



# SCHOOL COUNCIL

## NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2018 • VOLUME 24

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Happy New Year!! We hope that 2018 will be a productive and successful year for all educators, parents and students in school boards across Ontario.

The month of January is an excellent time to review the goals and progress of your school council. This issue will explore the ways in which a council might break down their goals and assess how they may need to change. Perhaps there are things that have not yet been done or it may be that you have been able to accomplish much more than you thought in the first four months of school.

Parents Engaged in Education are undertaking the same process for our organization and are very proud of the year of 2017. Last year saw two very successful province-

wide parent events which provided attendees with great information and training for their role in school councils. In addition, we became a registered charity and added the first Ontario Parent Engagement Forum allowing parents to share questions and opinions.

January 11, 2018, will see the opening of our Parent Resource Centre. This centre will provide parents the opportunity to learn how to work with their children academically and mentally at home. Sessions will also focus on skill building workshops for parent leaders in school councils. One of immediate goals for the new year is to allow parents from across Ontario access to these workshops through Facebook Live or webinars.

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Sara Westbrook

7 Emotional Intelligence

Skills to Teach Your

Child in 2018

ST. CLAIR



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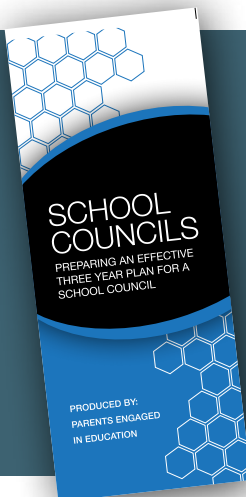
# Mid Year Review of SCHOOL COUNCIL PLAN

To operate effectively a school council must have a plan. Whether this plan is a longer range formal written plan or just an agreement at the beginning of the year of what you hope to accomplish this school year. A plan helps the council stay on track, engage parents in your goals and provides a sense of accomplishment as the council completes each task in the plan.

If you have not developed a plan for this school year by this time in the year, it is not too late. At the January meeting, put this item on the agenda. Look at what has been discussed in the past few months, what has the council voted on what they want to implement or issue that is the biggest priority for the school.



**Parents**  
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**FREE**  
*this*  
**month**

Summarize these items in a report to the council and ask them to participate in establishing a 6 month plan. Beside is a suggested format that might be helpful.

Working with this format, continue to add the items which your council choose as priorities for the short term. Different from a long range plan this plan does not have expected completion dates or progression notes because it is expected these items will be completed in the current year.

Developing a three-year plan is the most beneficial way to see your goals move forward and to engage others in your plan. This may be the time to look at planning for this type of goal setting to be undertaken at the beginning of the new school year. For further information on long term planning please feel free to download our brochure at [www.parentsengagedineducation.ca](http://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca).

