

Title: **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

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Reviewed:

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Authority Ontario Regulation 612/00 – School Councils

Related: Policy 1006 – School Council

**PURPOSE**

It is the purpose of this procedure to provide guidance regarding the establishment, role, responsibilities and operation of the School Council.

**PROCEDURES**

Structure and Composition of the School Council

1. The Principal of the school shall facilitate the establishment of and shall assist in the operation of the School Council and be responsible for providing the advice necessary to enable the council to operate.
2. Members of a School Council shall include:

parents and guardians of students enrolled or previously enrolled in the school

community representative(s). A person who is employed by the Authority cannot be

 appointed as a community representative

the Principal

a teacher

a support staff member

1. The size of the School Council, unless vacancies exist, shall not be less than 7. If positions remain vacant, the council shall function and continue to seek the required members. These numbers are determined so as to ensure that the number of parents on the committee is a clear majority of the membership.
2. It is expected that the membership of the council will reflect the diversity of the school community. Diversity could include demographics and school programs. The council shall consider the issue of balance in the selection of the community representative(s).
3. New parents to KidsAbility School shall be invited to join school council events at the registration meeting on the school website and via the Parent Handbook.
4. KidsAbility School shall maintain the KidsAbility School Council binder of Ministry guidelines, events, agendas, Parent Reaching Out Grants and school council information, in the school office.
5. A person is not qualified to be a parent member of a School Council if the person is

employed at the school.

1. Membership in the School Council shall be determined in the following ways:

Parents/guardians of students enrolled or previously enrolled in the school

The chair of the council shall be a member who is also a parent/ guardian

The community representative may be appointed by the council once it is

 established

The school Principal shall be a designated member

The teacher representative shall be a members of the teaching staff

The support staff member shall be a member of the support staff.

1. The trustees of the KidAbility School Authority may act as a resource to the council and its committees.
2. The term of office for positions on the council is one year. A person elected or appointed as a member of a School Council holds office from the date of the first meeting of the School Council after elections, until the date of the first meeting of the School Council after the elections are held in the next school year.
3. In the event of an election or appointment part way through the school year, the term of office will run from the date of the election or appointment, to the date of the first meeting of the School Council after elections are held in the next school year.
4. There will be no honorarium paid or lieu time granted to members of the School Council.
5. The Principal will support an effective liaison between the school and the School Council.

Role of the School Council

1. The role of the School Council is to provide ideas and suggestions to assist the Principal

and, where appropriate, school Board trustees in their decision-making on educational

issues. The advice should be based on the general views of the school community, and

the best interests of all students in the school. The council is accountable to the school

community it represents.

1. The School Council must operate within the Education Act and its regulations, Ministry of

Education and Training guidelines and the KidAbility School Authority policies, operating procedures and contractual agreements. Both the council and individual members can incur personal liability if they exceed their mandate.

Advisory Responsibilities

1. The School Council provides advice and suggestions to the Board and the Principal regarding matters of particular relevance to the community. The Principal and the trustees of the Board, may consult with the School Council with regard to the following general

areas:

the local school activity calendar within the Authority school year calendar

the school code of conduct

school program goals and priorities and curriculum delivery

school budget priorities

strategies for communication and reporting between the school and community

allocation of funding for the School Council

preferred qualities in the selection of the Principal

school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health,

 recreational, and nutritional programs

conflict resolution policies for internal school council disputes

local coordination of services for children and youth

potential revisions to Board policies of Board policies

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.

As well, the School Council will provide input to the school profile, which describes the different groups represented in the school population and the neighbourhood and may also collect details about the school’s activities and educational priorities.

Other Responsibilities

1. In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the School Council shall:

establish and review the council’s goals, objectives, action plans and

 procedures

share council events and dates with trustees

organize information sessions to enable members of the council to develop their skills as council members

consult with parents to gather their views and preferences on matters under

 consideration by School Council; report on the activities of council to the school

 community

communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community and, where appropriate, ensure that communication is available in the languages of the school community

hold a minimum of four events per year

ensure the financial statement is included in the annual report. The financial

 statement must include School Council activities for the entire academic year.

1. An annual report by the Principal shall include a section on the operation of the School Council.

 Roles and Responsibilities of School Council Members

1. Members of the School Council shall:

maintain a school-wide perspective on issues

participate in council events

participate in information and training programs

act as a link between the School Council and the community

encourage the participation of parents and community members

fulfill their duties (a council member who fails to do so may, after the involvement of a

 facilitator, be removed by a 2/3rds vote of the members of the full council).

strive to make decisions by consensus; however, if a vote is necessary, all council

 members, with the exception of the Principal, are equal and can vote. A majority vote

 of those members present is required for approval. A tie vote is a loss

The Chair

1. Annually, the School Council may elect a Chair from among the parent members of the School Council. A person who is employed by the Authority cannot be the chair or co-chair of the council.
2. The Chair or Co-chair of the School Council shall:

establish and communicate, in consultation with the Principal, an event schedule for

 the year

prepare events in consultation with the council members and

 Principal

chair any formal part of the event and be responsible for the time management of the agenda

ensure that the minutes of any formal meetings and records of all financial transactions are

 kept at the school for a period of four years. The minutes and records shall be

 available for examination without charge

participate in information and training programs (where available)

communicate with the Principal (i.e., involve the Principal in the planning of all School

