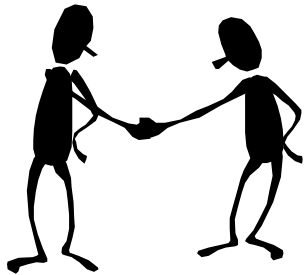


A JOURNEY THROUGH THE STUDENT COUNCIL SCHOOL YEAR

America’s future leaders are sitting in elementary classrooms today . . . and one of the best ways to foster their leadership and academic skills is through a student council. Student council is democracy in action. It teaches children that they truly can make a difference—at home, at school, in the community, and in the greater world society.

Here are a few ideas to help get your student council off to a great start.

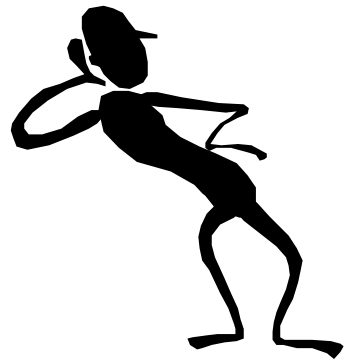
Build Teacher Support



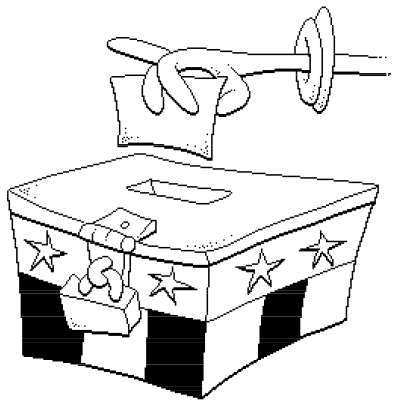
- Explain how a student council can help students build academic and leadership skills. Review the benefits for school and community.
- Recruit an advisor – the student council advisor is critical to the success of the program. This individual is usually a faculty member (or the principal) and wears many hats. Responsibilities include: instructing students on council rules and student government, helping students plan and conduct special events, and fostering leadership skills.
- Determine the structure of the student council with the administration
- Determine election/appointment/petition procedures

Tell the Kids

- The advisor and principal should plan a schedule of events leading to elections. The schedule can be given to staff and presented to students at an all-school assembly. Be sure to explain the purpose and function of student council, along with the duties of officers and class representatives and campaign “do’s and don’ts” (i.e., posters, speeches, and handouts). Explain election/application/petition rules and procedures for officers, executive staff, senators, representatives, etc. Distribute materials to interested students.
- Hold a faculty meeting to garner support for student council and to explain election details.



- Letters should be sent to student candidates' parents detailing:
 - duties of representatives and officers
 - campaign rules
 - time and date of campaign speeches
- Conduct a school assembly or grade level town meetings for student campaign speeches (if using popular vote or petitioning). Encourage students to make posters and pass out flyers. Many schools hold “primary elections,” where each classroom elects a representative. Later, older students (usually fourth and fifth graders) nominate candidates for student council offices in larger “general elections.”



Election/Appointment Day

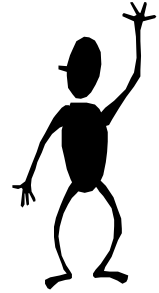
- Individual classrooms representatives/senators.
- All students vote/sign petitions for officers/executive staff/etc.
- Ask parents to help with voting and ballot counting if using popular election. Parents can volunteer as election monitors. Some parents can monitor “voter registration,” checking names off a complete room list. Others can direct traffic, oversee locked ballot boxes, help students count the ballots, and deliver results to the principal.
- Local city officials can be invited to help students vote. Some schools even use a voting machine—an excellent learning experience for the children.
- Invite the local paper to take pictures at this exciting event. Notify all candidates before announcing to the school. Announce elections results in the school newsletter
- Have a panel of teachers/administrators make recommendations for appointed positions.

Install Officers

- Have a ceremony for new officers and representatives at the first student council meeting or schedule an after-school event.
- For a special touch, invite parents, guardians, and friends to a special evening event.

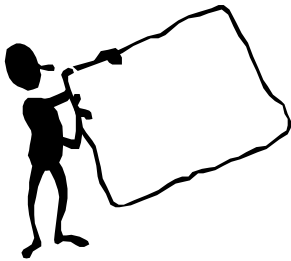
Hold Meetings

- ❑ Hold meetings in a quiet, comfortable room.
- ❑ Prepare an agenda for the group.
- ❑ Keep meetings brief, and remind students to raise their hands to speak.
- ❑ Consider using meeting time to present leadership workshops, have guest speakers, write and discuss legislation, plan projects/activities, evaluate projects/activities, etc.



Develop a Constitution

- ❑ Study the U.S. Constitution and other groups' constitutions.
- ❑ Vote to approve one for your own student council.



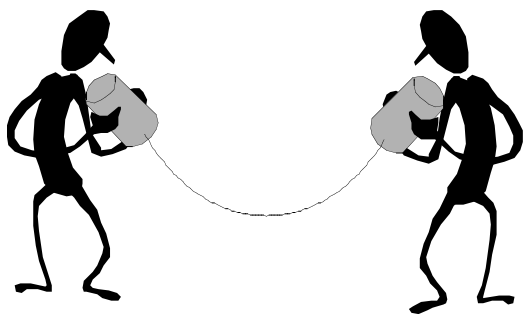
Conduct Projects/Activities

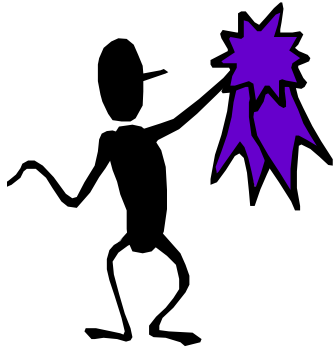
- ❑ Set goals first and be sure activities relate to them.
- ❑ Try a variety of projects: school spirit, community service, citizenship, social and fundraising.
- ❑ Form special committees to work on projects and select/elect students to chair them.



Tell Everyone

- ❑ Have officers give student council updates during morning announcements.
- ❑ Contact newspapers and radio and TV stations to tell them about service projects and special events.
- ❑ Have students write articles for the school newsletter on student council activities.





How did you Do?

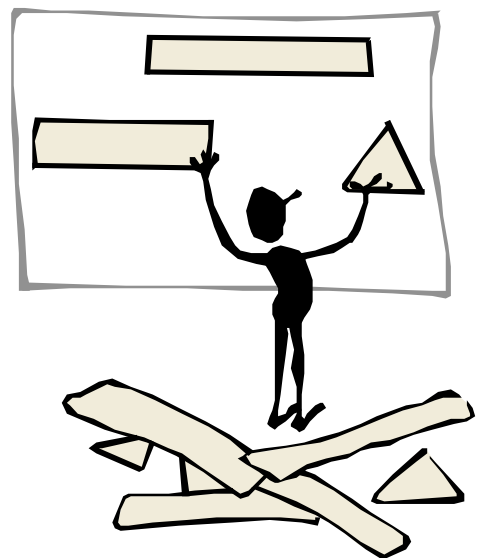
- Did service projects and activities further your goals?
- Did you stay within your budget?
- What should be done differently next year?

Plan Ahead

- Start now to make a calendar of student activities for the next school year!

Resources

- The American Student Council Association (ASCA) can help you build a strong student council program. Materials available include an installation ceremony, meeting agendas, parliamentary procedures, project ideas, recognition materials, and much more. For a complete product list, contact ASCA, 1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3483; (703) 684-3345



*(The above information was modified from the
National Association of Elementary School Principals)*

KCrawford