

One simple guideline can make meetings more productive

By Ann G. Macfarlane, Professional Parliamentarian

Meetings of one type or another can take up to half of the average work day and keeping them productive can sometimes be a challenge. But there's one simple guideline that can save time and improve the content of daily meetings by a thousand percent and it's this: *No one may speak a second time until everyone who wishes to speak has spoken once.*

Taking this guideline seriously, and consistently ensuring that it's followed, will improve meetings of all types – school board, staff, union, PTA, virtually any working gathering. The “speak once” rule is even enshrined in Robert's Rules of Order, the classic American guide to good meetings.

Typically, those with higher social status, the extroverts and the old-timers dominate the discussions, while others sit quietly and don't speak out. Why? There are several reasons:

- **People often don't want to speak out of turn or want to appear to be putting themselves forward.** They think, “It's not my place” and remain silent.
- **People doubt their own judgment.** They may say to themselves, “It looks like these numbers don't add up,” but then conclude, “Oh well, I'm sure the treasurer got it right and I'm just not reading it correctly.”
- **People are lazy.** Engaging in discussion takes energy, and sometimes it's easier to just coast along.

A simple solution to better participation

Once a group is made aware of the “speak once” guideline, the leader and the members should make an explicit commitment to follow it by:

- **Mentioning the guideline at the beginning of every meeting.**
- **Reiterating the rule during the meeting: “Let's be sure to hear from everyone once before we have a second round.”**
- **Utilizing the “round-robin” approach to directly ask each person what they think.**
(Anyone can pass and have a chance at the end, if they wish.)

Over and over this simple guideline has transformed confused, sometimes chaotic, discussions into useful explorations and resolutions of issues. We recommend it to all school leaders and others as a basic tool for running effective, productive meetings.

Ann G. Macfarlane is a professional parliamentarian who spent 10 years leading a parent group in the Shoreline School District of Washington State. She blogs at www.jurassicparliament.com and is the author of *Mastering Council Meetings: A Guidebook for Elected Officials and Local Governments*, available on Amazon.com.



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Coordinated responses to public health threats take teamwork

Public health departments throughout the region are closely monitoring all public health threats, including those of Ebola and Enterovirus, and are preparing coordinated responses should either of these illnesses turn up locally. Public health professionals in Alameda, El Dorado, Merced, Sacramento, Yolo and Solano counties are collectively mobilizing to ensure that:

- Health care providers and hospitals are able to provide timely and accurate information about when to suspect Ebola, how to diagnose the disease, and how to prevent exposure to staff and patients in health care settings;
- Ambulance and other emergency service providers are prepared to safely transport suspected Ebola patients;
- Laboratories are equipped to safely package and ship specimens to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for testing; and the
- California Department of Public Health and other local health departments are ready and able to receive and share the latest information, guidance, and response tools and plans.

In the event of an outbreak, local public health departments will widely disseminate important information and guidance. Their contact and other information are as follows:

Alameda County – Public Health

<http://www.acphd.org>
(510) 267-3250

El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency – Public Health Division

www.edcgov.us/publichealth
(530) 621-6320 – Communicable Disease Section during normal business hours
(800) 901-5789 – Communicable Disease Section after hours, evenings and weekends

Merced County – Public Health

<http://www.co.merced.ca.us>
(209) 381-1200

Sacramento County – Public Health

<http://www.dhhs.saccounty.net>
(916) 875-5881

Solano County – Department of Public Health

(707) 784-8600
<http://www.co.solano.ca.us/depts/ph>

Yolo County – Public Health

<http://www.yolocounty.org/health-human-services/health-department>
(530) 666-8645 (business hours)
(530) 321-3620 (after business hours)

Ebola virus precautions in schools

There has been much in the news about Ebola and its potential dangers. Understanding some basic facts about Ebola is the first step to protecting staff, co-workers and students in the event Ebola turns up in local communities and schools:

Previously known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, it is a rare and deadly disease caused by contamination from one of the Ebola virus strains. The virus can be spread in several ways, including by contact with blood or body fluids from an infected person through broken skin or mucous membranes.

Practicing standard universal precautions is the most effective way to protect students and staff. Review your district’s blood-borne pathogens guidelines. The basic precautions are as follows:

- Wash hands frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid contact with blood/body fluids from any person, particularly from someone who is sick.
- Don’t handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person’s blood or body fluids.
- Review and practice strict protocols for cleanup of blood and body fluids.



