

School Community Council

Adopted under The Education Act and Ontario Regulation 612/00

1.0 Objective

- 1.1 The purpose of the School Community Council Procedure is to outline the roles and responsibilities for the development and the operation of School Community Councils. In addition, this procedure will support and promote the goal of advancing student achievement, well-being, and the delivery of effective, sustainable, equitable and inclusive educational programs for all students through ongoing, valued parent/guardian, staff, and community input. The school community council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with this Regulation to the principal of the school and the Board.
- 1.2 This procedure is to be interpreted and applied in accordance with the District's commitment to promoting and upholding Indigenous rights and human rights in all of its learning and working environments. This includes anti-colonial, anti-discriminatory, and anti-racist approaches and actions to provide services and employment that are safe, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, equitable, accessible, and free from discrimination and harassment consistent with the DDSB's Indigenous Education Policy, Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy (the "Human Rights Policy"), the Safe and Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention Policy, and related procedures.

2.0 Definitions

In this procedure,

- 2.1 Board: The Board of Trustees of the Durham District School Board
- 2.2 District: The corporate entity of DDSB
- 2.3 Parent means a parent or legal guardian of a student who is enrolled in the Board.
- 2.4 Educators: Staff who provide instruction to students that attend a DDSB school.
- 2.5 School Community: The school community includes students, parents/guardians, staff members, and members of the local community.
- 2.6 School Community Council means a school council with the meaning of Ontario Regulation 612/00
- 2.7 Student: Any pupil who attends a DDSB School.

3.0 Structure and composition of School Community Councils

3.1 Membership of a school community council shall include:

- the number of parent representatives that is specified in the council by-laws. If no number is specified, there shall be 10 parent members. In adult day schools, parent positions shall be held by students.;
- one community representative (more if stated in council by-laws);
- one student (mandatory in secondary schools; recommended, but at the discretion of the principal, in consultation with the school community council, in elementary schools);
- the school principal;
- one teacher employed at the school;
- one person who is employed at the school, other than a Principal, Vice-Principal or teacher.

3.2 Parents shall form the majority on the council. A person is not qualified to be a parent member of a school community council if they are employed at the school.

3.3 A parent who is not employed at the school but is employed by District may qualify as a parent member if they take reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote of their employment with the District prior to the election. However, they cannot serve as chair or co-chair.

3.4 Each member of a school community council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the council. Each member of a committee of a school community council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by a committee of the school community council. The principal is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the school community council or by a committee of the school community council. Notwithstanding the above, as much as possible, the chair should aim for consensus building amongst the members of the SCC (School Council: A Guide for Members, Ontario 2022, Page 74).

3.5 it is expected that the membership of the council will reflect the diversity of the school community and seek to inform and engage the diverse communities the DDSB serves.

3.6 A Board Trustee cannot be a member of a District school community council.

3.7 Membership on the school community council shall be determined as outlined below:

- Parents shall be elected by parents of students enrolled in the school.
- One student representative shall be appointed by the student council (secondary schools).
- One student representative may be appointed by the principal (elementary schools).
- One teacher representative shall be elected by members of the teaching staff, not including the principal and vice-principal.
- One non-teaching employee shall be elected by non-teaching employees assigned to the school.
- The school principal shall be a designated member. The school principal may delegate any of their powers or duties as a member of the school community council to a vice-principal of the school.
- Community representative(s) shall be appointed by the council. A person who is employed by the District may be appointed as a community representative if they are not employed at the school and the members of the school community council are informed of the person's employment before the appointment.

4.0 Terms of Office

- 4.1 The term of office for elected and appointed positions on the council shall be for one year. Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms, unless the council by-laws provide otherwise.

5.0 Remuneration

- 5.1 There shall be no remuneration/honorarium paid to members or officers of the school community council.

6.0 Election of Parent

- 6.1 A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members of a school community council if they are a parent of a student who is enrolled in the school.
- 6.2 An election of parent members of a school community council shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair or co-chairs of the school community council after consulting with the principal. For a new school, the first election of parent members to the school community council shall be held during the first 30 days of the school year, on a date fixed by the principal.
- 6.3 The principal, on behalf of the school community council, shall give written notice of the date, time, and location of the election to every parent at least 14 days before the date of the election.
- 6.4 The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.
- 6.5 Individual campaign literature for school community council elections shall not be distributed or posted in the school. However, campaign literature may be displayed or distributed at a campaign forum held for candidates at the school, if the forum is organized by the school.
- 6.6 A candidate forum may be held at the school, in the evening, prior to the day of the elections. The forum will provide parents with an opportunity to learn more about the candidates. The forum will be moderated by the Principal.
- 6.7 School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support candidates or groups.
- 6.8 Each school shall conduct school community council elections in accordance with their by-laws.

