

Everything you need to know about School Council

Purpose

School councils play an important role in student success. They encourage a strong partnership between the school and the family and help parents become actively involved in the education of their children. School councils help good schools become better.

School councils are expected to:

- Advise the principal and, where appropriate, the board (through PIC)
- Place the interests of students first
- Support the DSBN's school success planning goals
- Encourage parent and community involvement in the educational system
- Promote positive attitudes towards public education

Who can be a member of school council?

Parents or guardians of students enrolled at the school may be a member of the school council. Board employees can be parent representatives, unless they are employed at the school attended by their children. Council membership should reflect the diversity of the school community.

How is a school council organized?

The majority of members on school council must be parents or guardians of students enrolled at the school. School councils will have a minimum of nine members, or eleven members if there are student representatives. Student representatives are required in secondary schools but optional in elementary schools.

Each school council should include:

Member	Membership process
Parents/guardians.....	elected by parents/guardians
School principal.....	designated member
1 community representative.....	appointed by council
1 teacher.....	...elected by teachers
1 support staff member.....	elected by support staff
1 student.....	elected by students

How to recruit new members

Make school council as visible as possible in the school. Welcome new families and develop strategies to connect with parents from every community group. Let parents know about council meetings and share information about council decisions and activities. Ensure that meetings are informative, efficient and held at convenient times.

Election

School council elections must be held in the first 30 days of the school year. Members must be nominated for a position on the school council executive and elected by membership vote. A person may be a candidate or vote in a school council election if he/she is a parent/guardian of a student enrolled at the school.

An Election Planning Committee should be established to plan and hold the elections. At least 14 days before the election, the principal shall give written notice of the election time, date and location to the school community. Eligible voters may cast one vote for each vacant position.

Term of office

The normal term of office for elected and appointed school council positions is two years. Some one year terms may be permitted. The term of office for parents should be staggered so that approximately half of the members are elected each year. Members of school council may be re-elected or reappointed for more than one term.

What is the role of school council?

School councils advise principals, superintendents and school trustees on educational topics and issues, including:

- School calendar
- Code of behaviour and dress codes
- School program priorities and curriculum delivery
- Budget priorities
- Selection criteria for principals and vice principals
- Extracurricular activities
- School-based services
- Fundraising policies
- Conflict resolution policies
- Planning for improvement
- Board policies, guidelines and new education initiatives that affect student achievement or board accountability to parents

School council recommendations

The principal and the board must consider council's recommendations and advise council of any actions taken in response to those recommendations. The principal may refer recommendations about broader educational issues to the board.



DSBN Parent Involvement Committee

support • engagement • success

School council responsibilities

General

- Establishes and reviews council goals, objectives, action plans and procedures each year
- Holds a minimum of four meetings each year
- Organizes training for council members
- Communicates regularly with parents and the school community
- Keeps minutes of its meetings and records of all financial transactions for four years

Financial

- Maintains control of all funds raised by school council and advises on all purchases and expenditures made with those funds
- Administers school council funds through the school activities funds bank account maintained by the school

Financial statement

- Prepares an annual financial statement for school council activities conducted for the academic year, from September 1 to August 31 inclusive
- Includes the financial statement in the annual report

Annual report

- Prepares an annual report summarizing school council activities for the entire academic year, from September 1 to August 31 inclusive
- Submits the annual report, including the annual financial statement, to the principal and the Communications department at the HJA Brown Education Centre no later than September 30 of each year

Quorum at meetings

A meeting of school council cannot be held unless:

- A majority of the current members are present
- A majority of members present at the meeting are parent members

Without a quorum, issues may be discussed but council cannot consider or approve motions.

Constitution and bylaws

Every school council should have a constitution. A constitution defines the school council's purpose, explains how council will be structured and describes the rights and responsibilities of council members and executive.

School councils must also establish bylaws to guide school council operations and activities.

All school councils must have bylaws to address:

- Election procedures
- Filling council vacancies
- Conflict of interest
- Conflict resolution

Responsibilities of school council chair

Note: a person employed by the board cannot be chair or co-chair of school council

- Supervises council activities and procedures
- Prepares council agenda and chairs meetings
- Communicates regularly with school principal
- Ensures regular communication between council and school community
- Ensures that fundraising activities and uses of funds comply with board policies and guidelines
- Prepares annual report of school council activities

Vice-chair - optional

- Assumes the role of the chair when the chair is absent
- Assists the chair, as needed

Secretary

- Records, maintains and reports accurate minutes of council meetings, including all council decisions
- Ensures minutes are available in school office for review by parents and students
- Acts as corresponding secretary for council

Treasurer - optional

- Receives all funds raised by the council
- Prepares bank deposits for funds received and submits them to the school secretary for deposit
- Authorizes school council expenditures
- Reviews, signs and dates monthly transaction reports on funds held in the school activity funds bank account
- Maintains financial records for council and gives financial reports, as required
- Prepares annual financial statement for council

Principal

Note: the principal may not vote at school council or school council committee meetings

- Attends all school council meetings
- Assists and supports school council activities
- Requests advice from school council in areas where council has advisory responsibilities
- Considers council recommendations and informs council of actions taken based on those recommendations
- Communicates regularly with school council chair
- Distributes materials provided by the Ministry of Education and acts as a resource on board and Ministry policies and procedures
- Approves all communication to the school community distributed through the school



DSBN Parent Involvement Committee

support • engagement • success