



Board Policy #262.0

School Councils

Document Integration Project Format

Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board believes that collaborative partnerships - among schools, families and their communities - are essential to improve student learning and to increase a shared sense of accountability for public education.

The Board believes that strong partnerships are built from a common vision and common goals, nurtured through regular communication and meaningful consultation, involving all members of the school community.

The Board believes that school councils play an important role in building school, family and community partnerships by providing input into relevant Board and school-level decisions and by encouraging the involvement of all members of the school community in support of student learning.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- receiving and considering advice from school councils on the development and review of policies and other matters of concern to councils.

Principals are responsible for:

- ensuring that a school council is established that represents the school community and promotes improved student learning through the development of school, family and community partnerships;
- communicating and collaborating with school councils;
- requesting school council input into the development and implementation of the school plan for continuous improvement;
- advising school council members of the need for volunteers in various capacities;
- promoting parent education and strategies to support children's learning at home; and
- forwarding information on community resources to school councils.

School councils are responsible for:

- supporting and promoting parent, family and community engagement in support of student learning;
- participating in the development and implementation of the school plan for continuous improvement;
- communicating with, and providing ongoing advice to, the principal; and
- coordinating community resources.

Legislative Context

Education Act, Regulations 612 and 613

Definitions

School Community

The school community includes, but is not limited to, parents, administrators, teaching staff, support staff, students and members of the local community.

School Councils

School councils are advisory bodies which may make recommendations to the school principal or to the Board on matters as stated in Board policy and procedure or on any other matter identified by the council with the exception of confidential personnel matters. School councils are comprised of parents (constituting the majority of members of the school council), one student representative (optional at elementary level), at least one community representative, the school principal, one teaching staff representative, and one support staff representative.

Department

Education and Community Services

Policy History

Approved 1996
Reviewed 1997
Amended 2001
Amended 2005
Revised 2007

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property; or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term "parents" refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.



Board Procedure #262.0

School Councils

Document Integration Project Format

This procedure outlines the purpose, roles and responsibilities of school councils in order to support improved student learning and to develop an increased sense of shared accountability for public education.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees shall:

- consult school councils on the establishment or amendment of Board policies that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including;
 - codes of conduct within schools,
 - appropriate dress of students in schools,
 - allocation of funds to school councils,
 - conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes,
 - fundraising,
 - budget, and
 - reimbursement of expenses incurred by members and officers of school councils;
- consult school councils on the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents including;
 - conduct of persons in schools, and
 - appropriate dress for students in schools;
- consult school councils on the Board Plan for Continuous Improvement;
- consult school councils on the process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals;
- consider each recommendation made to the Board by school councils and advise school councils, through the appropriate superintendent, of decisions reached or actions taken in response to recommendations made to the Board by school councils, along with a rationale for these actions or decisions;
- provide legal protection to school councils and members of councils for actions taken in the course of carrying out their responsibilities, provided that such actions are consistent with all Board policies and procedures;
- rule on internal disputes of school councils that are referred to the Board by the council (such decisions of the Board shall be final); and
- not sit as a member of a school council.

Superintendent of Education, with portfolio responsibility for school councils, shall:

- coordinate school council forums in each Community Education Centre at least twice annually for the purposes of conducting professional development, sharing effective practices, and facilitating communication among council chairs, council members, local trustees, principals and senior administrators;
- in collaboration with school council representatives, offer relevant professional development for council chairs, principals, and council members; and
- appoint school council representatives to various ad hoc advisory committees, as required by the Ministry or deemed appropriate by the Board.

Superintendents of Education shall:

- take responsibility for considering and/forwarding recommendations made by school councils to the appropriate person(s); and
- respond to recommendations made by school councils.

Principals shall:

- be a member of the school council;
- not be entitled to vote in votes taken by the school council or by a committee of the school council.
- attend all school council meetings, unless s/he is unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond his or her control (where possible, the vice-principal shall attend as a delegate);
- call the first school council meeting within the first 35 days of the school year;
- provide written notice (at least 14 days before the election date) of dates, times and locations of the election to every parent of a student who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school;
- make known the names of members of the school council to parents of students enrolled in the school by 30 days after the determination of the school council;
- provide written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the school council to every parent of a student who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school;
- ensure that copies of the minutes of the school council meetings are kept at the school and are accessible to all parents;
- ensure that the school council constitution and by-laws are readily available to the school community;
- provide one copy per family of written notices and the annual report to each student enrolled in the school (on the date the copy is given), for delivery to his or her parent(s) provided that the parents reside in the same home;
- post notices and the annual report in the school in a location that is accessible to parents;
- distribute to each member of the school council any materials received from and identified by the Ministry of Education or the Board as being relevant for distribution to school councils;
- act as a resource person to the school council and assist the council in obtaining information regarding the function of school councils, including information relating to relevant legislation, regulations and policies;
- consider each school council recommendation and advise the council of decisions reached or actions taken in response to each recommendation, along with a rationale for these actions or decisions;
- solicit the views of the school council with respect to the establishment, implementation or amendment of school policies and guidelines, in accordance with Board policies and procedures, that relate to the school's code of conduct, and appropriate dress for students;
- solicit the views of the school council with respect to the establishment, implementation, review and communication of the school plan for continuous improvement and the school profile;
- support and promote the school council's operations and activities;
- assist the council in communicating with the school community; and
- advise school councils when they are not in compliance with Board policies and procedures.

