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## SCHOOL COUNCILS

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### 1) PURPOSE

This administrative procedure has been developed to confirm the commitment of Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board to enhancing the relationships between schools and their communities through the work of School Councils. School Councils serve as an ongoing mechanism for effective communication and consultation among the school community, the staff in each school, school and system administrators, and the corporate Board and the Ministry of Education.

The district shall support and encourage the responsible and active advisory role of School Councils and, therefore, each school in its jurisdiction shall provide for the establishment and operation of a School Council in keeping with requirements of the Education Act and attendant Regulations, in accordance with this administrative procedure and other relevant policies and procedures of Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board.

### 2) THE ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

- a) The purpose of School Councils is, through the active participation of the membership, to improve student achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system.
- b) School Councils' primary means of achieving their purpose is by making recommendations, in accordance with board policies and procedures and the Act and attendant regulations, to the principals of the schools, the director of education and to the board.
- c) School Councils are advisory bodies and as such may provide advice to school principals, the director and board, as deemed appropriate by the School Council.
- d) School Councils shall be encouraged to:
  - i) endeavor to reflect the diversity of school communities;
  - ii) function in a manner which respects all members of the school community; and
  - iii) demonstrate a willingness to explore issues and respond to educational change.
- e) School Councils shall attempt to consult with parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school about those matters under consideration by the Council.
- f) School Councils shall not be incorporated.

### 3) SCHOOL COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board requires that an annual report be completed by each School Council in order to evaluate and respond to the changing needs of students, the school, parents/guardians and community.

- a) Every School Council at the end of its term shall prepare and submit a written report to the school principal, outlining the council's goals, activities, and achievements, including any fund-raising activities. The report must be submitted to the principal prior to elections of the new school

council. Sample reports are provided in the Ministry document: [School Councils - A Guide for Members, Section 10.1.](#)

- b) If the School Council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report on those activities in accordance with Administrative Procedure 330 Canvassing/Fund- Raising and 516 School Generated Funds – Accounting and Reporting. Reporting must be completed using Form 516-1.
- c) The principal, on behalf of the school council must ensure that all parent's/guardians who have a child enrolled in the school, have access to the annual report.

#### **4) STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION OF SCHOOL COUNCILS**

- a) The principal, in consultation with the School Council, will be responsible for the establishment of the Council and for providing the support necessary to enable the Council to operate within board policies, administrative procedures, and the Education Act and attendant regulations.
- b) Notwithstanding subsection 4) a) and wherever possible, school buildings twinned and/or under the jurisdiction of one principal may have one School Council representing all school buildings under the jurisdiction of the principal. Such arrangements are to be put into place by the principal, but only upon agreement by the Council currently representing each school building.

##### **Members of School Council**

- c) The School Council for a school, established in accordance with subsections 4), a) or 4), b), shall be composed of the following people:
  - i) the number of parent members determined under subsection 4) d);
  - ii) the principal of the school;
  - iii) one teacher who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal, determined in accordance with these procedures;
  - iv) one person who is employed at the school, other than the principal, vice-principal or any other teacher, determined in accordance with these procedures;
  - v) In the case of a school with one or more secondary school grades:
    - (1) one student enrolled in the school who is appointed by the Student Council, if the school has a Student Council; or
    - (2) one student enrolled in the school who is determined in accordance with this section, if the school does not have a Student Council.
  - vi) in the case of a school with no secondary school grades, one student enrolled in the school, if the principal determines, after consulting with the other members of the School Council, that the Council should include a student;
  - vii) one community representative appointed by the other members of the Council; and
  - viii) one person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations if such an association is established in respect of the school.
  - ix) paragraphs 4) c) v) or 4) c) vi) do not apply in respect of a school that is established primarily for adults.

