1991), an American expert in the area of non-profit governance defines six key competencies for council members (http://www.help4nonprofits.com/). These competencies reinforce the significant contributory role councils can play in the development of their schools. Chait asserts that where councils exhibit these competencies the organisation performs significantly better than those which do not exhibit all competencies.

The competencies defined by Chait are:
1. Contextual - the council understands and takes into account the values and beliefs of the organisation it governs
2. Educational - the council ensures that members are well informed about the organisation, the profession, the council's role, responsibilities and performance
3. Interpersonal - the council nurtures the development of members as a group and fosters a sense of cohesion
4. Analytical - the council recognises complexities in the issues it faces and draws upon different perspectives to find appropriate solutions
5. Political - the council accepts the need to develop healthy relationships with key constituencies
6. Strategic - the council helps ensure a strategic approach to the organisation's future

Working with the school community

Members of your school community can be the council's chief supporters. This is why it is critical that councils work well with their communities. Some things council's should consider:

1. Take the time to find out some factual information about the school community:
   · do students of the school all come from the local area;
   · what are the demographics of the school's catchment areas (link to ABS);
   · does the school have figures on students with learning difficulties/ disabilities/ giftedness;
   · what is the unemployment level in the local area;
   · does the council understand the aspirations of students - university, TAFE, work;
   · are there parents with particular expertise who can assist the school;
   · what do community members (parents, students, business people etc) think are the best things about the school;
   · which aspects of the school need to be developed?
2. Using information collated from questions about the above, council members can develop a profile of the community to assist them in decision-making.
3. Listen, listen, listen - actively seek feedback from the community before and after changes are made. This is a very different matter from listening to individual complaints (these are the province of the principal). Always emphasise that the council is looking for constructive input and that the views of the community are valued.
4. Remind people that, although their contributions are valued, the council cannot always represent the views of every individual. Although the council's role is to improve education outcomes for all children in the school, sometimes the good of one child may have to be balanced against the good of all when resources are limited.
5. Communicate - this is not just a matter of disseminating information, the aim is to change behaviour. Communicate in a way that enables the community to understand the reasons for decisions.
6. Communicate the council's priorities - it is very easy to be distracted by community members wanting their own particular issue dealt with immediately. If the matter is urgent then priorities may need to change; if it is not stick to the priorities that have already been determined.
7. Encourage community members to use their energies in a constructive way - how can they positively assist the school;
   do they have particular areas of expertise which the council can use;
   can links be formed with community organisations so they have contact with school on a regular basis?
8. Regularly invite parents and other local identities into the school to present prizes, attend assemblies and be guest speakers. The more that they see the school in operation, the better advocates they will be.
9. Work hand in hand with the P&C Association. The P&C is the chief representative of the parent body and therefore has access to the views, concerns and expertise of people who have the best interests of their children, and the school, at heart. It is an excellent source of feedback to the School Council.

Networking

One of the most relevant and powerful ways to advance an organisation is through networking. Here are some networking ideas:
- Council chairs can contact each other for advice/discussion. Councils themselves are the best source of information about what works and doesn't work. Council chairs can access other councils to get best practice examples of running meetings, strategic planning, working with your P&C Association and so on.
- Council members can participate in a 'chat' group. Councils can discuss how they have dealt with difficult issues, give examples of how they have made the council role more relevant and describe examples of effective council practice.
The School Council and the Parents and Citizens Association

The School Council and the Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) both have important roles to play in the school.

- The P&C Association is predominantly an advisory body, although it does have responsibility for approving the school budget. In its advisory role, the P&C brings matters related to student welfare to the attention of the principal and makes known its views on such matters as uniform, new programs, the provision of school facilities and any other matters that are of significant community interest. In addition the P&C is usually the school's major fundraising body and is the chief liaison between the school and parents. This latter role is the fundamental distinction between the P&C Associations and the School Council. In this regard the P&C has the ability to tap into the views of the full parent body, as all parents are invited to attend P&C meetings.

- The council also has an advisory role but its predominant functions are the approving and monitoring of strategic matters. Thus, the council approves the school budget, partnership agreements, annual operation plan and annual report. This gives the council an important developmental role in the school.

The monitoring role of the council is important, as it is in this role that the council determines the success of the school's strategic initiatives with a view to informing the further development of those initiatives.

Monitoring School Performance as a measure of Council Performance

A council should consciously use School Performance as a measure of its own performance. This can be undertaken through constant reference to the monitoring processes the council uses to evaluate school policies and programs. In doing so, concentration should be on identifying the achievements of students and the overall performance of the school. Year 12 academic results, and the results of all other years, where they are available, should be compared over time so that a longer-term view of student achievement is available. Students’ results in academic, sporting and extra-curricular competitions also provide evidence of student outcomes, again preferably with performance comparisons over time. Behaviour management and community service data also help a council understand the effectiveness of the school's pastoral care and how well this aspect of the school’s work is being implemented. The centrality of the academic, pastoral care and extra-curricular programs to the mission of the school means that a council would be foolish to avoid taking them into account in reaching judgements about the effectiveness of its governance. If a school is performing poorly in any of these areas, then the council must accept some of the responsibility for the situation and examine school policies accordingly.

A second strategy is to request the benchmarking of nominated academic, pastoral care or extra-curricular programs by the principal against those in similar schools. The use of this strategy facilitates council understanding of school performance and potential, and enables the council to form a view of how well the school is 'travelling' in comparison with others of similar capability. State-wide benchmarking is already available in some areas of student performance and this could form the basis of decisions about comparative performance as schools produce their annual reports.

A third strategy is the use of a cycle of review for other nominated areas of the school for which the council has strategic responsibility. These incorporate those areas included in the school budget, partnership agreements, annual operation plan and annual report.

Whichever form of monitoring is decided upon by the school, it should be undertaken in a spirit of using the information to improve education outcomes for students.

Reference:
Overview

The Minister for Education has ultimate responsibility for education in Queensland and, in this role, sets the policy direction for education. A Parliamentary Secretary and the Director-General of Education, who oversee operational functions of the Department of Education (Education Queensland), assist the Minister. The management structure also includes a Deputy Director-General and seven Assistant Directors General. A structural chart outlining the responsibilities of each of these roles can be accessed on the Department website.

At the school level, management is in the hands of the school principal who is assisted by three deputy principals, as well as by heads of departments. Only some schools have established School Councils, which involve parents in establishing their school’s strategic direction, and most have a Parents and Citizens’ Association. Neighbouring schools often share specialist services.

State schools in Queensland are supported by seven regional offices, which provide services and administrative support and quality assurance services.

The role of Education Queensland

The Education Department manages school funding; statewide teacher transfer; pay roll; accounting and computer network services; and provides educational leadership.

The Education Department also sets policies and procedures for Queensland State schools.

Other related authorities

The Queensland College of Teachers is a State government statutory authority responsible to the Queensland Minister for Education. The College is responsible for the registration of teachers, for keeping teacher registration under review, and for approving Queensland initial teacher education courses for teacher registration purposes. Standards used by QCOT are drawn from the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). All Development processes are linked to the standards from AITSL.

The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) is a statutory body, its functions and powers are set out in the Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Act 2014 and Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Regulation 2014. The Authority exercises portfolio-wide responsibilities for the development, review and approval of pre-school guidelines and syllabuses for years 1-12, as well as the development of professional resources for teachers to support the implementation of relevant guidelines and syllabuses. Additionally, the QCAA registers schools to deliver vocational education and training for Australian Qualification Framework qualifications and accredited courses. It is the QCAA’s role to determine procedures and implement quality assurance for Queensland’s system of continuous school-based assessment in the senior phase of learning. The QCAA advises schools about administering assessment, and coordinates the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in Queensland. Additionally, the QCAA designs, administers and marks the Queensland Core Skills Test and administers the Senior External Examination. The QCAA manages the procedures for student certification and issues certificates of achievement, such as the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) and Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QClA), and provides certified copies of certificates and other educational results. The QCAA develops tertiary entrance procedures, issues tertiary statements and provides information to the public about tertiary entrance procedures and requirements. [http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/)

Education policies for the 21st Century

Over the past 10 years the major strategic initiatives in Queensland have been:

1. **The introduction of a trial full-time preparatory school year in 2003 in 39 Queensland schools, including 30 State schools, 6 Catholic schools and 3 Independent schools.** Full time “prep” being offered across all schools in 2007. In order to enrol they must have turned 5 on or before 31st December in the year prior to the commencement of year 1. This is at least five months earlier than their interstate counterparts. This has led to the introduction of year 7 students to high school in 2015. The first group of “Prep” students are in year 8 in 2015.

