

SCHOOL COUNCIL HANDBOOK

*Building family and community partnerships in support
of student achievement and well-being*

Revised October 2013



TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR	1
INTRODUCTION.....	2
1. ABOUT THE BOARD.....	3
1.1. SCHOOL AND BOARD PLANNING	3
1.2. ROLE OF THE TRUSTEES	3
1.3. BOARD ADMINISTRATION (also referred to as “the Board”).....	4
1.4. CURRICULUM	6
1.5. SPECIAL EDUCATION	9
1.6. TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS IN ONTARIO.....	11
1.7. CUPE 1196 and CUPE 1734	12
2. COMMUNICATING WITH THE BOARD	13
2.1. School Council Forums.....	13
2.2. the Board’s Website.....	13
2.3. Other methods of communicating.....	13
2.4. School Council email	13
3. RUNNING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL COUNCILS.....	15
3.1. ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNCILS.....	15
3.2. GUIDE TO THE BOARD’S SCHOOL COUNCIL POLICY AND PROCEDURE 262.0	16
3.3. GUIDE TO THE BOARD’S School Fundraising and Administration of School-generated Funds POLICY and procedure 676.0.....	21
3.4. ESTABLISHING YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL BYLAWS.....	22
3.5. GROUP NORMS: A RESOURCE FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT.....	23
3.6. RULES OF ORDER.....	24
3.7. AGENDAS, MINUTES AND FINANCIAL RECORDS FOR SCHOOL COUNCILS	26
3.8. GUIDE TO SCHOOL COUNCIL AGENDA.....	27
4. CODE OF ETHICS	28
5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION	29
6. SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR EMAIL ACCESS.....	30
6.1. Before you Start	30
6.2. Getting Started.....	30
6.3. The Main Screen	33
6.4. Using Email.....	36

6.5.	Sending Email.....	37
6.6.	Customization Options.....	39
6.7.	Managing Contacts	42
6.8.	Folder Organization.....	43
6.9.	Tools.....	44
6.10.	Glossary of Terms.....	45
7.	APPENDIX A: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....	47
8.	APPENDIX B: SAMPLE SCHOOL COUNCIL BYLAWS	49
9.	APPENDIX C: TYPES OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT	54
10.	APPENDIX D: GLOSSARY OF TERMS	56

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The York Region District School Board is the third largest and one of the top performing school boards in Ontario. With our motivated students, skilled teachers and support staff, strong educational leaders, and supportive families and communities, we continue to build on our success. We are committed to the principles of equity and inclusivity enabling each student to learn and grow to his or her full potential.

Thank you for choosing to get involved with the school council. At the Board, we value parent, family and community engagement and recognize the positive effect this has on student achievement and well-being. Your commitment will help to make our school communities even stronger.

I hope you find this handbook to be a useful resource, and I wish you all the best for the school year.

Ken Thurston
Director of Education

INTRODUCTION

The following pages provide you with:

- background information on the York Region District School Board (YRDSB)
- information on Board policies and procedures relating to school council operations
- key resources to assist you and other school council members

This handbook is one tool to assist you in your collaborative work to support student achievement and well-being. Throughout the year, you will receive additional support in the form of training, online conferences and regular communication

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact your superintendent of schools.

1. ABOUT THE BOARD

1.1. SCHOOL AND BOARD PLANNING

1.1.1. *MULTI-YEAR PLAN*

As the governing body of the York Region District School Board, trustees are required to establish an annual Multi-Year Plan to guide system direction for a three to four-year period. The Multi-Year Plan is a reflection of emergent priorities identified by our educational communities.

Over the next two to three years, the Board will aim to reach goals based on student achievement and well being, delivery of effective and appropriate educational programs and stewardship of resources.

The Board is committed to continuous improvement and feedback from all members of the community. The Multi-Year Plan is a living document to be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. We encourage you to review the goals of the Plan and provide us with your feedback.

1.1.2. *DIRECTOR'S PLAN*

The Multi-Year Plan identifying our long-term goals is operationalized through the Director's Annual Plan. This annual plan focuses the work of our schools and staff into key areas while continuing to meet the goals set out by our trustees.

Both the Multi-Year Plan and the Director's Annual Plan are available on the Board website at www.yrdsb.ca.

1.1.3. *BOARD IMPROVEMENT PLAN*

The Board Improvement Work Plan (BIP) sets specific operational direction to ensure the goals of the Trustees' Multi-Year Plan and the Director's Annual Plan are achieved. Updated annually, the BIP reflects our system's continued commitment to improve achievement and well-being for our students. It is based on the fundamental belief that each student can learn, given time and support.

The BIP provides the framework for individual School Improvement Plans and Department Improvement Plans, each with its own measurable goals and targets which are monitored throughout the year and revised annually. The BIP is the means by which the Board holds itself accountable for improvements in student achievement and well-being.

For more information about School Improvement Planning, please see [the Ontario Ministry of Education's K-12 School Effectiveness Framework](http://www.ontario.ca/education) available on the Ministry of Education website www.ontario.ca/education.

1.2. ROLE OF THE TRUSTEES

Trustees are elected by ratepayers (in accordance with the [Municipal Elections Act](#)) and empowered under the [Education Act](#) to set policy for the operation of all public schools in York Region. Trustees

communicate with the public via formal and informal meetings with parent groups and concerned citizens, through the distribution of materials and through Board meetings that are open to the public. Trustees are available and accessible to address concerns from the community with respect to Board policies and education matters. They act as ambassadors for the system, officiating and speaking at school openings and events. Trustees also function as ombudspersons for students and community members, advocating a wide range of issues regarding public education.

1.3. BOARD ADMINISTRATION (ALSO REFERRED TO AS “THE BOARD”)

1.3.1. THE DIRECTOR

The Director of Education is the chief executive officer of the Board and is responsible to the Board of Trustees for the efficient management and coordination of all matters related to the instructional and business aspects of the Board’s operation. The director provides advice to the Board of Trustees and its committees regarding policy formation, educational issues and other administrative matters. The director also apprises the Board of staff changes and submits all reports required by the Board and its committees.

1.3.2. ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION

Associate Directors of Education are supervisory officers who oversee such areas as business and finance, staffing, Board and school plans, staff development and the appointments and transfers of principals and vice-principals.

1.3.3. SUPERINTENDENTS OF SCHOOLS

There are 12 superintendents responsible for schools in York Region (three in each of the four geographic areas of the Board – Central, North, West and East). The Superintendents of Schools ensure the link between the Board and the schools and communities with each taking on a responsibility for designated schools. There are also three superintendents who have central responsibilities, two Superintendents of Schools, Operations and one Superintendent, Equity and Engagement.

Superintendents are also assigned for the following areas: Curriculum and Instructional Services, Student Services, Business Services, and Plant Services.

1.3.4. COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRES (CECS)

There are four Community Education Centres (CECs) in the Board (North, Central, West, and East). Each CEC provides support for various administrative functions for the schools designated to the area. The operations within CECs are performed in conjunction with various divisions and departments of the Aurora and Newmarket Education Centres including:

- staffing of schools (teachers, teaching assistants and secretarial)
- supervision of staff
- staff development
- enrolment statistics
- parent concerns
- classroom programs

- boundaries
- budget
- non-resident student registrations
- occasional teacher dispatching
- special education (student placements, classes and programs)
- psychological assessments
- attendance counselling
- many other student support services

CECs			
North	Central	West	East
East Gwillimbury Georgina Newmarket Whitchurch-Stouffville	Aurora King North Richmond Hill	Kleinberg Maple South Richmond Hill Thornhill Vaughan Woodbridge	Markham

1.3.5. THE PRINCIPAL

The principal of a school, subject to the authority of the appropriate supervisory officer, is in charge of:

- a) the instruction and discipline of pupils in the school; and
- b) the organization and management of the school. – [Ontario Regulation 298](#).

Along with these two responsibilities, the principal’s responsibilities also encompass a broad spectrum of duties and tasks. The principal is accountable to the students, parents, staff and senior administration for every aspect of the school organization. The function of the principal is governed and bound by the limits of Board policy, the Ministry of Education’s legislation, regulations and directives, and the various collective agreements that apply to the teaching and support staff within the school.

1.3.5.1. DUTIES AND TASKS OF THE PRINCIPAL:

The following is not intended to be either comprehensive or all-inclusive but demonstrates the scope of a principal’s responsibilities. One or more vice-principals may also be assigned to the school to help the principal. Each principal is responsible for:

- organizing and managing his/her individual school, including any budget assigned to the school by the Board
- student admission and placement
- maintaining student records
- holding examinations and ensuring report cards are sent to parents
- enacting the safe arrival program at their school
- ensuring appropriate student supervision for all activities in and out of the school
- overseeing school discipline, which may include restorative approaches to recover relationships, suspensions and recommending expulsions when necessary

- assigning and supervising teachers
- providing opportunities for professional development that uses learning communities to improve student achievement and well-being and to develop equitable, inclusive and supportive school cultures
- preparing timetables for staff and students
- making recommendations to the Board on staffing appointments that are reflective of community diversity
- selecting culturally relevant and responsive textbooks and other learning materials from the approved Ministry of Education list, with the help of teachers
- ensuring ongoing maintenance of the school buildings
- preparing plans for fires and emergencies and conducting fire drills
- refusing to admit persons believed to be infected with or exposed to communicable diseases requiring an order under section 22 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act
- assigning duties to staff members
- providing prompt distribution of ministry materials to school council
- attending every meeting of the school council
- consulting with the school council regarding school code of conduct, appropriate dress for pupils and school action plans for improvement

1.4. CURRICULUM

1.4.1. *WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?*

Ministry of Education:

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades K – 8 and The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 –12



York Region District School Board:

Curriculum Review, Development and Implementation as defined in Policy 310.0



The Local School:

The School Improvement Plan Grade/Division/Department Planning

1.4.2. *CURRICULUM: A YORK REGION PERSPECTIVE*

The goal of curriculum delivery in YRDSB is to provide purposeful, dynamic and inviting programs that are culturally relevant and responsive and build the knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare resilient learners for life. Social, emotional and academic learning provides the underpinning for student achievement and well-being in both our elementary and secondary schools. Our YRDSB Literacy and

Numeracy Frames speak to key elements that need to work together to deliver curriculum in a purposeful, dynamic and inviting way:

- **Commitment** – YRDSB educators are committed to being a part of a collaborative that learns together to ensure shared beliefs and understandings, continuous learning and to ensure inclusive and equitable school cultures.
- **Planning** – Planning is purposeful to ensure focused and comprehensive programming.
- **Assessment** – Effective assessment practices inform instruction and inform school decision making.
- **Engagement** – Students are partners in learning with their teachers and administrators and student engagement is key to student success.
- **Instruction** – Knowing the strengths, needs and interests of learners is essential for instruction that is increasingly precise and personalized.
- **Relationships** – School staff work with families and their communities to establish positive relationships in the service of developing mutual understanding and effective programming for students.

The world of the future will undoubtedly be one that requires the ability to respond critically and creatively to new situations and challenges. It will also be a world in which citizens will be challenged to accept not only community, but also global responsibilities. Opportunities to involve students in authentic learning experiences and critical inquiry are woven into programming at both the elementary and secondary level. Informed pathways planning is vital as students transition and prepare for appropriate post-secondary decisions.

The Ontario Curriculum policy documents provide a framework for this purposeful approach to education, defining the expectations for learning for every subject, at every grade level from a provincial perspective. Assessment of student progress is guided by the Ministry of Education's *Growing Success* directives.

1.4.3. FOUNDATIONS FOR RESULTS-BASED LEARNING

The Ontario Curriculum defines the expectations for learning for every subject and for every grade. What remains is to determine the planning, instructional and assessment strategies which will ensure that every student is enabled to achieve the results intended to prepare him/her for the future.