**Number of Members**

- d) For the purposes of paragraph 4) c) i), the number of parent members shall be determined as follows:
- i) if the School Council has a by-law that specifies the number of parent members, the number specified in the by-law; and
  - ii) if the School Council does not have a by-law specifying the number of parent members, the Council shall not have more than fifteen (15) members in total.
- e) The School Council may specify, by by-law, that the Council shall include two or more community representatives, appointed by other members of the Council.
- f) In specifying numbers under subsections 4) d), and 4) e), the School Council shall ensure that parent members constitute a majority of the members of the Council.
- g) A person who is employed by the board cannot be appointed as a community representative on the Council unless:
- i) he or she is not employed at the school; and
  - ii) other members of the Council are informed of the person's employment before the appointment.
- h) A member of the Board cannot be a member of a School Council established by the Board.
- i) Once membership is determined, a completed copy of Administrative Procedure Form 175-1 should be forwarded to the appropriate school group superintendent.

**5) ELECTION OF PARENT MEMBERS**

- a) A person is qualified to be a parent member of a School Council if he or she is a parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school.
- b) Notwithstanding subsection 5) a), a person is not qualified to be a parent member of a School Council if:
- i) he or she is employed at the school; or
  - ii) he or she is not employed at the school but is employed elsewhere by the board unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment.
- c) A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members if he or she is a parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school at the time of the election.
- d) An election of parent members of a School Council shall be held:
- i) during the first thirty (30) calendar days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair or co-chairs of the Council after consulting with the principal of the school;

- ii) notwithstanding paragraph 5) d) i), the first election of parent members to the Council of a newly-opened school shall be held during the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school year for that school on a date that is fixed by the board.
- e) The principal of a school shall, at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the date of the election of parent members, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent/guardian of a student who, on the date notice is given, is enrolled in the school. This written notice is to be given by:
  - i) giving the notice to the parent's/guardian's child for delivery to his or her parents/guardians;
  - ii) if determined more effective by the principal in consultation with the School Council, electronic communication of the date, time and location of the election will be considered as complying with the distribution requirements of paragraph 5) e) ii), and
  - iii) posting the notice in the school in a location accessible to parents/guardians.
- f) The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.

## 6) OTHER ELECTIONS

- a) The election of the teacher, non-teacher and student members shall be held by the respective constituent groups during the first thirty (30) calendar days of each school year.
- b) A person is qualified to vote in an election of a member of the School Council:
  - i) for the teacher member, if he or she is a teacher, other than the principal or vice- principal, who is employed at the school;
  - ii) or the non-teacher member, if he or she is a person, other than the principal, vice- principal or any other teacher, who is employed at the school;
  - iii) for the student member, if he or she is a student enrolled in the school.
- c) The determination of teacher, non-teacher and student members by their constituent groups, unless otherwise provided for by the group for which the member is the representative, shall be election by secret ballot.

## 7) TERM OF OFFICE

- a) A person elected or appointed as a member of the School Council holds office from the later of:
  - i) the date he or she is elected or appointed; and
  - ii) the date of the first meeting of the Council after the elections in the school year; until the date of the first meeting of the Council after the elections in the next school year.
- b) A member of the School Council may be re-elected or reappointed unless otherwise provided for in the by-laws of the Council.

## 8) VACANCIES

- a) A vacancy in the membership of the School Council shall be filled by election or appointment in

accordance with the by-laws of the Council. If an election is held, sections 5 or 6 apply, as the case may be, with necessary modifications.

- b) A member of the School Council, except for the principal of the school, vacates his or her membership if he or she:
  - i) absents himself or herself, without being authorized by resolution entered into the minutes, from two (2) consecutive regular meetings of the Council; or
  - ii) ceases to hold the requirements to act as a member of the Council.
- c) Vacancies in the membership of the School Council do not prevent the Council from exercising its purpose.

