



REGULATIONS

SUBJECT: School Councils

The Lambton Kent District School Board recognizes that student success is achieved through shared responsibility of students, staff, families and community partners. School Councils provide a forum for parents, school staff and other members of the school community to work collaboratively to develop goals to improve student achievement and well-being, and to enhance the accountability of public education. The School Council will act in an advisory capacity to the School Principal and where appropriate, to the Board.

Each school within the jurisdiction of the Lambton Kent District School Board is required to establish a School Council as per Ontario Regulation 612/00.

STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

1. Official Name

The official name of a School Council for a school shall be “The_____School Council” or “The School Council for_____.” (Insert the name of the school in the blank.)

2. Membership

Parents/guardians shall form the majority of the School Council. It is expected that the membership of the Council will reflect the diversity of the school community. In defining a school community, considerations may include such aspects as geography, language, cultural, ethnic, economic, business, demographics, seniors or school boundaries. All members on the School Council are equal partners.

The membership of a School Council shall be appointed or elected, as appropriate, from all parents/guardians of students in the school, the school principal, students (optional in elementary schools), teaching and support staff, plus appointed community members.

Membership of a School Council, where possible shall include:

- 6 to 15 parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school;
- 1 community representative;
- in a secondary school, 1 student appointed by the student council;
- in an elementary school, the principal will consult with other members of the school council to invite 1 student representative to serve on council. If interest is demonstrated by a student, the principal will appoint the student to council
- 1 teacher (other than the principal or vice-principal) assigned to the school;
- 1 non-teaching employee assigned to the school; and
- the school principal.

The total membership of each school council shall be at least 10 (unless in extenuating circumstances).

3. Selection of Membership

Membership on the School Council shall be determined as follows:

- Parents/guardians shall be nominated /elected by parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school;
- The community representative shall be appointed by the Council.
- The secondary student representative shall be appointed by the student council; and the elementary student representative appointed by the principal after consultation with the school council
- The teacher representative shall be nominated and elected by members of the teaching staff assigned to the school;
- The non-teaching employee shall be nominated and elected by non-teaching employees assigned to the school; and
- The school principal shall be a designated non-voting member.

4. Chair

The Chair will be a parent/guardian member elected by the School Council at the first meeting following the selection/election of the Council as a whole.

5. Other Officers of the School Council

The School Council will elect a recording secretary at the first meeting. In order to facilitate its work, a School Council may decide to have other officers such as Vice-Chair or a Treasurer in addition to a Chair/Co-Chair and Secretary. Council would elect members to these positions at the first meeting.

6. Reimbursement of Expenses

School Council members shall not receive remuneration for serving as a member of a School Council. Reimbursement for expenses incurred as an officer or a member of a School Council will be provided in accordance with the Policy established by the Board.

7. By-laws

The Board Regulations shall serve as by-laws for School Councils to address the following:

- Election procedures
- Filling vacancies
- Conflict of interest
- Conflict resolution procedures

ELECTIONS

8. Nominations

Persons shall be selected/elected to for the School Council by volunteering/self nomination and voting (if numbers of interested parents exceed 15). Individuals must notify the principal at least 10 days prior to the election (if required). If the number of volunteers/nominees is equal to or fewer than the number of elected positions, then the nominees fill those positions by acclamation.

9. Selection/Election of Parent/Guardian Members

The selection/election of parent/guardian members of School Councils shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year.

- A person is qualified to be a parent/guardian member of a School Council if he or she is a parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school.
- A person is not qualified to be a parent/guardian member of a school council if,
 - he or she is employed at the school; or
 - he or she is employed elsewhere by the Board, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to select/vote for parent members of that employment
- In the event that an election is needed:

A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent/guardian members of a School Council if he or she is a parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.
- The Principal, will set the date of the election of parent members. 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 is enrolled in the school.
- The notice may be given by,
 - giving the notice to the parent/guardian's child for delivery to his or her parent via school newsletter;
 - posting the notice on the school website and
 - posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents/guardians.
- The election of parent/guardian members shall be by secret ballot.
- The Principal shall preside over the election proceedings until the election of the Chair.

Other Elections (If required)

The elections of non-parent/guardian members of School Councils shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year.

- (a) A person is qualified to vote in an election of a teaching member of a School Council if he or she is a teacher, other than the principal or vice-principal, who is employed at the school.
- (b) A person is qualified to vote in an election of a non-teaching staff member of a School Council if he or she is a person, other than the principal, vice-principal or any other teacher, who is employed at the school.
- (c) A person is qualified to vote in an election of a student member of a School Council if he or she is a pupil enrolled in the secondary school.

10. Term of Office

The term of office for selected/elected and appointed positions to the School Council shall be for one year commencing the day after the election. Selected/Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms.

11. Vacancies

The School Council selecting an eligible person to complete the vacating member's term of office may fill a vacant position created during a term. A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the School Council from exercising its authority.