1.4.3.1. THE PRINCIPLES OF RESULTS-BASED LEARNING

Results-based learning:

- is a way of thinking and working that directly affects every aspect of the schooling process
- requires that schools maintain a clear focus for learning, have high expectations, know and use effective instructional, assessment and evaluation strategies
- requires schools to deliberately design learning conditions so that all students have the time and support they need to learn effectively

1.4.4. CURRICULUM REVIEW, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

1.4.4.1. A FOCUS ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

As educators, we are preparing students for a world that is constantly changing. Thus, we are challenged to continuously address the need for change openly and honestly. Managing continuous change is an easier task when educational partners work together. Schools are learning organizations for students, staff and the community.

Shared Understandings:

- Principals, vice-principals and school staff create and communicate a shared vision for their school and work together to build equitable and positive climates for learning.
- School leaders ensure that literacy instruction is embedded into all subject areas and monitor effective assessment and instructional practice.
- School Leaders ensure that mathematics instruction focuses on the importance of problem-solving and inquiry and, through mathematical discourse, help students gain a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Strategies to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes for the appropriate use of digital literacies are woven into instructional practice to deepen student engagement.
- Each student and each staff member can be successful given appropriate time and support.
- High expectations are held for all.
- Teachers understand and can articulate what they do and why they teach and assess the way they do.
- Assessment-based instruction is differentiated as per the strengths, needs and interests of students.
- Early and on-going interventions are matched to student needs.
- Students receive meaningful, timely and descriptive feedback on their learning.
- The needs of students who are struggling are managed case-by-case.

1.4.5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ministry of Education: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/>

This website contains all of the Ministry of Education program documents along with curriculum updates, news releases and links to other educational sites.

YRDSB: <http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca>

This website contains information regarding key curriculum initiatives that are a current focus in York Region schools.

Ministry of Education (Grades 1-6) Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/moreinfo.html>

Ministry of Education (Grades 7-12) EDUGAINS: <http://www.edugains.ca/newsite/index.html>

Questions regarding the school curriculum can be directed to the school principal.

1.5. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Ontario's Education Act and related regulations require school boards to provide special education programs and services for children who need them. These programs and services are described in the York Region District School Board Special Education Plan 2013.

In accordance with the Education Act and Regulations:

- Each Ontario school-age pupil is entitled to access publicly supported education, regardless of the pupil's needs.
- Pupils who are identified as exceptional are entitled to special education programs and services suited to their needs.
- Parents or guardians of pupils with special education needs are consulted with regard to the assessment, identification placement, and program development for their children with special needs.

YRDSB's planning, program development and service delivery processes have a strong tradition of including students with special needs as an integral part of our culture. This tradition is based on a belief that every student can learn and succeed with appropriate accommodations and modifications that address individual strengths and needs. Inclusiveness relies on strong learning communities that promote a respect for differences and communities that recognize value and validate all children's right to belong at school. The practice of inclusion is more than full integration in regular classrooms. It goes beyond the continuum of service placements available to address individual student needs to include meaningful participation and interaction with others.

YRDSB supports the intent of Regulation 181/98 as follows:

- Wherever possible, the needs of exceptional students be met in a regular class with appropriate special education services, when such a placement meets the student's needs and is consistent with parental wishes.
- A continuum of service is available for students whose needs cannot be met within the regular classroom.

1.5.1. IDENTIFICATION PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

School boards are required to establish Identification Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs) in order to identify students who need special education programs and services. IPRCs follow a formal process governed by Regulation 181/98. A YRDSB brochure entitled *A Parents' Guide to IPRC* is available to provide information regarding this process.

<http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/w/schools/speced/SpecEdPlan-E-IPRCParentGuide.pdf>

The IPRC:

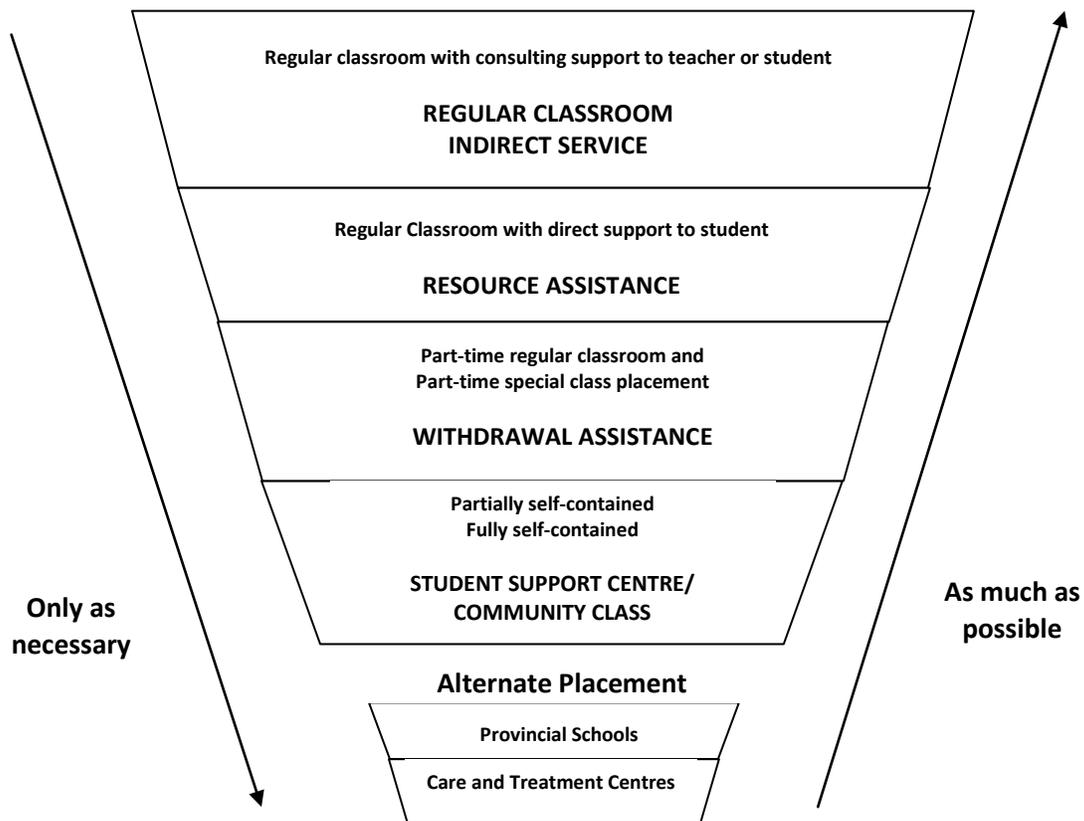
- decides whether a child should be identified as "exceptional"
- identifies the category and area of exceptionality;
- decides on an appropriate placement for the child who is identified as exceptional
- reviews the identification and placement at least once in each school year

1.5.2. PLACEMENT OPTIONS

YRDSB remains committed to the principle that all students are integrated into the regular classroom as much as possible. The placements in the following diagram are available to meet the needs of exceptional students as identified by the IPRC.

Additional information regarding placement options is provided in the Special Education Plan 2013, available on the Board website at <http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/w/schools/speced/SC-speciaeducationplan.pdf>.

Once a student is identified as exceptional through the IPRC process, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed.



1.5.3. INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

The IEP identifies required accommodations and learning expectations that differ from those described in the grade appropriate Ontario Curriculum and is developed in consultation with the child's parent(s).

The IEP includes:

- specific educational expectations
- an outline of the special education program and services that will be received
- a statement about the methods used to review progress

- a plan for transition to post-secondary school activities (e.g. work, further education and community living) for students 14 and older (*September 2014, refer to PPM 156*)
- a safety plan, developed as part of the IEP, when there is a concern for the safety of students or others

Regional resource support services are also available to support teachers and students. Support staff are located both regionally and at Community Education Centres and can be accessed through the In-School Team process (described in Section E of the Special Education Plan 2013).

1.5.4. SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

Under Ontario's legislation, each school board is required to have a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). SEAC plays an important role in ensuring that exceptional students receive appropriate educational services. SEAC may make recommendations to the Board concerning the establishment and development of special education programs and services.

SEAC members also provide information, advice and assistance to parents and guardians whose children may require additional support. The names and contact numbers for each SEAC member are on the Board's website: www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca. SEAC meets the first Thursday of each month beginning at 7 p.m. at the Education Centre Aurora. Visit the Board's website for further details.

1.6. TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS IN ONTARIO

In order to teach Kindergarten to Grade 6, an undergraduate degree and a Bachelor of Education (BEd) or equivalent is needed. For Grades 7 to 12, teachers also need to be qualified as an expert in one subject. In addition, to teach high school, they must be qualified to teach two subjects.

After successful completion of the teacher training program, membership in the Ontario College of Teachers is the last step. Graduates of teacher education programs and out of province/country applicants must be members of the Ontario College of Teachers to be eligible to teach in a publicly funded elementary or secondary school in Ontario.

Prior to an offer of employment by the Board, successful candidates are required to provide documentation indicating that they hold teaching qualifications and are currently a registered member, in good standing, with the Ontario College of Teachers (as per Section 262 of the Education Act).

All certified teachers in the province pay an annual fee to retain membership in the Ontario College of Teachers.

1.6.1. THE ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Set up by the Teaching Profession Act of 1944 as the professional organization for teachers in the province, all teachers (as defined in the Teaching Profession Act) are required to belong to the Federation, as a condition of teaching in the publicly funded schools of Ontario. The Federation, through the application of its bylaws, assigns each teacher to a specific affiliate. YRDSB's elementary school teachers belong to the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO). YRDSB's secondary school teachers belong to the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF).

Each of these affiliates has a local branch with locally elected executives to protect the interests of the teachers working for YRDSB. The local ETFO negotiates a collective agreement with the Board for all teachers (including occasional teachers) from Kindergarten to Grade 8. The local OSSTF affiliate negotiates with the Board for secondary school teachers. Principals and vice-principals are not included in these bargaining units.

The teachers' collective agreements are legal contracts that establish such working conditions as:

- Salaries
- Benefits
- Sick leave
- Retirement gratuity
- Leave of absence
- Grieving procedures
- Staffing
- Lunch Break
- Preparation Time

The affiliates work with the Board to make sure the terms of the collective agreements are carefully observed by all. Teachers are also bound by Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession.

The teachers' federations provide a number of services for teachers, such as updates on current educational issues, a wide range of professional development opportunities and professional counselling. Teachers pay an annual fee to finance their federations. In turn, the federations provide a strong network and a collective voice that speaks for them and education throughout Ontario.

1.7. CUPE 1196 AND CUPE 1734

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) is Canada's largest union. Its members are workers in municipal, provincial and federal government departments. CUPE Locals 1196 and 1734 are divisions of this union.

The members of CUPE 1196 include caretakers, landscapers, couriers, truck drivers, cabinet makers, electricians, mechanical (heating), general maintenance, welders, locksmiths, carpenters, plumbers, painters and masons.

The members of CUPE Local 1734 comprise a variety of positions including secretaries, education assistants and clerical staff.

Through the collective bargaining process, CUPE members strive to build a better future for us all. They work hand-in-hand with YRDSB to provide safe, clean, comfortable learning environments. As community partners, their members also support and participate in community projects and as members of a variety of community agencies. They provide sponsorship for youth athletic teams, assist in food drives, donate to local charitable endeavours and participate in special initiatives for worthwhile causes.

