

Policy 16 - SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The Board values the work the School Community Councils.

Specifically

1. Establishment of School Community Councils

- 1.1 A School Community Council (SCC) is to be established at each school in the Division.
- 1.2 In many schools, committees have been established to support specific activities such as graduation or the band program. The School Community Council will act in a coordination role for committees operating in support of the SCC and the school program.

2. Merging School Community Councils

School Community Councils wishing to merge are to make application to the Board. The Board may then recommend to the Minister of Education that the applicant School Community Councils be merged.

3. Memberships

3.1 Representative Members

3.1.1 Representative Parent and Community Members

The following individuals are eligible to run to become a Representative Parent and Community Member:

Parents of students who are enrolled in the school (including parents who do not reside within the attendance area of schools); and, electors that reside within the school attendance area. These provisions specifically do not limit or restrict the election or participation in voting of parents of students who may be employed by the Division and work in the particular school.

The constitution of each School Community Council outlines the number of Representative Parent and Community Members. The number of representative members range from five to nine (5 to 9) persons, of which the majority must be parents of students attending the school. It is suggested to have an odd number of representative members.

3.1.2 Representative Secondary Students

For schools offering a Grade 10, 11 and 12 program, the SCC constitution outlines the number of student members (one or two (1 or 2)). Student representatives will be selected by the Student Representative Council (SRC) or by the Principal of the school. Councils might consider having one Grade 11 student and one (1) Grade 12 with the Grade 11 student remaining on the Council for his/her Grade 12 as well.

3.1.3 Representative from First Nations Parents

The constitution of each SCC will outline which, if any, First Nation representatives are members of the SCC. First Nations are eligible to have representatives on the SCC if there are students who live on reserve and attend a school within the Division. The First Nation will select one (1) representative member for a two (2) year term.

3.2 Permanent Members

3.2.1 The Principal

The Principal is a permanent member of the School Community Council.

3.2.2 A teacher

The teacher member will be appointed by the Principal. It is acceptable for various teachers to share this role on a rotating schedule.

3.2.3 Other Permanent Members

The constitution of the SCC may allow for other permanent members as suggested by the School Community Council and approved by the Board. These may include people such as the Vice-Principal, the Community School Coordinator or others.

4. Election Procedures

4.1 One-half of the Representative Parent and Community Members of the School Community Councils will be elected each year. In the first year, one-half of the members are to be elected for two (2) year terms with the remaining representative members being elected for one (1) year terms to establish the staggered terms.

4.2 Upon the recommendations of the Principal, the Board will name an employee as an Election Supervisor. The employee could be the Vice-Principal, school secretary, a teacher or the Community School Coordinator. The Superintendent responsible for the School Community Council will act as the Election Supervisor for the Division. This role involves ensuring an Election Supervisor is selected for each school and the appropriate training has been delivered.

4.3 Election procedures for Representative Parent and Community Members are outlined at the end of this policy.

- 4.4 If, following the nomination process, there are vacant positions on a School Community Council, the Board can reduce the number of members of that SCC. However, if there are fewer than five (5) members, the Board can appoint members to fill the vacant positions.
- 4.5 For the initial election, no special procedures will be used to ensure the Representative Parent and Community Members are true representation of the student population. If following the initial election, the Board notices that some School Community Councils are not representative of the student population this concern could then be addressed through an amendment to this policy.

5. Constitution

Sample constitutions will be distributed to each of the School Community Councils. The School Community Council may use these samples as a guide and then develop its own constitution for Board approval. Each School Community Council will have a constitution.

6. Operations

- 6.1 Minutes of each School Community Council will be kept and forwarded to the Division Office and made available to members to the Board.
- 6.2 Funds held by former Parent and Community Advisory Groups will be transferred to the new School Community Council when it is created.
- 6.3 The School Community Council will prepare an annual budget. All funds will be administered using the procedures outlined in Administrative Procedure 520.
- 6.4 Special Meeting

A special meeting of a School Community Council shall be called by the Chair of the SCC if required to do so by the Board or a request in writing signed by no fewer than twenty-five (25) persons who have a child attending that school or who are electors living in the school's attendance area. Only business pertaining to the role and responsibilities of School Community Councils can be considered at a special meeting. The School Community Council will determine the time and place of the special meetings.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1 The School Community Council will gain an understanding of the school and its community's economic, social and health conditions and needs and aspirations for child and youth learning and well-being. They will become knowledgeable about resources and supports for the school, parents and community, through the development of a school/community profile.

