



## MOOSONEE DISTRICT SCHOOL AREA BOARD

BOARD GOVERNANCE POLICY	
Motion	2016-05-010
Adopted	May 3, 2016
Last Revised	2016-02-011
Review Date	

## SCHOOL COUNCIL: PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### 1. PURPOSE

The Moosonee District School Area Board is committed to supporting partnerships that involve meaningful dialogue and decision-making among the school, parents, and community.

The Board recognizes that when a school places a priority on the involvement of families, children do better in school. The school actively seeks and encourages parent involvement in the school's activities as a critical necessity for a high quality of education. Family involvement promotes a more responsive school, which in turn improves student attendance, behaviour, and achievement.

This governance policy confirms the commitment of the Board to be proactive and inclusive in employing diverse strategies to attract input from parents and other community members to facilitate their engagement in support of student achievement and well-being.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**Parent and Community Engagement:** This engagement refers to the partnerships established to support student achievement and well-being in alignment with the Ministry of Education's Parent Involvement Policy and the Parent Engagement Policy. Parent and community engagement can occur in homes, in the community, in the classroom, at school, and at the Board level.

**School Council:** A School Council is a legislated committee established in Moosonee Public School to promote the active participation of parents in improving student achievement and well-being. The Council acts in an advisory capacity to the principal and/or Board according to applicable legislation.

## POLICY

### 3. THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

3.1 The Board is committed to the belief that successful education requires a strong partnership and active involvement between the school, the home, and the community.

- 3.2 It shall be the policy of the Moosonee District School Area Board that a School Council be established in Moosonee Public School to improve pupil achievement and well-being and to enhance communication about the education system to parents.
- 3.3 The School Council shall operate in a way that is consistent with the philosophy, goals, and values of the Board, and that complies with the Board's policies and administrative procedures.
- 3.4 The School Council shall have, as its primary guiding principle, the fostering of the educational interests of students.
- 3.5 The School Council is advisory by nature and, as such, may make recommendations to the principal or to the Board through the principal.  
[See Appendix]
- 3.6 The mandate of the School Council, on behalf of the school community, is to:
- encourage the active participation of parents to improve student achievement and well-being;
  - enhance parent awareness of educational issues and the accountability of the education system to parents;
  - provide advice to the principal and, where appropriate, to the Board on school and education issues; and
  - submit an annual report on its activities, including any fundraising activities, to the principal of the school and to the Board.
- 3.7 The School Council shall hold regular meetings, meeting at least three (3) times per year. All meetings shall be open to the community and will be announced to the community at least one week in advance.
- 3.8 The School Council shall perform its advisory function while working within the framework of the *Education Act*, the regulations made under the *Act*, Board policies, collective agreements, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*, and any other related requirements. This legislated mandate is vested in a School Council acting as a group in accordance with its by-laws; it does not apply to individuals acting independently.

#### 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL

- 4.1 The principal will be responsible for the establishment of the Council and for providing the support necessary to enable the Council to operate within Board policies, administrative procedures, and the *Education Act* and attendant regulations.
- 4.2 As set out in Ontario Regulation 612/00 and this Board policy, the School Council shall be composed of the following people:
- six parent/guardians of students enrolled in the school;
  - the principal of the school;

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- one teacher who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal;
  - one person who is employed at the school, other than the principal, vice-principal, or any other teacher;
  - in elementary schools, one student appointed by the principal, if the principal determines, after consulting the other members of the School Council, that the Council should include a student; and
  - one community representative appointed by other members of the Council.  
[Ontario Regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees]

4.3 Parents/guardians shall form the majority of the Council.

4.4 All members of the Council are equal partners.

4.5 It is expected that the membership of the Council will reflect the diversity of the school community. Every effort will be made to ensure that the School Council includes representation that reflects the FNMI composition of the school population. .

## 5. ELECTION OF PARENT MEMBERS

5.1 At the beginning of each school year potential new Council members will be recruited from the parents or guardians of the students attending the school. At least six parent members shall be elected,. In the event that six parent/guardian members are not elected, the school is mandated by the Board to fill these vacant positions by appointment of parents/guardians who reflect the diversity of the community.