2. COMMUNICATING WITH THE BOARD

2.1. SCHOOL COUNCIL FORUMS

School council forums take place twice a year – usually in the spring and fall. These events may take the form of locally developed workshops or a regional symposium. The locally developed forums are held in each Community Education Centre to provide school council members with information on Ministry and Board initiatives; as well as providing an opportunity for dialogue among local trustees, council members and Board and school administrators. The regional symposium draws all representatives from school councils from across the region together. This one day event is geared to maximize the learning from across the region and allow for sharing on a much larger scale. Information about both sessions is shared by the Principal and area Superintendent with the local school councils.

2.2. THE BOARD'S WEBSITE

The Board's website (www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca) provides updated information including Board meetings, minutes, agendas and news releases. The Board's website also has information on each of the schools, the Board policies and procedures, as well as resource information for school councils.

2.3. OTHER METHODS OF COMMUNICATING

Open communication about areas of concern help to strengthen the partnership among members of the community, the schools and the Board. [Policy and Procedure #262.0 School Councils](#) will help you determine the best way of communicating your message. Principals, as agents of the Board within each school, are the primary contacts as sources of information.

2.4. SCHOOL COUNCIL EMAIL

Generic school council email accounts have been created for school council chairs. This service:

- eliminates the need to collect personal email addresses
- protects the privacy of personal email account information
- enhances collaboration amongst school councils
- facilitates the sharing of information between the Board and school councils

One account is automatically created per school for school council chairs. For schools with co-chairs, each chair may have their own email account. Requests for a second account are to be sent to information.technology.services@yrdsb.edu.on.ca. The accounts are directly identified with the Board (e.g. stonehaven.es@sc.yrdsb.edu.on.ca). Although formal training and ongoing technology support is not available by Board staff, a guide is given to school council chairs and online help is available within the email application.

Passwords to the accounts are reset on October 1 each year in keeping with the transition after elections of school council chairs. Sealed envelopes with the email account name, password and instructions are forwarded to each school office for school council chairs. School council chairs should

be aware that email and intranet are not private communication tools because others can read or access them.

Generic email accounts will increase the ability to communicate in an effective and efficient manner electronically and allow for easier two-way or group communication. Information normally circulated or forwarded to school councils by Board staff will be sent out in electronic format. Every effort will be made to avoid sending large attachments or lengthy emails.

Email will be used to distribute documents for consultation and to inform school council chairs of new information available to them on the website with links.

School council chairs will need to review the information that is sent to them and decide whether the information needs to be:

- Printed for school council members to review at a future school council meeting (each school is allotted a budget for the purpose of photocopying materials for school councils).
- Summarized verbally for school council members at school council meetings (making the information part of the minutes). Forwarded electronically to their members to read for information purposes.

Principals will ensure they are prepared to assist individual chairs with the printing and distribution of key documents.

Please note that school council chairs are responsible for checking these accounts.

Please note that, while school council chairs may choose to auto-forward information from the generic school council email address to their personal account, school council business must be carried out using the Board provided email address. YRDSB will not provide support for third party email accounts.

School council chairs - Refer to [Section 6](#) in this document on how to access Board provided email.

3. RUNNING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL COUNCILS

3.1. ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

The role of the schools councils is to improve student learning and to develop a shared sense of accountability for the public education system among both parents and educators.

3.1.1. THE ROLE AS DEFINED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Parent Engagement policy states there are two formal structures in Ontario's education system that support parental engagement and provide parents a voice at the school and district school board levels:

School Councils – focus on increasing parent contributions within the school community as a key factor for supporting student well-being, learning and achievement, and they act as a direct link between parents and the school principal.

Parent Involvement Committees – enhance parent contributions at the regional level in support of student well-being, learning and achievement, and they act as a direct link between parents, the director of education and the trustees.

Parent Engagement is a vital component of the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. Information about the Board's implementation of the strategy through its programs and action plans to support parent engagement and reflect the needs of students and our diverse communities is included in the director's annual report.

3.1.2. THE ROLE AS DEFINED BY THE YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

The policy statement for the Board's policy on school councils provides a clear sense of the role and reads as follows:

The York Region District School Board believes that collaborative and inclusive partnerships, among schools, families and their communities, are essential to improving student learning and increasing a shared sense of accountability for public education.

The Board believes that strong partnerships are built from a common vision and common goals, nurtured through regular communication and meaningful consultation, involving all members of the school community through engagement and inclusion.

The Board believes that school councils play an important role in building school, family and community partnerships by providing input into relevant Board and school-level decisions and promoting the engagement of a diverse cross-section of all members of the school community in support of student learning and well-being.

While the primary role of a school council is focused within the school community, the Board values advice from school councils on the development and review of policies and other matters of concern to councils.

The full policy can be viewed on the Board’s website in the [Policy and Procedures section, # 262.0](#).

3.1.3. THE ROLE AS DEFINED BY THE EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION

In 1998, the Education Improvement Commission completed an extensive study of school councils after meeting with hundreds of educators, school council members, trustees and concerned members of the community. It recommended that the purpose of school councils be clarified to focus on improved student learning and the Commission recommended that school councils focus on the following three areas in order to achieve this purpose. These are in essence, three specific roles:

- Fostering Parental and Community Involvement in Education
- Participating in the School Improvement Planning Process
- Influencing decisions made by principals, school boards and the Ministry of Education

The full report of the Education Improvement Commission, entitled *The Road Ahead III – A Report on the Role of School Councils* is available on the Ministry of Education website:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/eic/road3/eic3.pdf>.

3.2. GUIDE TO THE BOARD’S SCHOOL COUNCIL POLICY AND PROCEDURE 262.0

The following is intended to simplify and clarify the Board’s School Council [Policy and Procedure 262.0](#). Please refer to the complete document for detailed information.

3.2.1. PURPOSE AND ROLE OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

According to Ministry of Education [Regulation 612/00](#) and [Board Policy 262.0](#), the purpose of school councils is to support improved student learning and an increased sense of shared accountability for public education.

As stated in Board Policy 262.0:

“The Board believes that 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 encouraging the involvement of all members of the school community in support of student learning.”

School councils are advisory bodies that can make recommendations to the principal or the Board on matters as stated in Board Policy and procedure. Specifically, school councils are responsible for:

- supporting and promoting parent, family and community engagement in support of student learning
- participating in the development and implementation of the school improvement plan;
- communicating with, and providing ongoing advice to, the principal matters pertaining to the school
- collaborating with the principal to coordinate community resources that support student learning needs

3.2.2. COMPOSITION OF SCHOOL COUNCIL

- PARENTS (must form the majority of council members)

- The number of parents should be defined in your constitution, otherwise it will be six.
- A parent member CANNOT be employed at the school.
- If a parent works for the Board but not at your school, they can be a parent member IF they inform the school community prior to the election.
- ONE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE (optional at Elementary Level)
 - Appointed by the student council.
 - In elementary schools, may be appointed by principal after consulting with school council.
- COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE
 - At least one but may appoint up to four, if you make such a bylaw in your constitution.
 - If a parent works for the Board but not at your school, they can be a community member IF they inform the school community prior to the election.
- THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
 - If he or she is unable to attend a meeting, he/she may send the vice-principal.
- ONE TEACHING STAFF REPRESENTATIVE
 - Elected by the teachers of the school.
- ONE SUPPORT STAFF REPRESENTATIVE
 - Elected by the support staff of the school.

3.2.3. ELECTION OF SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

3.2.3.1. ELECTION OF PARENT MEMBERS

- Parents may be elected or appointed.
- Elections must be held during the first thirty calendar days of each school year.
- Public notice must be given fourteen days before the election, specifying date, time and location.
- Each parent of a student has one vote by secret ballot and may vote for up to as many parent candidates as there are parent positions on council.

3.2.3.2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- The council members elect the chair/co-chairs. They must be parents and not employed with the Board.
- The council members may elect other officers if it is stated in your constitution.

3.2.3.3. VACANCIES

- Vacant positions do not prevent the school council from exercising its authority.
- Positions can be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the bylaws of your council.

3.2.3.4. TERM OF OFFICE

- Terms are one year only, but members may be re-elected unless otherwise restricted in your bylaw.

3.2.4. VOTING

- Each member of council is entitled to one vote, with the exception of the principal.
- Each committee member gets one vote, in votes taken by that committee, even if they are not a member of council.

3.2.5. REMUNERATION

- A person cannot receive any remuneration for serving on school council.
- Reimbursement for expenses shall be in accordance with Board policies.

3.2.6. INCORPORATION

- A school council shall not be incorporated.

3.2.7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- receiving and considering advice from school councils on the establishment and amendment of Board policies that relate to student achievement and well-being and to the accountability of the education system to parents
- consulting school councils on the Trustees' Multi-Year Plan
- considering recommendations made by school councils and advising school councils, through the appropriate superintendent, of decisions reached or actions taken in response to recommendations

The Board will:

- hold school council forums in each CEC at least twice a year
- offer relevant professional development for school councils
- appoint school council representatives to ad hoc advisory committees
- provide insurance protection to school councils and members of councils
- rule on internal disputes of school councils that are referred to the Board by the council

3.2.8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

3.2.8.1. RESPONSIBILITIES:

CONSULTATION: School councils must consult with parents of students enrolled in the school.

3.2.8.2. MEETINGS:

- At least four meetings per year, open to the public and in a location accessible to the public.
- The first meeting must be held within the first thirty-five days of the school year.

- Decisions are made only when there is a quorum (a majority of the members are present and a majority of those present are parent members).
- All activities must be in compliance with the Board policies.

3.2.8.3. MINUTES AND FINANCIAL RECORDS

- Records kept for a four-year period and made available at the school.
- A written annual report (including fundraising) made to the principal and the Board.

3.2.8.4. PRINCIPAL AND VICE-PRINCIPAL PROFILES

- Prepare/review and submit annually to the school's superintendent of schools, an administrator profile outlining the preferred characteristics of the school's principal and/or vice-principal.

3.2.8.5. ROUTING OF ADVICE TO THE BOARD

- School councils may make recommendations to the Board by submitting them in writing to the school's superintendent of schools. The superintendent of education will, in turn, take responsibility for considering and/forwarding the recommendation to the appropriate person(s) and will subsequently respond to the council.

Recommendations to the Board shall be reflected in the minutes of the respective school council's meeting.

3.2.8.6. BYLAWS:

School councils **MUST** make the following bylaws:

- election procedures and the filling of vacancies between elections
- rules in cases of conflict of interest
- a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes

School councils **MAY** make bylaws, which include:

- the number of parent members and /or community representatives
- limiting the number of times that a member may be re-elected or re-appointed
- that the school council may have two co-chairs
- specifying other officers and/or committees of the school council
- the governance of conduct of the council's affairs

3.2.9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL

3.2.9.1. COMMUNICATE

- Give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings to every parent.
- Give a copy of the annual report to every parent.

- Make known the names of members of the school council by newsletter or other means.
- Distribute any materials received from the Ministry or Board to council members.
- Ensure copies of the minutes are kept at the school and are accessible to all parents.
- Ensure the school council constitution is readily available to the school community.
- Assist the council in communicating with the school community using a variety of formats that provide communication in languages represented by the students in the community.

3.2.9.2. CONSULT

Seek input from council in areas, which have been identified as priorities, including, but not limited to:

- Student achievement and well-being.
- Actively support and encourage school council members and other parents to share ideas to reduce the student achievement gap and to help inform of school improvement plans.
- Promote accountability of the education system to parents.
- Develop strategies for recruitment that work towards representation of diverse parent groups on all school committees, including school councils.
- Consider recommendations made by council and provide rationale for decisions made regarding these recommendations.
- Advise council when they are not in compliance with Board policies and procedures.
- Attend all school council meetings.
- Act as a resource person and assist council in obtaining relevant information.
- Support and promote the school council's operations and activities.

3.2.9.3. SUPPORT

- Attend all school council meetings.