## **9) OFFICERS**

- a) The School Council shall have a chair or, if the by-laws of the Council so provide, co- chairs, who shall be a parent member of the Council, and who shall be elected by majority vote of the members of the Council present and voting at the first meeting following the election/ appointment of the Council members.
- b) A person who is employed by the board cannot be the chair or co-chair of the Council.
- c) The School Council may have such other officers as are provided for in the by-laws of the Council.
- d) Vacancies in the office of chair, co-chair or any other officer of the School Council shall be filled in accordance with the by-laws of the Council.

## **10) REMUNERATION**

- a) A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of the School Council.
- b) The board shall assume responsibility for the costs associated with the operation of the Parent Involvement Committee.
- c) The school shall assume responsibility for the costs associated with the operation of the School Council.
- d) Notwithstanding the above, the board or school will not assume travel costs for members of School Councils to Council meetings, presentations to the board and participating in other approved activities of the board unless provided for directly through Ministry of Education funding

## **11) MEETINGS**

- a) The School Council shall have not less than four regularly scheduled meetings during the period of September through June of each school year.
- b) The first regular meeting of the School Council shall be held within the first thirty-five (35) calendar days of the school year after the elections on a date, time and location determined by

the principal of the school.

- c) The School Council, as decided by the Council at its first regular meeting, may determine to have additional meetings during the time period as outlined in subsection 11) a).
- d) Any meeting of the School Council:
  - i) shall not be held unless a majority of the members of the Council are present at the meeting, the principal or designate is present and a majority of the members of the Council who are present at the meeting are parent members;
  - ii) shall be open to the public; and
  - iii) shall be held at the school or other location accessible to the public.
- e) The principal of the school, on behalf of the School Council, shall give provide written notice, not less than five (5) calendar days in advance of each meeting, of the dates, times and locations of any meeting of the School Council to every parent/guardian of a student who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.
- f) Notwithstanding paragraph 11) d) i), the failure to have a quorum does not prevent the attending members of the School Council from meeting. Any outcomes, however, from such a meeting must be approved by a subsequent meeting of the Council that is held in accordance with paragraph 11) d) i).

## 12) VOTING

- a) Subject to sub-section 12) c), each member of the School Council is entitled to one (1) vote in votes taken by the Council.
- b) Subject to sub-section 12) c), each member of a committee established by the School Council is entitled to one (1) vote in votes taken by the committee.
- c) The principal of the school is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the School Council or by a committee of the Council.

## 13) FUND-RAISING

- a) The School Council may engage in fund-raising activities:
  - i) the activities shall be conducted in accordance with applicable administrative procedures including Procedure 330: School Canvassing and Fundraising and Procedure 516: School Generated Funds- Accounting and Reporting, and
  - ii) the activities are to raise funds for a purpose approved by the district or authorized by any applicable administrative procedures established by the director.
- b) The School Council shall ensure that the funds raised by such activities are used in accordance with any applicable administrative procedures.

## 14) MINUTES AND FINANCIAL RECORDS

- a) The School Council shall keep minutes of all meetings and records of all financial transactions

including transactions associated with fund-raising, in accordance with Administrative Procedure 195: Records and Information Management.

- b) The minutes and financial records shall be available at the school office during normal working hours for examination by any person.
- c) The minutes, once approved by the School Council, shall also be made accessible to parents/guardians, school community and forwarded by the principal to the school group superintendent and trustee upon request.

#### **15) BY-LAWS**

- a) The School Council may make by-laws governing the conduct of its affairs. Sample by-laws are provided in Ministry document: School Councils - A Guide for Members, Section 7.
- b) Each School Council shall make the following by-laws:
  - i) A by-law that governs election procedures and the filling of vacancies in the membership of the Council;
  - ii) A by-law that establishes rules respecting participation in the School Council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest; and
- c) A by-law that establishes a conflict resolution process for internal disputes of the School Council.
- d) By-laws shall be approved by a vote of the majority of members of the School Council present and voting at a regular meeting of the Council.
- e) By-laws, once established, are to be reviewed on an annual basis and if amended in any form shall be approved by a vote of the majority of members of the School Council present and voting at a regular meeting of the Council.