7.0 Elected Officers

- 7.1 A school community council shall have a Chair, or if the by-laws of the council provide, two Co-Chairs.
- 7.2 A Chair or Co-Chair must be a parent member of the council and shall be elected by the members of the council.
- 7.3 A person who is employed by the Durham District School Board cannot be the Chair or Co-chair of the school community council.
- 7.4 A school community council may have such other officers as provided for in the by-laws of the council.

7.5 Officers shall be elected at the first meeting of the school community council after the elections.

8.0 Vacancies

8.1 A vacancy in the membership of a school community council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the council.

8.2 A vacancy in any of the elected officer positions on the school community council shall be filled in accordance with the by-laws of the council.

9.0 Meetings

9.1 A school community council shall meet at least four times during the school year.

9.2 A school community council shall meet within the first 35 days of the school year, after the elections, on a date fixed by the school principal.

9.3 A meeting of a school community council cannot be held unless a majority of the current members of the council are present at the meeting and a majority of the members of the council who are present at the meeting are parent members (majority is more than 50%).

9.4 All meetings of a school community council shall be open to the public. Meetings may be held in person, or by electronic or virtual means, or hybrid (both in person and virtually).

9.5 The principal of a school shall give written notice of school community council meetings to every parent by using any of the means specified in Ontario Regulation 612/00.

9.6. SCC members, individually and collectively, will treat other SCC members and those in attendance at the meeting with dignity and respect and will not engage in discriminatory conduct when conducting SCC business.

9.7. SCC meetings and events are considered extensions of DDSB learning and working environments and are subject to DDSB policies and procedures.

10.0 Committees of School Community Council

10.1 A school community council may, in accordance with its by-laws, establish committees to make recommendations to the council.

10.2 Every committee of a school community council must include at least one parent member of the council.

10.3 A committee of a school community council may include persons who are not members of the council.

10.4 All committee meetings shall be open to the public.

10.5 The principal shall give written notice of school community council committee meetings to every parent in accordance with Ontario Regulation 612/00.

11.0 By-Laws of the School Community Council

11.1 A school community council may make by-laws governing the conduct of its affairs.

11.2 Every school community council shall make the following by-laws:

- i. A by-law that governs election procedures and the filling of vacancies in the membership of the school community council.
- ii. A by-law that establishes rules respecting participation in school community council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest.
- iii. A by-law that, in accordance with any applicable District policies, establishes a conflict resolution process for internal school community council disputes.

12.0 Reimbursement for School Community Council Members

- 12.1 Reimbursement for approved out-of-pocket or other expenses is dependent upon the allocation of funds for this purpose by the Ministry of Education through the provincial funding formula.

13.0 Minutes and Financial Records

- 13.1 A school community council shall keep minutes of all its meetings and records of all its financial transactions.
- 13.2 The minutes and financial records shall be readily available at the school for examination without charge by any person.
- 13.3 13.1 and 13.2 do not apply to minutes that are more than four years old and financial records that are more than seven years old.

14.0 Not Incorporated

- 14.1 A school community council shall not be incorporated.

15.0 Consult with Parents

- 15.1 A school community council shall consult with parents about matters under consideration by the council.

16.0 School Community Annual Report

- 16.1 Every school community council shall submit annually a written report on its activities to the principal of the school and to the Board.
- 16.2 The annual report shall include a report on any fundraising activities of the school community council and the "Annual School Community Council Treasurer's Report" (see Procedure #5131 section 9.0).
- 16.3 The principal shall share a copy of the report with the school community.

17.0 Conflict Resolution

- 17.1 School community councils shall attempt to resolve internal council disputes among the council members. If the council is not able to resolve a dispute at the school level, the school community council Chair or the Principal may appeal to the appropriate Superintendent of Education or Family of Schools. If the Superintendent of Education Family of Schools is not able to resolve the dispute the Director may appoint an external mediator to assist in resolving the dispute.
- 17.2 Conflict resolution training for school community council members shall be provided by the Board.