3.2.10. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIRS/CO-CHAIRS

- Call school council meetings, prepare the agenda and chair the meetings.
- Communicate with the school principal, senior Board staff and trustees, as required.
- Ensure that minutes are recorded, parents are consulted, fundraising meets Board policies, and the bylaws are reviewed annually.

3.2.11. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VICE-CHAIR

- Assist and act on behalf of the chair/co-chair.

3.2.12. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

The members of the school council are accountable to the parents they represent and shall:

- Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.
- Regularly attend school council meetings.

- Participate in information and training programs.
- Act as a link between the school council and the community.
- Encourage the engagement of all parents within the school community.
- Participate on sub-committees and assist with tasks of the school council.

Note: [Board Policy & Procedure #262.0](#) is the official document from which to base any school council decisions. The above is intended as a guideline.

3.3. GUIDE TO THE BOARD'S SCHOOL FUNDRAISING AND ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOOL-GENERATED FUNDS POLICY AND PROCEDURE 676.0

Many school councils perform fundraising activities in the name of the school and as such are required to conform to the appropriate sections of [Ontario Regulation 612](#) that deal with fundraising issues. Below are some areas of the [policy and procedure 676.0](#) on School Fundraising and Administration of School-Generated Funds for school councils and other parent fundraising groups. Refer to [Policy and Procedure 676.0](#) for full details.

- The principal is ultimately responsible for activities related to the school and therefore is also responsible for school council activities.
- The principal is responsible for developing a fundraising plan, in accordance with the school's improvement plan, for each school year and requesting input from school council in the selection of fundraising activities.
- The fiscal year for school councils is September 1 to August 31 of the following year.
- The Ministry of Education in its document, [School Councils A Guide for Members \(2002\)](#), states **"School councils should be aware that, because the school board is a corporate entity and the school is not, any funds raised by the school council (and any assets purchased with those funds) belong, legally, to the board."**
- All fundraising activities and expenditures must be conducted in accordance with federal, provincial and municipal laws and Board policies and procedures. Particular attention needs to be paid to policies on purchasing, conflicts of interest and other similar policies.
- The school principal remains responsible, on behalf of the Board, to ensure that all fundraising activities are in compliance with Board policies and procedures.
- Money collected from fundraising activities is to be provided to the school and kept in the school pending deposit to the school generated funds bank account.
- A financial report must be presented at each meeting of the council and receipt of the report recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- All records are to be kept for a period of seven years at the school.
- Where a separate fundraising group exists it is to become a subcommittee of the school council.
- Where possible, two or more individuals should be present when the money is counted and bank deposits are prepared.

3.4. ESTABLISHING YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL BYLAWS

The Ontario Ministry of Education [School Councils: A Guide to Members](#) provides guidance on establishing School Council Bylaws:

School councils are not required to develop lengthy constitutions, since [Ontario Regulation 612/00](#) sets out the mandate and roles and responsibilities for school councils. In effect, the regulation serves as the constitution for the school council. If a school council already has a constitution in place, the council may wish to continue to use it, provided that it does not conflict with the provisions of the regulation.

School councils must develop certain bylaws to provide them with direction for the operation of council business and to help the council work effectively. The development of operating bylaws should begin as soon as possible after a council meets for the first time. At a minimum, the regulation requires councils to develop bylaws to address the following areas:

- election procedures
- filling vacancies
- conflict of interest
- conflict resolution procedures

Refer to [Appendix B](#) in this document for Samples of the above bylaws.

Bylaws governing other areas of operation may also be developed. Once bylaws have been developed, your school council may want to review them from time to time, although they do not need to be rewritten each year. Conflict resolution bylaws must be established in accordance with any applicable policies established by the Board.

Your council may also wish to develop bylaws related to the following:

- a school council code of ethics
- general expectations regarding meetings (e.g., attendance, promptness)
- the number and scheduling of meetings (at least four meetings must be held each school year)
- the number of parent members on the council and the number of members required for a quorum (in compliance with [Ontario Regulation 612/00](#))
- the number, description and duties of executive officers
- any requirements regarding signing officers
- the establishment and roles of committees
- a process for seeking input from the community

It is important to ensure that bylaws created by the school council do not conflict with any of the provisions of [Ontario Regulation 612/00](#).

3.5. GROUP NORMS: A RESOURCE FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT

Groups of people working together such as school councils do not become a team overnight. Effective teams evolve and become productive over time. Regardless of their size or composition, teams go through certain stages of development. The length of each stage varies from team to team, and may be as short as several meetings or may last many months. The sequence of stages, however, is the same for each team.

While the specifics of each stage may vary from team to team, the overall nature of each stage is consistent across teams. During the process, some of the actions and feelings of team members may not appear to be productive. This is particularly true during the dissatisfaction stage when a sense of frustration and incompetence frequently emerges. However, working through each stage is a crucial part of the team's evolution.

3.5.1. PURPOSE FOR NORMS

- To express the values of the team
- To make sure every team member knows and agrees with what's expected of him/her
- To develop norms that support the needs of the team members and the school
- To help the team evaluate its performance
- To have everyone agree on what's important to the team and provide a guide for behaviour

3.5.2. BENEFITS

- A safety net
- A way to take risks
- A means to achieve higher productivity
- A means to increase our effectiveness

3.5.3. FORMING

In the orientation stage there is testing and trust building. People are polite, impersonal, watchful and guarded.

3.5.4. STORMING

There is infighting and goal clarification. People sometimes choose to leave. Conflicts need to be confronted and difficulties discussed. Teams can feel stuck here. This is normal.

3.5.5. NORMING

The commitment builds and teams get organized. Skills are developed and procedures established. The issues are confronted.

3.5.6. *PERFORMING*

There is maturity and closeness as effectiveness increases. People are more resourceful, creative and supportive. Progress increases.

Group norms help frame the way people interact and support the development and progression of teams through the stages. At the very least, they will help councils establish a common purpose and assist them when meeting together.

3.5.7. *GROUP NORMS ADDRESS*

- Things – materials, equipment
- Ideas – issues, opinions, values
- Self – comforts, needs
- People – behaviours, expectations

3.5.8. *THE PROCESS*

- Reflect on your own individual needs
- Share and list the ideas with your team
- Share with the large group and come to a consensus

3.5.9. *SAMPLE*

Norms should be developed cooperatively by the council.

- Agenda set by members and circulated in advance
- Meetings begin and end on time
- Consensus decision-making
- All speakers and opinions are respected
- Individual students, parents, and staff are not discussed
- Be open-minded and objective
- Refer parent or student issues to the teacher or principal

3.6. *RULES OF ORDER*

Official rules such as Robert’s Rules of Order are recommended to help school councils work effectively together. The following simple rules of order were produced by the Halton District School Board.

- An individual must be recognized by the chair before obtaining the floor to make a motion. In plain English, this means the chair of the meeting must say it is your turn, before you can speak and formally propose a course of action.
- Once an individual has the floor, he or she may make a formal proposal, or motion, beginning with the statement, “I move...”

- Another individual must second the motion, by saying, “I second the motion.” This indicates that he or she agrees that the proposal should be discussed.
- Once a motion is made and seconded, the chair states the question so everyone is clear on what is being proposed. From this point, until the motion has been voted on, all discussion must focus on the question.
- After stating the question, the chair asks if the assembly is ready for the question, or ready to vote on the proposal.
- If no one indicates a desire to speak to the issue, the chair puts the question or conducts the vote by asking for those in favour and those opposed. The vote may be conducted by a show of hands, by standing or by ballot.
- If members of the group wish to discuss the motion, the chair opens debate. Each participant may speak to the question twice, but no one may speak the second time until everyone has had the chance to speak once. Once debate is complete, the chair puts the question.
- The majority needed to pass the motion should be a majority plus one (e.g. 51%). In case of a tie the motion is lost.

3.6.1.1. AMENDING A MOTION

Up until the chair states the question, the person making the motion may change it, although the seconder may withdraw and the changed motion may need another seconder. Once the chair has stated the question, however, the motion must be formally amended in order to be changed.

- The person making the motion may propose to modify it. The chair will ask if anyone objects. If they do, the question to modify the motion is put to a vote. If the group consents to the modification, debate continues on the motion as amended.
- Another individual can move to amend the motion by stating, “I move to amend the motion by....” From here, the process is the same as for any other motion – steps 3 through 8 above.
- An amendment to the amendment may also be proposed, but a third amendment is out of order.
- After the amendment has been dealt with, discussion returns to the original motion.

3.6.1.2. WITHDRAWING A MOTION

- At any time before a vote, the person making the original motion may ask to withdraw it. The motion to withdraw does not require a seconder. Once the motion is withdrawn, it is as if it never existed.
- If the chair has already stated the question and a request to withdraw the motion is made, the chair asks if there is any objection. If there is none, the motion is withdrawn. If someone objects, the request to withdraw the motion is put to a vote.

3.6.1.3. TABLING A MOTION

A motion to table a motion means to set it aside to discuss at another time so more pressing business can be discussed, or so more information about the issue can be obtained.

- The motion to table takes precedence over the motion being discussed.

- The motion to table requires a seconder.
- There can be no debate on a motion to table.

3.6.1.4. MOTIONS THAT ARE NULL AND VOID

Any motion that contradicts provincial [statutes] and regulations or Board policies is out of order, even if the motion was voted on and passed by a majority vote.

3.7. AGENDAS, MINUTES AND FINANCIAL RECORDS FOR SCHOOL COUNCILS

3.7.1. AGENDAS

- A carefully planned and organized agenda is the foundation of a successful meeting. A good agenda briefly outlines what you intend to discuss and in what order. Items on the agenda should reflect the concerns and interests of your school community.
- Each meeting’s agenda can be as simple or as complex as you want. The items can be numbered as well as listing the speaker who will address each topic. Some word processing programs have an agenda wizard, which in addition to preparing your agenda will also give the secretary itemized pages to record the minutes.
- The agenda should be prepared by the chair in consultation with the principal and distributed to each council member, one week prior to the meeting.
- At the beginning of each meeting the chair should ask if anyone has items to add to the agenda.

3.7.2. MINUTES

- The minutes are a wonderful reference tool for council members. They provide continuity from one meeting to the next.
- Your council secretary can keep minutes in the form of notes or record the minutes according to Robert’s Rules of Order.
- Minutes should be written up and distributed within two weeks of the meeting. They should be passed at the next regular meeting. Copies of minutes must be kept in the main office for anyone to see, at any time as well as posted on a school notice board or website.

3.7.3. FINANCIAL RECORDS

- Financial records for school council may be obtained by the school for the council to refer to as needed. Fundraising activities must comply with the policies established by the Board ([School Fundraising and Administration of School-generated Funds 676.0](#)). Funds may be raised and spent for a purpose as outlined in the school fundraising plan, in accordance with Board policies. Textbooks and materials that support the curriculum should be paid for from the school budget.
- The treasurer should obtain from the school and present a monthly report and at the end of the year, provide an annual report to the school community. Minutes must be retained for a minimum of four years and are available for anyone to see without charge. Financial records are to be kept by the school for seven years.

3.8. GUIDE TO SCHOOL COUNCIL AGENDA

Outlined below are the various agenda items that might appear on your council’s agenda. Included are tasks specified in the [Board Procedure](#) and Ministry Regulations as well as other items that are a regular part of most council meetings. There are many other items that will appear throughout the year and should be added accordingly. This is intended only as a rough guide to help you organize your year.