2. The second major reform was the introduction of multiple pathways for senior students to improve completion rates and increase flexibility. The compulsory school leaving requirements changed so that young people are required to participate in education and training after year 10. It is compulsory for young people to stay at school until they finish Year 10 or have turned 16, whichever comes first. Those young people who do not enter full-time work at this time will be required to participate in education and training for:
   - a further two years; or
   - until they have gained a Senior Certificate; or
   - until they have gained a Certificate III vocational qualification; or
   - until they have turned 17.

3. **A new approach to the middle years of schooling** looked at innovative ways to improve student achievement in the years 4 to 9 and to provide continuous support for students through different learning stages. Specific strategies were implemented to support students at risk of leaving school early.
4. **Year 10 was established as a transition to the Senior Phase of Learning.** Schools are required to develop individual student plans with young people and their parents or guardians as bases for their Year 11 and 12 studies. All students will be required during Year 10 to register with the Queensland Studies Authority so their progress can be monitored and achievements recorded in the Senior Phase of Learning. Students will have greater flexibility to spread their senior schooling over three years or, in the case of exceptional students, to accelerate their learning.

5. **A broader range of learning,** including learning in school, vocational education and training and other learning began counting towards a Senior Certificate from 2006. The Queensland Certificate of Education requires set standards of achievement to be achieved before being awarded. Young people have nine years to achieve this certification.

6. Teachers are now required to participate in an Annual **Performance Development Plan** process.

7. Schools participated in the **Teaching and Learning Audits.** These audits examined eight areas where quality schools showed strength. This has now been refined to nine areas of school improvement and schools are reviewed by the School Performance Unit.

8. The introduction of **published data** and the National NAPLAN tests changed the focus in many schools.

9. The **Australian Curriculum** has been slowly rolled out. Schools are currently implement AC up to year 10 in English, Mathematics, Science and History. A review is planned to examine the impact on schools.

10. A review of senior assessment and certification processes is underway, this review is designed to strengthen the current processes for young people currently studying in senior whilst exploring alternate methods for determining exit results.

The current strategic plan has the following focus areas:

![Strategic Plan 2013–17](image)

**The Curriculum**

The vast majority of Queensland State and Independent schools base their curriculum on the QCAA syllabus documents and the Australian Curriculum, where available. The Authority makes syllabuses for each subject in years P-12 available to schools. The Australian Curriculum has been written up for Queensland teachers in the form of C2C (curriculum to classroom) plans. A small number of schools in Queensland base their curriculum on syllabuses that are available interstate and overseas; for example, the International Baccalaureate, the GCSE (General Certificate of Education) and the ACE (Accelerated Christian Education) Curriculum.

The basis for the Queensland state school curriculum for the compulsory years of schooling are eight Key Learning Areas (KLAs): English, Science, Languages other than English (LOTE), Health and Physical Education, Mathematics, Studies of Society and Environment (SOS), Technology and the Arts. The seven approved LOTE subjects for years 4 to 10 are Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese and Korean. The eight KLAs were chosen on the basis that they effectively encapsulate the range of desirable learnings offered in schools. Details on all KLAs can be accessed at the QSA website. The Australian Curriculum divides SOSE into History and Geography.
The Australian Curriculum sets out the core knowledge, understanding, skills and general capabilities important for Australian students. Learning Area syllabuses also include the development of general capabilities (literacy, numeracy, ICTS, critical and creative thinking, personal and social capacity, ethical understanding and intercultural understanding) and cross-curriculum priorities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and sustainability.)

The Senior Curriculum

The QCAA is responsible for the senior curriculum and accredits the syllabus documents for senior study. The Authority is also responsible for the issuing of the Senior Certificate, the major qualification at the end of year 12. All year 12 students receive a Senior Statement. This statement records student results for subjects studied in years 11 and 12. These may include:

- QCAA Authority subjects - e.g. English, Maths A, Maths B, Accounting
- QCAA Authority Registered subjects - e.g. English Communication, Trade & Business Mathematics, Agricultural and Horticultural Studies
- Recorded subjects - e.g. Australian Music Examinations Board subjects
- Core Skills Test grade - see below
- Number of Semester Units for each subject
- Level of Achievement in each subject
- VET Competencies - e.g. Vocational Education subjects such as Certificate II in Communication for the Workplace and Certificate I in Information Technology. These competencies may be studied through TAFE or embedded in subjects studied at school.

The Queensland Certificate of Education is only awarded to students who successfully obtain 20 credits from their individual studies. Tertiary admission is based on performance in Authority Subjects of which there are currently 59.

Authority subjects

These subjects are fully moderated by the QCAA and are generally studied by students wishing to undertake university studies. Students must take Authority subjects to be eligible for an Overall Position (OP) and Field Positions (FPs). Authority-registered subjects are recorded on the Senior Certificate. Results in Authority-registered subjects are not included in the calculation of OPs and FPs.

Recorded subjects

Recorded subjects are subjects that are taught externally to the school or within the school by an external agency and for which the result is awarded by an agency other than the QCAA, e.g. Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB). The QCAA approves the inclusion of the external agencies' subjects on the Senior Certificate, but the QSA's procedures for the review of standards of achievement do not apply to the results of studies in these subjects. Results from these subjects are not included in the calculation of OPs and FPs but they can count towards the QCE.

VET Competencies

The QSA has a delegation under the Training and Employment Act (2000) to accredit courses, recognise vocational placement schemes and register schools for the delivery of VET to Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate II level. Most of the VET studies undertaken by school students are stand-alone subjects. Smaller numbers of students undertake VET through school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE)

Students working towards a QCE have a wide range of learning options; these can include senior school subjects, vocational education and training, workplace and community learning, and university subjects undertaken while at school. To be eligible for a QCE, students must achieve at least 20 credits of learning. A minimum of 12 credits must come from completed Core courses of study. At least 1 credit must come from Core studies completed while enrolled at a school. The remaining 8 credits can come from a combination of core, preparatory, enrichment or advanced courses, with preparatory studies contributing a maximum of 6 credits. Partial completion of a Core course of study may also contribute some credit. Students must also meet the QCE literacy and numeracy requirements. https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/3171.html

Overall Position

The OP or Overall Position is an indication of a student's overall achievement in QCAA authority subjects in comparison with all other Year 12 students in Queensland. An eligible student's OP is reported as one of 25 bands from 1 (highest) to 25. The approximate distribution of students across the bands is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band 1</th>
<th>Bands 2 to 6</th>
<th>Bands 7 to 21</th>
<th>Bands 22 to 24</th>
<th>Band 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>about 2% of students</td>
<td>about 15% of students</td>
<td>about 70% of students</td>
<td>about 11% of students</td>
<td>about 2% of students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To receive an OP students must study a certain number of authority subjects and satisfy other requirements. The basic eligibility requirement is 20 semester units of credit in Authority subjects with at least three subjects each taken for four semesters. Each completed semester of a subject gives one unit of credit; studying a subject for four semesters gives four units; taking five subjects for four semesters gives 20 units. There are no compulsory subjects for the OP. Students' results in each subject are placed on a ladder of five bands with 10 rungs per band. These five bands represent VHA (Very High Achievement) at the top, passing through HA (High Achievement), SA (Sound Achievement), LA (Low Achievement) and VLA (Very Low Achievement). The other requirements for an OP score are completion of Year 12 as a full-time student and sitting for the Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test. To obtain the best possible OP, students are advised to study those Board subjects that they enjoy and in which they are able to achieve good results.
FP (Field Position)
In addition to an OP, each student who is OP-eligible receives a Field Position score between 1 (highest) and 10 across five fields of study. These are areas that emphasise particular knowledge and skills. The five fields are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>extended written expression involving complex analysis and synthesis of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>short written communication involving reading, comprehension and expression in English or a foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>basic numeracy involving simple calculations and graphical and tabular interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>solving complex problems involving mathematical symbols and abstractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>substantial practical performance involving physical or creative arts or expressive skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A student who studies mostly Maths and Sciences will have a higher weighting in Fields C and D and a student who studies mostly Humanities subjects will have a higher weighting in Fields A and B. Not all students will be eligible in all fields, but most students will receive a score in all five fields.