- 18.0 **Removing a Member from a meeting** – A Chair/Co-Chair is authorized to expel or exclude any person, including a member of the Council, from a Council or Committee meeting if the person has been guilty of improper conduct at a meeting or an event, including in respect of a breach of Board policy, including the Human Rights Policy (see Section 1.2). Further, the Director of Education or designate may provide a notice of trespass under the *Trespass to Property Act* to any person excluding them from District premises where a school council is held, if reasonably necessary in order to ensure the safe and orderly conduct of school council meetings.

19.0 Role and Responsibility of Chair/Co-Chairs

19.1 The Chair/Co-Chairs of the school community council shall:

- call school community council meetings,
- prepare the agenda for the school community council in collaboration with the school Principal and share the agenda with the school community prior to meetings;
- chair school community council meetings;
- ensure that minutes of school community council meetings are recorded and maintained;
- participate in information and training programs;
- communicate with the school principal and Board staff on behalf of school council;
- ensure that there is regular communication with the school community

20.0 Role and Responsibility of Council Members

20.1 Provide informed advice to the school principal on student achievement, school accountability to parents, issues related to supporting anti-discrimination, and addressing barriers to equitable and inclusive education for all students.

The members of the school community council shall:

1. the School Community Council is not a forum to discuss a family's individual situations or relationship with the school. Such agenda items will not be permitted and the family will be encouraged to meet with the principal of the school and following that if still not satisfied, the Superintendent for the school;
2. maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
3. participate in council meetings;
4. participate in information and training programs;
5. act as a link between the school community council and the community;
6. plan and support activities that increase active participation for parents within the school community.
7. encourage the participation of parents from the whole community. .
8. sit on other committees that may be established by the council;
9. initiate an agenda item through the Chair/Co-Chair;
10. seek information in an open and non-threatening manner;

11. give information that contributes to the knowledge and decision-making process;
12. offer opinions as opinions, not as facts;
13. elaborate on another's contribution;
14. observe the Council's Code of Ethics and establish by-laws;
15. uphold and align all SCC decisions, recommendations, practices and activities (for example: initiatives, strategies, communications and events) with the Principal and requirements set out in section 1.2 of this procedure.
16. devise strategies to enhance outreach to diverse communities so that all parents have an opportunity for their voices to be heard.
17. identify, prevent, and address barriers to participation and engagement

20.2. The School Community Council is an important and rewarding opportunity to network, volunteer, help build communities, and potentially support career development – to highlight the value of participating and engaging, especially for newcomer community members, underrepresented communities, etc., for students, the school community, and the member – that the skills and experiences gained may support members' personal and professional development.

21.0 The Board and School Community Council

21.1 In addition to its other obligations to solicit views of school community councils under the Act, the Board shall solicit the views of school community councils with respect to the following matters:

1. The establishment or amendment of policies and guidelines that relate to student achievement or the accountability of the education system to parents, including:
 - policies and guidelines established with respect to the conduct of persons in schools;
 - policies and guidelines respecting appropriate dress for students in schools;
 - policies and guidelines respecting the allocation of funding by the Board to school community councils;
 - policies and guidelines respecting fundraising activities of school community councils;
 - policies and guidelines respecting conflict resolution processes for internal school community council disputes; and
 - policies and guidelines respecting reimbursement by the board of expenses incurred by members and officers of school community councils.
2. The development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including:
 - implementation plans for policies and guidelines with respect to the conduct of persons in schools;
 - implementation plans for policies and guidelines respecting appropriate dress for students in schools.
3. District operational plan for improvement, based on multiple sources of data, including the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports that include qualitative and quantitative data for every school.
4. Process and criteria to inform the selection and placement of principals and vice-

principals. Process and criteria to inform the selection and placement of Principals and Vice-Principals. The District shall ask all SCCs to submit their recommendations annually. The District shall advise each Council of any changes in administration.

- 21.2 Section 19 does not limit the matters on which the Board or District may solicit the views of school community councils.

