

**Rules and Orders of Procedure for
Whittier Elementary Community Council
2021-22**

Whittier's Community Council will not transact business, except at a regularly called meeting, with prior notice given to all members and the community. We will follow the form, timing, and publication of all notices according to state law. We will follow our previously prepared agenda.

Establishing a quorum

The transaction of business requires the presence of a quorum, which is a majority of the council membership. For a seven-member SCC, at least four must be present; for a five-member SCC, at least three members must be present. If a quorum is present, the council may proceed to the business at hand. If a quorum is not present, a meeting can only be informational, and no business can be transacted. In the absence of both officers, another person is appointed to function as chair.

Methods of action

Matters will be acted upon following a motion and acceptance for council consideration (usually by a "second."). The substance of the motion is written into the minutes.

Deliberating proposed actions

Appropriate discussion will precede any decisions or votes taken by the SCC.

Voting

The chair will call for a vote when there is a motion on the floor, and the chair determines that productive discussion has run its course.

Voting order – The chair will most likely call for "all in favor" and "all opposed". The minutes will reflect individual votes if the vote is not unanimous. However, the chair may choose to use a roll call vote if he/she feels that this individual voting process helps the Council move toward settling a specific issue. The vote will be called alphabetically by last names or by the seating arrangement in the room. All members present will vote on a motion. They may vote "yes," "no," or "abstain."

Vote required to carry a motion – When a vote is taken on a motion before the council and a quorum is present, a majority of the votes of the members voting "yes" or "no" determines the outcome (i.e. abstentions are not counted). In the event of a tie vote, the motion is lost. When votes are entered in the minutes, "abstain" votes shall be recorded as such.

Vote required for added members to the council or to appoint chair and vice chair

Vote will be taken via silent ballot and will be counted by two members of the council who are not nominated to office. Those elected will be recorded in the minutes.

Striving for consensus

On critical issues, such as adopting the SSAP, or funding a plan, Whittier SCC will strive for a unanimous vote. On such issues, we will work to have both sides compromise by moving to a middle

ground or to a whole new solution that everyone can support. We will strive for consensus rather than majority rule, even if it means adopting everyone's second choice.

A consensus is reached when every member can agree to support the decision even though the decision may not have been anyone's first choice. Members with differing views discuss the issue until they reach a common ground.

In making decisions by consensus, it is essential that all members of the council:

- Have ample information and time to study it;
- Candidly share their views and listen to the views of others;
- Attempt to find a decision that all members can support, not just a simple majority;
- Agree to support the final decision.

Tie votes – A tie means the motion was defeated. Any member of the council can present an alternative motion; however, the motion may be ruled out of order by the chair or by vote of the council if the alternative is deemed too similar to the original defeated motion.

Parliamentary procedure

Whittier Elementary will follow *Robert's Rules of Order* for small assemblies (less than 12 persons), suggested by Gurdon H. Buck of the Hartford, Connecticut Bar:

- Members are not required to obtain the floor before speaking or making a motion, which can be done while seated. The chair merely recognizes the person.
- Motions need not be seconded, although the chair should repeat the motion so that the Council knows what is being discussed. Before there is a vote, the proposed resolution should be repeated by the chair unless the resolution is clear. (A long motion should be in writing to assist the chair.)
- There is no limit on the number of times that a person can speak, although it is not proper for a member to speak if a person who has not spoken wishes to be recognized. It is never proper to interrupt.
- Informal discussion on a topic is permitted, even though no motion is pending. (It is required, however, to stick to the agenda.)
- When a proposal is perfectly clear to the council, a vote can be taken without a motion having been made, but the chair is responsible for expressing the resolution before it is put to a vote.
- The chair need not rise while putting questions to a vote.
- The chair can participate in the discussion and unless there is a rule or custom of the council to the contrary, can make motions and vote.
- In order to have the benefit of the council's matured judgment, no motions to close or limit debate (such as "calling the question") are permitted.

Adjourned meetings

Public notice, including an agenda, will be given at least 24 hours before a reconvened meeting as well as for a special meeting except in an emergency situation.

A regular meeting scenario

Whittier's principal and SCC members will have compiled information regarding each item of business and distributed it to members of the council ahead of the meeting whenever possible. Members should

have studied the agenda material prior to the meeting, know in advance the major issues the council will be discussing and deciding, know what questions they want to ask, and begin to form their views by the time the meeting starts. Council members should reserve final judgment on issues until the full council has had an opportunity to deliberate.

Whittier's Community Council will operate its meetings similar to the following agenda:

1. Call to order.

Chair: "The meeting will now come to order."
(The Council could do a pledge to the flag.)

2. Roll call.

Names of those members present and absent will be recorded in the minutes. The roll may be called formally out loud or taken silently. If a quorum is present the council proceeds to the business at hand. If a member misses twice in a school year without previous excusal, they will be contacted by the Community Council chair or vice chair and told that if they miss a third Council meeting without excusal during the school year, a new person will be appointed in their place. If they miss half of the meetings or more within a school year, with or without excuse, a new person will be appointed in their place.

3. Approval of the minutes.

Chair: "Are there any corrections or additions to the minutes of our last meeting (date)?"
Minutes can be distributed with the agenda packet, eliminating the need to read them at the meeting. At this point a member is free to suggest any changes to the minutes that may be more in accord with the facts or other changes in the interest of clarity or accuracy.
The minutes must always reflect the truth and must state exactly what action was taken. Any action of the council may be reviewed, reconsidered, reversed or rescinded by vote on a new motion.

4. Report of the principal.

Chair: "We will now hear the report of our principal."
As the chief executive officer of the school, the principal should be called upon to make regular brief reports. Many of the issues or problems the principal presents may have a direct bearing on the decisions to be made when the council considers the action items.

5. Public participation.

Chair: "We have with us tonight (naming the individual or organization waiting to be heard) who wishes to present a matter for consideration to the council."
Or, "Do we have anyone present who wishes to address the council?"
The chair may indicate the nature of the business if the chair knows what it is. Public participants should be allotted a reasonable amount of time as determined by the council.

6. Items for council action.

Chair: "The council will now consider action on the following item(s)."
Note that the council may take action only on items listed on the agenda.

7. Announcements.

Chair: "Are there any announcements to report?"

This may include announcement of special school events, parent-teacher meetings, civic meetings, or similar news.

8. Adjournment.

Chair: "If there is no further business to come before the council, the meeting stands adjourned."

The meeting also may be adjourned upon the passage of a motion to adjourn made by one of the council members.