The Queensland Core Skills (QCS) Test
All students who wish to be allocated an OP score must sit the QCS test. This test is designed to test various skills that are learned within students’ class subjects. It consists of four papers that are administered on two consecutive days towards the end of term 3.

- Paper 1 is a Writing Task involving the completion of 600 words of continuous prose written over a two hour period, in response to one or more pieces of stimulus material.
- Papers 2 is a 60 minute Multiple Choice Paper of 50 multiple choice questions.
- Paper 3 is a Short Response Item Paper taken over two hours consisting of a series of questions in response to various tasks.
- Papers 4 is a 60 minute Multiple Choice Paper of 50 multiple choice questions.

The QCS Test is used to moderate results between schools. Students who are not OP eligible may choose to take the QCS Test and have the results recorded on their Senior Certificate.

Tertiary Entrance Statement
In addition to the Senior Certificate, OP eligible students receive a Tertiary Entry Statement which records their OP and FP scores and is used to assess applications for tertiary entry. For students who are not eligible for an OP, it is still possible to gain a place in some tertiary courses on the basis of their achievements in all subjects reported on the Senior Certificate (provided that they have studied any prerequisite Board subjects and achieved the level specified). Students who are not eligible for an OP may be assigned a rank based on schedules published by the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre (QTAC) and/or TAFE Queensland and the individual universities. Such students are selected for courses on the basis of this rank.
Effective communication is critical to the good health of the School Council and involves more than simply the transfer of information. The goal of communication should be to transfer meaning and, often, it is expected that communication will change behaviour. Members of the School Council need to communicate with the principal and school staff, with parents of the school and with members of the wider community. The subject of this section, however, concentrates on two areas:

1. what members of council can do to communicate more effectively with each other
2. what members of council can do to communicate more effectively with their communities.

**Internal Council Communication**

Research into achieving the aims of communication suggests that there are a number of things council members should be aware of in their communication with each other. These include listening with attention, showing respect for the other person's point of view, suspending judgement until a contrary argument has been fully explored, and understanding enough about the other members of the council to know where they are 'coming from.'

There would be few people unaware of the importance of developing active listening techniques to enhance understanding and show empathy, however this is not as simple as it sounds. Good listening involves:

- not interrupting, especially to correct mistakes or make points
- not judging
- thinking before answering
- facing the speaker
- being close enough to hear
- concentrating on what is being said (and not on the listeners own response)
- watching nonverbal behaviour
- looking for the emotions and assumptions underlying remarks
- using effective questioning skills
- giving and receiving appropriate feedback
- displaying empathy
- not insisting on the last word.

One of the most effective things a council can do is to practise listening skills by agreeing as a group to identify good listening techniques and making a point of putting them into action within the council.

Showing respect for another's point of view even when you do not initially agree is essential in building good communication. Each member of the council should identify his or her own personal communication style, try to determine instances where this style may be a barrier to effective communication, and then develop techniques to enhance personal communication.

This is particularly important in difficult situations where poor communication skills may cause the breakdown of relationships. Councils should make it a focus of their professional development to identify techniques for improving interactions with others.

In difficult situations an effective technique is to employ a non-threatening method of requesting behaviour change. For example, ‘When you are late for council meetings, I get concerned that we’re making plans without your input,’ rather than, ‘You’re always late for council meetings (accusation and generalisation) and some members (but not me, implied) of the council are starting to resent wasting time waiting for you to show up.’

Council members should also practise suspending judgment as a technique of good communication. This involves actively listening to opinions which differ from one's own without rehearsing one's own response.

Often it is difficult to ascertain where a speaker is ‘coming from’ (that is, the context from which they form an opinion). One way to attempt to understand another's viewpoint is by being aware of body language. A number of studies have shown that over 90% of communication is carried in the nonverbal messages sent out by participants. During communication it is important to be aware of the signals you are giving out as well as reading the signals you are receiving from the other people involved. Some things to be aware of include:

- facing the people you are interacting with as this indicates respect
- conveying confidence and enthusiasm in your posture, whilst observing the posture of others for clues to their feelings
- being aware that your facial expression, and the expressions of others, may be sending contradictory signals
- maintaining eye contact to communicate confidence, and indicate interest in the speaker.

**Communicating with the School Community**

Overall, leadership and infrastructure have the most impact on whether communication between the council and the school community is effective or not. What leaders do or do not do; what they ask about; and who they recognise are all important aspects of communication. When communication is good, members of school councils are consulting with members of the school community and listening to what they are saying; they are disseminating critical information to the community and
explaining reasons for any changes; they are providing recognition when members of the community assist the school; and they are making themselves visible at school functions.

Furthermore they are taking care of the communication infrastructure. This includes confirming that the school has policies and procedures in place to communicate with the community and that there is a clear structure and communication chain.

To sum up, the role of the School Council in communication is to:

- place the school in the ‘marketplace’
- articulate the school’s vision to the wider community
- report progress towards achieving the vision
- let people know ‘how they can help’
- be proactive
- set an example which communicates the values and behaviour desired
- be visible, seek out opinions, listen and consult
- seek feedback that communication is understood
- openly share timely news and information where appropriate
- ensure that there is a communication infrastructure in place
- respond quickly to rumour and innuendo by providing the truth
- communicate what matters

Team Building
Recent research into the way teams function concludes that when a group of people works together a variety of human weaknesses may be activated. These include embedded prejudices and biases, propensities for the exercise of power, the formation of alliances and initiation of conflict, and a hunger for leadership without the mantle of responsibility (Sinclair, 1995).

The purpose of this section is to identify ways of avoiding these weaknesses so that the council team can work together to achieve its shared objectives.

The Shared Vision Of The Council
One of the most important aspects of team building is to decide the specific tasks of the team. An important exercise for the council is to decide on its role within the school and concentrate its efforts on fulfilling that role. The ‘mission’ of school councils is clearly defined in the Act as ‘improving education outcomes for students’. All actions that the council take need, therefore, to be examined in the light of this mission.

In identifying actions which promote the fulfilment of its mission, the council can be a very effective team as it is able to define projects and quickly share and disseminate information. However, just as important is to define what the council cannot do. The effectiveness of the council, in itself, helps to build the team, while ineffectiveness may over time cause the group to disintegrate.

