



School Councils – Strengthening the Parent-School Partnership

Presented by:

School Council 411 (SC411)

Parent Involvement Advisory Committee

Toronto District School Board



What is Parent Involvement?

Parent Involvement consists of parents, educators, administrators, government bodies and the community working together toward the common goal of helping students achieve their full potential. Parent involvement exists in many different forms.



Why does Parent Involvement Matter?

When “schools, families and communities work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.”

(Henderson/Mapp)



Positive results can include:

- Improved student achievement
- Reduced absenteeism
- Better behaviour
- Restored confidence among parents in their children's school

Ontario Parent Involvement Policy
December 2005



Research also shows that:

- Partnership activities can help create safer schools.
- Curriculum-related family involvement, such as interactive homework, can help students improve academic skills in specific subjects.
- High-performing middle and high schools inform and involve parents and community partners as a planned part of their programs.



Research shows (continued)....

- Parents want to be involved and influential in their teens' education.
- Students in middle and high schools want their parents involved in meaningful ways.
- When schools reach out to involve families, more parents become involved.

Dr. J. Epstein *et al.*

National Network of Partnership Schools



Benefits for Parents and Families:

- Increased understanding of school contributing to an increased feeling of ownership of school
- Increased interaction between parents, their children and other families within their community
- Increased access to needed community services such as health and social services
- Increased levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy and empowerment
- Participation in their child's education may lead parents to further their own education. Develop life-long learners



School Council Basics

What does an effective school council look like?



Attributes of an Effective School Council

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Inclusiveness



School Council Regulations

- School councils are governed by the regulations outlined in the Education Act: Ontario Regulation 612/00 and 613/00 (2001).
- Toronto District School Board policies such as Equity, Parent and Community Involvement, Fundraising, etc.

Accountability

Transparency

Inclusiveness



Purpose of a School Council

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

Reg. 612/2.1

Accountability

Transparency

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Role of a School Council

- A School Council is an advisory group.
 - *Reg. 612/3.8*
- Provides advice to the school principal and or to the School Board on any matter.
 - *Reg. 612/20*

Accountability

Transparency

Inclusiveness



Responsibilities of a School Council

- Constitution and by-laws
- Recording
- Reporting
- Consultation
- Communicating

Accountability

Transparency

Inclusiveness



Responsibilities of a School Council Chair/Co-chair

- Arrange and chair Council meetings.
- Prepare meeting agendas.
- Ensure minutes are recorded and maintained.
- Facilitate conflict resolution.
- Participate as ex-officio member on Council sub-committees.
- Communicate with principal on behalf of Council.

Accountability

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Inclusiveness



Responsibilities of the School Principal

- Acts as a resource on laws, regulations and Board policies.
- Attends school council meetings.
- Considers advice and provides response to advice.
- Consults on items pertaining to school policies and guidelines related to student achievement, accountability of the system to parents and communication of these plans to the public. (i.e. code of conduct, school improvement plan, EQAO results, etc.)
- Provides written notice of School Council elections to community at least 14 days before elections.

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Constitution and By-laws

Each School Council *shall make* the following by-laws:

- One governing **election procedures** and **filling of vacancies** in the membership of council;
- One establishing rules regarding participation in cases of **conflict of interest**.
- One defining, in accordance with TDSB policies, a **conflict resolution** process for internal School Council disputes.

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Constitution and By-laws

The Constitution and By-laws may also contain a description of:

- the membership;
- the executive;
- School Council sub-committees;
- how decisions are made;
- what is quorum;
- financial operations – signing authorities, who and how expenditures are approved, etc.

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School Council Elections

- Election must be held within 30 days from the first school day in September.
- Principal shall notify the parent community 14 days before the election with details such as date, time and location.
- Election is to be done by secret ballot.

Accountability

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Recording

- Minutes must be taken at each meeting.
- Minutes must be available to everyone and stored in an accessible location.
- Records must be maintained for 4 years.

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Reporting

- School Councils need to submit an annual report on activities.
- Principal shares this report with the parent community and with the School Board.
- Financial reporting per Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) standards.

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Consultation

Must consult with parent community on issues being considered by School Council.

- Formal consultation on items such as dress code, code of conduct, school improvement plans, safe school plans, budget and issues with school-wide impact.
- Informal consultation on items such as expenditures of school council funds, field trips, lunchroom issues, change in entry times, or dismissal times.

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A Thing to Remember

Parent Involvement is **heart**-work!

