

## **School elections – monitoring and evaluation**



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## Preface

We have researched, drafted, tested, modified and published two booklets, *School elections guidelines* and *School elections – student’s notes*, which already serve as resources for the running of school elections and for much class room teaching and learning. All CBC and PCC, and an increasing number of other school and education authorities have copies of these first two teaching and learning aids.

Continuing our series of Student Leadership publications, is this third booklet *School Elections - monitoring and evaluation*.

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## **Why observe school elections?**

Observing elections can be treated as part of what we call ‘monitoring and evaluation’ which is done to ensure that standards and policy are maintained. Observer’s reports can be used to identify where improvements are needed. Also to ensure transparency and credibility, that the election was fair, which is important if students are to respect the winning candidate.

An election is a competition, played to set rules. The observers reports together, allow everyone to know if rules are followed, by everyone involved.

The report of the election observers panel enables the school authorities, the election organising committee and any other interested parties to evaluate the election process, most importantly to identify changes and improvements that are needed in subsequent years. We also want to identify any extra support or sensitisation that is needed, to make our school elections work well for everyone.

The monitoring process is a practical exercise through which students will learn and develop skills in objective, impartial observation and reporting. They will learn team work and more precisely how a representative council functions - the observers panel composed of elected class representatives has the structure of a school council, responsible for producing a report that can influence how future elections are run. They will learn to be accountable (their report will be publicly available). These are lessons in citizen rights, duties and democratic practice that feature in the Citizenship /civil and moral education syllabus.

## **How to observe school elections**

- i. The principal will establish an election observers panel. It will be composed of non-post holding staff members and representatives from each class. There will be a minimum of one boy and one girl representative of each stream of each class.
- ii. Student members of the observers panel will be selected by a class vote, organised according to principles outlined in the school elections guidelines.
- iii. Students will not observe proceedings in their own class. Form one students may observe form 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6. Form 2 may observe form 1, 3, 4, 5 or 6, and so on.
- iv. Observation involves the whole election period: planning, preparation, the ballot, count, publication of results, etc.
- v. Observers will have a check list of things to observe and record. The check list will correspond to the stages in the guidelines for running of elections.
- vi. The people on the Observers panel must be different to the people organising the election. This helps to ensure objectivity.

- vii. Observers must understand what it means to be objective and neutral. Their role is to record whether guidelines are followed, or not. They note what they see – there is a section for extra comments.
- viii. Observers must be equipped, with all the papers, pens, etc they need to fulfil their task.
- ix. Generally, an observer is a person who watches, takes notes and records proceedings, without participating. In the school situation, in order that observers exercise their civic duty they should vote in the classes they are observing: eg. a form one student observing a lower six class ballot, casts his vote in that lower six class.
- x. The report is not concerned with the result, only the process, including that results are reported honestly, accurately and according to published programme.
- xi. The observers panel will verbally present their combined report to general assembly, normally within 48 hours of the proclamation of election results. This could be at the time of installation of the new prefects. The written report, signed as agreed by all observers, with original observers forms from all classes attached, will be submitted to the principal at the end of the presentation.

## **Rules for observers**

- i. Observers must know and understand the school election guidelines, and school rules.
- ii. Observers must know how to complete the observation forms.
- iii. Observers must not disrupt, interfere with or influence activities.
- iv. Observers may not replace or relieve those running the election.
- v. Observers must be friendly, low-key, objective. They must be truthful and accurate. They must be completely neutral, and comply with the instructions of administration.
- vi. If dissatisfied observers must write this down in their report, not communicate their dissatisfaction.
- vii. Observers must not work to advance or defeat any candidate.
- viii. Observers will be observant and be perceptive, that is able to find out information, listen and record unobtrusively.

## **OBSERVATION FORM**

		<b>YES/NO</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Election committee	Are students, staff and admin represented on the elections committee?		
	Are students, staff and admin actively involved in organising and running the elections?		
Application process	Are the following posted on notice boards and known by students?		
	List of prefect posts to be filled?		
	Description of duties and responsibility of each vacant post?		
	Qualifications for prefectship?		
	Rules and regulations for prefects?		
	Application procedure?		
Logistics	Preparation		
	Are materials prepared in good time?		
	Are schedules made and published?		
	Are application forms available to all interested candidates?		
Student awareness	By Talking to students observers will ascertain whether		
	They know what they are voting for?		
	They know the voting process?		
	They know why to vote?		
	They know how to vote, ie. how to choose a good leader?		
	Have they been encouraged to participate in student government?		

Selection of candidates	Is the whole or a representative sample of election organising committee included in selection?		
	Are all qualified applicants considered?		
	Is the application process objective, with decisions based on merit not on personal feelings or preferences of individual staff?		
Campaign	Is it orderly?		
	Is the code of conduct for election campaign enforced? On campus? In dormitories? At hustings?		
Voting	Are ballot papers clear and available?		
	Do students know the voting procedure?		
	Is the vote secret?		
Counting the votes	Are admin and students involved in counting?		
	Is the count public?		
	Is the count at the site of the vote?		
	Is announcing the result immediate and undisputable?		
	If the vote is made class by class Are all classes represented when class votes are totalled for final result?  Are original results of each class vote pasted together, with the overall total, on the central notice board?		
	Does appointment clearly follow the vote?		

<b>NAME OF SCHOOL</b>		<b>DATE</b>	
<b>OBSERVER'S NAME &amp; SIGNATURE</b>			

**Record any other comments and observations here**