School councils shall:

- carry out responsibilities in accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures, and their school council's constitution and by-laws;
- hold elections for members of school councils during the first 30 calendar days of each school year;
- fill vacancies in council membership or in the officers of a school council by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the council;
- continue in its duties even if there is a vacancy;
- meet at least four times during the school year (with the first meeting occurring within the first 35 calendary days of the school year) at meetings that are open to the public and in a location accessible to the public;
- hold meetings where decisions are made only when a majority of the members are present and of those present, a majority is parent members;
- record and maintain minutes of all meetings and records of all financial transactions for a four-year period;
- make the minutes and financial records available at the school for examination without charge by any person;
- submit a written annual report and a treasurer's report on its activities, including fundraising, by September 15th of the following school year, to the principal of the school and to the Board;

- prepare/review and submit annually, no later than November of each school year or as requested by the superintendent, an administrator profile outlining the preferred characteristics of the school's principal and/or vice-principal to the superintendent of education (if an updated profile is not submitted the most recent version will be considered);
- ensure compliance with the Board policy on fundraising when taking part in fundraising activities;
- engage in internal conflict resolution activities in accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures, and by-laws of the council;
- consult with parents of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the school council;
- not be incorporated;
- not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of a school council; and
- receive reimbursement for expenses incurred as members or officers of the school council in accordance with relevant procedures established by the Board.

School councils may:

- create by-laws regarding;
 - election procedures and procedures for the filling of vacancies between elections, and
 - a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes;
- specify the number of parent members provided that the number would constitute a majority on the school council (otherwise the number of parent members is six);
- specify the number of community representatives as two or more appointed by the other members of the school council (otherwise there will be one community representative appointed by other members of the school council);
- limit the number of times that a school council member may be re-elected or re-appointed (otherwise there is no limit);
- specify that the school council may have two co-chairs (otherwise there is only one);
- specify other officers of the school council;
- establish committees to make recommendations to the school council such that membership on the committee includes at least one parent member of the council and may include persons who are not members of the school council;
- set norms and rules for conducting school council meetings and committees;
- refer internal disputes to the Board for the Board's consideration and ruling (which is final);
- make recommendations (reflected in the minutes of school council meetings) to principals either verbally or in writing;
- make recommendations (reflected in the minutes of school council meetings) to the Board by submitting them in writing to the school's superintendent of education; and
- in collaboration with the principal, undertake fundraising and decision making regarding the expenditure of such funds in accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures.

School council members shall:

- be elected during the first 30 calendar days of each school year, on a date that is established by the chair or co-chairs of the school council after consulting with the principal of the school;
- in the case of a new school, hold the first election of parent members to the school council during the first 30 calendar days of the school year, on a date that is fixed by the principal;
- hold office from the later of either;
 - the date s/he is elected or appointed, and
 - the date of the first meeting of the school council after the election are held during the school year;
 until the date of the first meeting of the school council after elections are held in the next school year;
- be able to be re-elected or re-appointed in subsequent years unless otherwise specified in the by-laws of the school council;
- be entitled to one vote, when a consensus cannot be reached and voting is necessary by school council;
- be entitled to one vote, in votes taken by a committee of the school council on which the member sits;

- be accountable to the members of the school community whom they represent;
- maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
- regularly attend school council meetings;
- participate in information sharing and training programs;
- act as a communication link between the school council and the community; encourage the participation of all parents and of other people within the school community; and
- participate on sub-committees and assist with tasks of the school council as appropriate.

School council chairs/co-chairs shall:

- carry out tasks in accordance with Board policies and procedures and their school council's constitution and by-laws;
- call school council meetings (minimum four per year) in consultation with the principal;
- ensure that parents are consulted about matters under consideration by the council;
- ensure that fundraising activities, management of the proceeds of fundraising and all expenditures are in accordance with applicable Board policies and procedures;
- prepare the agenda for school council meetings in consultation with the school's principal;
- chair school council meetings according to the agenda;
- ensure that minutes of school council meetings are recorded;
- communicate with the school principal;
- communicate with senior Board staff and trustees, as required; and
- ensure that the school council constitution and by-laws are reviewed annually.

School council vice-chairs shall:

- assist the chair/co-chairs in carrying out his/her responsibilities; and
- act on behalf of the chair/co-chairs in the event of his/her absence.

Student representative shall:

- in secondary schools, be named by the student council (where one exists) or be elected by the student population if a student council does not exist;
- in elementary schools, be appointed by the principal after consulting with the school council to determine if the school council wants a student representative; and
- not be applicable to a school that is established primarily for adults.

Community representative shall:

- be one community representative or up to four community representatives if the council chooses to so specify in a by-law, provided that the majority of members continues to be parents;
- be appointed by the members of the school council; and
- not be employed at the school as a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager and if employed in such a capacity elsewhere in the Board must inform the other members of the council of his or her employment before the appointment.

Teaching staff representative shall:

- be one teacher who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal; and
- only be elected by teachers employed at the school.

Support staff shall:

- be one person who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal or any other teacher; and
- only be elected by support staff employed at the school.

School council officers (chair, co-chair or officer) shall:

- be elected by the new school council;
- be a parent member of the council; and
- not be a person who is employed by the Board or who is a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager.

Parents of students enrolled in the school shall:

- form the majority of the members of the school council;
- have the number of representatives defined by either of the following;
 - school council by-law which specifies the number of parent members, or
 - six by default;
- not qualify to be a parent member of a school council if;
 - s/he is employed at the school, a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager, or
 - s/he is not employed at the school, but is employed elsewhere by the Board (unless s/he takes reasonable steps to inform parents that s/he is an employee of the Board);
- each have one vote in the election of school council members;
- be elected to school council by secret ballot; and
- be elected to school council by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to, or less than the number of parent member positions on the council (if additional vacancies exist, parent members may be appointed by the council according to the by-laws of the council).

Department

Education and Community Services

Procedure History

September 2002
Revised 2007

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property; or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term "parents" refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.