

Rules of Order

Rules of order help school councils operate effectively. School councils can establish rules of order, according to their culture and needs. Rules of order help formalize discussion, debate and decisions for the group. It is important that the school council follows a set of rules and that the chair knows the rules and adheres to them. There are official rules, such as Robert's Rules of Order or simplified versions, such as those outlined below.

Simple Rules of Order

1. An individual must be recognized by the chair before obtaining the floor to make a motion.
2. Once an individual has the floor, he or she may make a formal proposal or motion, beginning with the statement, "I move ..."
3. Another individual must second the motion by saying, "I second the motion." This indicates that he or she agrees, in principle, and that the proposal should be discussed.
4. Once a motion is made and seconded, the chair states the motion so everyone is clear on what is being proposed. From this point until the motion has been voted on, all discussion focuses on the question.
5. After stating the motion, the chair asks if the assembly is ready for the motion or ready to vote on the proposal.
6. If no one indicates a desire to speak to the issue, the chair puts the motion or conducts the vote by asking for those in favour and those opposed. The vote may be conducted by a show of hands, by standing or by ballot.
7. If members of the group wish to discuss the motion, the chair opens debate. Each participant may speak to the motion twice. Once debate is complete, the chair puts the motion.
8. The majority needed to pass the motion should be stated in the school council operational procedures; e.g., 51%. In case of a tie, the motion is lost.