

SECTION 6: OPERATIONS

Policy 6.44: School Council Policy

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Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Algoma District School Board that each school shall establish and maintain a school council to act in an advisory capacity to both the school principal and to the Board. The council shall work in a collaborative manner to promote continued excellence in education with consideration of the interests and rights of all.

School councils shall operate within the [Education Act](#), regulations and all other relevant legislation. The school councils shall also operate within the policies, guidelines and procedures of the Algoma District School Board.

A Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) shall be established to support, encourage, and enhance parent engagement at the Board level.

Rationale

The Algoma District School Board believes that successful education begins with active and positive participation of school, home and community. Local school partnerships, represented as school councils, promote and encourage academic excellence and a supportive and socially responsible learning environment in their school community.

Definitions

- “meeting” does not include a training session or other event where a school council does not discuss or decide matters that it has authority to decide;
- “parent” includes a person who has lawful custody of a child if other than the parent of the child
- “parent member” means a member of a school council who is elected or acclaimed to the council in accordance with section 1.3 of this policy and [Regulation 612 of the Education Act](#).

1.0 Procedures:

1.1 Purpose of School Councils

The purpose of school councils is, through active participation, to improve student achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

A school council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with applicable legislation, regulations, policies and procedures, to the principal of the school and the Board that established the council.

A school council shall consult with parents of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the council.

1.2 Composition of School Councils

A school council for a school shall be composed of the following people:

1. The principal of the school
2. One teacher who is employed at the school, who is not the principal or vice-principal.
3. One person who is employed at the school, other than the principal, vice-principal or any other teacher.
4. In the case of secondary schools, one pupil enrolled in the school and appointed by the student council.
5. In the case of a school for adults, there is no pupil representative. Adult students are the parent members.
6. In the case of elementary schools, one pupil enrolled in the school may be appointed by the principal of the school, if the principal determines, after consulting the other members of the school council, that the council should include a pupil.

7. One community representative, (or more as per bylaw), appointed by the other members of the council.
8. One person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, if the association is established in respect of the school.
9. Parent members such that they constitute a majority of the members of the school council.
10. It is recommended that the total number of members of a school council not exceed 15.
11. Total of elected parent members must be greater than the total of all other members.

1.3 Eligibility for a School Council

1. Parent members must be the parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school, as defined above.
2. Parent members must not be employed at the school. A parent, employed by the Algoma District School Board, other than at the school which established the council, may qualify if s/he takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of his/her employment with the Algoma District School Board.
3. A trustee of the Algoma District School Board cannot be a member of a school council for this Board.

1.4 Elections of Parent Members

1. The election of parent members of a school council shall be held during the first 30 calendar days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair or co-chairs of the school council after consulting with the principal of the school. If there is no chair, the principal, in consultation with senior administration, shall select an election date within these same thirty days.
2. If a new school is established, the first election of parent members to the school council shall be held during the first 30 days of the school year, on a date that is fixed by the Algoma District School Board.

3. The principal of a school shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, on behalf of the school council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school. The written notice shall be given to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent and posted in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.
4. The election shall be by secret ballot.

1.5 Election School Employee Members

1. Teachers of the school, other than the principal or vice-principal may vote for the teacher member of the school council.
2. Only non-teacher school employees may vote for the school council member who represents this group.

1.6 Non-Elected Members

1. Community member(s) and the Home and School representative (if applicable) are appointed by school council resolution.
2. An Elementary pupil (optional member) is appointed by the Principal.
3. A Secondary pupil is appointed by the Student Council. If the school does not have a Student Council, the pupil is elected by the student body.

1.7 Term of Office

1. A person elected or appointed as a member of a school council holds office commencing from the later of:
 - (a) the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections; and
 - (b) the date he or she is elected or appointed until the date of the first meeting of the school council following the elections of the next school year.

1.8 Vacancies

1. A vacancy in the membership of a school council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the council and this policy.
2. If an election is held to fill a vacancy in the membership of a school council, notification, posting and secret ballot shall apply as with other elections.

3. A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the council from exercising its authority but a meeting cannot be held if a majority of the members of the council present are not parent members.

1.9 Officers

1. A school council shall have a chair, or if the by-laws of the council so provide, co-chairs.
2. A chair or co-chair of a school council must be an **elected parent member** of the council, and shall be elected by the members of the council.
3. A person who is employed by the Algoma District School Board cannot be the chair or co-chair of the council.
4. A school council may have such other officers as are provided for in the by-laws of the council.
5. Subject to eligibility and required composition of a school council, vacancies in the office of chair, co-chair or any other officer of a school council shall be filled in accordance with the by-laws of the council.

1.10 Ministry of Education Powers

1. The Ministry may, for the purpose of consulting and communicating directly with members of school councils, collect the names, mailing addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of the chair or co-chairs of a school council and of the other members of the council. This information shall be provided by the members of school council to the school principal and shall be sent by the principal of the school to the appropriate senior administrator immediately following the election at the beginning of the school year or upon any change in this information.
2. The Ministry may disclose information collected under subsection (1) to the Ontario Parent Council, which may use the information for the purpose of consulting and communicating directly with members of school councils.

1.11 Meetings

1. A school council shall meet at least four times during the school year.
2. A school council shall meet within the first thirty-five calendar days of the school year, after the elections held each year, on a date fixed by the principal of the school.
3. A meeting of a school council cannot be held unless,

- (a) a majority of the current members of the council are present at the meeting; and
- (b) a majority of the members of the council who are present at the meeting are parent members.