5.2 A person is qualified to be a parent member of the School Council if he or she is a parent of a student who is enrolled in the school.

5.3 Notwithstanding subsection 5.2, a person is not qualified to be a parent member of a School Council if:

- he or she is employed at the school; or
- he or she is not employed at the school but is employed elsewhere by the Board unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment.

5.4 A trustee may not be elected as a member of the School Council.

5.5 A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members if he or she is a parent of a student who is enrolled in the school at the time of the election.

5.6 Elections will be held within the first thirty (30) calendar days of each school year.

5.7 The principal of a school shall, at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the date of the election of parent members, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a student who, on the date notice is given, is

enrolled in the school. This written notice is to be provided by giving the notice to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parents, electronic communication, or posting the notice in the school in a location accessible to parents.

- 5.8 The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.
- 5.9 The School Council chair must be a parent member of the Council, elected by majority vote of the members of the Council present and voting at the first meeting following the election/ appointment of the Council members.

## 6. OTHER ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

- 6.1 The election of the teacher, non-teacher, and student member (if applicable) shall be held by the respective constituent groups during the first thirty (30) calendar days of each school year.
- 6.2 A person is qualified to vote in an election of a member of the School Council:
- for the teacher member, if he or she is a teacher, other than the principal or vice-principal, who is employed at the school;
  - for the non-teacher member, if he or she is a person, other than the principal, vice-principal or any other teacher, who is employed at the school;
  - for the student member, if he or she is a student enrolled in the school.
- 6.3 The determination of teacher, non-teacher, and student members by their constituent groups, unless otherwise provided for by the group for which the member is the representative, shall be election by secret ballot.
- 6.4 The School Council shall appoint a community representative at the first meeting held after the elections.
- 6.5 Members will serve a term of one year.
- 6.6 A member of the School Council may be re-elected or reappointed unless otherwise provided for in the by-laws of the Council.

## 7. VACANCIES

A vacancy in the membership of the School Council shall be filled by election or appointment as decided by the Council. If an election is held, sections 5 or 6 of this policy apply, as the case may be, with necessary modifications.

## 8. RECORDS AND DECISION-MAKING

- 8.1 The School Council shall keep minutes of all meetings and records of all financial transactions including transactions associated with fund-raising.

- 8.2 Any recommendations to the principal or to the Board through the principal shall be recorded in the minutes as a resolution approved by the School Council.
- 8.3 The minutes and financial records shall be available at the school office during normal working hours for examination by any person.
- 8.4 The minutes, once approved by the School Council, shall be forwarded by the principal to the supervisory officer.
- 8.5 The Council will generally operate in a manner that uses consensus and compromise as the preferred method of decision-making. If an issue on the agenda has not been resolved by consensus after two consecutive meetings of the School Council, it shall be resolved by majority vote at a subsequent meeting.

## 9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 9.1 Chair

The chair of the School Council shall:

- call School Council meetings;
- prepare the agenda for School Council meetings;
- chair the School Council meetings;
- ensure that the minutes of the School Council meetings are recorded and maintained at the school;
- participate in information and training programs;
- communicate with the school principal; and
- ensure that there is regular communication with the school community through the principal.

### 9.2 School Council Members

The members of the School Council shall:

- understand that their role is advisory and that this advisory function is vested in the School Council as a body rather than in its individual members;
- understand they cannot have access to confidential information regarding students or staff [*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*];
- participate in Council meetings, contributing positively, and helping the group function as a team;
- provide informed advice to the school principal on matters related to student programs and the school environment;
- participate in information and training programs;
- evaluate the success of the School Council in achieving shared goals for the school;
- act as a link between the Council and the community; and
- encourage the participation of parents from all groups, and of other people within the school community.