Developing the team
Research concludes that one of the major barriers to successful team building is a lack of training. Sometimes this is due to a lack of time or resources, but often it is simply because it is assumed that people naturally know how to work together. Some of the steps councils might take to develop their team include:

- building a caring, sharing and trusting environment by making sure that enough information-sharing occurs within the group, and by valuing the contribution of all members
- offering training in interpersonal skills, such as assertiveness training
- making available resources and strategies in areas where the team may feel its lacks competence, such as strategic and action planning
- recognising that members of the council are being asked to take on extra work and finding ways to reward them (this might be something as simple as recognising the hard work)
- enjoying the journey together by having fun and celebrating success
- offering mutual support, including always displaying council solidarity even when individual members have reservations about a decision
- offering opportunities for personal growth by giving members the chance to gain new knowledge, learn new skills and enhance self-esteem
- establishing procedures for conflict resolution, consensus decision making and meeting management
- understanding that building trust and good communication takes time
- taking meaningful measurements of the council’s success through regular evaluation.
Leadership
The importance of the Council Chairperson cannot be overstated. Even though the chairperson is 'first among equals' the role is critical as the liaison between the council and the school management. The Council Chair also has a role in fostering independent behaviour and displays of initiative from council members. Good leaders motivate the team in the short term and create the conditions for self-motivation in the longer term. Good leaders clearly articulate the team's purpose, help team members to see the best in themselves, challenge and support, provide opportunities for growth, stress teamwork, and make team members aware of their responsibilities to both the council and the school community.

Establishing Council Norms
Norms are rules or standards that determine what is appropriate or inappropriate behaviour in a group. They establish expectations about council behaviour and how council members interact with each other. Often group norms are based on the previous experiences of group members. For example, if the Council Chairperson has been used to decision making by democratic vote this may become the norm for the council even though another process may better suit the council. Making early joint decisions about how meetings will be run, how decisions will be made, and how conflict will be dealt with is likely to enhance group communication and cohesiveness.

Offering a Challenge
Most teams begin full of enthusiasm and with a desire to contribute. However, over time this enthusiasm wanes as council members see themselves attending meetings but seeming to have little influence on change. An effective way to renew enthusiasm is to offer a challenge. This may be as simple as agreeing to communicate personally with every new parent to the school; or as complex as working together with the P&C Association to raise $20,000 for new library books. The task itself does not matter as much as the fact that each member of the group feels he or she is contributing to the council mission.

Emotions
One of the difficulties for councils as teams is that the group is made up of individuals who all bring their own emotions and past experiences to the team. While each individual has a role to play, sometimes emotions can derail the effectiveness of the council. For example, in most groups some members will dominate others, some will always find security in agreeing with the majority, some will make it a point to always disagree with authority. Part of the development of the council team should be to attempt to understand how emotions affect the team and to put in place procedures to support all members of the council. A good instance of this is in agreeing that consensual decision making will be the process for all controversial issues.

Sometimes the struggle for power within a group can result in poor decisions and communication if some members of the council dominate proceedings and talk more than others. Other group members who feel that they have less power tend to talk less frequently. It is important for team building that all members of the council feel they have some power in the group. The Council Chairperson can enhance the self-esteem of each member by ensuring that a variety of people volunteer for tasks and that all members of the council take an active role. Where council members seem reluctant to speak up it is the Chair’s responsibility to nominate these members for particular tasks or to actively seek their opinions in the full council meeting.

Enhancing Group Cohesiveness
To enhance council cohesiveness
- talk about the group in terms of ‘we’ not ‘I’
- reinforce good attendance at meetings
- establish and maintain council traditions (e.g. ending each meeting with refreshments, an annual council barbecue)
- set clear short-term and long-term goals
- celebrate the achievement of goals
- encourage the participation of all members of the group
- reflect on the council’s history
- laugh together - humour creates and improves a positive climate, breaks down barriers, shows empathy and can help to remove the sting of criticism.

Managing Conflict
Conflict in itself is not necessarily negative. Habitual agreement can over time seriously weaken the effectiveness of the council if it means that ideas are not allowed depth or development, or if it is the result of one or two people dominating council proceedings. However, managing conflict badly, also weakens council effectiveness. People generally manage conflict in one of three ways: they withdraw; they control; or they cooperate.

Some people are simply non-confrontational and they will withdraw from difficult situations to avoid conflict. While sometimes this may be the correct strategy, more often than not these people find that avoiding conflict does not make the problem go away. Eventually they may find that if they always agree with others, over time their ideas and suggestions will be discounted.

Some people like to control a group and use strategies to get their own way in all situations. If the controller uses facts and evidence to back up a position and uses constructive strategies to persuade others, then being assertive about a position may be justifiable. If, however, the controller is emotional, aggressive and uses blame, bullying and coercion to ‘win’ then group cohesiveness will quickly deteriorate.
Group members who take a cooperative approach prefer to seek solutions to problems rather than to view conflict as a 'win-lose' situation. While there are some disadvantages to this approach, generally the research promotes cooperative conflict management as being more likely to promote communication and team cohesion (Beebe & Masterson, 1997).

In order to promote cooperative conflict management, the first step is to separate the people from the problem. This means valuing the other person as an equal and being prepared to listen to his or her point of view. This might involve:

- acknowledging the person's feelings
- determining the specific issue that is causing the intense feelings
- assessing the intensity and importance of the issue
- inviting the other person to join you in working towards a solution
- making a positive relational statement.

Cooperative conflict management focuses on areas of agreement and tries to find what the opposing positions have in common before attempting to solve the conflict. If there is initially agreement on part of a problem, there is more likely to be cooperation when the more contentious issue is discussed. The important thing here is to clarify the underlying goal, and hopefully find agreement, and then discuss cooperatively the different strategies through which the goals can be achieved.

The more options that can be generated to find a solution, the more likely a cooperative agreement will be reached. Sometimes feuding team members may become fixated on one approach to achieve a goal. This makes conflict management difficult. Using brainstorming, or other techniques, for identifying a variety of options and seeking more than one solution to overcome obstacles is likely to make conflict management more successful.

Basing decisions on objective criteria will also assist successful conflict management. Typical criteria are related to cost, measurement and time. For example, if it is agreed that student reading levels must be improved in grade 1 by at least 6 months within one year but there is only $50,000 to achieve that improvement, the council is using criteria to help identify a solution acceptable to all council members.

If despite all of the efforts of council there are still members who are consistently uncooperative, the Council Chairperson may have to intervene. This might involve privately discussing the issues with the council member. In this situation the Chair needs to:

- avoid being emotional or angry
- describe what is upsetting him/her using 'I' language - 'I find it difficult to concentrate when you interrupt while I am speaking'
- disclose his/her feelings - 'I feel that you don't think what I have to say is important'
- return to the issue of contention and try to work towards a solution.

Researchers into communication and team building assert that 98% of the problems we face are 'people problems' (Juran, 1998). While this may be an overstatement, the importance of building a cohesive team is central to the success of School Councils.

Good communication and effective team building do not happen 'overnight.' Nor will they persist without regular renewal. As council membership changes or as long term members of council become more entrenched, it is important that communication and team-building skills are maintained. This means a regular revisiting, and updating, of council members' skills in these areas.

DECISION-MAKING
The argument in this section is based on a preference for consensual decision-making by School Councils. This preference is built on the knowledge that consensus seeking is consistent with the concept of 'shared wisdom' and that it helps build cohesion in a decision-making body. However, there are other forms of decision-making that will arise in a council during its lifetime. Two of these - representational and democratic - are briefly explained together with some of their benefits and problems.

Representational decision-making
Representational decision-making is not an appropriate way for School Councils to arrive at decisions. When Councils are composed of members elected or appointed by others, representational decision-making is a distinct possibility. Representatives may be elected by particular constituencies such as parents, students or, school staff, or they may be appointed by groups in the school such as the Parents and Citizens Association. If a person takes a place on the Council with a view that he or she must 'represent' the views of the electorate or the group, then the seeds are sewn for factionalism at worst and dysfunctionality at best. If representatives are unable to move beyond the sectional interests of a particular constituency, then decisions are achieved only through members making deals with others on the Council - factionalism in the true sense. Representatives must be able to accept the view that once elected, they become members of the Council with a commitment to work in the interests of the school, not the interests of their constituency. Of course, they may talk with and listen to the views of those who elected or appointed them, but as Council decision-makers, they act on the basis of their own judgement, not under the 'instructions' of the groups from which they are drawn.
Democratic decision-making

All Councils use democratic or parliamentary decision-making processes. Put simply, democratic decision-making recognises and implements majority views by voting on formal motions. The Chair’s role at these times is to encourage debate for and against a proposition and to draw the outcomes of that debate into a motion to be put to a vote. The benefits of this approach to decision-making are well known and they include:

- the exposure of both sides of an argument
- the easy identification of the weight of opinion
- speedy resolution.

