

# THE BASICS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Parliamentary Procedure is an effective method for a Student Council to use when making decisions. Parliamentary Procedure is based on these principles:

- Only one idea should be considered at a time.
- Individuals should be encouraged to introduce ideas, but the decisions should be made by the entire group.
- Decisions should be according to majority rule, but the rights of the minority should be protected.

Some councils are small and friendly enough that they may feel they do not need the formal wording and rules of Parliamentary Procedure. It is possible to follow the principles of Parliamentary Procedure without using its system of rules and motions, but using Parliamentary Procedure provides valuable citizenship training for Student Council members. Parliamentary Procedure may seem complicated at first, but with practice, it allows for decisions to be made smoothly and fairly.

Some common Parliamentary terms are:

## **Motion**

The starting point for any action to be taken by the entire group, it is a proposal for action. It must have a **second** to be considered for discussion

## **Second**

Another council member expresses agreement with the motion presented

## **Amend**

To change or modify the motion

## **Call for the Question**

To end discussion on a motion by bringing it to an immediate vote

## **Table**

To postpone consideration of a question temporarily

## **Voice Vote**

To take a vote by asking for *ayes* and *nays*

## **Division of the House**

To take a vote by a show of hands, standing, or secret ballot, usually after a voice vote seems to show equal votes for and against the motion

## **Adjourn**

To close the meeting

# PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

| When a member wants to . . .   | He/She Says                                   | May He/She Interrupt a Speaker | Must It Be Seconded | Is the Motion Debatable | What Vote Is Required |
|--|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| have the group take definite action; make a motion                   | "I move that . . ."                           | No                             | Yes                 | Yes                     | Majority              |
| clarify or correct procedure   | "Point of Order"                              | Yes                            | No                  | No                      | President decides     |
| close discussion and vote  | "I call for the question."                    | No                             | Yes                 | No                      | 2.3                   |
| ask for a show of hands when the result of a voice vote is not clear | "I call for a division of the house."         | No                             | No                  | No                      | None                  |
| reconsider something already acted upon                              | "I move we reconsider our action about . . ." | No                             | Yes                 | No                      | Majority              |
| adjourn, or end, the meeting   | "I move that we adjourn the meeting."         | No                             | Yes                 | No                      | Majority              |
| agree with the motion  | "I second the motion."                        |                                |                     |                         |                       |

# TO PASS A MOTION

1. The President says, "If we want to take action on this idea, then someone needs to make a motion. Does anyone want to make a motion?"
2. A Student Council member makes a motion by saying, "I move that....."
3. The President asks, "Is there a second to the motion?"
4. A Student Council member says, "I second the motion."
5. The President restates the motion by saying, "It has been moved and seconded that . . . ."  
Then the President says, "Is there any discussion?"
6. The President calls on Student Council members who raise their hands to speak either in favor or against the motion. During discussion, the President should **summarize** what has been said and/or **clarify** what has been said. It is "out of order" to discuss anything other than the motion at this time.
7. When the President feels that discussion is completed, the President says, "If there is no further discussion, we will vote on the motion."
8. The President restates the motion, or has the Secretary restate the motion. Then the President says, "All in favor say, 'Aye'. All those opposed say, 'No'." A majority vote is needed to pass a motion. If the President is not sure after the voice vote, the President may call for a show of hands or a roll call vote.
9. The President then announces the results by saying, "The motion is passed," or, "The motion has failed."



Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Student Council Agenda for \_\_\_\_\_

Month

Day

Year

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. READING OF THE MINUTES

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT

V. OFFICERS' REPORTS

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1.

2.

3.

4.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1.

2.

3.

4.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1.

2.

3.

4.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1.

2.

X. ADJOURNMENT



# AGENDA

An agenda is a guide to an organized meeting. It is a list of the specific items to be presented to the Student Council. The agenda is prepared by the Executive Board before the Student Council meeting and copies of it are distributed to all Student Council members. It is also a good idea to distribute copies of the agenda to the school administrators and faculty members.

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Call to Order</b>          | The person in charge of running the meeting, usually the President, officially opens the meeting                      |
| <b>Roll Call</b>              | The Secretary takes attendance to make sure that the required number of voting members are at the meeting             |
| <b>Reading of the Minutes</b> | The Secretary reads a summary of what was done done at the last meeting   |
| <b>Treasurer's Report</b>     | The Treasurer reports on expenses and income since the last meeting and reports on how much money Student Council has |
| <b>Officers' Reports</b>      | Each of the officers may speak about items relating to his/her responsibilities                                       |
| <b>Committee Reports</b>      | The chairperson of each of the permanent and temporary committees reports on what each committee is doing             |
| <b>Old Business</b>           | Items already introduced at a previous meeting which require further discussion or action are considered              |
| <b>New Business</b>           | Any item which has not previously been brought before the Student Council is considered                               |
| <b>Announcements</b>          | Messages are presented which, among other things, may include reminders about coming events                           |
| <b>Adjournment</b>            | A vote is taken to formally end the meeting   |

**Note:** Committee meetings are sometimes included in a Student Council meeting.

# Student Council Officers' Planning Guide for the \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting

Call to Order  
 Roll Call  
 Secretary's Report  
 Treasurer's Report

|   | Officers' Reports | This is What Will be in My Report |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 |                   |                                   |
| 2 |                   |                                   |
| 3 |                   |                                   |
| 4 |                   |                                   |

|   | Committee Reports | Reports Will Include Information about These Projects |
|---|-------------------|---|
| 1 |                   |   |
| 2 |                   |   |
| 3 |                   |   |
| 4 |                   |   |

|   | Old Business | Information Which Needs to be Presented | Presenter |
|---|--------------|---|-----------|
| 1 |              |   |           |
| 2 |              |   |           |
| 3 |              |   |           |
| 4 |              |   |           |

|   | New Business | Information Which Needs to be Presented | Presenter |
|---|--------------|---|-----------|
| 1 |              |   |           |
| 2 |              |   |           |
| 3 |              |   |           |
| 4 |              |   |           |

|   | Announcements | Presenter |
|---|---------------|-----------|
| 1 |               |           |
| 2 |               |           |

| Things I Need to do before this Meeting |
|---|
|   |
|   |
|   |