



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD Policy and Procedure #262.0, School Councils

WORKING DOCUMENT

Executive Summary

The School Councils policy and procedure outline the roles and responsibilities for the development and operation of school councils.

What has Changed?

Major changes to the document:

Reason for review: Four-year cyclical review.

Who is affected by these changes and what is the impact on current practice?

Implementation timelines: Immediate.

Lead Superintendent(s)/Subject Matter Expert(s): Tania Sterling, Superintendent of Education, Leadership Development

Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities under this Policy

- Board of Trustees
- Director of Education
- Superintendents
- Principals
- School Council Chairs and Members

Relationship to Board Priorities

The School Council procedures support the goal of advancing student achievement, well-being and mental health and the delivery of effective and sustainable educational programs by actively engaging a diverse representation of community members, including those from marginalized communities.

Timelines and Next Steps

This policy and procedure was scheduled for first review at the March 1, 2022 Policy and By-Law Standing Committee meeting.

Providing Feedback

Questions about this policy and/or procedure should be raised with your principal, manager or supervisor. If additional clarification is required, principals, managers and supervisors may contact the lead superintendent and/or subject matter expert.

In accordance with Board Policy #285.0, [Board Policies, Procedures and Supporting Documents](#), the Board welcomes all comments and suggestions on Board policy.

Input is an important component of the review process. If you feel a policy and/or procedure needs to be revised, feedback may be submitted through the school council or by submitting the on-line form. In your response please;

- outline clearly the specific section(s) of the policy and/or procedure in which you are not comfortable,
- suggest specific alternate wording to reflect your position, and
- identify the reason(s) for your concern(s).

Specific recommendations or questions about the review process should be submitted using the on-line form or sent to the Policy Officer, Trustee Services via email at policy.committee@yrdsb.ca, or via telephone at 905-727-0022 extension 2570 or in hard copy at [The Education Centre – Aurora](#).

Legislative Context

[Education Act](#)

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property, or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities, will respect the policies and procedures of the Board.

1. Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board believes collaborative and inclusive partnerships among schools, families and their communities are essential to advancing student learning, achievement, well-being and mental health, and to increasing a shared sense of confidence in public education.

Strong and inclusive partnerships are built from a common vision and common goals, and are nurtured through regular communication and meaningful consultation involving all members of the school community.

Working together with school councils to collaborate, co-create, and implement actions that meet the needs of students in diverse communities.

School councils play an important role in building school, family, and community partnerships by providing input into relevant Board and school-level decisions and by working with members of the school community to support student learning, achievement, well-being and mental health.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- a) reviewing the School Councils policy in accordance with the priorities in the [Trustees' Multi-Year Plan](#) and the approved policy review cycle;
- b) understanding and communicating with members of the community about the School Councils policy, as required;
- c) receiving and considering advice from school councils on the establishment and amendment of Board policies that relate to student achievement and well-being and mental health and to the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians/families;
- d) consulting with school councils on the development of the [Trustees' Multi-Year Plan](#); and
- e) considering recommendation school councils make to the Board and provide the school council, through the appropriate superintendent, with a rationale for any decisions reached or actions taken in response;
- f) make a genuine effort to attend school council forums and regional symposiums to listen, learn, and share with school councils members and other participants.

2.2 The Director of Education is responsible for:

- a) implementing and operationalizing the School Councils policy;
- b) consulting school councils on the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to parent engagement and its impact on student achievement and well-

- being and mental health and to the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians/families; and
- c) consulting school councils on Board planning processes.

2.3 Associate Directors, Schools are responsible for:

- a) providing support, as required, in responding to internal disputes of school councils.

2.4 The senior staff member identified to support school councils is responsible for:

- a) ensuring internal disputes of school councils that are referred by the Superintendent of Schools are responded to in an appropriate manner.

2.5 Superintendents of Schools are responsible for:

- a) providing support to principals in exploring solutions to internal disputes of school councils in an appropriate manner;
- b) referring internal dispute of school councils to the senior staff member identified to support school councils, as required; and
- c) ensuring the Associate Director, Schools is informed of internal school council disputes, as required.