4. The principal of a school shall, on behalf of the school council, give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the council to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school. The notice may be given by giving the notice to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent and posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.
5. All meetings of a school council shall be open to the public.
6. A school council is entitled to hold its meetings at the school.
7. All meetings of a school council shall be held at a location that is accessible to the public.

1.12 Committees

1. A school council may, in accordance with its by-laws, establish committees to make recommendations to the council.
2. Every committee of a school council must include at least one elected parent member of the council.
3. A committee of a school council may include persons who are not members of the council.
4. All committee meetings shall be open to the public in a location that is accessible to the public, and notice of committee meetings must be given in accordance with all regular council meetings.

1.13 Voting

1. Each member of a school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the council.
2. Each member of a committee of a school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee.
3. The principal of the school is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the school council or by a committee of the school council.

1.14 By-laws

1. A school council may make by-laws governing the conduct of its affairs. These by-laws may not contravene any Ministry legislation or Board policy, procedures, guidelines, or any other legislation.
2. Every school council shall make the following by-laws:
 - (a) A by-law that governs election procedures and the filling of vacancies in the membership of the school council.
 - (b) A by-law that establishes rules respecting participation in school council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest.
 - (c) A by-law that, in accordance with any applicable policies established by the Algoma District School Board, establishes a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes.
3. A school council may make by-laws which govern the election of officers and the establishment and terms of reference for committees.
4. The Board shall provide assistance in the development of by-laws.

1.15 Minutes and Financial Records

1. A school council shall keep minutes of all of its meetings and records of all of its financial transactions.
2. The minutes and records shall be available at the school for examination without charge by any person for a period of four years.
3. Minutes and records must be kept for four years, after which point they may be destroyed.

1.16 Incorporation

A school council shall not be incorporated.

1.17 Role of the Principal

1. The principal of a school may delegate any of his or her powers or duties as a member of the school council, including any powers or duties under this Regulation, to a vice-principal of the school.
2. The principal of a school shall provide for the prompt distribution to each member of the school council of any materials received by the principal from the Ministry that

are identified by the Ministry as being for distribution to the members of school councils.

3. The principal shall post any materials distributed to members of the school council in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.
4. The principal of a school shall act as a resource person to the school council and shall assist the council in obtaining information relevant to the functions of the council, including information relating to relevant legislation, regulations and policies.
5. The principal of a school shall perform the duties relating to school councils that are imposed on the principal by [Regulation 298 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario](#).
6. The principal shall assist the school council in communicating with the parents and community with respect to official school council business. This may include placing, in school newsletters, notices of meetings and other information which is relevant and appropriate to the mandate of a school council.
7. The principal of a school shall consider each recommendation made to the principal by the school council and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.
8. The principal shall solicit the views of the school council with respect to the following matters:
 - (a) The establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines and the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including,
 - i. a local code of conduct established under the [Safe Schools Act](#) governing the behaviour of all persons in the school, and
 - ii. school policies or guidelines related to policies and guidelines established by the Algoma District School Board under the [Safe Schools Act](#) respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the board's jurisdiction.
 - (b) School action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of pupils, and the communication of those plans to the public.

1.18 Consultation and Communication

1. In addition to its other obligations to solicit the views of school councils under the Act and regulations, the Algoma District School Board may solicit the views of the school councils established by the board with respect to the following matters:
 - (a) The establishment or amendment of board policies and guidelines that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including,
 - i. the conduct of persons in schools within the Algoma District School Board's jurisdiction.
 - ii. appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the Board's jurisdiction.
 - iii. the allocation of funding by the board to school councils
 - iv. conflict resolution processes for internal school council disputes, and
 - v. reimbursement by the board of expenses incurred by members and officers of school councils.
 - vi. fundraising activities of school councils.
 - (b) The development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including,
 - i. conduct of persons in schools of the Algoma District School Board and
 - ii. appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the Algoma District School Board.
 - (c) Board action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of pupils, and the communication of those plans to the public.
 - (d) The process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals.
 - (e) The Board may solicit the views of school councils on any matter.
2. The principal of the school shall review in advance with the school council any materials produced by the School Council which are to be distributed to the school community in order to advise on compliance and compatibility with board policy, guidelines and other legislative requirements.
3. The School Council shall consult with parents of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the council.
4. The Parent Involvement Committee may serve as a primary avenue for consultation and communication between the Board and school councils.

1.19 Annual Report

1. Every school council shall annually submit a written report by June 10 of each year on its activities to the principal of the school and to the Algoma District School Board. This report shall include dates and times of meetings and a summary of the activities undertaken during the past school year.
2. The principal shall, on behalf of the school council, give a copy of the annual report to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the copy is given, is enrolled in the school. This report may be given to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent and the report shall be posted in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

1.20 Finance/Funding

1. A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of a school council.
2. The Algoma District School Board shall fund school councils according to the guidelines established by the Ministry of Education through the Grant for Student Needs (GSN). Budget allocations shall be established during the development of the annual operating budget of the Board.
3. The Algoma District School Board shall reimburse members and officers of the council for expenses they incur as member or officers of the council as approved in advance, by the Board and in accordance with approved Board policies and/or procedures as established for school councils.

1.21 Fundraising by School Councils

1. A school council may engage in fundraising activities provided they are conducted in accordance with applicable policies established by the Algoma District School Board.
2. The fundraising activities must be to raise funds to be used to benefit the students of the school. No funds shall be raised to support any political or religious organization, party or initiative.
3. A school council shall ensure that the funds raised by the council are used in accordance with any applicable policies established by the board.
4. In addition to the Annual Report, a statement of accounts showing income and specific expenditures for all fundraising shall be made annually by the school council to the Board.