

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Background

The Division recognizes the rights of parents to be involved in their children's education and for parents, community members and school staff to be involved in key decisions about the education of students. In each school in the Division, parents and the school community are to be provided with the opportunity to establish and maintain a School Council. School Councils have a role in advising and consulting with the principal on any matter relating to the school.

The Division encourages parental, staff, student (where appropriate) and community participation in making decisions that create a stronger learning environment for students served in our schools.

Definition

A School Council is a collective association of parents, teachers, principals, staff, students (where appropriate), and community representatives who seek to work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the entire school community and thereby to enhance student learning. A School Council provides a means to facilitate cooperation among all the concerned participants in the local school.

Procedures

1. Each principal is to provide for the establishment of a School Council with the stipulation that the majority of the members are parents or guardians of students attending the school.
 - 1.1 Any parent or guardian of a student registered in Division schools can serve on a School Council, however, where possible the executive of a School Council should be comprised of a majority of Catholic parents.
 - 1.2 It is expected that there be an opportunity for representation from both the parish and broader community.
2. The first meeting of the school council must be held within 40 school days after the start of the school year or as specified in the bylaws of the school council.
 - 2.1 Where a school is unsuccessful in establishing a School Council pursuant to the School Councils Regulation 94/2019, the principal shall make every effort to establish a Parent Liaison Committee for that year.
 - 2.2 If there are fewer than five (5) parents or guardians in attendance or if an establishment meeting is not successful in establishing a School Council, a principal may establish an advisory committee for that year.
3. The central focus of the School Council is to effectively support and enhance student learning. This is typically done through participation in decisions that impact student learning.

4. The School Council may advise the principal and the Board respecting any matter related to the school. This most often includes, but is not limited to planning, communication, community relations and school programming.
5. Once established, the Council may specify its model of governance. Each School Council may operate by a set of by-laws:
 - 5.1 Respecting the number, location, and calling of meetings;
 - 5.2 Prescribing members, roles of members, and election of members; and
 - 5.3 Respecting the number of members that constitutes a quorum.
6. The School Council must retain at the school a copy of the minutes for each meeting of the School Council and make them available to the Superintendent on request. The minutes for each meeting are to be retained for at least seven years.
7. The school will provide the school council with opportunity to provide advice on the development of the school's:
 - 7.1 Foundation statements, if any, respecting the school's vision, principles and beliefs.
 - 7.2 Policies
 - 7.3 Annual education plan and annual results report
 - 7.4 Budget
8. The school will provide the school council with:
 - 8.1 The results from provincial assessments and an interpretation of those results
9. School Councils may fundraise but may not engage in casino activities.
 - 9.1 Fundraising is to be for predetermined purposes decided upon in consultation with the principal and consistent with applicable Board policy. Funds must be expended as agreed by both parties.
 - 9.2 Any funds raised by the Council must be deposited in either an account of the Division or a legitimate account owned by the School Council.
 - 9.3 Such funds are subject to audit by the Superintendent or designate on an annual basis.
10. The chair of a School Council must prepare and provide to the Board by no later than September 30 of each year a report that:
 - 10.1 Summarizes the activities of the School Council in the past school year; and
 - 10.2 Details the receipt, handling and use of any money by the school council in the previous year
11. A School Council may not incorporate under the Societies Act. Parents or guardians wishing to incorporate as a society for the purpose of holding a gaming license must do so under the Societies Act.

- 11.1 Such a society is a separate entity from the School Council.
 - 11.2 If the proposed society bears a direct relationship to the school community in the name or in function, a copy of the proposed charter must be approved, in writing, by the Superintendent or designate.
12. Approved costs associated with the operation of the School Council must be approved by the principal and included in the operational budget of the school.

Reference: Section 33,52,53,55,197,222,251 Education Act
School Councils Regulation 94/2019
School Councils Policy 1.8.3
School Councils Resources Manual
School Councils Handbook