2.6 Principals are responsible for:

- a) ensuring that a school council is established that represents the school community and promotes improved student learning, achievement and well-being and mental health through the development of equitable and inclusive school practices;
- b) applying school community data to actively attract and recruit participation on school council that resembles that of the student population attending the school;
- c) building an understanding with the community about the role and the value that school councils play in improving student success in class, virtually, and at home;
- d) ensuring all community members, including those who are newcomers or marginalized, have transparent and equitable access in participating on school councils;
- e) finding ways to remove barriers to improve access and engagement with school councils;
- f) facilitating the opportunity and creating the safe space for school community members to identify needs and for schools and school councils to actively respond to the identified needs;
- g) communicating and collaborating with school councils to share information about Board and ministry mandates and respond to community feedback;
- h) encouraging school council members to share their ideas for advancing student achievement and well-being;
- i) supporting parents/guardians/families in informing the school improvement plan;
- j) developing a fundraising plan in partnership with school council members that is reflective of/responsive to the needs of the school and the community;
- k) supporting school councils in understanding the implementation of Board policies and procedures and their role in the review process;
- l) forwarding information on community resources to school councils;

School Councils

- m) working with school councils to invite input into relevant decision-making within the scope of the school councils mandate;
- n) facilitating learning for school councils to strengthen collaborative relationships, foster equitable and inclusive practices, and create safe and welcoming environments;
- o) engaging in internal conflict resolution activities in accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures, and the school council constitution and/or by-law;
- p) referring internal disputes of school councils to the Superintendent of Schools, if required;
- q) ensuring school councils understand their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the School Councils policy and procedure and appropriate guidelines and legislation; and
- r) collecting feedback from the school council and reporting back on the impact and value to school improvement and student success.

2.7 School councils are responsible for:

- a) reviewing school data as an input into school council activities to co-create solutions and to be responsive to the needs of the student and school community;
- b) sharing lived experiences to foster an understanding of community needs and to work towards achieving shared objectives;
- c) supporting and promoting family and community engagement in advancing student achievement and well-being and mental health in an equitable and inclusive manner;
- d) collaborating together as a school council, not as individual school council members, to make recommendations to the Board in the development and implementation of the school improvement plan;
- e) communicating with and providing ongoing advice to the principal on school-related matters;
- f) collaborating with the principal to coordinate community resources that support student learning, achievement and well-being and mental health; and
- g) understanding and communicating with members of the community about the roles and responsibilities of school councils as outlined in the School Councils policy and procedure and appropriate guidelines and legislation, as required;
- h) working with the school principal to reconcile the impact/influence/value that the school council activities have on student success and school improvement.

3. Definitions

3.1 School Community

The school community includes, but is not limited to, students, parents/guardians/families, staff members and members of the local community.

3.2 School Councils

School councils are advisory bodies which may make recommendations to the school principal or to the Board on matters as stated in all applicable Board policies and procedures. School councils are comprised of:

- a) parents/guardians/families (constituting the majority of members of the school council);
- b) students;
- c) at least one community representative;

- d) the school principal;
- e) one teaching staff member; and
- f) one support staff member.

4. Contact

Director's Office

5. History

Approved 1996

Reviewed 1997

Amended 2001

Amended 2005

Revised 2007

Revised 2011

Working Document February 2015 Revised November 2015

Working Document March 2022



Board Procedure #262.0

School Councils

1. Procedure Statement

This procedure outlines the roles and responsibilities for the development and operation of school councils.

2. Application

School Council Membership consists of the following:

2.1 Community representative

- a) The community representative is appointed by school council members. The representative cannot be employed at the school as a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager. If the individual is employed as a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager elsewhere in the Board, they must inform other members of the council of this before the appointment.

2.2 School council chair, co-chairs and officers

- a) These members of the school council must;
 - be elected by members of the school council,
 - be parent(s)/guardian(s)/families members of the school council, and
 - not be a person who is an employee of the Board or who is a member of a bargaining unit at the school.

2.3 Parent members

- a) Any parent/guardian/families with a child enrolled in the school are eligible;
 - for election to school council,
 - for acclamation to a position on the school council when the number of candidates is equal to, or less than the number of parent(s)/guardian(s)/families member positions on the council, and
 - to be appointed to the school council if additional vacancies exist.

2.4 Student representative

- a) The student representative is a member of the school council and will be;
 - named by the student council in secondary schools, and
 - appointed by the principal after consulting with the school council, where applicable, in elementary schools.

2.5 Support staff member representative

- a) The support staff member representative is a member of the school council. This representative must be;
 - employed at the school,
 - not be the principal or vice-principal, and
 - elected by support staff members employed at the school.

2.6 Teacher representative

- a) The teacher representative is a member of the school council. This representative must be employed at the school and is elected by teachers employed at the school.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Director of Education shall:

- a) allocate staff and resources to support the School Councils policy and procedure; and
- b) consider advice from school councils on the establishment and amendment of Board procedures that relate to student learning, achievement and well-being and mental health and to the accountability of public education in York Region to parents/guardians/families.

3.2 The senior staff member identified to support school councils shall:

- a) coordinate regional opportunities for school councils to meet at least twice annually, when appropriate;
- b) in collaboration with school council representatives, offer relevant professional development for council chairs, principals, and council members; and
- c) appoint school council representatives to ad hoc advisory committees, as required by the Ministry of Education or deemed appropriate by the Board.