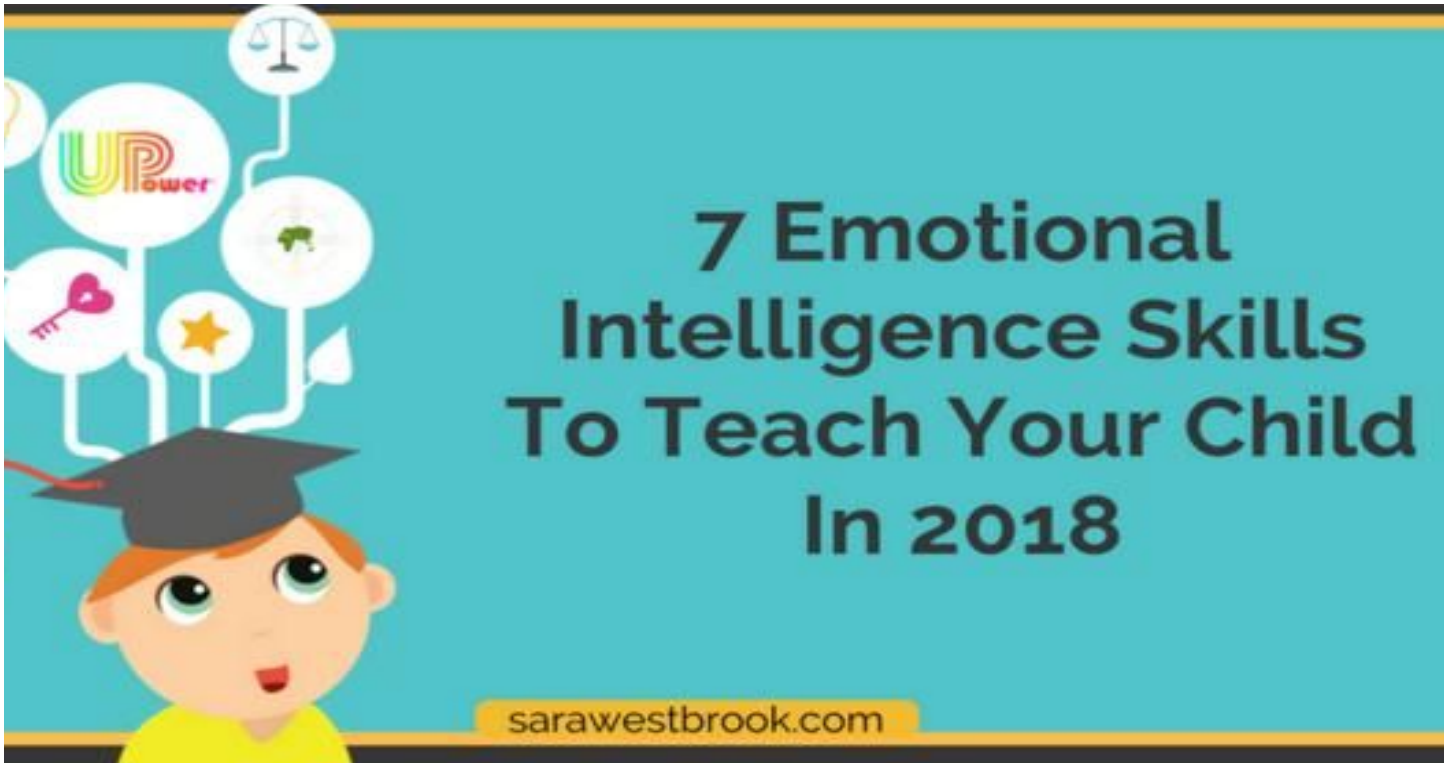
As you take the time to develop a plan for the balance of the year, it is the perfect time to review the successes and accomplishments of your council since the beginning of the school year! Thank all those who have helped the council do so much already.

DESCRIPTION OF GOAL	ACTION PLAN	PERSON/ COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE
Increase communication with school community	Establish a communication sub-committee to accomplish: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a quarterly newsletter.</li> <li>2. Keep School Council website or school website council section updated with work/events of the council.</li> <li>3. Increase social media presence and promote to parents to follow for updated information on council work.</li> </ol>	Communication Committee
Increase understanding of the School Learning Improvement Plan	Meet with the Principal to establish a meeting date that the topic could be included on the agenda.  Following this meeting, prepare a report for parent community providing a simple review of the plan. This communication will be approved by the Principal prior to being released to the community.	Chair  Chair and Secretary

**DOWNLOAD THIS  
FREE BROCHURE  
FROM OUR WEBSITE.**

**PREPARING AN EFFECTIVE  
THREE YEAR PLAN FOR A  
SCHOOL COUNCIL**

*ParentsEngagedInEducation.ca*



At the beginning of each year, many people set their intentions and create resolutions. They see the New Year as an opportunity to change something they feel stuck or unhappy within their life and hope to use January as the motivation they've been missing to make it happen.

Sadly, it's estimated by University of Scranton Psychology Professor John C. Norcross that less than 10% of New Year's resolutions are actually achieved. So instead of passing this ineffective ritual onto our children, let's use 2018 as an opportunity to teach them the emotional intelligence skills they need to be successful every day of the year.

### 1. DREAM BIG

Believing that big dreams are possible is an important part of building confidence. Working towards achieving dreams helps young people be responsible for their choices, rather than victims of their circumstances.

Dreams become achievable through goal setting and taking action. By taking consistent small steps towards their goals, a child

learns that their effort creates outcomes. Through this process, they learn that setbacks and challenges will happen. Instead of being stuck, feeling overwhelmed or giving up, they learn to change their choices.

You can help a child to dream big by encouraging them to keep a journal, make a bucket list or a UPower map . Then coach them to make choices that will give them the end result they want.





## 2. CULTIVATE A GROWTH MINDSET

The mindset that a child has will determine the level of success they experience. A child with a Growth Mindset sees setbacks and challenges as opportunities for learning and knows that skills

come with hard work, rather than being born with the abilities.

A child with a Fixed Mindset thinks they are either good at something, or not. They tend to give up easily on things that don't come naturally and think this isn't something they can change.

We can help cultivate a Growth Mindset in children by focusing on praising the strategy they tried, the choices they made, and the effort they put in. Let them know the character trait they used to get there. For example: 'Great Job! I like how you chose to be determined to get the job done.'

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and knows that skills come with hard work, rather than being born with the abilities.