(continued on page 3)



Enterovirus: Know the symptoms, practice prevention

Another current health concern is the Enterovirus-D68. Like other viruses, it is important to know the basic facts and precautions. Enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68) can cause mild to severe respiratory illness. Mild symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Cough
- Body and muscle aches



Severe symptoms may include:

- Wheezing
- Difficulty breathing

Since EV-D68 causes respiratory illness, the virus can be found in an infected person's respiratory secretions, such as saliva, nasal mucus or sputum. EV-D68 likely spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes or touches a surface that is then touched by others. In general, infants, children and teenagers are most likely to get infected and children with asthma are most vulnerable.

There are no vaccines for preventing EV-D68. To guard against getting and spreading EV-D68 and other respiratory illnesses, practice the following:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact, such as kissing, hugging and sharing cups or eating utensils, with people who are sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or shirt sleeve, not hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
- Stay home when sick.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Ebola virus precautions *(continued from page 2)*

Other precautions:

- Be aware of staff or students who develop fever (temperature of 101.5 F/38.6 C) and any of these symptoms: headache, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, unexplained bruising/bleeding, and especially if they have recently traveled to West Africa or have been in contact with a confirmed or suspected case of Ebola.
- Check with your local health department for any reporting requirements.

For additional information visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

Source: American Federation of Teachers

Clean for health first, then appearance

By Tony Almeida, Area Custodial Supervisor, Elk Grove USD

Think small when it comes to health and cleaning. While cleaning for appearance removes 'big' visible soil, cleaning for health removes "small" contaminants, such as bacteria, dust, airborne particulates, and a variety of microbes and chemicals. The latter are the primary contributors to unhealthy indoor environments.

Because custodians are very often the first line of defense in maintaining school environments, the way school maintenance staff cleans classrooms and buildings can substantially impact the physical health of the students and staff who use them. For experienced custodians, there are two basic elements for ensuring healthy school environments: non-toxic cleaning products and a team approach to cleaning—using more than one person to routinely maintain a space or facility.

Cleaning for health instead of appearance can directly benefit the one in 13 children who has asthma. Research also shows that there's a real link between clean school buildings, healthy students, productive staff and lower absentee rates.

For information on team cleaning, visit <http://www.teamcleaning.com>.





Confronting the fibber

There's a strategy for dealing with dishonest coworkers

People lie. Even if the lies aren't full-blown fibs, some people withhold information or omit details because doing so benefits them in some way. In the workplace that dishonesty can lead to conflict—and usually causes mistakes and decreases in productivity. If you work with a dishonest person, follow these tips to effectively manage the situation:

- **Determine the severity of the problem.** If your work is suffering or the team is at risk because of the lies, address the matter. If you are merely annoyed because your coworker tells little white lies about his/her personal life, let it go.
- **Be open-minded.** What you view as a lie could simply be a misinterpretation. Consider that you might be misreading the situation or that you might not have all the facts.
- **Stay calm and be gentle.** If the person is lying, he or she may quickly become defensive. Don't mirror that hostility or an argument could break out.
- **Open a dialogue.** Don't go on the attack and outright accuse the person of lying. Instead, talk to the person and ask questions to gain clarification. Example: "I'm confused and would like to clear up a few things with you. You said on Friday that you had called the printer to cancel the order until we could revise the mailer, and you said that you were told it was too late to make changes. Today, Suzette told me that she never received a call from you. Did you call? What time? Who did you speak to?"
- **Let the person off the hook.** If this is a one-time occurrence, let the person save face by overlooking the lie, but do explain how the behavior adversely affects you or the team and tell the person how to handle the situation the next time. Example: "I've heard conflicting stories and we just need to drop it and move on. It's not the end of the world, but we are going to exceed our printing budget this month, which I am unhappy about."
- **Provide instructions for going forward.** Example: "Next time, please ensure that you talk to an actual person, take down a name and number, and ask him or her to send a follow-up email confirming what you discussed. That way we're covered should something like this happen again."

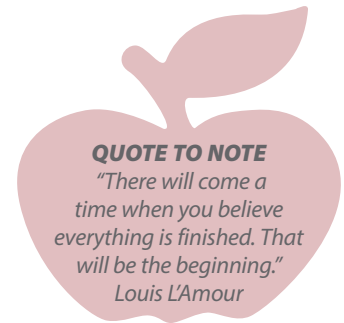
Adapted from "How to Deal with a Dishonest Coworker" by Jonathan Strickland

SIA has online training resources

Visit the SIA website for links to a variety of training videos on subjects ranging from contracts to concussions. Go to www.sia-jpa.org, click on the RESOURCES tab at the top and scroll down to ONLINE TRAINING.

WeTip works and it's free

Are you using WeTip at your site? The service and materials are free to SIA members. For more information, contact Teresa Franco at tfranco@sia-jpa.org.



QUOTE TO NOTE

*"There will come a time when you believe everything is finished. That will be the beginning."
Louis L'Amour*

The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP). Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder.



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