If a member does not attend three consecutive regular meetings, without a reason acceptable to the School Council, the position may be deemed to be vacant by the School Council.

12. Meetings

A School Council shall meet:

- within the first 35 days of the school year, after the elections are held, on a date fixed by the Principal of the school
- at least four times during the school year.
- All meetings of a school council shall be open to the public.
- All meetings of a school council shall be held at a location that is accessible to the public. A school council may hold its meetings at the school.
- 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/guardian of students enrolled in the school.
- The notice required may be given by:
 - giving the notice to the parent/guardian's child for delivery to the home via school newsletter;
 - posting the notice on the school website and
 - posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parent/guardians.
- The School Council shall have access to reasonable photocopying and support to facilitate the operations of the school council.

13. Quorum Requirements

A meeting of the School Council cannot be held unless:

- a majority of the current members of the School Council who are present at the meeting;
- and
- a majority of the members of the School Council who are present at the meeting are parent members.

14. Meeting Agenda

- The Chair, the Principal, a member, or a sub-committee of the School Council may initiate matters for discussion and the agenda should conform to the matters for which the School Council has an advisory responsibility. The agenda should include an opportunity for public input.
- The Chair of the School Council shall prepare the agenda for School Council meetings in consultation with the Principal.

15. Consensus/Decision Making

- Consensus decision-making will be used by the School Council to resolve the matter being discussed. Consensus exists when all present can support or accept what is proposed with no one standing in opposition. Consensus need not be time-bound and a decision may change on the basis of new or additional information.
- When a disagreement arises, school councils, School Council members and principals are encouraged to meet and discuss the concern in an effort to resolve the dispute internally.

- If, after a meeting, there is still disagreement or the relationship cannot be improved, the following dispute resolution process should be used:
 - a) The Principal shall ask the school's Superintendent of Education to appoint a mediator to attend a meeting of the parties in an attempt to resolve the problem or to improve the relationship.
 - b) The mediator shall be neutral and shall not render any decision in the matter, but shall assist the parties in resolving the problem or improving the relationship.
 - c) At the meeting, the mediator shall explain their role to the School Council or member, and invite those present to each outline their concerns and proposed solutions. The mediator shall assist the parties in coming to the resolution that would most benefit the school.
 - d) The mediator shall report the resolution, or lack of resolution, to the school's Superintendent of Education.
 - e) Where the mediator reports a lack of resolution, the school's Superintendent of Education shall request a written report from each party outlining the perceived problems and attempts at resolution. This report shall be forwarded to the Director of Education.
 - f) The Director of Education shall review the situation and make recommendations accordingly.

16. Special Meetings

A special meeting of the School Council may be held:

- a) at any time decided by the School Council, provided that all members are notified twenty-four hours in advance of the time, date, place and purpose of the meeting; or
- b) upon a written request by at least three members being given to the Chair of the School Council.

The business of any special meeting must be confined to the purpose for which it was convened.

17. Committees

- a) A School Council may establish committees to make recommendations to the School Council.
- b) Every committee of a School Council must include at least one parent member of the School Council.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL COUNCILS

18. Advisory Responsibilities

School Councils shall act as advisory bodies. The principal will solicit the views of the School Council and the School Council will provide input to the school principal, and where appropriate, to the Lambton Kent District School Board on any of the matters listed below that the School Council has identified as priorities:

- provide input in the determination of the local school year calendar;
- provide input for scheduling significant school events;
- review and suggest revisions to the school code of student behaviour;
- provide input into curriculum and program goals and priorities;
- provide input regarding the school's achievement in provincial and school board assessments to support and improve programs delivered in the school;
- assist in the preparation and review of the school profile and the overall growth plan for the school;
- assist in the preparation and review of the principal profile for consideration by the Board in its selection of school principal;

- provide input into the school's budget priorities including the local capital improvement plan, for consideration during the Board's annual budget review;
- provide input and support into school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational and nutritional programs;
- report to parents and the community;
- assist in developing school-community communication strategies;
- support extra-curricular activities in the school;
- support the community use of school facilities and be aware of current Board policy and regulations;
- assist and make recommendations related to the local coordination of services for children and youth; and
- provide input into the development, implementation and revision of current Ministry and Board policies;
- provide input on any other topic agreed to by the School Council that is felt important to the school community.

19. The School Council shall also:

- maintain minutes of meetings, and financial records, for a period of at least 4 years
- submit, at the end of its term, a written Annual Report to the principal, and to the Director of Education outlining its goals, activities, and achievements. If the School Council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report on those activities. The principal will give a copy of this report to every parent.
- annually review the Principal Profile and submit a copy of the profile to the Superintendent of Education – Human Resources for consideration by the Board in its selection of a school principal.
- organize information and training sessions to enable members of the School Council to develop their skills as School Council members;
- communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by the School Council, and to report on the activities of the School Council to the school community; and
- promote the best interests of the school community.