3.3 Superintendents of Schools shall:

- a) consider and forward recommendations school councils make to the appropriate person(s) for consideration;
- b) annually solicit the views of school councils with respect to the process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals, through the development of the Principal Profiles; and
- c) respond to recommendations made by school councils.

3.4 Principals shall:

- a) be a member of the school council;
- b) review the school council handbook and on-line modules with their school council at the beginning of each school year and highlighting best practices for consideration by council;

- c) work with other staff members and school council members as required to identify community, student, support staff member and teacher representatives on the school council;
- d) provide guidance to school councils to support their decision-making process
- e) provide learning opportunities for school councils on relevant topics such as, but not limited to, legislation, policies and regulations, meeting records, code of ethics, conflict resolution, fundraising and community engagement;
- f) not be entitled to vote on matters under consideration by the school council or a committee of the school council;
- g) attend all school council meetings, unless unable to do so due to illness or other cause beyond their control;
- h) in extenuating circumstances, if unable to attend a school council meeting, arrange for the vice-principal to attend on their behalf;
- i) schedule the first school council meeting within the first 35 days of the school year;
- j) in the case of a new school, identify the date for the first school council election during the first 30 calendar days of the school year;
- k) provide at least 14 days notice of dates, times and locations of the election of school council members to parents/guardians/families of students enrolled in the school on the date notice is given;
- l) communicate the names of members of the school council to parents/guardians/families of students enrolled in the school within 30 days after school council members have been determined;
- m) advise school council members when there is a need for volunteers in the school;
- n) make the dates, times and locations of school council meetings available to members of the school community; ensure that the following documents are available to members of the school community;
 - school council meeting minutes,
 - school council constitution and/or and by-law,
 - school council communications, and
 - school council annual report;
- o) in accordance with all applicable legislation, Board policies, procedures and [guidelines](#) and best practices, support the school council in creating a constitution and/or by-law that is fair and equitable and includes the following;
 - a code of conduct,
 - the process of making constitutional and/or by-law amendments,
 - electronic participation in school council meetings and decision making,
 - election procedures and the filling of vacancies,
 - participation in school council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest, and
 - a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes;
- p) distribute to each member of the school council any materials received from and/or identified by the Ministry of Education or the Board as being relevant for distribution to school councils;
- q) support the council in obtaining information about the roles, responsibilities and functions of school councils, including information relating to relevant legislation, regulations and policies;

- r) consider each recommendation the school council makes and provide the council with a rationale for any decisions reached or actions taken in response;
- s) solicit the views of the school council with respect to;
 - the establishment and amendment of Board policies and procedures that relate to student learning, achievement and well-being and mental health and to the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians/families, and
 - the establishment, implementation, review and communication of the school improvement plan and school profile;
- t) develop an annual fundraising plan, selecting fundraising activities and managing and administering funds in accordance with Board [School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds](#) policy and procedure;
- u) ensure that school council financial records are maintained and available for examination for a seven- year period;
- v) ensure the procurement of materials and services is carried out in accordance with all applicable Board policies and procedures;
- w) ensure the school council is aware that insurance coverage is provided through the Board for school councils if carrying out a Board-approved event and following applicable Board policies and procedures;
- x) support and promote the school council's operations and activities;
- y) support the school council in communicating with the school community; and
- z) clarify the implementation of Board policies and procedures with school councils to ensure compliance.

3.5 School councils shall:

- a) carry out their responsibilities in accordance with;
 - Ontario Regulation 612, School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees,
 - the School Council policy and procedure,
 - the School Council Handbook,
 - all other relevant Board policies and procedures,
 - the school council constitution and/or by-law, and
 - create a constitution and/or by-law regarding.
- b) school council member code of conduct;
 - the process of making constitutional and/or by-law amendments;
 - electronic participation in school council meetings and decision making;
 - election procedures and the filling of vacancies;
 - participation in school council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest; and
 - a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes;
- c) be familiar with their responsibilities, as outlined in the School Councils policy and procedure and the [School Council Handbook](#);
- d) provide annual input into the development and/or review of a Principal Profile;
- e) hold elections for school council members during the first 30 calendar days of each school year;
- f) fill membership vacancies by election or appointment in accordance with the school council constitution and/or by-law;