On the downside, democratic decision-making tends to emphasise competition, and it may marginalise those in the minority producing feelings of bitterness on troublesome issues. Deciding what should be accepted as a reasonable majority on new strategic directions or on potentially controversial policy is something that Councils employing democratic decision-making should address. A two-thirds majority is often fixed as a minimum for those policies considered sufficiently important to warrant a critical mass of support before a Council can proceed to implement its decisions with confidence. Moreover, fixing majorities reduces the chances that the Council Chair will have to use his or her casting vote - a situation to be avoided if at all possible.

Consensual decision-making

Consensus is finding the highest level of agreement without dividing participants into factions. It’s an important tool, but may not be needed for all decisions. In this model, each decision maker must agree to (but not necessarily with all parts of) the final outcome. Although they may differ on some aspects of the decision, school council members agree the total package best meets everyone’s needs and supports it on that basis. If consensus cannot be reached on any part or all of a decision, a vote is taken.

There are advantages to the consensus building model. It:

- ensures all council members have an effective voice
- builds on differing perspectives and values
- allows for flexibility in arriving at solutions
- can build respect for differing values and viewpoints

• can lead to better informed, more creative, balanced and enduring decisions
• ensures the final decision has the support of the entire school council
• if unsuccessful, it allows for a decision to be made by voting.

Consensus Voting

- How many are all for it - believe in it - they could be leaders on the issue.
- How many are all for it - will lend support.
- How many need to talk about the issue further.
- How many are not sure, but trust the opinion of the group.

The first person to say no to the proposal must give an alternative.

Consensual decision-making rests on an acceptance of the concept of ‘shared wisdom’ outlined above. Council members need to be able to suspend judgement, to see an issue from a range of perspectives, to debate choices, and to move personal positions by transcending self-interest if consensual decision-making is to be achieved. This is most important when a council is faced with significant strategic decisions. There is little use in bringing a contentious matter prematurely to a vote just to achieve the appearance of a decision. As indicated above, democratic or parliamentary decision-making produces winners and losers, and for some difficult matters this is entirely inappropriate. When an issue is apparently unresolvable, it is better to let it sit for a period if at all possible, rather than taking a vote. Time out, or ‘cooling off’ allows for the settling of views, the gathering of additional information and the refocusing of the issues which can be revisited at a future date.

In short, a consensus-seeking process is the gradual clarification of issues and the movement of positions taken by different people on those issues. Consensus does not necessarily mean a unanimous position. It is a position taken so that all Council members are committed to support ensuing action despite any persisting reservations. It is true that consensual decision-making can be time consuming but the trick is to know which matters really require a consensus view. Generally it is the more controversial issues that are best dealt with using the consensual decision-making model.
Two models for Consensual Decision-Making

A. The Six Hats Model
1. Take an issue e.g. whether to change to flexible school hours
2. Think with each of de Bono’s Thinking Hats and discuss the issues which emerge under each hat:
   - RED HAT: Emotions, Hunches, Intuitions
   - BLACK HAT: Where are the problems and blocks?
   - YELLOW HAT: How will a change help/benefit the school?
   - WHITE HAT: What are the facts?
   - GREEN HAT: What is the creative response?
   - BLUE HAT: Where is the discussion leading?
3. Using de Bono’s Six Action Shoes explore what might need to be done if a change is to be made:
   - NAVY SHOES: Routines
   - GREY SNEAKERS: Data Gathering
   - ORANGE GUMBOOTS: Emergency Action
   - BROWN BROGUES: Practical Action
   - PURPLE RIDING BOOTS: Official Action
   - PINK SLIPPERS: Softly, Softly!
4. Narrow the Options
5. Determine the range of options to be offered

B. The Constructive Controversy Model
1. Introduce the controversial or contestable issue to the Council.
2. Divide members into groups of four, made up of two pairs. One pair in the group is to support the affirmation side of the issue and the other pair is to represent the negative side.
3. Pairs research the topic and prepare their cases (each pair needs to do enough research so that it is capable of arguing both sides of the issue).
4. Pairs try to convince each other that their side is the right one.
5. At a set juncture the debate is halted.
6. The pairs swap sides and continue the debate (pairs should NOT be told at the beginning of the exercise that is going to occur).
7. When the debate is concluded the group must try to reach a ‘position of consensus’ on the issue. The consensus reflects areas of agreement, disagreement, compromise, uncertainty and alternative solutions. The group may need anywhere from five to fifteen minutes for this task.
8. To conclude the exercise each group makes a brief report to a plenary session on their ‘position of consensus’.

*Some guidelines on how to report on the consensus position will help to focus the exercise. For example, the consensus must be summarised in no more than two sentences. And it may have to adhere to a format like ‘Yes/No, we believe ... because ... but ... because ...’

Collaboration
According to “The Concise Oxford Dictionary”, collaborate means to 1. work jointly, esp. in a literary or artistic production. The term collaborate, although often used in the sense of literary or artistic production, works beautifully for the cooperative creative venture of educating our children. Collaboration does not prevent an individual from acting alone. Principals, teachers and other partners have specific responsibilities for which they are accountable. To collaborate means to acknowledge our common goal of providing all children in our community with the best education possible and to work jointly toward achieving it.

Consultation
Consultation involves one person meeting with another for the purpose of obtaining an opinion, information or advice. In the case of school councils, each group represented on council is expected to operate in consultation with the others. A main purpose of school councils is to share views and information—a mutual consultation process.

Dialogue
The following definition of dialogue describes the nature of discussion that best meets the needs of school councils: Dialogue is based on the principle that conception and implementation are intimately linked, with a core of common meaning. During the dialogue process people learn how to think together in the sense of occupying a collective sensibility in which the thoughts, emotions and resulting actions belong not to one individual, but to all of them together.
MARKETING

In schools, marketing has long been viewed with some suspicion. The connotations connected with ‘selling’ an education program concern many educators who see marketing promoting competition for students and resources at the expense of collaboration and collegiality. Educators are also concerned about marketing in schools. That is, the marketing that has schools promoting particular products, collecting barcodes or advertising on school property in return for resources.

Marketing in schools, however, is about more than either of the above; it is less about selling and more about understanding the needs and wants of the school’s community and trying to meet those needs. It is about making schooling a positive experience from the time parents and students enter the school gates.

First Impressions

Sometimes the most basic things can decide whether visiting a school is a positive or negative experience. Some things that help ensure a school creates a good first impression include:

- clear and welcoming signs placed strategically so that visitors can readily find their way to the car park and the administration building
- signs placed on main roads so that the turn-off to the school is obvious
- main road display boards which clearly show the school name and logo, information about P&C meetings and something personal about the school, such as congratulations to new school captains
- tidy and well-maintained gardens and buildings which are free of graffiti, and school grounds free of litter
- a friendly welcome at reception and from staff and students
- an information kit with information for potential parents which might contain some or all of the following: the school’s philosophy and mission, curriculum (including co-curricular activities), behaviour management policy, map of the school, details about the P&C Association and School Council
- helpful and efficient dealing with telephone contact to the school. Is the phone answered promptly and pleasantly? Are queries answered accurately and dealt with efficiently? Are calls returned in a timely manner? Are telephone messages passed on to the appropriate people and do they include enough detail?
- the ‘feel’ of the school. Do students and staff seem happy? Are classrooms well-ordered and buzzing with activities? Are all students included in schoolyard activities? Is there a sense that students feel safe and secure?