20. The School Council may organize and run fundraising events as they deem necessary for the benefit of students, provided such fund raising activities are conducted in accordance with Board policies, regulations. The Principal is responsible for all fund raising activities involving the school.

21. Conflict of Interest

- The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* applies to elected and, in some cases, appointed officials on local School Councils, committees and boards, including district school boards. This *Act* also applies to members of advisory committees and other committees established under the *Education Act*.
- The main purpose of the conflict-of-interest legislation is to protect the public and ensure that public officials do not benefit financially from their position of trust. The *Act* allows members to take responsibility by identifying any conflict and declaring it openly.

- Conflict-of-interest legislation is concerned only with pecuniary, or monetary, interests. The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* refers to three kinds of pecuniary interest: direct, indirect, and deemed.
- A member who identifies a conflict of interest must declare it before any discussion of the matter begins. The member must:
 - publicly declare a conflict of interest, state the general nature of the interest and have the declaration recorded in the minutes;
 - not vote on the matter;
 - leave the room when the council is discussing the issue and have this fact recorded in the minutes; and not discuss the matter with members or attempt to influence the vote.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

22. Chair/Co-Chair

The Chair/Co-Chair of the School Council shall:

- a. call School Council meetings;
- b. prepare the agenda for School Council meetings in consultation with the principal;
- c. chair School Council meetings;
- d. ensure that the minutes of School Council meetings are recorded;
- e. participate in information and training programs;
- f. communicate with the school principal, as required;
- g. ensure that there is regular communication with the school community; and
- h. consult with senior board staff and trustees, as required.

23. Vice-Chair (if this position is created by the Council) The

Vice-Chair of the School Council shall:

- assume the role of the Chair in the absence of the Chair
- assist the Chair as requested

24. Secretary

The secretary of the School Council shall:

- ensure the minutes of the School Council meetings are recorded, maintained, reported and available at each meeting;
- verify and record all consensus decisions;
- act as corresponding secretary as required.

25. Treasurer (if this position is created by the Council)

The treasurer of the School Council shall:

- receive all monies raised by the School Council;
- draw and cosign cheques along with the Principal, for payment of authorized expenditures;
- maintain the books and give a financial report at each meeting;
- submit books, vouchers and financial statements, annually or as required, to the principal for audit purposes.

26. Positions of Council Members

The members of the School Council shall:

- maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
- participate in School Council meetings, contributing positively as a team member;
- participate in information and training programs;
- act as a link between the School Council and the community;
- encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community;
- evaluate the success in achieving the shared goals for the school; and
- ensure that the rights to privacy of students, staff and parents are respected and protected.

27. Responsibilities of The Principal

The principal of the school shall:

- facilitate the operation of the School Council and assist in its operation;
- support and promote the Council's activities and advice;
- seek input from the School Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility;
- inform the School Council on how their recommendations have been taken into account when decisions related to their recommendations are made
- act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements;
- obtain and provide information required by the School Council to enable it to make informed decisions;
- communicate with the Chair of the School Council, as required;
- ensure that copies of the minutes of the Council's meetings are kept at the school;
- assist the School Council in communicating with the school community;
- encourage the participation of parents within the school community;
- oversee the nomination process and conduct elections (if required) for parent representatives to the School Council;
- be accountable for all funds raised by School Councils in the name of the school by being one of the signing authorities; and
- forward the name of the School Council Chair(s) to the Director

28. Responsibilities of the Director of Education:

- ensure a School Council exists at each elementary and secondary school under the jurisdiction of the Board;
- implement the provincial legislation, and Board policy, regulations School Councils;
- through the Parent Involvement Committee, arrange district meetings/workshops or presentations for the School Council Chairs, to enhance system-wide communication;
- through the principal, provide the opportunity for School Councils' input on major changes to Board policies and regulations;
- through the principal, provide the opportunity for School Councils to be advised of how their recommendations have been taken into account
- through the Parent Involvement Committee, report to the Board on School Council activities;
- facilitate training for School Councils in areas such as council management, dispute resolution, and meeting procedures.

29. Responsibilities of the Board

The Lambton Kent District School Board shall:

- through the Director of Education, solicit the views of the School Councils with respect to the following matters:
 - The establishment or amendment of board policies and guidelines that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents,
 - The development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents.
 - The development of Board action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of students,
 - and the communication of those plans to the public.
 - The process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals through the completion of the School's Principal Profile,
 - Any other matter on which the Board wishes to solicit the views of the Councils.
- consider each recommendation made to the Board by the School Councils and advise the School Councils, through the Director of Education, of the action taken in response to their recommendations.

Implementation Date: March 28, 2000
Revised: May 25, 2002, May 27, 2008, January 16, 2018

Reference: LKDSB Policy *School Councils*
LKDSB Policy *Parent Involvement Committee*
LKDSB Parent Involvement Committee By-laws
Education Act, Ontario Regulation 612/00.