Agenda items at every meeting should be:

- Welcome/introductions
- Review the agenda
- Adopt previous minutes
- Correspondence
- Student Council report (where appropriate)
- Principal/VP report
- Teacher report
- Financial report
- Report from other committees
- New business
- Date of next meeting/adjourn

September	October	November/December
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election of officers • Review mission/yearly goals • Appoint community member or brainstorm on ways of recruiting • Establish operative norms • Establish sub-committees • Report from principal on current School Plan and fundraising plan • Provide input on fundraising plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team building • Develop communication plan • Develop fundraising plan: main fundraisers, spending priorities • Review school budget • Begin work on school survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EQAO results • Share survey results • Possible guest speaker • Discuss capital improvement projects

January/February	March/April	May/June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review principal profile • Review school profile • Possible guest speaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish School Plan committee and brainstorm for next year • Review bylaws • Review code of behaviour • Review homework policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt new bylaws • Presentation of new school plan • Review slate of officers needed for next year • Set date for election • Finalize annual report

4. CODE OF ETHICS

The following code of ethics, derived from [Ministry guidelines](#), privacy and legal consultations made by the Board, may be used by school councils in an attempt to outline expectations for members and as a guideline for behaviour.

- A member shall consider the best interests of all students.
- A member shall be guided by the school and the Board's mission statements.
- A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified in the Education Act, its regulations, and the applicable bylaws and procedures.
- A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- A member shall conduct themselves in accordance with the [Board's Equity and Inclusive Education policy](#).
- A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
- A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- A member shall not disclose confidential information.
- A member shall act in accordance with relevant laws, including Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), and relevant Board policies and procedures.
- A member shall advise the principal immediately if the member believes that there may have been a privacy breach.
- A member shall abide by applicable laws and policies with respect to access, use or disclosure of Board data and information.
- A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- A member shall declare any conflict of interest.
- A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.

5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Each school council must have a bylaw regarding conflict resolution as per [Ontario Regulation 612/00](#) and the Board's procedure (refer to section 5.4 Establishing School Council Bylaws).

The following is a four-step approach to resolving internal conflict and other difficult matters:

- **Acknowledge the conflict.** As a group, acknowledge when a conflict exists and determine the source of the conflict. For example, is it related to facts? Goals? Processes? Values? Personal preferences? Beliefs? Communication?
- **Plan how to deal with the conflict.** Once the source of the conflict is defined, decide how to deal with it. This may be done by the chair, another individual on the council, or the entire council. (In particularly difficult times, it may be best to engage a person who has no association with the council to facilitate discussion and problem solving.) At this stage, all council members should reflect on the problem and be prepared to state their concerns and viewpoints.
- **Provide time for discussion.** The chair or whoever is facilitating the discussion should introduce the problem and ask each member for input so that the nature and source of the conflict are clear. Acknowledging each person by listening attentively sets the tone for problem solving and opens the council to a variety of solutions. Emotions should be accepted and dealt with since they are a part of conflict.
- **Seek the best solution.** As viewpoints and solutions are described, the individual facilitating the discussion deals with them one at a time. Following the discussion, the person facilitating the discussion may use a process for building consensus to arrive at a new solution. Council members will be asked the following questions: Can you live with this solution? Will you support the solution? Depending on the nature of the conflict, it is sometimes best for council members to have time to reflect on the proposed solution, with the decision to be finalized at a future meeting.

If after following the above steps, your school council still feels strongly that the situation requires further consideration you may contact either the Director's Office or Board and Trustee Services. The matter will be reviewed and may be directed to a staff member for action.

Remember, you are welcome to speak with your local trustee at any time to share concerns or make suggestions. Depending on the circumstances, however, there is a possibility that you will be asked to follow the above steps in order to best meet your needs.

6. SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR EMAIL ACCESS

6.1. BEFORE YOU START

6.1.1. USING THE MOUSE

The mouse is a pointing device used to move the insertion point or pointer arrow around on the computer screen. Moving the mouse on a flat surface causes the mouse “ball” to rotate and creates cursor movement on the screen. As you work with email, you will need to remember the common terms below:

Click	To select an item on the screen, you click on it. This means that you point at it with the cursor arrow and then press and release the left mouse button.
Double-click	To start a program or open a file, you double-click on it. This means that you point at it with the cursor arrow, and then click the left mouse button twice in rapid succession.
Right-click	To display the shortcut menu for a particular item on screen, you right-click on it. This means that you point at it with the cursor arrow, and then click the right mouse button.
Drag	To move items around on the screen or to select multiple items, you use the drag function. This means that you point the cursor arrow at the item or items, and press down and hold one of the mouse buttons (usually the left button) while moving the mouse.

6.1.2. TOOLBARS

Toolbars contain buttons you can access by using the mouse. These buttons provide shortcuts for accessing many email features. You will notice that by placing the mouse cursor over an icon on the toolbar, a description of the action will appear to better explain the purpose of the button.

6.2. GETTING STARTED

6.2.1. WELCOME

This system allows York Region District School Board school council chairs to access their school council email from any web browser on the Internet. Users can also maintain an address book, create and manage folders (mailboxes), use filters to process incoming mail and change user settings. Throughout this document, the terms mail, email and message are used interchangeably. The terms folder and mailbox are also used synonymously.

6.2.2. WEB ACCESS / LOGGING ON

Users can access their mail using Netscape version 4.0 or higher, and Microsoft Internet Explorer version 4.0 or higher.

1. Open the browser (e.g. Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator).

- In the address bar, enter <http://scwm.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/login.cgi?>. Or go to www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca select School and select on the left hand navigation bar School Council Email.
- Enter the information for the **Email Address** and **Password**, as supplied.

You may save the address in your favourites by selecting **Bookmark this Login Page!**



If the logon information is correct, your mailbox summary appears. If you repeatedly have problems logging in, contact Board Operations staff through the main switchboard at extension 4357, option 3. Be sure to inform the help desk attendant that you are a school council email account user and ask for the Computer Operations desk.

- If desired, select the **Languages** dropdown to switch from **English** interface to **Français**.

You can select the following options for ease of use:

Remember Me (not recommended if you share this computer)

This option will save your password in a file (called a cookie), so you do not have to enter it each time you log in. When you log on, the browser sends the password in a cookie.

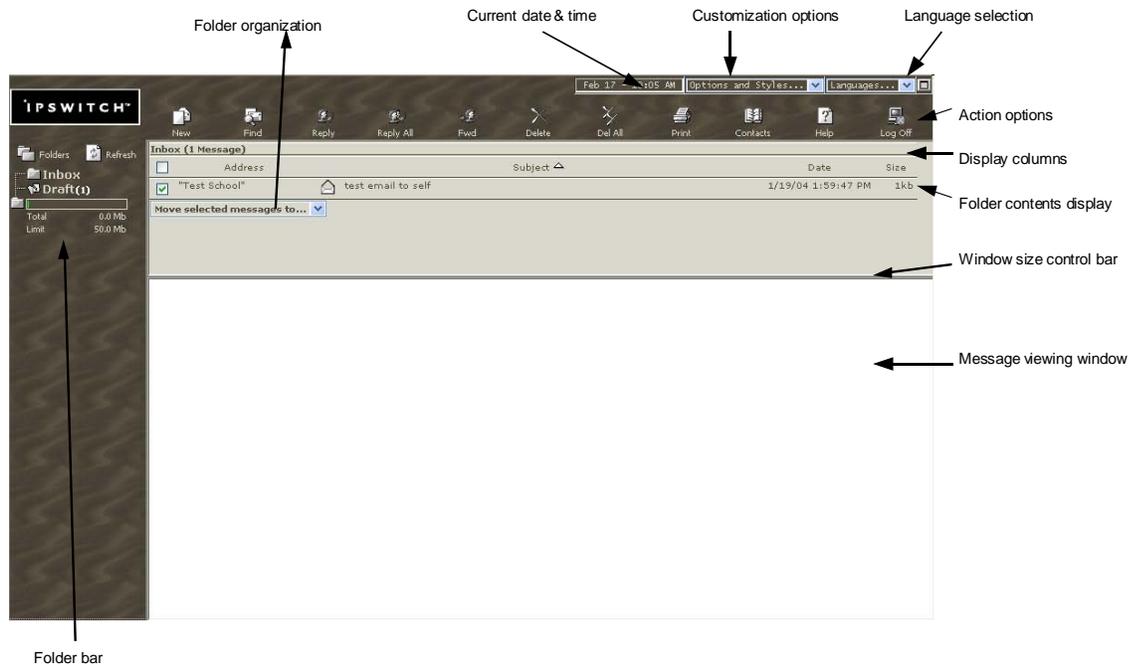
Regular Mode / SSL Encrypted: Choose SSL Encrypted if you would prefer to have your email session encrypted. This is the same type of encryption you would use to access an online banking site.

- Select **Log In**.
- The welcome screen will appear briefly before you are taken to the main menu.



6.2.3. MAIN MENU

Once logged in, the following screen will appear:



- Current Date & Time** Located at the top of the screen, the date and time are regularly updated.
- Customization options** Located at the top of the screen, the customization options allow for personalization.
- Language selection** The rightmost item at the top of the screen, language selection allows for French or English interface. Note that language selection does not translate the content of emails or attachments.
- Action options Toolbar** The action icons appear across the screen near the top and allow access to the basic functions.
- Display columns** Just below the action icons, the top shaded area contains the name of the active folder along with the column headers. The column headers allow you to sort the display order of the current folder contents.
- Folder contents display** The contents of the current folder appear in this shaded window. An item from this area may be selected by clicking on it. The active message appears **bold**.
- Window size control bar** This is the bar between the folder contents and the message viewer. When you place the mouse cursor overtop of this bar, the cursor becomes a \updownarrow symbol. You can then drag this bar to adjust the side of the message window.
- Message viewing window** The bottom right non-shaded section of the screen contains the contents of the current message.
- Folder Bar** Located on the left hand side of the screen; this bar shows available folders and allows for folder selection.

Folder organization Located at the bottom left of the shaded section, this drop down tool allows for easy movement of one or more selected items to a different folder.

6.3. THE MAIN SCREEN

Located across the top of the screen, the most common email options are available via icons.

6.3.1. THE ACTION TOOLBAR

 (New)	Creates a new message.
 (Find)	Finds a message.
 (Reply)	Replies to the sender of this message.
 (Reply all)	Replies to everyone listed in this message.
 (Fwd)	Forwards this message to someone else for action.
 (Delete)	Deletes this, or selected message(s).
 (Delete All)	Delete all messages.
 (Print)	Prints this message.
 (Contacts)	Displays a window listing the people on your network or Contacts list.
 (Help)	Displays a window for online help.
 (Log Off)	Log off of your email account.

6.3.2. THE MAILBOX FOLDER TREE (FOLDER BAR)

Mailbox folders: Name of the mailbox. You will see the following standard mailboxes, plus any mailboxes that you have created.

- **Inbox.** All new mail will be received into this mail box, unless you have set options to route mail elsewhere. See Mail Processing [Filters under online help for further detail](#).
- **Sent.** This mailbox is activated when you set your "Save copy of outgoing mail in Sent folder" preference to Yes.
- **Deleted.** This mailbox is activated when you set your "Deleted messages" preference to *Move to Deleted folder*.

- **Draft.** This mailbox is activated when you select to Save, rather than Send, a message that you are composing. You can select a message in the Draft folder at a later time, modify it, and send it.

Size (in Megabytes): Amount of disk space being used by the mailbox. The current space used is indicated by 'Total.' The total space available for this account is indicated by 'Limit.'

Mouse-over any folder to view the number of items in the folder, along with the total size of all messages in that folder.

6.3.3. **FOLDER CONTENTS DISPLAY**

The main page shows the messages in the folder you selected in the top frame. From this page, you can read your mail, move messages to another mailbox, sort and delete messages. For help with setting the number of messages displayed, view the help file.

