

School Council

School councils are an important forum through which members of school communities play an advisory role in school improvement planning. Key factors in collaborative relationships are building meaningful, two-way communication and supporting respectful interactions among education partners.

School council is a structured group of parents, principals, teachers, secondary students and community representatives whose purpose is to advise the principal and the school board respecting matters relating to the school. It is a means for parents and community members to work together with the school to support and enhance student learning.

A school council is a vehicle to support meaningful parental involvement in decisions that affect the school and its operations. School council provides the venue for parents to reflect the wishes of the broader community for the education of its students and to actively participate in giving advice and support to the principal in the operations of the school. The actual decision-making authority of the school council is limited to:

- determining the school council operating procedures
- setting policies to govern school council activities at the school level, as described in the *Education Act*
- planning engagement activities that align with school council's legislated purpose
- choosing to provide advice to the principal and school board

Core Activities

- Advises the principal and board on educational issues that pertain to the school.
- Establishes and reviews school council's goals, objectives, action plans and procedures.
- Communicates and consults with parents and the school community.
- Meets regularly.

Annual Agenda Framework

Sample Annual Agenda

Role

A school council should review its mission, vision and goals annually to ensure they reflect the views of the current membership.

School council functions may include:

- consulting with the principal to ensure students have opportunities to meet Ministry standards, fiscal management is sound, and the community is taken into consideration during school-based planning
- advising the principal and the school board on topics as requested
- being involved in school-based planning
- sharing ideas and information with other school councils and provincial organizations
- communicating information to the school community and other school councils
- setting policies that relate to school council functions, such as:
 - location of school council meetings
 - mail, email address for school council correspondence
 - school council orientation and development
 - financial management and/or fundraising
 - communications
 - privacy
 - minutes of school council meetings
 - pertinent information unique to the school council

Effective School Council Checklist

What School Councils are Not

As the primary role is advisory, school councils are not eligible to incorporate as societies. It is not the primary intent of school councils to fundraise or lobby.

Roles that are not to be taken on by a school council include:

- school governance
- employment issues
- school management
- listening to complaints

Education Act & School Councils Regulation

Advisory

The school council is a legislated structure - a forum for parents and community members to participate in an advisory capacity in their local school decision-making processes. The advisory role is intended to engage parents, high school students and the community in school decision-making for which the principal is responsible.

Advising the Principal

School council may, at its discretion, advise the principal on matters relating to the school. Some of the more common topics for discussion include:

- school's overall mission, philosophy, policies, rules and goals
- school's improvement planning, including three-year plans
- school division policies (e.g. school fees, school council policies)
- school budget
- school volunteers
- provincial achievement test results and diploma exam results
- guidelines and principles for the school resource allocations
- fundraising
- training and/or information needs of school council members
- school policy on use of facilities by the larger community
- facility renovations
- ways of reporting student achievement results to parents and public
- methods of communicating with parents and the public
- promotion of the school in the community
- programs offered in the school
- extracurricular activities offered in the school
- student attendance procedures, standards of student conduct and bullying issues
- services for students to improve learning, such as assistance from reading specialists and guidance counsellors
- school calendar and adjustments in school hours
- graduation and other school celebrations