- g) appoint community representative(s) to the school council;
- h) ensure that a parent(s)/guardian(s)/families qualifies to be school council member in accordance with legislative requirements;
- i) continue its duties even if there is a vacancy;
- j) meet at least four times during the school year, with the first meeting occurring within the first 35 calendar days of the school year;
- k) ensure that all meetings are open to the public and in an accessible location;
- l) ensure the agenda is communicated to members of the school community and available to members of the public within a reasonable amount of time;
- m) only make decisions when a majority of the members are present and where a majority of the members in attendance are parent(s)/guardian(s)/family members;
- n) record and maintain minutes of all meetings for a four-year period;
- o) ensure that minutes are accessible to any member of the public;
- p) complete the annual report template by June 30 of the school year;
- q) support the fundraising plan and activities as outlined in the Board [School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds](#) policy and procedure;
- r) ensure that all financial transactions are conducted in accordance with all applicable Board policies and procedures;
- s) consult with parents/guardians/families of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the school council;
- t) adhere to the [School Council Communications Protocol](#);
- u) understand that insurance coverage is provided through the Board for school councils if carrying out a Board-approved event and following applicable Board policies and procedures;
- v) not be incorporated and not be a registered charity; and
- w) not provide any remuneration to any members including, but not limited to, the chair, family members, the community representative, the student member or staff members.

3.6 School Councils may:

- a) when drafting or reviewing the school council constitution and/or by-law, consider;
 - specifying the number of parent(s)/guardian(s)/family members who will serve on the committee, provided that the number constitutes a majority on the school council, otherwise the number of parent(s)/guardian(s)/family members shall be six,
 - specifying the number of community representatives, if more than one, who will serve on the committee,
 - outlining eligibility for elected positions,
 - specifying that the school council may have two co-chairs, otherwise there is only one chair,
 - specifying other officers of the school council, and
 - establishing norms and rules for conducting school council meetings and its sub-committees.
- b) establish subcommittees to make recommendations to the school council provided that the committee includes at least one parent(s)/guardian(s)/family member;
- c) identify other school community members to participate in sub-committees to make recommendations to the school council;

- d) refer internal disputes to the superintendent responsible for school councils for consideration, through the principal; and make recommendations, through the minutes of school council meetings, to;
 - principals, and
 - the Board by submitting them in writing to the superintendent of schools.

3.7 School council members shall:

- a) be elected during the first 30 calendar days of each school year, on a date established by the school council chair or co-chairs, after consulting with the principal;
- b) in the case of a new school, hold the first school council election during the first 30 calendar days of the school year on a date identified by the principal;
- c) hold office from the later of;
 - the date they are elected or appointed, or
 - the date of the first school council meeting after the election is held;
- d) hold office until the first meeting of the school council after elections are held in the next school year;
- e) understand that when a consensus cannot be reached and voting is necessary, or on committees of the school council on which the member sits;
 - each parent(s)/guardian(s)/family member is entitled to one vote,
 - the principal is not entitled to vote,
 - staff members are entitled to one collective vote, and
 - community representatives are entitled to one collective vote, regardless of the number of community representatives;
- f) be aware of their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the [School Council Handbook](#);
- g) adhere to the school council constitution and/or by-law;
- h) be accountable to the members of the school community they represent;
- i) maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
- j) regularly attend school council meetings;
- k) participate in information sharing and training programs;
- l) act as a communication link between the school council and the community;
- m) encourage the participation of all parents/guardians/families and other members of the school community;
- n) receive reimbursement for expenses incurred as members or officers of the school council in accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures; and
- o) participate on sub-committees and assist with tasks of the school council as appropriate.

3.8 School council chairs/co-chairs shall:

- a) carry out tasks in accordance with Board policies and procedures and their school council's constitution and/or by-laws;
- b) call a minimum of four school council meetings per year in consultation with the principal;
- c) ensure that parents/guardians/families are consulted about matters under consideration by the council;
- d) in collaboration with the principal, undertake fundraising and decisions about the management and expenditure of such school-generated funds in accordance with [School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds](#) and other relevant Board policies and procedures;
- e) prepare the agenda for school council meetings in consultation with the principal;
- f) ensure meeting minutes accurately reflect the discussion and recommendations made by the committee;
- g) ensure meeting agendas and minutes are accessible to members of the public;
- h) chair school council meetings according to the agenda;
- i) ensure that minutes of school council meetings are recorded and communicated with members of the school community;
- j) communicate with the school principal;
- k) communicate with senior Board staff members and trustees, as required; and
- l) ensure that the school council constitution and/or by-law are reviewed annually and are in compliance with all applicable Board policies, procedures and guidelines.

3.9 School council vice-chairs shall:

- a) assist the chair/co-chairs in carrying out their responsibilities; and
- b) act on behalf of the chair/co-chairs in the event of their absence.

3.10 Parents/guardians/families of students enrolled in the school shall:

- a) each have one vote in the election of school council members.

4. History

September 2002

Revised 2007, 2011, November 2015

Working Document February 2015 Revision drafted: October 31, 2018

Revised February 2022