6.3.3.1. **HOW TO READ THE SUMMARY**

As you begin to send or receive messages, there are specific symbols that appear next to the message text. These symbols are quick identifiers to the status of that message. Some of these symbols include:

-  New message that has not been read yet.
-  Message that has been read.
-  File has been attached to this message.
-  A reply was sent on this message.
-  Message has been forwarded to you, or you forwarded to someone else (depending on whether you are in the Inbox or Sent Items folder).

Folder Name (#messages): current folder



To scroll to the next or previous screens of folder contents click on the appropriate selection. Alternately, select a specific page from the drop down list.

Address: The sender of the message

Subject: Subject of the message, written by the sender. To read a message in the same window click on its subject. To open it in a new window, click on the "letter" icon. The following graphics will appear in the subject area:

Date: Date and Time the message was received (or sent) in this mail account.

Size: Size of message, including attachments. Kb represents Kilobytes (approx. 1,000 bytes); Mb represents Megabytes (approx. 1,000,000) bytes.

6.3.3.2. SELECTION BOXES

Check boxes appear in the left-most column so that you can select multiple messages to move or delete.

6.3.3.3. SORT ORDER

By default, messages are sorted by date, with the most recent message at the top. You can sort by Address, Subject, Date, or size by clicking on the heading name. You can sort in ascending or descending order. You may change the default sort setting using Preference.

6.3.4. DELETING MESSAGES

When you click the **Delete** button, all *selected* messages are deleted. Alternatively, you may select **Delete All** to delete all messages without having to select each message. You can also click "delete" located in the header menu of each message for quick individual deletion. For information on saving deleted messages and confirming deletion see **Handling Deleted Messages**.

6.3.5. FILING/MOVING MESSAGES

While viewing a specific message you can click the drop-down menu **Move to folder...** The message is moved to the mailbox indicated. **Note:** you may need to scroll to the bottom of the section using the left hand scroll bar.

Internet Explorer: You can also drag and drop the icon from the subject header into any of the folders in the left folder hierarchy. You can do this for individual messages or groups of messages by clicking their check box next to the messages.

6.3.6. CHANGING FOLDERS

To view messages in a different folder, select the folder from the folder hierarchy at the left of the page.

6.3.7. VIEWING MESSAGES

To read mail in the current mailbox folder, click on the **subject line** to display the message in the message viewing window at the bottom of the page.

6.3.8. HELP

On line help is available in a help window by clicking on the  icon on the action toolbar.

6.3.9. LOG OFF

To exit your Board school council email account, be sure to click on the  icon on the action toolbar. This will ensure the session is not available to any else and the application is properly closed.

6.4. USING EMAIL

Electronic mail (email) is the process of sending and receiving messages using a computer program to cut down on the amount of paper being generated through the manual process and to speed up communication.

6.4.1. READING MESSAGES

Selecting the folder in the folder hierarchy on the left of the page displays the contents in the top frame of the **main Board school council email page**.

Clicking the "**Subject**" displays the message in the bottom frame. Clicking the "**Subject Icon**" (for example ) opens the message in a new window.

If you want to add the address in the **Address** box to your Address Book, click **Save Address**.

Once you have opened a message, the navigation links (see figure below) offer the following:

[Prev](#) | [Next](#) | [Reply](#) | [Reply All](#) | [Forward](#) | [Delete](#) | [Print](#) | 

Previous. Opens the previous message in the current mailbox. This is only available if there is more than one message in the mailbox.

Next. Opens the next message in the current mailbox. This is only available if there is more than one message in the mailbox.

Reply. Creates a new message addressed to the sender. Note: You can set up Reply to include or exclude the original message. To do so, go to the "**Options and Styles...**" menu and select as desired under **Preferences**.

Reply all. Composes a message to the sender and all the CC addresses. See the note above about including/excluding the original message.

Forward. Forwards the message to an email address. You can set up forwarding to allow or disallow you to edit the forwarded message. In addition, you may forward attachments along with the email. To set these options, go to the "**Options and Styles...**" menu and select as desired under **Preferences**.

Delete. Deletes the message from the mail server, or moves it to the deleted items folder (depending upon your preferences setting).

Print. Allows you to see what the message will look like when it's printed, and to proceed to printing to the printer of your choice based on the printers configured on your computer.

Move to. Moves the message from the current mailbox to the mailbox selected from the drop-down box.

6.5. SENDING EMAIL

There are several ways to create an email. Following are the most common methods.

Hint: To save a copy of messages you send in the **Sent** folder, go to the "**Options and Styles...**" menu and select 'yes' for this option under **Preferences**.

6.5.1. CREATING A NEW MESSAGE



- Click the **New** button, to display the **Compose** page.
 - a) To send to an email address which is in the address book, click on the **Address Book**, **To**, **CC** ("carbon copy"), or **BCC** ("blind carbon copy") items. In the address book folder which opens, select the address(es) to send the email to as appropriate.

Hint: Multiple addresses can be selected at one time by holding down the Ctrl key while clicking on the items to select.

- b) Alternatively, in the **To**, **CC** ("carbon copy"), and **BCC** ("blind carbon copy") text boxes, enter the email addresses of the message recipients. You can type or paste email addresses into these boxes, using a comma to separate multiple addresses.

Etiquette Hint: Use BCC when sending to large distributions and/or to hide the distribution on the email. This is especially appreciated by recipients who do not want their email address widely distributed.

- Enter a **Subject** for the message.

Etiquette Hint: Many users manage their email using subject line. Be sure to use a subject line, and keep it clear and concise.

- Enter the message in the **Message** box.

Etiquette Hint: For business emails, keep to one subject within an email. Multiple topics covered in a single email often results in one item being focused on while others are overlooked.

- To spell check your message, select the dictionaries that you want to use, and click **Spell Check** (see the TOOLS section of this manual for further details).
- **Attachments.** If you wish to attach files to the email, click **Browse** to select the file you want to attach, or type the path and name of the file into the box. Then, click **Attach**. To remove an attachment, select a file in the list and click **Remove**.
- Click **Send**.

Hint: If you are not ready to send a message, but would like to keep a copy of what you have created for future use, Click **Save Draft** to save a copy of the message in your Draft folder. You can later select the message, modify it, and send it.

6.5.2. **REPLYING TO MESSAGES**

You may reply to the sender of a message  or to everyone on the distribution . Once you make the desired selection, you will be taken to the compose window similar to creating a new message. The 'To', 'Cc' and 'Subject' lines are pre-populated based on the original email. You may override these by editing the existing data.

Continue creating the email as detailed under 'Creating a New Message.'

Hint: You can set up your Board school council email messaging so that when you reply to a message, the original message is automatically included in your reply; if you do this, the original message appears in the same text box as your reply. (The original message is editable, is flagged "Original Message," and shows the From and Date fields.)

- From the Options and Styles... menu, select Preferences under My Options.
- On the User Preferences page, locate Replying and select Include original message or don't include original message.
- Click the Save button at the bottom of the table you are working in when finished.

6.5.3. **FORWARDING MESSAGES**

To send a copy of an email on to another person, select the forward  option. This will open the compose window and you may continue creating the email as detailed under 'Creating a New Message.'

6.5.4. **FINDING EMAIL MESSAGES**

To find items in your mailbox, use the  option. This feature allows you to search a single mailbox or all your mailboxes for a specific word or phrase.

- On the Main page click the **Find** icon.
- **Enter your search phrase.** If you are looking for a name or User ID, enter it. (Examples: sue@domain; Fred Anderson; Todd). If you want to search for a word or phrase, enter the text (Examples: beignets, New Orleans cafe). Multiple word entries are considered a phrase; you do not have to enclose the phrase in quotation marks. For example, the entry *New Orleans cafe* will search for messages that contain that phrase. It will not search for messages that contain just the word *Orleans* or just *cafe*.

- **Select the area to search.** You can search for a name or user ID by the recipient (*To*) or the sender (*From*). You can also search the *Subject* line or the *Message Body* for the occurrence of a word or phrase.
- **Select the mailbox(es) that you want to search.**
- Click **Search** to search the selected mailbox.

Search Results

The **Search Results** lists all messages that meet the search criteria. To view a message in the list, click on it.

If you want to view the results of the previous search, click **Last Search**.

6.5.5. **HANDLING DELETED MESSAGES**

You can set up your **Board school council email messaging** to either purge deleted messages immediately or place them in a folder named "Deleted." (Deleted messages remain in the Deleted folder until you delete them by selecting the box located to the left of the message, or multiple messages, and clicking the **Delete** button.)

Internet Explorer: You can also delete messages by dragging and dropping them in the **Deleted folder**.

To purge deleted messages immediately:

- From the Options and Styles... menu, select Preferences under My Options.
- On the User Preferences page, locate Delete Messages and select Purge message.
- Click the **Save** button.

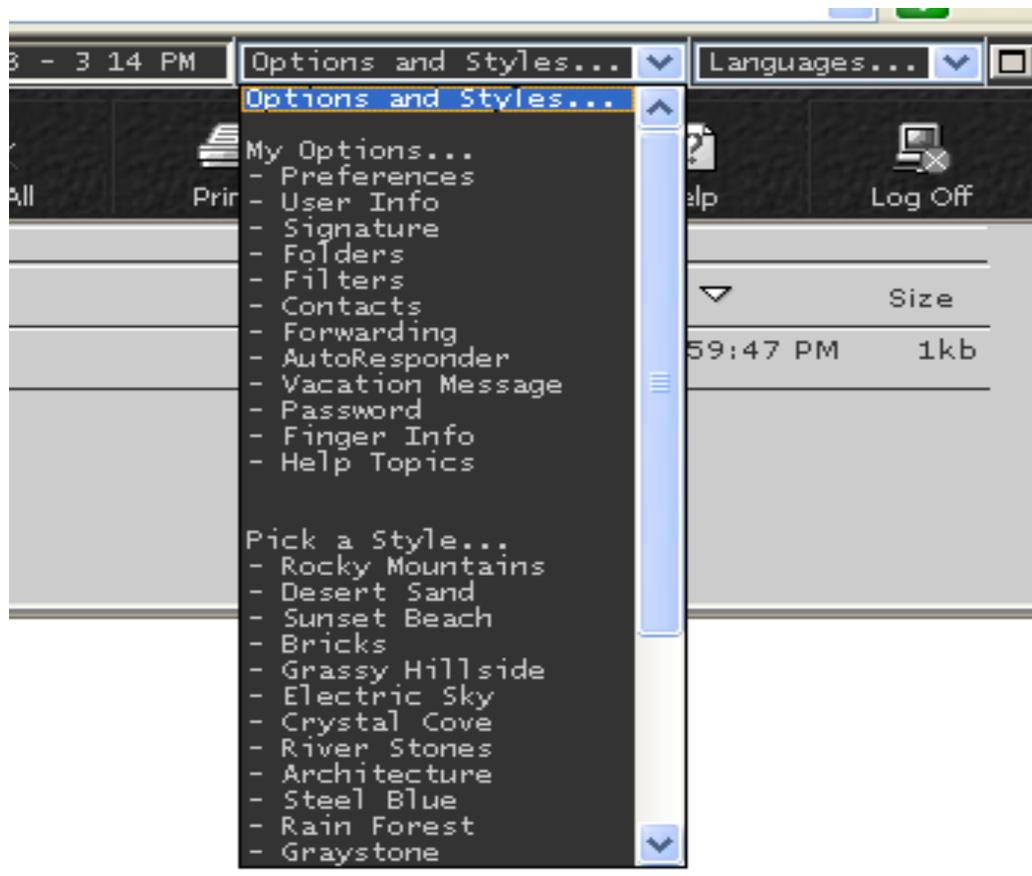
To place deleted messages in a folder:

- From the Options and Styles... menu, select Preferences under My Options.
- On the User Preferences page, locate Delete Messages and select Move to Delete folder.
- Click the **Save** button.

