Committee Role Play

Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No 9

Inquiry into:

Proposal to increase school hours to between 9.00am and 5.00pm

Introduction

A lot of the work of Members of both Houses, but particularly the Legislative Council is in committees. There are many committees. Parliamentary committees are made up of Members of Parliament representing a number of different political parties. The committees investigate many things including new laws, how government departments spend their money, matters of importance to people in NSW, and they produce a report at the end which makes recommendations about what the government should do.

Committees are important because they have public hearings where people who are involved in the issues being investigated can have their say. This makes sure that many opinions and points of view from the community are listened to before governments make decisions and it should result in better laws and better action from government.

We are going to have a short committee hearing now. We will need some volunteers.

- First, a good reader to be Committee Chair [select, hand card, and show where to sit]
- Three good talkers to be witnesses [select, hand them cards, but they can stay in seats - show them where the witness will sit at the table]. These three are from community organisations interested in today's inquiry. Just use your own names when asked.
- Three good thinkers to be Committee Members [select, hand cards, show them where to sit]. These three, like the Chair, are Members of the Legislative Council.
- One person to be Committee Clerk - this person takes the minutes at the meeting (they don't have to this time) and do most of the work behind the scenes for the Committee. They will also assist Witnesses to make the Affirmation [select and place]

The rest of you are the audience. Most committee hearings are held in public so anyone can come and listen.

So this is Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No 9 and today's inquiry is into:

A proposal to increase school hours to between 9.00am and 5.00pm
Summary of Roles and Setting

Roles:
- Chair of Committees (1 script)
- Three witnesses representing different community groups (1 role card each)
- Three MLC committee members (1 role card each)
- Committee Clerk (1 role card)
- Audience (everybody else)

Alternative issues being inquired into by Committee:

1: A proposal to increase school hours to 9.00am to 5.00pm
   Witness A - Department of Education
   Witness B - represents teachers union
   Witness C - parents' organisation

2: A proposal to ban junk foods from school canteens and schools premises
   Witness A - nutritionist
   Witness B - parents' organisation
   Witness C - snack food manufacturer

Layout of Chamber
Outline of Role Play

Introduction [Leader - Card 1 - includes selecting students for roles and handing out role cards]

Chair and Hearing [Chair script]

- Chair declares meeting open and welcomes witnesses and audience.
- Chair invites witnesses to present evidence
- Clerk assists Witness A with Affirmation
- Witness A speaks
- Chair thanks Witness A and invites questions from Committee Members
- Member A asks Witness a question
- Witness A answers question
- Chair thanks Witness A who returns to audience.
- Chair invites Witness B to present Evidence
- Clerk assists Witness B with Affirmation
- Witness B speaks
- Chair thanks Witness B and invites questions from Committee Members
- Member B asks Witness a question
- Witness B answers question
- Chair thanks Witness B who returns to audience.
- Chair invites Witness C to present Evidence
- Clerk assists Witness C with Affirmation
- Witness C speaks
- Chair thanks Witness C and invites questions from Committee Members
- Member C asks Witness a question
- Witness C answers question
- Chair thanks Witness C who returns to audience.
- Chair thanks all witnesses and concludes hearing

Conclusion [Leader - Card 4 - includes thanking students for roles and retrieving role cards]
Conclusion

After the committee has heard from many different people and points of view and after some more research and discussion, they will make up their minds about whether or not this is a good idea.

Then they will write a report [COULD SHOW AN EXAMPLE OF A REPORT AT THIS POINT] which will be presented to the Legislative Council and then to the Government. It will say what the Committee thought was the best thing to do. It will make recommendations for action by the Government. The Government will consider the report and decide whether or not to accept the recommendations - often they accept some but not others.

Committees hearings like the one you've just taken part in go on all the time whether Parliament is sitting or not. They are an important way in which governments try to listen to the community and bring all the different ideas together to choose the best course of action.

Thank you to the Chair, Committee Members, witnesses, Committee Officer and Hansard Reporter and to all of you for doing such a great job today.
I welcome the witnesses and members of the public to this hearing of the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No 9. The terms of reference for this inquiry are that we inquire into and report on the effect of increasing school hours from the present hours to between 9.00am and 5.00pm and to make recommendations to the Government. Today the Committee will hear from representatives of community groups with an interest in this issue.

[Witness A - Department of Education
Witness B - Teachers Union
Witness C - Parents' Association]

I welcome the representative from the Department of Education. Please take a seat at the table.

[Wait for witness to take seat and to make the affirmation]

What is your full name?

[Witness states name]

Are you here to represent a particular organisation at today's hearing?

[Witness answers]

Would you like to make a statement to the committee on this proposal?

[Witness presents statement]

Thank you. Do any of the Committee Members have any questions?

[Member A asks question - Witness gives an answer]

I thank the representative of the Department of Education for attending today. You may return to your seat.

[Witness returns to seat]
I would now like to welcome the representative from the Teacher's Union.

[Wait for witness to take seat and to make the affirmation]

What is your full name?

[Witness states name]

Are you here to represent a particular organisation at today's hearing?

[Witness answers]

Would you like to make a statement to the committee on this proposal?

[Witness presents views]

Thank you. Do any of the Committee Members have any questions?

[Member B asks question - Witness gives an answer]

I thank the representative of the Teacher's Union for attending today. You may return to your seat.

[Witness returns to seat]

I now welcome the representative from the Parents' Association. Please take a seat at the table.

[Wait for witness to take seat and to make the affirmation]

What is your full name?

[Witness states name]

Are you here to represent a particular organisation at today's hearing?