[sarawestbrook.com](http://sarawestbrook.com)

## 3. IDENTIFY EMOTIONS

Children who can identify, feel, and release emotions in a healthy way are happier, more resilient, and have richer relationships.

When a child is acting out, it's easy to respond to their behaviour by asking, 'Why did you say/do that?!' Asking them 'why' questions usually elicit answers like:

- 'I felt like it' 'I wanted to'
- 'It doesn't matter anyway'
- 'I don't know'
- "They did this to me so I..."

Since behaviours happen because of an emotion a child is feeling, a more effective question to ask is: 'What were you feeling when this happened?'

Ask them the emotion they are experiencing. If they don't have the words, they can use the Elephant in the Room poster to help them identify it. Once they have identified their emotion, ask them how they can release it in a healthy way. One of my favourite ways to release my emotions is journaling .

Here are some other suggestions .



Children who can identify, feel, and release emotions in a healthy way are **happier, more resilient, and have richer relationships.**

EMOTIONS ARE NORMAL. MOVING THROUGH THEM IN HEALTHY WAYS IS ESSENTIAL. USE THIS LIST TO HELP YOU MOVE THROUGH YOUR EMOTIONS.

- EXERCISE SKATEBOARDING PRAY PLAY A SPORT
- FORGIVE DRINK TEA READ
- TALK TO SOMEONE NATURE WALK
- DO SOMETHING YOU LOVE BIKING ●
- PLAY AN INSTRUMENT Give a Hug/Get a Hug
- CRY WATCH A MOVIE GO FOR A WALK
- TALK TO A PET SWIMMING
- TAKE A SHOWER/BATH Take a Nap
- YELL/SCREAM INTO A PILLOW LAUGH Go Shopping
- PHOTOGRAPHY Video Games ●
- CALL A FRIEND ● Hangout with a Friend COOKING
- HAVE A SNACK YOGA LISTEN TO POSITIVE
- MUSIC BAKING DRAW PAINT Poetry
- Punch a Pillow BREATHE THINK OF SOMETHING FUNNY
- ARTS & CRAFTS DANCING DRAW YOUR FEELINGS
- JUMP ON TRAMPOLINE SCRAPBOOKING
- WALK YOUR DOG RUN UPOWER JOURNAL

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Without recognizing the emotion that created the behaviour, a child is less likely to learn the self awareness necessary to tolerate and release those emotions in a healthy way.

#### 4. SET BOUNDARIES

As parents, we would like to save our children from challenges and difficult emotions, but that's not possible, nor would it benefit them. They need boundaries, limits, and structures and they also need to understand that choices have consequences.

A child must experience and learn how to move through disappointment, adversity, and emotions like anger, sadness, frustration and anxiety in preparation for the challenges and struggles they will face.

Our role is to say no when appropriate and stick to it. Children hearing "no" will beg, plead, compare, get angry, and sometimes declare you are mean and they don't like you. Creating Healthy Boundaries can be tough on us when our own emotions come into play - especially the emotion of guilt.

Find your healthy way to move through your emotions knowing that your job is to stay steadfast and endure, knowing this too will pass. In following through, we are teaching children the valuable skill of how to bounce back from upset and disappointment.

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### 5. ENCOURAGE POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Over time what children say and repeat to themselves will determine their self confidence and ability to bounce back. It can even affect how big they allow themselves to dream.

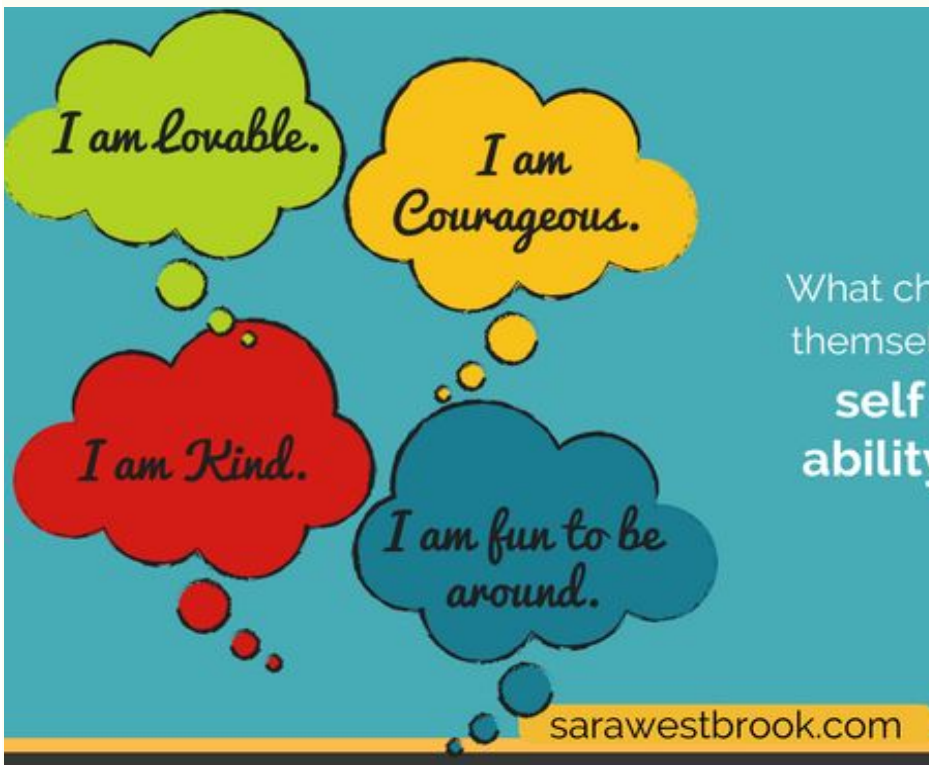
In my UPower Journal , I teach children the following affirmations:

## Children need boundaries, limits, and structures.

They also need to understand that choices have consequences.



- I can do this. I just need to ask for help
  - I choose to put in the effort. Effort pays off.
  - I ask questions even when I am feeling afraid and nervous.
  - I just haven't achieved it... YET.
  - I am perfectly imperfect and that's what's PERFECT about me!
- Encourage positive self talk by helping them identify when they need to make a shift from 'I can't' to 'I can'. Ask them what they could say to themselves that would be more encouraging and caring.



What children say and repeat to themselves will determine their **self confidence and ability to bounce back.**

## 6. REFRAME FAILURE

The fear of failure can stop young people from putting in effort or trying something new.

Making mistakes or “failing” is a necessary part of the learning process and an opportunity for developing creativity, problem solving, and growth. Failure only happens when they give up.

Four ways to help them refocus on being confident and determined:

- Talk to them about the emotions they are experiencing.
- Remind them of their healthy ways

- to move through their emotions and fears.
- Ask what positives they have learned from their experience.
- Discuss what they would do differently next time.



## 7. PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Gratitude is a powerful character trait and a great way to shift from negative emotions to more positive ones.


Studies have shown that even small expressions of gratitude can increase optimism, positivity, and connectedness. These are essential in developing strong character and healthy wellbeing.

Some simple ways to help children build the skill of gratitude include:

- Asking what they are grateful for from their day.
- Starting a daily gratitude journal.
- Sharing handwritten thank you notes when someone does something kind and thoughtful.

Instilling emotional intelligence skills develops confidence, resilience and emotional and mental well-being.

Until next time....



*about the author*

Sara Westbrook is a Motivational Speaker/Singer/Author specializing in Resilience, Confidence & Mental Well-Being. She has performed her UPower presentations to over 250,000 students, parents and educators.

She is author of 'The UPower Journal' - a book for youth to not only express their thoughts and emotions, but also to build their confidence, resilience and mental well-being through the personal stories, many exercises and quotes found inside.

To book a presentation or to learn more about Sara visit [www.sarawestbrook.com](http://www.sarawestbrook.com)



**Gratitude is a powerful character trait and a**

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## ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

# BECOME A PEIE AMBASSADOR

## AND BE A PART OF YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL COMMUNITY



**Parents**  
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*Ambassador*

*A P.E.I.E. Ambassador will...*

Promote the mission of the organization.

Share the organization's resources with their school community.

Work to engage other parents with their children and their school.

Be their child's biggest CHEERLEADER in school!

  
**Ombudsman**  
ONTARIO  
ONTARIO'S WATCHDOG

## Can the Ombudsman help you?

The Ombudsman resolves and investigates complaints about Ontario public sector bodies.

Do you have an unresolved problem with a school board?

Our staff have helped thousands of parents and families with school board issues, such as:

- Student busing and transportation
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- Student safety
- School board administration

We can:

- Refer you to local officials who can resolve the matter
- Investigate problems and recommend solutions
- Answer questions and help you navigate the system



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Parents Engaged in Education

## ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

### Experienced. Knowledgeable. Respected.

It's the start of another new school year filled with great expectations.

Ontario teachers are ready to lead, inspire and develop young hearts and minds.

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## Parents

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[www.parentsengagedineducation.ca](http://www.parentsengagedineducation.ca)  
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647-408-2091

Parents Engaged in Education is a not-for-profit organization formed by experienced school council members to provide resources and skill building opportunities for parent leaders across the province.

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