22.0 The Principal and School Community Council

- 22.1 In addition to their obligations to solicit the views of school community councils under the Act and the regulations, the principal shall solicit the views of the school community council with respect to the following matters:

1. The establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including:
 - a local code of conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in the school, and
 - school policies or guidelines respecting appropriate dress for students in the school.
2. The development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to student achievement, well-being, or the accountability of the education system to parents, including:
 - implementation plans for a local code of conduct;
 - implementation plans for school policies or guidelines respecting appropriate dress for students in the school;
3. School learning plans based on addressing the learning needs of students and their wellbeing. Plans will be evidence-informed and include multiple sources of data, including the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports. The Principal shall provide for the prompt distribution to each member of the school community council of any materials received by the principal from the Ministry of Education that are identified as being for distribution to the members of school community councils.
4. The Principal shall post and share any materials distributed to members of the school community council in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.
5. The Principal shall make the names of the members of the school community council known to parents not later than 30 days following the election of the parent members of the school community council.
6. The Principal shall attend every meeting of the school community council unless they are unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond their control.
7. The Principal shall act as a resource person to the school community 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.
8. The Principal shall consider each recommendation made to the principal by the school community council and shall advise the council on the action taken in response to the recommendation.
9. The Principal may delegate any of their powers or duties as a member of the school community council, to a vice-principal in the school.

10. The Principal shall provide opportunities for students and SCC voice in the development and implementation of school leaning plans.

23.0 Recommendations and Communications of School Community Councils

- 23.1 Recommendations of school community councils that are specifically related to the school should be referred to the school principal.
- 23.2 Recommendations that are broader in scope than the local school may be referred either to the school principal for direction or to the appropriate Board official or Board committee.

24.0 Use of Social Networking, Digital Communication Applications, and Web Sites by the SCC

- 24.1 SCC members will ensure that information communicated publicly through social media applications shall not reveal personal information about staff, students, parents, or other members of the school community. Information that is inappropriate for posting may include but is not limited to photographs and/or videos of students or staff for which no consent has been provided, school financial information, school plans, or other schools administrative information.
- 24.2 Any discriminatory, inappropriate or demeaning references to staff, students, parents, or other members of the school community communicated through social networking applications represent a contravention of Board policy.
- 24.3 Inappropriate use of electronic communication and social networking is contrary to Board policy and may result in criminal charges or civil actions. Examples of inappropriate use include, but are not limited to:
- a) Making inappropriate online comments that are defamatory in nature;
 - b) Disclosing confidential information about the Board, school, staff, or students;
 - c) Posting the work of others without proper attribution, in breach of copyright law;
 - d) Breaching a court-ordered publication ban;
 - e) Inciting hatred against an identifiable group;
 - f) Contravening the Youth Criminal Justice Act by disclosing information about a minor;
 - g) Using technology to criminally or otherwise harass a student, staff, or others;
 - h) Using a computer to lure a child or human trafficking;
 - i) Exchanging or forwarding compromising photos, video, or audio recordings of children which are sexually explicit in nature.
- 24.4 Only DDSB staff have editing rights to the school websites. A staff liaison may be appointed to post-school community council information as requested by the Chair in conjunction with the school Principal.

- 24.5 School community council members wishing to use social media (Facebook, YouTube, Remind, or like applications) as a method of communication with the broader community on behalf of the school community council must ensure that they have received permission from their school Principal. Logins and passwords for access to these sites must be provided to the school Principal. Application privacy settings must be set such that the public may view the content without the need to be “accepted”, “friended” or “followed” by the application administrator.
- 24.6 School community councils must adhere to Canada’s Anti-Spam Legislation. Anyone who sends an electronic message that encourages participating in a commercial activity must do the following:
1. Obtain the consent of the recipient;
 2. Provide identification information about the sender;
 3. Provide an unsubscribe option so recipients can remove themselves from the list.
(Canada’s Anti-Spam Legislation: www.fightspam.gc.ca)

25.0 Evaluation

- 25.1 This policy may be reviewed and updated as deemed necessary or appropriate, but it shall be reviewed at least every 5 years.

26.0 Reference Documents

- o The Education Act
- o Ministry of Education – School Councils: A Guide for Members (2002)
- o Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2009 and PPM #119, 2013
- o Ontario Education Equity Action Plan 2017
- o DDSB School Community Council Handbook 2021
- o Ontario Regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committee
- o Ontario Regulation 298 – Operation of Schools
- o Code of Conduct
- o Ontario Human Rights Code
- o Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy and Procedures
- o Safe and Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention Policy
- o The Indigenous Education Policy

Appendix:

Appendix A: Summary of Election Procedures – School Community Council

Appendix B: Candidate Nomination Form (Elections)

Appendix C: Durham School Community Councils

Appendix D: Durham District School Board School Community Handbook

Effective Date

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