WELCOME

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School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees

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Established under Education Act S.170(1). Every Board shall:

17.1 establish a school council for each school operated by the board, in accordance with the regulations.

See also Regulations 612/00 and 298.
Purpose

Reg. 612/00:

S.2(1) The purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.
Means

Councils are advisory, rather than decision-making bodies.

Board and Principal **must**: share prescribed information with Council, and consult Council on particular matters.

Council **may** also make recommendations to the Principal of the school and to the Board.
Means (cont.)

The Board shall “consider each recommendation made to the board by the council, and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.” (Reg. 612/00, S.21)

“The principal of a school shall consider each recommendation made to the principal by the school council and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.” (Reg. 298, S.11(19))
Reg. 612/00:

S.23  A Council shall consult with parents of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the Council.
Composition

Councils shall include the following members:

• Parents, in a number fixed by Council By-law, provided that parents constitute a majority
• Principal (or V.P. as delegate)
• One Teacher employed at the school
• One non-teaching employee of the school
Composition (cont.)

• A pupil, if at least one secondary grade (optional for elementary school).

• One (or more) community representative, appointed by Council.

• One person appointed by Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, or the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education, or Parents Partenaire en Educations, if any such association is established at the school.
Some restrictions:

Employees of the Board are ineligible for appointment as the Community Representative unless they do not work at the school, and Council is made aware of their employment prior to appointment.

“Parent” is a parent or guardian (non-parent with lawful custody), and cannot be employed at school, or elsewhere unless voters are informed prior to vote.

Trustees cannot be members of a Council.
Election

At least 14 days prior, the Principal shall give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a pupil enrolled at school.

Must be held within the first 30 days of school year.

Must be by secret ballot.
Term

From the later of: the date of election or appointment, and the date of the first meeting following election, to the date of the first council meeting after the election of the following school year.

No limit to the number of terms, unless stated in the Council’s By-law.
Officers

A Council shall have a chair, or if allowable by By-law, two Co-Chairs, elected by Council.

Must be a parent.

Shall not be an employee of the Board.
A meeting cannot be held unless:

- A majority of members are present; and
- The majority of those present are parents.

The Principal (or designate) must attend, but is not entitled to vote.
Meetings

Councils shall meet:

- Within 35 days of start of school year; and
- at least four times per year.

All meetings must be open to the public, and in a location accessible to the public.

Councils are entitled to hold meetings at the school.

Principal shall give written notice of date, time, and place of meetings to every parent of pupil at school.
A Council cannot be incorporated.
Members cannot be remunerated.
Board shall establish policies respecting reimbursement for expenses incurred.
A Council *may* make By-laws governing the conduct of its affairs. Every Council *shall* pass a By-law governing:

- Elections and vacancies;
- Participation in the event of a conflict;
- Conflict resolution process.
A Council shall keep minutes (for four years), which shall be available at school for examination by any person.

A Council shall submit an annual report to the Principal and the Board, including a report on any fundraising activities.

The Principal shall give a copy of the report to every parent by:

- Giving a copy to the pupil for delivery to the parent;
- and
- Posting the report in a location accessible to parents.
Board’s Duty to Inform

Every board shall make information about the teacher performance appraisal system available to the chair of the school council.

*Education Act, S.277.45(1)*
Board’s Duty to Consult

Every **Board** is required to solicit the views of school councils with respect to:

- board policies and guidelines that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including policies and guidelines regarding student conduct; appropriate dress; board funding to councils; council fundraising activities; council conflict resolution processes, and council member reimbursement.
- the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents;
- Board action and communication plans in response to EQAO results; and
- the selection and placement process and criteria for Principals and Vice-Principals
Principal’s Duty to Inform

The Principal shall:

- Distribute to Council and make available to all parents any materials designated by the Ministry for Council;
- Publish names of Council members within 30 days of election;
- Act as a resource to Council and assist with obtaining relevant information as requested;
The Principal shall solicit the views of Council with respect to the establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines, and the development of implementation plans for new initiatives, that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including policies and guidelines regarding:

- the development of a school Code of Conduct; and
- appropriate student dress
Fundraising

A Council *may* engage in Fundraising, provided it does so in accordance with Board policy and Ministry Fundraising Guidelines, and for a Board authorized purpose.

Fundraising plan for school encouraged under Ministry Guideline.

All proceeds must be used for the intended purpose.

Principal is responsible for fundraising activities and for funds raised.
Challenges

**Purpose**


Legislated purpose is to make recommendations to Principal and Board regarding improving pupil achievement.

“Enhancing communication between school and parents” was ranked as the most important function of Council by 75% of Council respondents to survey.

However, the majority reported that fundraising occupied most of their time.
Parent Communications

- typically electronic
- not all families have internet
- CASL compliance: board is vicariously liable for Council
- Principal cannot disclose private information regarding students and staff
- Council cannot communicate under its own authority. Must be through Principal, including website and newsletter.
Challenges (cont.)

Barriers to Participation

Studies show that student achievement increases with parent involvement.

Not all parents are equally able to participate in council.

Ability to reimburse for expenses can reduce barriers.
Challenges (cont.)

**Disruptive Members**

Conflict resolution mechanism must be in By-law.

By-law can include code of conduct.

There is no regulatory provision to disband or suspend a Parent Council, nor is there the authority to remove an individual Council member.

Elected for one year term.
Parent Involvement Councils

Purpose is to “support, encourage and enhance parent engagement at the board level in order to improve student achievement and well-being”, by:

- Providing information and advice on parent engagement to board;
- Communicating with and supporting school councils;
- Activities to help parents support their children’s learning.

(Reg. 612/00, S.27)
PIC’s (cont.)

• Majority of members must be parents, and majority of those present must be parents for a quorum;
• Must meet at least 4 times per year;
• Director and Trustee must be appointed;
• Chair (or co-chairs) must be parent;
• May form sub-committees, but must have a parent member;
• Only parent and community rep. members may vote.
• Board must solicit and respond to advice on matters relating to student achievement and well-being.
References

Regulation 612/00

Regulation 298


Board supplementary materials

Sample By-laws