Word of Mouth

If parents and students feel good about their school then marketing takes care of itself. ‘Word-of-mouth’ is, by far, a school’s most valuable marketing tool. Research confirms that, more than anything, parents and students form an opinion about a school through word of mouth. The power of the local community to say good things - or to misrepresent the school - cannot be underestimated. By building contacts with local community leaders and encouraging students to participate in local activities such as fundraising for charity, sport and community service the benefits of being a student at the school are conveyed to those people who may act as its strongest advocates. Research shows that who conveys the messages about a school is just as important as the message itself, with parents of the school and community members having the most credibility, teachers and the school principal having medium credibility and the school Board having the least.

For this reason it makes very good sense to make a serious effort to speak to current parents and encourage them to positively market their school. Schools should talk to parents about their marketing program, explain the reasons for a marketing approach and ask parents to assist in promoting the school. Parents must, of course, be given the tools to do the job effectively. This means they need access to accurate data about what the school is doing, student achievements and the school’s education program.

To many people, staff are the school. They are often the major person-to-person contact with members of the community, both inside and outside the school. They are likely to be central to whether students are succeeding academically and whether they are happy at school. They are likely to be the chief communicator with parents and the people who take day-to-day responsibility to ensure that the needs of each individual child are being met.

In taking into consideration the word of mouth impression created by the school, staff cannot be neglected. If members of staff are unhappy they will not effectively market the message the school wishes to convey. Because staff can be great ambassadors for the school they must be kept informed of developments, asked for their input and given reasons why their support is needed in the marketing program. Careful and well planned inservicing is, therefore, essential if all staff members are to understand the significance of their role as ‘marketers’ of the school.
Finding out what parents and students want
Schools need to welcome expressions of opinion, both bad and good, and to encourage members of the school community to communicate in a constructive way. Criticism of the school can be valuable in providing opportunities for discussion and increased understanding of issues; positive comments can be shared with the community to reinforce the school’s value.

The important thing here is that communication must be two-way and must be much more than overwhelming parents and students with a mass of information and publicity. Telling the community what the school is ‘going to do’ without any input from its members does not foster understanding of what ‘customers’ really want. On the other hand, when schools work with their communities in solving problems and discussing areas of concern real communication results.

Finding out what the school community wants may include such activities as an annual survey, public meetings, P&C seminars, student workshops or interviews with key people.

In an article in *Education Australia*, well known marketing consultant Linda Vining gives an example of what happened when students about to enter high school in a particular school were shown the school’s handbook, which consumed vast resources in time and cost, and asked what they wanted to know about the school. Students responded that they wanted to know: Who else was in their class? Who would be their teachers? Where would their rooms be? What would they be doing on different days? How much homework would they have? How many assignments would they have? All of these issues of importance to students were not in the handbook.

The students suggested that one thing the school could do was to produce a short biography and photograph of each grade 8 teacher so that when the new students arrived they could recognise their teachers and know something about them.

Marketing Strategies
Increasing public awareness of your school: a planned marketing campaign targeted at school-community relations is one strategy for increasing public awareness of the school. This might be approach in the following steps:

1. establish a task force responsible for developing and implementing the plan
2. define exactly what it is the plan is to achieve and who is the target audience
3. identify those community groups that can help deliver the school’s message e.g. newspapers, parent volunteers, trade outlets, local churches, old scholars, service organizations
4. develop a strategy and specify tactics such as newsletters, displays, newspaper columns, school videos, ceremonies, community projects, public debates, news releases, stunts, t-shirts, school tours, VIP speakers
5. document a calendar of events and activities, including a budget for each event
6. evaluate each activity and the overall strategy using short questionnaires, discussion and simple response slips.

School publications
Schools produce a huge volume of published materials such as newsletters, handbooks, calendars, report cards, certificates and awards, student work sheets, leaflets, posters, tests and examinations and so on. These publications can be a major positive component of the schools marketing or they can be counterproductive, for example when school assignments are sent home containing spelling errors. To begin using school publications as a marketing tool, the first step is to undertake a publication audit. Critically analyse each publication with regard to appearance, subject matter and production. Determine the purpose and audience of the publication and make decisions about those publications which are necessary and those which could be dropped.

Then deal with one publication at a time:

- define the purpose of the publication
- decide on its optimal frequency
- map out the proposed content
- decide who will be responsible for the content
- decide on the size, shape, number of pages
- determine the importance of the publication - should a professional designer be used for some publications?
- consider distribution - does everyone who should receive the publication do so?
- consider sponsorship to cover some of the costs of publication
- consider building in reader feedback for some publications
- schedule tasks and set deadlines.

Finally look at the consistency of all of school publications. Do they follow a design that clearly identifies them as publications of the school? Is there consistency, where appropriate, in layout, font size, use of school logo? Are they distributed according to published deadlines?
Meetings
Publications are useful but they are never as effective as a personal approach. One to one contact is almost always the best way to convey a message. Most parents with an interest in their school want to meet the principal and other personnel. One-on-one contact will have much greater impact than any other form of promotion. This is so whether the school is seeking enrolments or trying to raise funds for a school project. Consider the following to maximise the school’s exposure to parents and the local community:

- make the community aware that the principal is available at every opportunity to speak on behalf of the school
- approach local service clubs and organise a presentation - for example, focus on how the school is preparing business leaders of the future or discuss business projects being undertaken by students
- arrange meetings away from the school and closer to the homes of parents and potential students
- invite old scholars and ask them to speak about their school experiences
- arrange regular ‘principal afternoon teas’
- establish networks of old scholars in their regions and meet with the alumni regularly.

Developing the School’s Website
The school website is increasingly becoming a way that schools communicate with their immediate community and with the wider world. Most people who visit a website do so because of something they have read on paper; it is unlikely that they will find the school’s website by accident.

To encourage visits to the school’s website make sure that the web address is added to all school literature and publications, announce changes to the site in the newsletter and add the address to all press releases. The principal and staff should be familiar with the website and address as well as anyone who answers the school phones so that they can continually draw it to the attention of community members. To increase the chances of the website receiving a ‘hit’, link the web page to other appropriate sites and register the home page address with as many search engines as possible. www.submit-it.com allows multiple registrations.

When people access the website it needs to be as user friendly as possible. Some points to remember are to:

- describe the school in a few sentences and up front - don’t waste the potential enrolment’s time!
- place contact information where it is easily accessible
- organise the most important information so that it will be noticed
- beware of overdoing animations or loud music. They might be good fun but they slow the user down and may, in fact, make access so time-consuming that it is not worth the effort
- check that the site is easily readable. Dark print on a dark background may make information too difficult to see
- update the site regularly so that users will be enticed to return again and again.

Promoting a school involves much more than has been covered in this short article. No mention has been made of radio or television advertising; exhibitions and expositions; open days; displays; surveys; or ‘corporate image’. Whether we like it or not, the competition and complexity involved in maintaining the good image of a school cannot be left to chance any longer. A full school approach would seem to be the minimum that is required to ensure that a school remains competitive.

Ethical Considerations
The National Code of Practice for Sponsorship and Promotion in School Education (1992) was developed by a working party of the Australian Education Council in conjunction with other education, business and school organisations to guide participants in sponsorships and promotions in developing activities consistent with good educational practice.

Schools considering promotion and fundraising programs can access this code at www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/public/pub3311.htm

The Education Department also has guidelines for Commercial Activities in Schools.
The major role of the School Council is to approve, monitor and advise the principal in relation to plans and policies of a strategic nature. The key planning documents in State Schools are:

- the Partnership Agreement (four year school strategic plan)
- Annual Implementation Plan
- Annual Budget.

While the school principal and staff are largely responsible for the development of these plans, the School Council performs an advisory role in their formation, formally approves the plans and monitors their progress. The purpose of both the Partnership Agreement and the Annual Implementation Plan is to set the strategic directions of the school by developing clear policies, to give management and staff guidance in leading and managing daily work.

