

Finding Time to Meet: Officers/Committee Chairs/Full Council:

The first step in creating a time for meetings is a frank and honest discussion with the officers and then the committee chairs and cabinet to ascertain their individual and collective commitment to the success of the organization. Is the work of Council important? If it is, then begin by working on specific goals for the new year followed by specific objectives. Build the Council slowly, don't over commit, but reach for excellence in all that the Council does. Find examples of successful Councils and work to build your organization around examples of success. PASC can help in creating physical exchanges between schools or internet interaction.

1. Once goals and a commitment to achieving those goals is in place, **survey officers and cabinet members on their personal schedules** and commitment to other activities, sports, and of course academic success.
2. **Use the survey to develop a calendar that works for the group. Be ready to compromise.** Every meeting of the officers and or full cabinet may not be able to be at the same time and place every week. Members and advisors may need to commit to missing another activity once in a while to accommodate the schedule of others. Work as a TEAM to plan meetings. Consider officer and cabinet meetings:

Before school at 7:00 AM with members bringing breakfast treats

Directly after school before the start of athletic practices (short meetings)

An evening meeting after athletic practices

On a Sunday evening at someone's home

Specific officers meeting with assigned chairs during their lunch period (not everyone meets all of the time).

Any of these time ideas can work with proper planning and individual compromises for the good of the Council.

3. **Nothing works better than face to face meetings, however, use of the internet is the key to 21st Century meetings for busy people.** Council Chat Room, A Council Facebook Group, or the use of a Google Group and Google Docs allows Council members to interact, to share ideas and opinions, and to develop proposals with a limited amount of face to face time. This again requires pre-planning, a commitment to communicate in a timely fashion, and an understanding of the importance of follow through on group tasks.
4. **When to hold Council meetings?** This may be one of the greatest challenges faced in schools today with no homeroom periods, block schedules, assigned academic tutoring time to support PSSA testing, and normal busy schedules for students and advisors. A key to success in scheduling time is allowing the administration and faculty to see that the work of the Council is important to the climate and positive attitude in the school. Council goals, commitment of student officers to Council excellence, a serious commitment to represent all students and constructive meetings by the advisor and officer with the administrative team are essential in developing a understanding by the principal and the staff that what Council does for the school is critical to the school's success and thus needs a commitment of time. **Student Council must be seen as an important co-curricular aspect of the school and not an extra-curricular activity.**

Meeting options:

Meet before school if buses arrive early or if students walk or can car-pool

Meet once every other week for one class period or 45 minutes in a block schedule. Rotate meetings so that they do not occur more than once during the same time period in a two month period.

Meet after school, particularly between athletic seasons

Meet one evening a month from 7:00-9:00 PM. Use part of that time (45 minutes) for committee meetings so that when items come before the General Assembly they are well developed proposals and can be debated on their merits without questions on small details based on a lack of planning.

Work with the administration to plan meetings using a combination of the above schedule times to minimize the impact on academics or any group within the student body. All students should feel that they can be represented in the Council.