#### **16) COMMITTEES**

- a) The School Council may, in accordance with its by-laws, establish committees to make recommendations to the Council.
- b) If a committee has two or more members, it shall include at least one parent member of the School Council within its membership.
- c) A committee of the School Council as specified in subsection 16) b) may include persons who are not members of the School Council.
- d) Stipulations relating specifically to the attendance at meetings of the School Council shall apply in accordance with Section 11) with necessary modifications, to committees of the Council.

#### **17) PRINCIPAL**

- a) The principal of the school shall attend every regular meeting of the School Council, unless he or she is unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond his or her control.
- b) The principal shall act as a resource person to the School Council and shall assist the Council in

obtaining information relevant to the functions of the Council.

- c) The principal shall solicit the views of the School Council with respect to the following matters:
  - i) The establishment or amendment of school policies procedures and guidelines and the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system including:
    - (1) a local code of conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in the school; and
    - (2) school procedures or guidelines respecting appropriate dress for students.
  - ii) School action plans for improvement, based upon the Education Quality and Accountability office's (EQAO) reports on the results of tests of students and the communication of those plans to the public.
  - iii) Other areas which, in the opinion of the principal, should be forwarded to the School Council for the solicitation of the views of the Council.
- d) The principal shall consider each recommendation made to the principal by the School Council and shall advise the Council of the action taken in response to each recommendation.
- e) The principal of a school may delegate any of his or her duties under this procedure to the vice-principal of the school.

## **18) CONSULTATION BY BOARD**

- a) The board may solicit the views of School Councils with respect to the following matters:
  - i) The establishment or amendment of applicable administrative procedures that relate to student achievement or the accountability of the education system:
    - (1) with respect to the conduct of persons in schools including any implementation plans for new and applicable education initiatives;
    - (2) respecting appropriate dress for students in schools including any implementation plans for new and applicable education initiatives;
    - (3) respecting the allocation of funding by the board to School Councils;
    - (4) respecting the fund-raising activities of School Councils;
    - (5) respecting conflict resolution processes for internal School Council disputes; and
    - (6) respecting reimbursement by the board of expenses incurred by members and officers of School Councils.
  - ii) District action plans for improvement, based on the EQAO's reports on the results of tests of students, and the communication of those plans to the public.
  - iii) The process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals.
  - iv) Other areas which, in the opinion of the director of education should be forwarded to School Councils for the solicitation of the views of the Councils.
  - v) The director of education shall consider each recommendation made by School Councils, singly or through the Parent Involvement Committee, through referral to the appropriate board standing committee, and shall advise the appropriate Council(s) of the action taken in response to each recommendation.



**Legal References:**

- *Education Act, section 265 Duties of Principal; sections 302-303 Boards to Consider Views of School Councils;*
- Ontario Regulation 298—Operation of Schools, subsections 11(12-20) Duties of Principals Regarding School Councils
- Ontario Regulation 612/00—School Councils
- Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 122 School Councils
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

**District References:**

- [Board Policy 01 - Board Vision, Mission and Priorities](#)
- [Board Policy 07 - Board Policy Development and Review](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 111 - Administrative Procedures Manual](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 115 - School Planning and Reporting](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 170 - Communications and Media Relations](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 175: School Councils](#)
- [Administrative Procedure Form 175-1 Membership of School Council](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 182 - Sponsorship/Partnership](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 194: Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 195: Records and Information Management](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 197: Commercial Electronic Messages](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 330 - School Canvassing/Fund-Raising](#)
- [Administrative Procedure 516 – School Generated Funds – Accounting and Reporting](#)
- [Administrative Procedure Form 516-1 – Planning and Reporting for Fundraising](#)

**Resources:**

- [Ministry of Education: School Councils: A Guide for Members](#)