### 9.3 The Principal

The principal shall:

- facilitate the establishment of the Council and assist in its operation;

- submit a list of the School Council members to the supervisory officer by October 31<sup>st</sup>;
- provide training to Council members regarding their role and responsibilities, including responsibility for any funds collected by the Council;
- support and promote the Council's activities;
- attend meetings of the Council as a non-voting, ex-officio member;
- seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility; [See Appendix]
- obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions;
- communicate with the chair of the Council as required; and
- ensure that copies of the minutes of the Council meetings are kept at the school and are forwarded to the appropriate supervisory officer.

Notwithstanding any of the above, the principal continues to be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school under the *Education Act* and its regulations, Board policies, collective agreements, and any other related requirements.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Recommendations and decisions of the School Council that are directly related to the school shall be referred to the school principal.
- 10.2 Recommendations and decisions that are broader in scope than the school may be referred either to the school principal for direction, or to the appropriate Board official or Board committee.

## 11. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

- 11.1 A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of the School Council.
- 11.2 School Council members will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses for activities that are pre-authorized by the principal or Board, and in accordance with Board policy.

## 12. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

- 12.1 The Board may provide financial support to the School Council each year. A budget amount sufficient to cover printing, mailing, and similar expenses to assist the Council in carrying out its responsibilities will be identified by the Council, in consultation with the principal, from the general school budget.
- 12.2 The grants will be prescribed by the Board each year and are intended solely for the operation of the School Council, and not for the school itself, events in the school, or other non-organizational spending. The normal process for expenditure will be the same as for the school itself.

- 12.3 The Board may provide material and personnel resources for the establishment and maintenance of the School Council.
- 12.4 The chair of the School Council or the full School Council may be requested to meet with the Board from time to time to provide community input to the Board.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

### **Legal:**

*Education Act, Section 169.1: Board Powers and Duties: Positive School Climate*  
*Education Act, Section 170 (1) para. 17.1 Establish School Council*  
*Education Act, Section 302 (8): Board to Consider Views of School Councils*  
*The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*  
Ontario Regulation 298 Operation of Schools S 11 Duties of Principals: School Councils  
Ontario Regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees  
Ontario Parent Involvement Policy 2005  
Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools, 2010  
PPM No. 119 Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies 2009, revised 2013  
PPM No. 122 School Councils  
PPM No. 128 The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct  
The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct

### **Board:**

Board Policy GOV-01 Board Philosophy, Goals, and Values  
Board Policy GOV-02 Strategic Directions  
Board Policy GOV-03 Role of the Corporate Board  
Board Policy GOV-04 Role of the Supervisory Officer  
Board Policy GOV-07-0 Equity and Inclusive Education  
Board Policy GOV-08 Safe Schools  
Board Policy GOV-09 Safe Schools: School Code of Conduct  
Board Policy GOV-10 Environmental Stewardship

### **Resource:**

Ontario Ministry of Education. *School Councils: A Guide for Members*. Revised 2002

## APPENDIX

### The Advisory Role of the School Council

Section 11, Ontario Regulation 298 Operation of Schools notes that the principal of the school will solicit the views of the School Council on Board policies, administrative procedures, and school practices that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents. Specific matters on which the principal of the school will solicit the views of the School Council include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the school Code of Conduct
- appropriate dress for students in the school
- curriculum and program goals and priorities
- the school improvement plan
- the reports of the Education Quality and Accountability Office [EQAO] on results of tests of students
- responses of the school and/or Board to reports of achievement on provincial and Board assessment programs
- methods of reporting to the parents and community

The views of the School Council will also be solicited on the following matters:

- the school year calendar
- preparation of the school profile
- using the school profile to indicate the desirable qualities of the principal, vice-principal, and/or teaching staff that would support that context [to submit to the Board prior to hiring]
- suggestions for school needs at budget time
- school/community communication strategies
- co-curricular activities in the school
- school-based services and community partnerships related to the social, health, nutritional, and recreational programs
- suggestions about community use of school facilities
- local coordination of services for children and youth
- other matters as the Board may direct.

#### NOTE:

School Council members are to maintain a school-based focus on all issues. The School Council is not a forum for discussion about individual students, parents, staff members, other School Council members, or trustees.