Strategic matters are policy-directed and long-term. They attempt to answer the question: What kind of school do we want? Thus, strategic planning is used to identify improvements needed in areas such as:

- Curriculum
- Organisation
- Services
- Staffing
- Resources
- Marketing.

A shared establishment of the schools' purpose and a set of Core Goals related to the operations of the school usually precede development of a school's strategic direction.

The school's Annual Implementation Plan and Strategic Plan are the primary planning tools which describe how a school will achieve its purpose. It provides 'direction, purpose and consistency to the activities of the school' (Walker, 1993).

The way in which policies in the strategic plan are implemented is an operational matter. Operational matters refer to day-to-day running of the school and are action oriented. These are the province of the principal and school staff.

One method of developing the school's strategic direction is to

- clarify strengths and weaknesses
- articulate what the school is aiming at
- develop priorities
- plan actions
- monitor the results.

Thus, the council may address the following questions in order to systematically set goals and achieve them:

- Performance indicators - how are we doing? Strengths? Weaknesses?
- Benchmarking - how do we compare with similar schools?
- Vision - what are we aiming at?
- Developmental planning - what are our priorities?
- Target setting - what focus within each priority?
- Resources planning - how much? When needed?
- Action planning - who responsible? Action by when?
- Success criteria - how will we know when we've achieved it?
- Monitoring - how is it progressing? Who will check?
- Evaluation - what can we learn from this cycle?
- Dissemination - who needs to know about this?

**Best Practice Strategic Planning**

For effective strategic planning, there should be:

1. a balance between top-down and bottom-up management control. Stakeholders (staff, council, parents, students, and members of the community) should participate in the process and must accept responsibility for it.
2. a process which is in harmony with leadership style, organisational politics, school cultures and educational philosophy.
3. a commitment by leadership to the concept of ongoing improvement and a framework within which others can be empowered to respond. Leaders must act as catalysts and sustainers, providing both pressure and support for activities.
School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework

### Purpose
School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework 2022–23 outlines the requirements for School Planning and Reviewing and Reporting in schools to support effective student learning outcomes for all students.

- The School Planning, Reviewing and Reporting Framework (SPRRF) aims to embed professionalism, shared understanding and ongoing reflection in the planning and reviewing of school improvement and accountability in schools.
- Under the Framework, all schools develop a School Plan to implement the strategic direction of the Department.

### Alignment
The improvement and accountability framework is aligned to the Department’s Education, Training and Employment Strategic Plan.

### Key Strategies for School Education
- Leadership and Management
- Learning and Teaching
- Curriculum and Assessment
- Student Wellbeing
- School Improvement

### Performance Indicators
- Improved Learning and Literacy outcomes for all students
- Improved Vocational Education and Training (VET) outcomes
- Improved attendance and engagement in school

### School Planning
School planning involves a whole-school approach to strategic planning that includes the school’s vision, mission, values, and strategic priorities. It is a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, review, and improvement.

#### Planning
School planning ensures a school’s success, support, and school improvement activities for all students.

#### Reviewing
Reviewing is the process of evaluating the effectiveness of the school’s strategic plan to determine if it has achieved its intended outcomes.

#### Reporting
Reporting involves communicating the results of reviewing to stakeholders.

### The School Plan
The School Plan is a strategic document that sets the direction for school improvement and accountability. It includes:

- **Purpose:** The school’s strategic direction
- **Outcomes:** The specific achievements that the school aims to achieve
- **Strategies:** The actions and processes to achieve the outcomes
- **Indicators:** The measures used to evaluate progress

### Education Queensland Requirements for Strategic Planning

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>How</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Who</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Reviewing</td>
<td>SBHS School Council - Handbook</td>
<td>Page 40</td>
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### Reporting & Accountability
Schools must report progress against the strategic plan and review its effectiveness to ensure continuous improvement.

- Annual reporting: Schools must report against the School Plan, including progress and outcomes.
- Strategic planning: Schools must develop and review the School Plan annually.

### Resources for using student data:
- Tuke Hake and other data from the School Planning and Reviewing Framework.
- Student outcomes on the learning continuum.

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**Learn more about the frameworks and resources available for your school.**

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**Great state. Great opportunity.**
**Sunshine Beach State High School**  
**Work Sheet 1: Strategic vs Operational Matters**

Which of these matters are rightly the responsibility of the School Council and which are matters for attention within the school by the principal and the professional staff?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Strategic</th>
<th>Operational</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Adding a goal to the school’s strategic plan</td>
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<td>2. Appointing a new Teacher Aide</td>
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<td>3. Approving Staff attendance at in-service education activities</td>
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<td>4. Authorising expenditure on class text book sets</td>
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<td>5. Co-opting a new member to the School Council</td>
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<td>6. Signing cheques for classroom equipment</td>
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<td>7. Deciding on content of the School’s Annual Report</td>
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<td>8. Approving a School policy on staff development</td>
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<td>9. Initiating policy discussion amongst the School’s staff</td>
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<td>10. Monitoring the School’s test results</td>
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<td>11. Debating the student behaviour code</td>
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<td>12. Monitoring information on literacy levels in the School</td>
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<td>13. Implementing new student reporting procedures</td>
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<td>14. Introducing a new Maths Teacher to the School</td>
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<td>15. Discussing views on alcohol sale at School functions</td>
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<td>16. Producing the School timetable</td>
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<td>17. Revising the School’s philosophy statement</td>
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<td>18. Selecting new computing equipment</td>
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<td>19. Signing a construction contract for a new building</td>
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<td>20. Advising on the use of School buildings</td>
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Sunshine Beach State High School

Work Sheet 2: Deciding which issues belong with the School Council

The following list could be written on file cards to categorize in one of five ways:
1. Not the school council’s responsibility (by legislation)
2. Not the school council’s responsibility (by choice)
3. For information of council only
4. For advice/consultation by council
5. As part of a collaborative decision-making process (council as a partner)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Category 1-5</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Achievement test results</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2. Budget and resources</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3. Communication procedures</td>
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<td>4. Confidential issues</td>
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<td>5. Controversial programs (drugs, parenting skills)</td>
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<td>6. Curriculum change</td>
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<td>7. Decisions from Education Queensland</td>
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<td>8. Educational and societal data and facts</td>
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<td>9. Extracurricular programs</td>
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<td>10. Field trips</td>
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<td>11. Fundraising</td>
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<td>12. Helping students eg. homework</td>
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<td>13. Student behaviour issues</td>
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<td>14. Locally developed courses</td>
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<td>15. Long-range planning</td>
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<td>16. Maintenance and facilities</td>
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<td>17. Parent-teacher interviews</td>
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<td>18. Political activities</td>
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<td>19. Report cards - format, timing</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Resource and material selection</td>
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<td>21. School goals</td>
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<td>22. School events - schedule/calendars</td>
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<td>23. School and staff organization</td>
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<td>24. School year - length, timing</td>
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<td>25. School programs and courses</td>
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<td>26. School philosophy, mission, vision</td>
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<td>27. Hiring staff</td>
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<td>28. Staff competence</td>
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<td>29. Student activity eg. hot lunch</td>
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<td>30. Student handbook</td>
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<td>31. Student placement</td>
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<td>32. Student policy (development) discipline, lates, dress code,</td>
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<td>attendance</td>
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<td>33. Supervision issue</td>
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<td>34. Teacher evaluation process and policy</td>
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<td>35. Test schedules</td>
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<td>36. Volunteers</td>
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<td>37. Personnel Issues</td>
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### Work Sheet 3: Thinking Strategically

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should we be doing MORE of?</th>
<th>What should we be doing LESS of?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>What NEW things should we do?</th>
<th>What must we STOP doing?</th>
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</table>
## Promotion of profile of School Council within the school community

- Is the School Council viewed positively within the School Community by the parent body?
- Is the School Council viewed positively within the School Community by the school staff?
- Is the School Council viewed positively within the School Community by general community?
- Is the Profile of the School Council promoted within the school community?
- Are regular reports done in the school newsletter or community newsletter?
- Is there a School Council promotional pamphlet?
- Are successes of the School Council reported regularly?
- Are other examples of promoting the profile of the School Council evident?