Note: If the "deleted" folder has been renamed, the User Preferences page will display the new name. For example, if the folder was renamed to "Trash," the User preferences page would display "Move to Trash folder" under the Delete Messages section.

6.6. **CUSTOMIZATION OPTIONS**

From the dropdown 'Options and Styles' list, several options are available. Select any item by clicking on it. A new window will open allowing customization based on the selection made. Not all options are discussed in this manual. The more common options are detailed below. For further assistance on all options, please refer to the online help.



6.6.1. **PREFERENCES**

Use the **Preferences** page to set your preferences for how features work. Customization is available for each of the items listed below. When changing settings be sure to 'Save' changes by clicking on the button at the bottom of the section. For more detailed assistance, please refer to the online help.

Mail Sending Options	
Forward Editing	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Edit original message <input type="radio"/> Don't edit original message
Forward Attachments	<input type="radio"/> Include attachments <input checked="" type="radio"/> Don't include attachments
Replying	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Include original message <input type="radio"/> Don't include original message
Reply message (original message indicator)	<input checked="" type="radio"/> ">" <input type="radio"/> None
Save copy of outgoing mail in Sent folder	<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes
For spell check applet, use Java	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1.1 <input type="radio"/> 1.2
Open Web Calendaring in	<input type="radio"/> New <input checked="" type="radio"/> Current window
Message Display Options	
Number of messages per page	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 20 <input type="radio"/> 50 <input type="radio"/> 100
Initial sort criteria	<input type="radio"/> From <input type="radio"/> Subject <input checked="" type="radio"/> Date <input type="radio"/> Size
Sort Messages	<input type="radio"/> Ascending <input checked="" type="radio"/> Descending
Display Message Headers	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Basic <input type="radio"/> Full
Message Preview	<input type="checkbox"/> Preview <input type="text"/> characters (max. 128)
Text attachments	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Show as links <input type="radio"/> Show with message text
Delete Options	
Delete messages	<input type="radio"/> Move to Deleted folder <input checked="" type="radio"/> Purge message
Confirm delete messages	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="button" value="Save"/> <input type="button" value="Reset"/>	

6.6.2. INCLUDING A SIGNATURE

A signature is a tag that is added to the end of all your messages. All messages sent from your Board school council email account contain a disclaimer stating:

+++++

The opinions expressed above are those of the sender and do not represent the official policies or statements of the York Region District School Board.

+++++

In addition, you may wish to add your own personal signature.

To include a signature:

- From the Options and Styles... menu, select Signature under My Options.
- On the User Preferences page, under the My Signature header, enter a signature in the text box (limited to 1000 characters).

Note: This feature is disabled if the text box is empty.

- Click the **Save** button at the bottom of the table you are working in when finished.

6.6.3. **CHANGING YOUR PASSWORD**

Your password may be changed at any time. Be sure to remember your new password as it cannot be retrieved should you forget it. If you forget your password, contact the Board Helpdesk through the main switchboard at extension 4357, option 3.

- To change your password From the **Options and Styles...** menu, select **Password** under **My Options**.
- Complete the boxes as prompted.
- Click the **Save** button at the bottom of the table you are working in when finished.

6.7. **MANAGING CONTACTS**

Use this page to add, modify, or delete entries in your Address Book. Addresses can be entered into the address book as a single address, or as part of a contact list. Address Book data is contained in the aliases.txt file.

6.7.1. **ADDING A SINGLE ADDRESS**

- Under **Add an Entry**, select Email Address.
- In the **NAME** text box, enter a unique name.
- In the **EMAIL** text box, enter the email address. Enter one complete email address per line (i.e. matthews@domain.com). If the user is on the same domain as the one you are logged into, you can simply enter the user ID (i.e. matthews).
- Click **Add**.

Hint: When replying to an email, it is possible to add recipients to the address book: If you select this option, all email addresses in the To, CC, and BCC areas will be added to your Address Book.

6.7.2. **ADDING A CONTACT LIST**

- Under **Add an Entry**, select Contact List.
- In the **NAME** text box, enter the name of the contact list.
- In the **LIST** text box, enter the email addresses that will be part of the list. Enter one complete email address per line (i.e. matthews@domain.com). If the user is on the same domain as the one you are logged into, you can simply enter the user ID (i.e. matthews). A contact list must contain at least one email address, but has no maximum limit.
- Click **Add**.

Note: Each contact list has a maximum of 1024 characters. If you enter more than 1024 characters, the contact list will not be saved.

6.7.3. **MODIFYING AN ADDRESS BOOK ENTRY**

- In the Modify or Delete an Entry section, select the address or contact list from the MODIFY list box.
- Modify the name and/or email address, in the respective text boxes.
- Click Modify.

6.7.4. **DELETING AN ADDRESS BOOK ENTRY**

- In the **Modify or Delete an Entry** section, select the address or contact list that you want to delete from the **MODIFY** list box.
- Click **Delete**.

Hint: When adding or modifying a contact list, click the **Insert from Address Book** icon  to add current address book entries to a contact list. Simply select the addresses that you want to add and click **Add to Contact List**, then save the contact list. Select multiple addresses by pressing the **Ctrl** key on the keyboard and selecting the email addresses.

6.8. **FOLDER ORGANIZATION**

A folder or mailbox named **Main** is automatically created whenever an account is created. A folder named "Sent" is created if you set **Save copy of outgoing mail in Sent folder** to **Yes**. Likewise, it creates a folder named "Deleted" if you set your **Deleted messages** preference to Move to Deleted folder. If you use the calendar feature, there will also be an IMIP folder. This is the folder that stores the invitations for the calendar.

You can also create "sub-folders," within a particular folder. For example, a folder named "Parrots" can have a sub-folder named "Tricks" and another one named "Sounds."

The main page displays the following information about each folder:

Folders. Lists the name of the folders and visually displays folder hierarchy.

Size. The total size of the folders' contents.

Message Count. Displays the number of unread messages in each folder.

6.8.1. TO CREATE A NEW FOLDER

- From the **Options and Styles...** menu, select **Folders** to go to the **My Folders** page, or click on the **"Folders" Icon** on the main page.
- Under **Create a Folder**, enter the name of a new folder to create. (The name must be eight characters or less and may not contain any special characters.)
- Click the **Create** button.

6.8.2. TO CREATE A FOLDER WITHIN ANOTHER FOLDER

- Under **Create a Folder**, enter a name like *UserName.Parrots.Tricks*, which will add a new folder called *Tricks* under the directory *Parrots*, which is under the top directory *UserName*.
- Click the **Create** button.

6.8.3. TO RENAME A FOLDER

- Under **Modify a Folder**, choose the folder name from the list to the right.
- Enter a new name in the text box.
- Click the **Rename** button.

6.8.4. TO DELETE A FOLDER AND ALL THE MESSAGES IT CONTAINS

- Under **Modify a Folder**, select the folder name from the list to the right.
- Click the **Delete** button.

6.9. TOOLS

6.9.1. SPELL CHECK

IMPORTANT: *There are known problems running Spell Check on Windows XP with this email tool. Spell checking runs as a Java application on your personal computer. Depending upon the version of Java on your PC, you may or may not be able to run spell check. Please be advised that York Region District School Board is unable to guarantee or support the running of Spell Check.*

A spell checker allows users to check for spelling errors before sending a message. The spell check allows users to select or add dictionaries with which to spell check. To spell check a message before sending it:

- Create a message as detailed under Creating a New Message.
- The Spell check feature comes equipped with five dictionaries to aid in spell checking. Select the dictionaries that you want to use by clicking on them.

Hint: You may use more than one dictionary when spell checking. For example, you may wish to use both the standard British dictionary along with your custom dictionary. To select multiple dictionaries, hold down the Ctrl key while clicking on the dictionaries you wish to use.

- Click Spell Check.

Depending on your initial normal or encrypted selection at the login screen, you may receive a warning message indicating that spell checking is not a secure transmission. Click OK to continue, or Cancel if you are checking highly sensitive or secure email content.



Spell Checking will open in a new window. By default, the Spell Checker will display any misspelled words in red, as well as displaying the number of misspelled words at the bottom of the Spell Checker window.

For more information about spell checking, open the Spell Checker and click the **Help** button.

6.10. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Contacts	An organized listing of contact names, addresses, and related information.
Current View	A method of viewing the information for the selected group.
Customization	The process of customizing or setting up your own preferences.
Icon	A graphic image representing the action which will be taken if you click on the item.
Inbox	The main folder where email is delivered to.
Mail/Email/Message	Used interchangeably to represent an electronic mail message.
Mailbox/Folder	Used interchangeably to represent an organized storage repository for messages.
Network	A system allowing several computers to communicate with each other, generally to share resources.
Options	Settings for the program's appearance and working mode. You can change or accept the default settings by accessing the options.
Printing	The process that allows you to generate a paper copy of specified item(s).

Toolbar

Commonly available screen elements that contain icons or buttons you can use to access common program features or commands. You can access the Toolbar only by means of the mouse.

7. APPENDIX A: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Can Board employees be members of council? What about spouses of employees?

A Board employee who does not work in the local school is permitted to fill any position on council for which he/she is otherwise eligible (except chair) providing he/she informs the electors of his/her employment. Employees who work in the local school for which they are seeking a position on council may only seek the staff position for which they are eligible (that is, teaching or support staff representative). School assistants are exempt from the limitations of this provision. The eligibility of employees' spouses is not limited in any way. For the purposes of eligibility, "employee" is defined as a "member of a bargaining unit, a manager, or an administrator."

2. How are school council elections to be conducted?

It is important that basic democratic principles have been adhered to in planning annual elections and that a bylaw be prepared that clearly outlines the election process to all members of the school community. It is essential that all parents have a right to express their willingness to run for council. Details regarding the elections and the list of candidates must be well publicized and elections are to be by secret ballot. In the past, many council elections have been by acclamation. It is anticipated that this will continue in some cases. Election by acclamation is an accepted democratic practice providing all other principles are followed.

The level of campaigning, the use of candidate profiles, speech requirements and other specifics regarding the elections should be clarified in each council's bylaws.

A word of caution: Many parents will be less likely to run if the process is too complicated or demanding.

3. How is the chair of the council selected?

The chair and all other officers of the council are to be elected by the council from among the members elected/appointed to the council. The chair(s) must be a parent member. There is not to be a direct election of officers by the community at large.

4. How should school council conflicts be handled?

Each school council is to have a bylaw regarding conflict resolution. A sample will be included in the school council handbook. It is important to be proactive in managing conflict. Building strong relationships and trust is critical. So too, is practicing open communication. Don't let conflicts smoulder. Bylaws regarding conflict resolution should focus on solving problems within the council. You are encouraged to make good use of your principal as a resource. If the conflict cannot be resolved internally, your school superintendent should be contacted. She or he may act as a facilitator and provide clarification of relevant Board policies, procedures or Ministry regulations.

5. Are fundraising activities a function of a school council? What can be purchased with funds raised by the council?

Regulation 612/00 recognizes fundraising as a legitimate and worthwhile activity for school councils. It can be an effective way for councils to achieve their overriding purpose of supporting student learning in their local school. Fundraising must, however, be carried out in accordance with Board policies on fundraising and funds must be spent on Board approved items as per the school fundraising plan. These are critical requirements so that all councils remain compliant with Board and Ministry legislation and are thereby protected legally by the Board. Refer to [Procedure 676.0](#) for details.

6. Should our council take out liability insurance? Are we covered by the Board's liability insurance?

School councils that are acting in accordance with Ministry legislation and all relevant Board policies and procedures are protected legally by the Board.

7. Can everyone who shows up at a council meeting be considered to be a member and therefore vote on decisions/recommendations of the council?

