Collaboration Workshop

Planning our School Association Priorities

Introduction

This short activity helps School Association committees talk about what matters most to their school community with the aim to focus time and energy on actions that achieve said priorities.

You don't need a formal strategic plan, but this might be a good way to consider this process. You're simply aiming to agree on a few shared priorities.

Allow 20–30 minutes.

Step 1: What matters in our school community?

Start by talking and brainstorming together.

- What do we value about our school?
- What helps our school community feel strong and connected
- What do families often talk about?

Write down your ideas.

Step 2: What is the school working on?

Ask the Principal to briefly share:

- Current school improvement priorities, including data (if relevant)
- Areas where community support might help.
- Opportunities for families to be involved.

Step 3: Where could the School Association add value?

Consider what you heard in Steps 1 and 2. Discuss where the School Association could make a useful difference within its role.

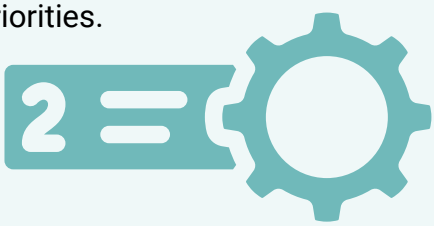
Some priorities may align with the school's priorities. Others may focus on family voice, connection, communication, participation or another community need.

Ask:

- What matters most to families and the school community?
- Where is there a clear need or opportunity?
- Where could the Association add value?
- What can the Association realistically influence?
- Does it fit the Association's role and capacity?



Write down the strongest possibilities before choosing three or four priorities.



Possible priority areas might include:

- Strengthening family connection and belonging
- Improving communication and family voice
- Increasing family participation and engagement
- Supporting student learning or wellbeing
- Expanding opportunities for students
- Linking fundraising to an agreed school-community need



Step 4: Choose a few priorities

Most School Associations find it helpful to focus on three or four priorities.
These should be things your committee can realistically support.
You may wish to pause here and seek feedback from the school community and dicuss as a committee to determine possible priorites.

Step 5: What might achieving the priorities look like?

For each priority, write one or two practical actions.

Examples

- Host a community event for connection
- Create a volunteer register for supporting curriculum
- Support a student wellbeing activity
- Raise funds for a school project
- Improve communication with families for engagement and involvement.

Step 6: Write it down

You may wish to record your priorities in a short document so future committees understand what you are working towards.
School Association actions can be embedded in the School's Improvement Plan if they fit.
Reflecting on the priorities and actions at each committee meeting should become part of general practice.
Remember, this is simply a guide for your work - it can change as your school community changes – it should be a living document.

A helpful reminder

School Associations exist to support the school community, foster cooperation between families and staff, and contribute to the life of the school.
Your priorities should always come back to supporting students and your school community.

Examples of School Association Priorities

Community connection

- Hosting community events
- Welcoming new families
- Supporting school celebrations
- Encouraging volunteering opportunities
- Strengthening connections between families and the school.

Fundraising and resources

- Organising fundraising events
- Applying for community or government grant
- Supporting playground improvements or equipment
- Supporting extracurricular programs or student opportunities

Supporting learning and wellbeing

- Fundraising for learning resources
- Supporting literacy or numeracy initiatives
- Supporting student wellbeing programs
- Providing knowledge of parent expertise that links with curriculum learnings
- Helping create welcoming and inclusive spaces
- Supporting excursions, programs or activities

Communication and family voice

- Supporting communication between families and the school
- Gathering feedback from families
- Helping explain school initiatives to the community
- Encouraging parent participation in School Association meetings