## Well defined roles, responsibilities and functions of the School Council

- Is the main role of School Council clearly defined?
- Are the main responsibilities of School Council clearly outlined?
- Is there a clear vision for the school?
- Have belief statements been clearly formulated and defined for the school?
- Are all School Council members aware of these?
- Is the school community aware of these?
- Are relevant school documents available to School Council members to assist them in their roles?

## Roles and Relationships of School Council Members

- Are all School Council members clear on their overall role and function within the School Council?
- Are all School Council members clear on their individual role on the School Council?
- Have specific roles been determined for various School Council members? (e.g. staff and parent representatives, School Council President, Principal, public relations officer, minutes secretary, etc)
- Is the role of the Principal on the School Council clearly defined?
- Is the role of the School Council President on the School Council clearly defined?
- Is shared leadership promoted among all members of the School Council?
- Are strategies in place to develop shared leadership within the School Council?
- Are the main roles of the staff and parent School Council representatives clearly defined?
- Are School Council members aware of the time commitment required to be on the School Council?
- Is teamwork developed within the School Council?
- Are positive relationships fostered within the School Council?

## Accountability, Monitoring and Reporting

- Is there a process for determining how effective your School Council will be in undertaking its role?
- Are there measures in place to substantiate that your School Council has made a difference to the operations of the school?
- Does the School Council have a process for monitoring the school’s performance?
- Is the School Council accountable to the school community?
- Does your School Council have strategies to gather data and issues from staff, parents and the general school community?
- Does your School Council have a process to report back to the school staff, parents and community?
- Will the operations of your School Council improve student learning outcomes at your school?

## Training and Professional Development

- Are all School Council members confident in being prepared for their role on the School Council?
- Has support or training been undertaken in preparing School Council members for their role on the School Council?
- Has your School Council explored further areas for support and training to assist members in their role on the School Council?

## Functioning and Operations of School Council

- Are the operational procedures of your School Council clearly defined?
- Does each member of the School Council have a School Council handbook?
- Does each member of the School Council have a copy of the School Council Constitution?
- Are School Council meetings scheduled regularly?
- Is there a set method for developing agenda items?
- Are decision-making processes in place?
- Is there a process for achieving consensus in decision making within your School Council?
- Are detailed minutes of School Council meetings kept?
- Are there strategies for your School Council to deal with any difficulties or conflict situations in its general operations?
- Has the School Council attempted to identify any barriers that may prevent the School Council from reaching its goals and achievements?
- Does your School Council clearly fit within the management structure within your school?
- Is the relationship between the operations of the School Council and the school’s P and C Association clearly defined?
- Is the relationship between the operations of the School Council and the school’s other decision-making bodies (e.g. staff meetings, Admin meetings, etc) clearly defined?
- Is there a process in place for reviewing and modifying the operations of the School Council at regular times throughout the year?
- Do the School Council members feel positive about the future of the School Council?
- Have the School Council members explored future operations of the School Council and possible expanded future roles and responsibilities?
Every student succeeding
State Schools Strategy 2016–2020

Our vision
Inspiring minds, creating opportunities, shaping Queensland’s future.

Our purpose
Preparing Queenslanders with the knowledge, skills and confidence to participate effectively in the community and the economy.

Successful learners
Students engaging in learning and achievement, and successfully transitioning to further education, training and employment.

Teaching quality
Teachers employing high quality, evidence-based practices focused on success for every student.

Principal leadership and performance
School leaders driving school improvement and student achievement.

School performance
Schools achieving success through an intentional approach to improving the progress of every student.

Regional support
Regions providing a renewed focus on supporting performance and outcomes across the three sectors – early years, schooling and training and skillling.

Local decision making
Schools ensuring community needs are central to decision making processes, autonomy and accountability.

Collaborative empowerment — the way forward
Every student succeeding is our improvement agenda that identifies key strategies to lift performance across the system to ensure every student succeeds.

This document supports regional and school planning to ensure that every child benefits from excellent instruction.

As the centre of this approach is our department’s collaborative empowerment business model. By working together, communicating better with each other, developing our people, and reviewing our performance, we will ensure our schools are among the best in the world.

Our strategies
- Work together to address the unique needs of students to ensure successful transitions through each phase of learning.
- Communicate clear expectations for our students, teachers, principals, and regional and central office staff.
- Recognise and cultivate innovation to improve outcomes.
- Develop the capabilities of our people to support every student.
- Review and monitor performance to drive improvement.
- Provide support where performance needs to improve.

Our performance indicators
- Improve student academic achievement.
- Improve Queensland Certificate of Education attainment.
- Close the gap in attendance, retention and attainment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
Successful learners

Know your learners
- Analyse student data regularly to monitor progress, guide teaching practices, and prompt early intervention.
- Expand opportunities for all students to reach their potential as successful people; identify and support at-risk students; provide vocational education and training options in schools.
- Implement, monitor, and review attendance, behaviour, and attainment strategies for continuous improvement.

Meet your learners' needs
- Create a culture of engaging learning that improves achievement for all students and inspires lifelong learning.
- Provide challenging learning experiences that further develop reading, writing, numeracy and STEM (including coding and robotics) expertise across the curriculum.
- Cater for individual student's academic, social and emotional needs.
- Provide case management that supports student attendance and retention, literacy and numeracy achievement and Year 12 attainment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Create the next generation of global citizens and entrepreneurs by embedding STEM opportunities and expanding the study of languages.

Local decision making

Embrace autonomy
- Embrace increasing autonomy by collaborating with local communities.
- Maintain understanding of systemic priorities and requirements.
- Drive the school improvement agenda with school leadership teams, teaching staff and corporate service staff.

Create partnerships
- Implement the Parent and Community Engagement Framework, engaging the community, business and industry in decision making.
- Establish strong, innovative and strategic partnerships that expand opportunities and contribute directly to greater student success.

Teaching quality

Develop professional knowledge
- Develop a deep understanding of the P–12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework.
- Use a deep understanding of the Australian Curriculum to adopt and adapt the Curriculum into the Classroom (C2C) materials to suit the school context.

Develop professional practice
- Implement a research-validated school-wide pedagogical framework.
- Improve students' literacy and numeracy achievement in all learning areas.
- Support consistency of teacher judgment and accurate reporting against achievement standards.
- Use peer observation, feedback, differentiated coaching and learning communities to improve teaching practices.

Develop professional engagement
- Support career and capability development using the annual performance review process.
- Use the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) to guide capability development.

Principal leadership and performance

Lead teaching and learning
- Build a shared belief that all students can learn and all teachers can teach.
- Lead and model student-centred professional learning communities.
- Be an instructional leader.

Develop self and others
- Support all staff to achieve high standards of professionalism and develop leadership capacity.
- Build our future leaders.
- Build capability, drawing on the Australian Professional Standards for Principals, the APST, and strategic initiatives, to personalise pathways.

Lead improvement, innovation and change
- Drive and lead future-focused school improvement change within and amongst schools.
- Contribute to the evidence base for system-wide student-focused innovation, learning and improvement.

School performance

Know your data
- Triangulate available data to monitor performance and inform practice.
- Use research evidence to determine what works best in each context.
- Apply the learning from school reviews to inform the improvement agenda.

Know your strategies
- Develop and drive school improvement through an explicit improvement agenda, underpinned by the School Improvement Hierarchy and the School planning, reviewing and reporting framework.
- Share successful practice across classrooms to ensure better outcomes for students.
- Work collaboratively within and across schools to improve performance.

Access current resources
DET employees only