- 7.2 The School Community Council participates in the Continuous Improvement Framework by focusing on the same outcomes that are established by the province, the Division and the school. The Council will assist the school in developing the “Learning Improvement Plan” for the school. For example, if the school has a focus on improving student literacy, the School Community Council will consider ways of assisting parents and the community to improve student literacy.
- 7.3 Provide advice on certain matters including:
 - 7.3.1 Advice to the Board on policies, programs and educational service delivery decisions, including grade discontinuance, school closure, religious instruction, language of instruction, and sensitive topics. Advice can be provided through the School Community Council Chair or the Principal who will pass the advice to senior administrators of the Division. Communication can also occur through the minutes of School Community Council meetings.
 - 7.3.2 Assist the school with the Spring Program Plan for presentation to the Board.
 - 7.3.3 Advise the Principal on school programs and operations.
 - 7.3.4 Assist with playground fundraising and selection.
 - 7.3.5 Advice to other organizations, agencies and governments on the learning and well-being needs of children and youth.
 - 7.3.6 Assist with appropriate scholarship selections.
 - 7.3.7 Approve fundraising activities, school fees and the Student Code of Conduct.
 - 7.3.8 Provide advice/guidance for the development of the school student handbook.
 - 7.3.9 Be informed of and provide advice for school trips.
 - 7.3.10 Encourage and facilitate parent and community engagement.
 - 7.3.11 Develop shared responsibilities for the learning success and well-being for all children and youth and ensure all voices in the community are heard.
- 7.4 The Council will communicate annually to the parents and its community on plans, initiatives and outcomes, and on the expenditure of funds related to the operation of the School Community Council; and participate in ongoing orientation, training, development and networking opportunities provided by the Board and other provincial organizations.
- 7.5 Provide direction for the allocation of funds from the Board for the benefit of the school and students and for the operation of the School Community Council.
- 7.6 A minimum of five (5) meetings per year must be held.
- 7.7 School Community Councils are not to discuss, consider or provide advice about personal or confidential information about students, parents, teachers or other staff by the school.

8. Support

8.1 Senior Administrative Contact

A Superintendent will be assigned duties to facilitate the School Community Councils, supervise the election process and plan and implement Division-wide development opportunities for members of School Community Councils. If an individual School Community Council wishes to see a Superintendent, the Principal will invite the Superintendent responsible for that school to become involved.

8.2 Financial Support

The Board will provide an annual grant to each School Community Council.

8.3 Communication

8.3.1 Advice from Councils can be passed to the Division Office through the Chair of the School Community Council or through the Principal. Communication can also take place through the minutes of the School Community Council which will be forwarded to the Division Office.

8.3.2 Councils can communicate with their communities through newsletters and through annual meetings or possibly through school websites.

8.3.3 Board members or Division Office staff can attend School Community Council meetings upon request of the Council.

8.4 Election Process

The Board will provide an annual grant to each School Community Council.

9. Eligibility of Representative Members

9.1 Parents of students who are enrolled in the school (including parents who do not reside within the attendance area of the school) and electors that reside within the school attendance area are eligible to vote. The majority of the five to nine (5 to 9) representative members must be parents of students attending the school.

9.2 At least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the representative parent and community council members will be elected each year. In the first year, one (1) half will be elected for two (2) year terms and one half for one (1) year terms.

9.3 Election Procedures

9.3.1 Representative parent and community members are elected at an annual meeting of the School Community Council.

9.3.2 The annual meeting will be advertised in the school newsletter and in at least one (1) local community newspaper four weeks in advance of the meeting. An annual report of the School Community Council will be given and new elections for $\frac{1}{2}$ of the members will take place.

9.3.3 The Division, in consultation with the Principal, will name a school employee to be the Election Supervisor for the school (Vice-Principal, school secretary, teacher, school coordinator).

- 9.3.4 The Election Supervisor will facilitate the selection of a Chair for the annual meeting and the Chair will call for nominations from the floor as well as indicate those who have had prior nomination forms filled out.
- 9.3.5 If an election is necessary, the Chair will call upon the Election Supervisor to facilitate the election.
- 9.3.6 Nominations will be accepted before the meeting as well as from the floor of the annual meeting. Nomination forms will be available at each school and can be returned to the Election Supervisor anytime prior to the annual meeting. Nomination forms are to indicate whether the candidate is a parent or community representative. (see Form 17-1)
- 9.3.7 At the annual meeting, all nominations including those from the floor will be listed on chart paper and then voters will write in their selections on a secret ballot. Names are to indicate whether they are running as a community member or parent. Individuals can be nominated from the floor by someone else or can volunteer themselves to stand for election. (see Form 17-2)
- 9.3.8 Duties of the Election Supervisor
- Gather nominations prior to the meeting.
 - Advertise the time, place and date and purpose of the annual general meeting of the School Community Council.
 - Announce at the meeting who is eligible to vote.
 - Display names of those standing for election.
 - Distribute and collect ballots.
 - Count ballots with the Chair of the annual meeting.
 - Ensure that the majority of elected members are parents. For example, if there are nine (9) positions to fill, the first five (5) parents with the greatest number of votes will be declared elected and the remaining four (4) members will be filled by individuals with the next highest vote count.
 - Announce the outcome of the election at the meeting.
 - The Chair will ask to have the ballots destroyed. If there is a dispute about the election, the ballots will be retained and the matter will be brought to the attention of the Division.
- 9.3.9 If there are vacant positions on the Council, the Board can reduce the number of members but not below five (5). If needed, the Board can appoint members to fill vacant positions.

Reference: Sections 140.1, 140.2, 140.3, 140.4, 140.5 Education Act
Regulations Part II.2
School Community Councils: A Handbook for School Community Councils and Principals