

SCHOOL COUNCILS

The Division believes that parents or guardians should be provided with the opportunity to establish a school council to facilitate a successful home and school partnership that supports student learning.

Guidelines

1. A school council is a collective association of parents, guardians, teachers, principal, staff, students (where required and as appropriate), community representatives.
2. The school council should work to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the entire school community in enhancing student learning.
3. School councils are responsible to the parents and the community they serve.
4. Each school council has a role in collaborating with the Principal on any matters relating to the school.

Procedures

Establishment of A School Council

1. Notice of the establishment meeting must be given at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting.
2. The Principal must decide who is to act as the chair and who is to act as the secretary at an establishment meeting.
3. Agenda at Establishment Meeting The persons attending an establishment meeting must
 - a. Decide, subject to School Councils Regulation section 7, on the size of the school council
 - b. Decide on the model of governance for the school council,
 - c. decide, subject to subsection (2) of the School Councils Regulation, on the term of office of each member of the school council,
 - d. elect, subject to subsection (2), of the School Councils Regulation, the initial members of the school council referred to in section 7(1)(d), (parents of students enrolled in the school),
 - e. decide, subject to section 8, on the size of the executive,
 - f. decide on the term of office of each member of the executive, and
 - g. elect the initial members of the executive.

4. If no parent advisory council exists, the Principal is responsible for calling and setting the guidelines as outlined for the establishment meeting.
5. A minimum of five (5) school parents must be present at the establishment meeting.
6. Members of the public may attend, but only parents of children registered at the school may vote at the establishment meeting.
7. In the event that a minimum of five (5) school parents fail to attend the establishment meeting, the Principal may establish an advisory committee for that year.
8. A new establishment meeting must be held within forty (40) days after the start of the next school year when an insufficient number of parents fail to attend or when a school council ceases to function during a school year.
9. The Principal is automatically a member of the school council.
10. Teacher and student representatives (where required and as appropriate) must be elected or appointed by their peers prior to the establishment meeting in order for them to attend the establishment meeting.
11. Members must be elected according to the School Councils Regulation (94/2019) and the school council's by-laws.
12. Where two schools are served by one Principal, the parents may decide to have one school council to serve both schools.
13. The majority of representatives on a school council must always be parents of students attending the school.
14. A community representative may be a member of the community or a representative of a business that has a link to the school, or the school council may seek to appoint someone from the community who has an expertise that the school council needs in any particular term.
15. Immediately following the organizational meeting, the names and addresses of the members of the school council must be forwarded to the superintendent.

School Council By-Laws

1. School Councils will establish by-laws.
2. School Council by-laws need to address the following items:
 - a. Terms of admission of members and their rights and obligations.
 - b. The mode and time of calling a general meeting and special meetings, the number necessary for a quorum¹ at a meeting, and who has the right to vote at a meeting.
 - c. The areas or issues on which school councils can advise and/or consult.
 - d. The number, job descriptions and method of election of the officers of the council.
 - e. The number of meetings to be held.

- f. Rules concerning finances and operation.

¹ *A quorum is a minimum of 4 at elementary and junior high levels and a minimum of 5 at the senior high level.*

- g. The relationship between the school council and any school-based society that raises money for the school.
- h. The rules governing the annual general meeting.
- i. The preparation and custody of minutes of meetings and other books and records of the school council.
- j. The rules or procedures to resolve internal conflict among school council members, between the school council and the wider community, and between the school council and the school staff.

School Council Operations

A school council may discuss or involve itself in the following during a school year:

1. Writing of a mission statement or a statement of philosophy for the school council.
2. Reviewing the by-laws of the school council annually.
3. Assisting in creating a positive school experience for the school students and staff.
4. Advising the Principal and the Board respecting any matter relating to the school.
5. Consulting with the Principal concerning the students' opportunities to meet educational standards, and ensuring that the fiscal management of the school is in accordance with the requirements of the Board and the Superintendent.
6. Developing a common vision for the school and working to implement that vision by facilitating communication and planning regarding priorities and programs that are needed to meet the expectations of the local school community.

Regulations

1. A school council does not govern the school nor involve itself directly in determining professional practices, and only the school board hires and dismisses school staff.
2. A school council may not incorporate as a society or under the Companies Act. A school council may work with a society as a sub-committee of the council or in partnership with a society that has been established to serve a special purpose in the school.
3. No member of a school council shall receive any remuneration for acting as a member of the council.
4. The chair of a school council must prepare and provide a report by May 31st of each year to the Board through the Superintendent:
 - a. Setting out the activities of the school council in the year.

- b. Including a financial statement relating to money handled by the school council in the year, if any, and
 - c. Including a copy of the minutes for each meeting of the school council held in the year.
5. A by-law respecting the governance procedures of a school council does not come into force unless it is approved by a majority of:
- a. parents of students enrolled in the school, and
 - b. parents of children enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program at the school; who vote at a special meeting of the school council called for that purpose.
6. The Division will keep in force insurance which indemnifies school councils in respect of claims for:
- a. damages for death or personal injury.
 - b. damages to property, and
 - c. damages to property owned by the Board in respect of which the Board has an insurable interest:
 - i. that the Board has agreed to insure, or
 - ii. For which the Board otherwise has or may have assumed liability in an amount and form prescribed by the minister.
7. In the case of conflict between a school council and the Principal, respecting disputes on policies proposed or adopted by the school, the Principal or the school council may appeal in writing to the Superintendent of Schools for assistance in resolving the dispute. The Superintendent shall inform the Board when an appeal from a Principal or school council has been received. If the Superintendent cannot resolve the dispute, the Superintendent shall refer the matter to the Board of Trustees, who may appoint an ad-hoc committee to investigate and bring back to the Board recommendations for resolving the dispute.

References

Education Act Sections 33, 52, 53, 55; 197, 204, 222, 251.
School Councils Regulation 94/2019
December 2003

Updates: July 2011
February 2020