[Witness answers]

Would you like to make a statement to the committee on this proposal?

[Witness presents views]

Thank you. Do any of the Committee Members have any questions?

[Member C asks question - Witness gives an answer]

I thank the representative of the Parents' Association for attending today. You may return to your seat.

[Witness returns to seat]

Thank you all for your contributions. This hearing is now adjourned. The Committee will consider today's evidence and will table its report to the Legislative Council.
Committee Role Play
Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No 9
Inquiry into:
Proposal to increase school hours to between 9.00am and 5.00pm

Role Card: Representative of the Department of Education

[The words in brackets are instructions - not words to be spoken]

[You are the representative of the Department of Education and the Department is in favour of this idea. When invited by the Chair, take your seat at the table. The Clerk will hand you the Affirmation to read. Please read this aloud.

Then answer the Chair's questions. When the chair ask if you would like to make a statement on the proposal begin as shown below - you will have to give your reasons for supporting the idea. There are some suggestions below if you are stuck.]

Thank you Mr/Madam Chair and Committee Members. Yes, I would like to make the following statement

As you know the Department of Education has been considering this idea for some time. While we can see that there are some problems we can also see that there would be many advantages if we had longer school hours.

For example ....

[Give your reasons:
You could use some of these ideas -
- it would make better use of expensive school buildings
- there is so much to learn but not enough time in the present school day
- children with working parents will not have to go home to empty houses or to expensive childcare if school times and work times are the same
- longer hours might mean there would be no need for homework

When you are finished say: ]

Thank you to the Committee for giving us this opportunity to present our views today.

[Now you will be asked a question by a Committee Member. Try to think of a good answer. If it is about having school on Saturdays, try this one:
Most parents don’t work Saturdays. We think it would work better if normal school and work hours were much the same.

When the Chair thanks you, return to your seat]
Role Card: Representative of the Teachers' Union

[The words in brackets are instructions - not words to be spoken]

[You are the representative of the Teachers' Union and the Union is not in favour of this idea. When invited by the Chair, take your seat at the table. The Clerk will hand you the Affirmation to read. Please read this aloud.

Then answer the Chair's questions. When the chair ask if you would like to make a statement on the proposal begin as shown below - you will have to give your reasons for supporting the idea. There are some suggestions below if you are stuck.]

Yes, thank you Mr/Madam Chair and Committee Members, I wish to make the following statement

The Teacher's Union is generally opposed to this idea because

[Give your reasons:

You could use some of these ideas -
- teachers are already too busy and stressed
- children just can't work that long - they'd get too tired
- it would cost more because teachers would have to be paid more
- finishing the same time as other work would make peak hour traffic much worse and there would be a shortage of public transport

When you are finished say: ]

Thank you to the Committee for giving us this opportunity to present our views today.

[Now you will be asked a question by a Committee Member. Try to think of a good answer. If it is about teachers working longer hours, try this one:

Teachers are not paid enough but they already work long hours. They should be paid properly for the hours they work now.

When the Chair thanks you, return to your seat]
Committee Role Play

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Role Card: Representative of the Parents' Association

[The words in brackets are instructions - not words to be spoken]

[You are the representative of the Parents Association. The Association can see both good points and bad points to this idea. When invited by the Chair, take your seat at the table. The Clerk will hand you the Affirmation to read. Please read this aloud.

Then answer the Chair's questions. When the chair ask if you would like to make a statement on the proposal begin as shown below - you will have to give your reasons for supporting the idea. There are some suggestions below if you are stuck.]

Thank you Mr/Madam Chair and Committee Members. Yes, I would like to make the following statement

The Parents Association can see both good and bad points in this idea.

Some good points are:

[Give your reasons - You could use some of these ideas:
- we wouldn't have to worry about where our children are between 3 and 5 o'clock
- it would make better use of the schools and cut down vandalism]

But some bad points are:

[Give your reason - You could use some of these ideas:
- children would be tired and cranky
- it would cost more which means more taxes or school fees]

When you are finished say: ]

Thank you to the Committee for giving us this opportunity to present our views.

[Now you will be asked a question by a Committee Member. Try to think of a good answer. If it is about longer hours being safer for children, try this one:

Longer hours would be safer while children are in school but we would be concerned about them coming home later during peak hour traffic, especially in winter when it is dark.

When the Chair thanks you, return to your seat]
Thank you Mr/Madam Chair and Committee Members. I would like to ask the Department of Education representative this question:

Has the Department thought of the idea of making the school week longer by having school on Saturdays?
Thank you Mr/Madam Chair and Committee Members. I would like to ask the Teachers' Union representative this question:

Would teachers agree to work longer school hours if they were paid more?
Thank you Mr/Madam Chair and Committee Members. I would like to ask the Parents' Association representative this question:

Would children be safer if school hours were longer?
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Role Card: Committee Clerk

[The words in brackets are instructions - not words to be spoken]

[You are not a Member of Parliament. You work for the parliament and your job is to assist this Committee to do its work. You take the minutes of the meetings (no need to do it this time!). You will assist each Witness to their seat and will ask them to make an affirmation (that is to state that they will be telling the truth - this is like being sworn in in a courtroom).

When the Chair calls each Witness, you should leave your chair and lead them to the Witness Chair.
You should then hand them the Affirmation Card and say:

Please read the affirmation.

When the Witness has read the Affirmation, take the card back and return to your seat.

Role Card   -  Committee Clerk
AFFIRMATION

I sincerely and truly affirm that the evidence now about to be given by me shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.