This practice would be inconsistent with Board and Ministry policy. Members of councils are those who have been duly elected/appointed according to [Board Procedure 262.0](#) and the constitution of the local council. All attendees at meetings should have an opportunity to have input into the discussions of the council but responsibility for making decisions is up to the duly elected council members who represent the entire school community. It should also be noted that voting on controversial issues is seldom the best approach. Reaching a consensus that all members can support is often the better way to handle matters of this nature.

8. Who do I call for clarification if I have any further questions about school council matters?

The first person to contact for clarification on school council legislation and Board policy is your local school principal. He or she is the agent of the Board in your school and is knowledgeable of these matters.

8. APPENDIX B: SAMPLE SCHOOL COUNCIL BYLAWS

SAMPLE ELECTION PROCEDURES

Sample 1

Source: Adapted from Holy Name of Mary School Council, Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, Almonte, Ontario.

- Elections shall occur within the first thirty days of the start of each school year.
- Each parent/guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at the school, and must declare if he or she is employed by the school board.
- Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent/guardian membership position on the council.
- An election committee shall be struck by the school council in May to help plan the election process, the gathering of nominations, and the running of the election. No one standing for election, or the spouse of anyone standing for election, shall be a member of the election committee.
- The election committee shall:
 - provide nomination forms
 - ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date(s), location, and time, at least fourteen days in advance of the election
 - request a profile from all candidates and make these available to the electorate
 - conduct the elections by secret ballot
 - count the ballots
 - help the principal notify all candidates of the results
 - keep all results and related information confidential
- Only the names of the successful candidates shall be made public. A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file by the council for use in the event that a vacancy on the council occurs.
- All individuals standing for election shall be notified of the results before the results are released to the school community.
- The school council shall help the principal ensure that the names of new members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election.
- At the first meeting of the new school council at the beginning of the year, the council shall set dates, times, and locations for its meetings throughout the year.

Sample 2

Source: Adapted from the "Thames Valley District School Board School Council Handbook."

- School council election committee. The current school council will establish a school council election committee. The committee must ensure that a new council is in place within thirty days of the start of the school year in September. The committee should have representation from parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and students.

- Considerations for the school council election process. In any given year, the term of office for all school council positions is one year. Appeals related to the school council election process or results shall be resolved by the school council election committee. If the situation is not resolved, the school principal and the chair of the outgoing council shall jointly make a ruling.
- Election of parent/guardian representatives
 - a) Parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school are eligible both to vote for and to run as parent candidates. Self-nomination will suffice. No additional qualifiers or quotas may restrict eligibility either to vote for or to run as a parent candidate (e.g., child's program, grade, location of home). Candidates should be prepared to summarize their reasons for running for the school council. They must also declare if they are employed by the school board.
 - b) Nomination forms shall be filed by all parent-candidates for elected positions on the school council. Parents may nominate themselves or other parents.
 - c) Information about candidates shall be made available to the school community at least one week before the election.
 - d) If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed.
 - e) No individual campaign literature for school council elections may be distributed or posted in the school.
 - f) School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
 - g) The election day proceedings shall be publicized by the principal at least fourteen days prior to the election.
 - h) The election day proceedings shall be supervised by the principal.
 - i) The principal shall conduct a lottery to determine the ballot position for each candidate.
 - j) Elections for school council shall be conducted by secret ballot. Voters must be present at the school on the election day(s) during the preset hours for voting (to include both daytime and evening hours).
 - k) All eligible voters shall be entitled to cast one vote for each of the candidate positions available. Casting more than the maximum number of votes permitted in the category spoils the ballot.
 - l) Ballots shall be counted by the principal in the presence of at least two parents who are not election candidates.
 - m) If there is a tie for the final position for a representative on the school council, the winner shall be determined by lot.
- Election of the teaching staff representative
 - a) The principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the teaching staff representative to be elected.
 - b) Anyone assigned to the teaching staff of the school (full- or part-time) other than the principal or a vice-principal may be a candidate.
- Election of the non-teaching staff representative
 - a) The principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the non-teaching staff representative to be elected.
 - b) Anyone assigned to the non-teaching staff of the school (full- or part-time) may be a candidate.
- Appointment or election of the student representative

- a) For elementary schools. The principal will consult with other members of the school council to determine if there is to be a student representative on the council. If a positive decision is reached, the principal appoints a student representative to the council.
 - b) For a secondary school. If the school has a student council, it will appoint a student representative to the council. Otherwise, the principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the election of the student representative.
- Selection of community representatives. All appointments of community representatives to the school council are to be by majority vote at a meeting of the school council.

SAMPLE FILLING VACANCIES

Sample 1

Source: Adapted from the bylaws of Holy Name of Mary School Council, Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, Almonte, Ontario.

- Should an elected parent/guardian council position become vacant before the next election, the council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.
- If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming a council member, the council may request that interested parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. The council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.
- When a vacant spot on council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election.

Sample 2

Source: Adapted from St. Francis Catholic School, "School Council Operating Guidelines," Paris, Ontario.

If any school council positions become vacant because of resignation, inability of a member to fulfil his or her roles and responsibilities, or other cause, the remaining members shall constitute the school council, unless the parent/guardian majority is not maintained. If the majority of parents on the council are not maintained, the school council shall instruct its nominating committee to send home nomination forms for the vacant position(s) for parents on the council and to hold an election for the purpose of filling the vacancy. Vacant positions, other than for parent representatives, may be filled by appointment of the council for the remaining term of office, from among members of the school community who meet the requirements set for the vacant positions.

SAMPLE CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Sample 1

Source: Adapted from the St. Francis Catholic School, "School Council Operating Guidelines," Paris, Ontario

Any time the school council does business with the potential for monetary gain/loss with any person, agency, or company, and a member of the school council has a vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency, or company, that member shall declare a conflict of interest and shall not discuss or vote on any such resolution relating to the matter.

Sample 2

Source: Ontario Ministry of Education, School Council: A Guide for Members, 2002

Each school council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and vision of the school council and a personal or vested interest, that arise in connection with his or her duties as a school council member. Should an issue or agenda item arise during a council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest situation, he or she shall declare conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.

Sample 3

Source: Ontario Ministry of Education, School Council: A Guide for Members, 2002

- A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.
- Members of the council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decisions of the council.
- A member shall exclude him- or herself from discussions in which:
 - a conflict of interest is likely to result.
 - the member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the school council may be jeopardized.
 - the council member, his or her relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit either directly or indirectly as a result of actions that may be taken by the principal or board in response to advice that the council provides to the principal or to the board.
- A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

SAMPLE CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

Sample 1

Source: Ontario Ministry of Education, School Council: A Guide for Members, 2002

- Every school council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.
- Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- The chair's responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members.
- If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
- If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the chair shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

Sample 2

Source: Ontario Ministry of Education, School Council: A Guide for Members, 2002

- Council members are elected to serve the school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on council at all times.
- If a council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the chair shall ask for order.
- If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the chair may direct the individual council member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.
- The removal of a member for one meeting does not prevent the council member from participating in future meetings of council.
- The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools within one week of the meeting.
- When the chair has requested the removal of a member or members from a meeting, the chair shall request that the disputing members of council participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting may be a private meeting, and shall not be construed as a meeting of the council.
- The chair may request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.
- An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
- Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

9. APPENDIX C: TYPES OF PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

taken from Parent Engagement Policy, Ontario Ministry of Education

Strategy	School's Role	Examples of how the school can help
School Climate	Foster and sustain a positive, welcoming, and inclusive school climate in which all parent perspectives are encouraged, valued and heard.	<p>Offer suggestions that will support learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss learning expectations and students' academic progress with students and parents, and make efforts to assist parents who do not understand the language of the school • Actively support and encourage school council members and other parents to explore and develop ways to engage parents in strategies to support student achievement and well-being and specific goals identified in school improvement plans • Monitor school climate (e.g. through system surveys, school surveys and focus groups) to help identify barriers to parent involvement or issues that should be addressed to foster a safe and welcoming learning environment
Eliminating Barriers	Identify and remove barriers to parent engagement that may prevent some parents from fully participating in their children's learning and to reflect the diversity of students in our communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement strategies to identify and remove discriminatory barriers that limit engagement by students, parents and our diverse communities • Work towards representation of diverse parent groups on all school committees, including school councils • Implement the board Equity and Inclusive Education Policy, and its program and action plans, to support parent engagement and reflect the needs of students and our diverse school communities • Use a variety of methods to communicate with diverse parent communities (e.g. newsletters, emails, face-to-face meets, interactive websites, online surveys, phone trees, videos, webcasts)
Supports for Parents	Provide parents with the knowledge, skills and tools they need to support student learning at home and at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively explore and utilize opportunities (e.g. Parents Reaching Out [PRO] Grants) to further engage parents at school and at home to support student achievement • Support strategies (e.g. workshops, resources such as tip sheets, translation of materials) for parents and students to develop skills and knowledge that support a positive learning environment • Review self-assessment strategies to determine the effectiveness of parent

Strategy	School's Role	Examples of how the school can help
		<p>engagement strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue consulting with parents during the IPRC/IEP processes • Value and acknowledge the different forms of parent engagement as it evolves locally and reflects community diversities
Parent Outreach	Review and expand communication and outreach strategies such as local workshops, presentations, tools and resources, to share information and strategies related to supporting learning at home and parent engagement at schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing parent and community partnerships and seek to expand them to reflect the diversity of our parents and broader community • Communicate progress to the board and the local community including educators, students, parents, and the public • Where schools are offering full-day kindergarten, inform parents about the initiative and explain how it will provide young students a foundation for learning

Closely adapted from Ministry of Education (2010). Parents in partnership: A parent engagement policy for Ontario schools. Toronto: Author. Adapted with permission of Ministry of Education.

10. APPENDIX D: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<p>CUPE Canadian Union of Public Employees</p>	<p>MFIPPA Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</p>
<p>DSB District School Board</p>	<p>OAC Ontario Academic Course - the senior academic year after Grade 12 (phased out June 2003)</p>
<p>EDU An abbreviation used by the Ministry of Education in some of its publications</p>	<p>OSR Ontario Student Record</p>
<p>EIC Education Improvement Commission (the Commission's mandate ended December 2000, however, reference is still made to their work)</p>	<p>OSSD Ontario Secondary School Diploma</p>
<p>Elementary level/panel Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 (Also see the definitions for Primary Division, Junior Division, and Intermediate Division)</p>	<p>OSSTF Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation</p>
<p>EQAO Education Quality and Accountability Office – a crown agency established in 1996 to measure and communicate the achievements of students, schools and school boards, through province-wide assessments of students and through other indicators</p>	<p>OTF Ontario Teachers' Federation, an umbrella organization for the OSSTF and ETFO</p>
<p>ETFO Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario</p>	<p>Primary Division Junior Kindergarten to Grade 3</p>
<p>IEP Individual Education Plan – a special education plan developed for a student who has been identified as exceptional through the IRPC process</p>	<p>PEAC Parent Engagement Advisory Committee – purpose is to support, encourage and enhance parent engagement at the board level in order to improve student achievement and well-being</p>
<p>Intermediate Division Grades 7 and 8</p>	<p>SEAC Special Education Advisory Committee – committee established by each school board to monitor the board's special education programs, services and plans</p>

<p>IPRC Identification, Placement and Review Committee – a committee comprised of at least three individual, at least one of whom must be a principal or a supervisory officer, who decide whether individual students should be formally identified as exceptional for the purpose of providing special education support</p>	<p>Secondary Level Grades 9 to 12 (OAC phased out June 2003)</p>
<p>JK Junior Kindergarten</p>	<p>SK Senior Kindergarten</p>
<p>Junior Division Grades 4 to 6</p>	