 Council activities and/or initiatives that will involve or impact upon the school’s staff or

 students)

ensure diversity in sub-and ad-hoc committees. Every committee of a School

 Council must include at least one parent member of the council. A committee of a

 School Council may include persons who are not members of the council.

facilitate collaborative decision-making

ensure that there is regular communication with the school community;

consult with the trustees, as appropriate

prepare and submit, in order to maintain effective communication, an annual report,

 including the financial report, to all council members and make it available to all

 parents. The report will be kept on file at the school and the Principal shall share it with

 the Board of Trustees.

1. The Chair, in consultation with the council, shall be responsible for making public statements on behalf of the School Council.
2. The Chair, in consultation with the council, may develop procedures for the rules of order for the meetings.

Other Officers

1. A Co-chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and/or Treasurer may be elected, from the council

members, if the council so decides.

The Principal

1. In compliance with Ontario Regulation 612/00, Section 14. (3), the Principal of the school

is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the School Council or by a committee of the

School Council.

1. The Principal of the school shall:

 attend all School Council events

facilitate the establishment of the School Council and assist in its operation

support and promote the council’s activities

act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements

obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make

 informed decisions

maintain regular communication with the chair of the council

assist the council in communication with the school community

encourage the participation of parents, students as appropriate, and other people

 within the school community

approve all printed materials from the School Council distributed through the

 school as per Board policy

support an effective liaison among the school, the various organizations within it and

 the School Council

Include a short summary of the School Council’s annual report in the school

 newsletter with a notation that copies of the full report are available upon request

Provide for the prompt distribution to each member of the School Council of any

 materials received by the Principal from the Ministry that are identified by the

 Ministry as being for distribution to the members of School Councils.

Post any materials distributed to members of the School Council in a location that is

 accessible to parents.

Solicit the views of the School Council on:

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

1. The Principal will share the information about the Ministry of Education ProGrant (Parents Reaching Out Grant) with the School Council. As part of the deliberations regarding this grant;
* The Principal will consult with School Council and lead the grant process in completing a grant proposal and submission to the Ministry of Education.
* The Principal will lead a school Pro-Grant Committee to ensure the successful grant is completed within the school year.
1. The Principal will publish information from the school council in the school newsletter Inside Education and the school website.

 Recommendations and Communications of School Councils

1. Recommendations and decisions of School Councils that are specifically related to the school shall be referred by the Chair to the school Principal.
2. Recommendations and decisions which are broader in scope than the local school

may be referred by the Chair either to the school Principal for direction or through the

Principal to the Board or Board committee. The Board shall consider

each recommendation made to the Board by the council and shall advise the council of

the action taken in response to the recommendation in the same way that the Board

responds to delegation.

1. Communications to the community must be reviewed by the Principal and the council.
2. The council is responsible for setting up its own communication plan.
3. All communications should be, where necessary, available in the languages of the

Community.

Role of Trustees

1. School Council represents a very real opportunity for establishing new relationships and for creating a broadened consensus around student learning as the key focus of the school.
2. Trustees can facilitate and support the workings of the School Council by:

supporting the work of the School Council in the community

assisting in the establishing of contacts with the community

acting as an additional resource to the council with respect to the sharing and

 discussion of ideas and proposals

being available for consultation and advice on Board policies or on drafting a

 recommendation for Board consideration

being made aware of the events planned by the council.

Framework for school council elections

1. The current School Council may establish a School Council Elections Committee. The

Committee will encourage elections of members be held during the first 30

calendar days of the school year.

 35. If there is to be an election of Parent Representatives

- Parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school are eligible both to vote for and to run as a parent representative. Self-nomination will suffice

- No additional qualifiers or quotas may be used to restrict eligibility either

to vote for or run as a parent candidate. (For example, location of home, etc.)

 - Candidates should be prepared to summarize, to the school community,

their reasons for running

- Parent Candidate Nomination forms shall be filed by all candidates for elected positions on the School Council

- No individual campaign literature for School Council elections may be distributed or posted in the school

- The Principal shall conduct a lottery to determine the ballot position for each

candidate

- Elections for School Council shall be conducted by secret ballot

- Every effort shall be made to provide voters with the opportunity to vote electronically while maintaining confidentiality

- If there is a tie for the final position for a representative on the School Council, the winner shall be determined by lot

- School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates

 - The election day proceedings shall be supervised by the school Principal

- If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed

- If all elected positions have not been filled at the end of the election process and vacancies exist, the newly constituted School Council should follow the Vacancies in Membership section of this procedure

- The Principal shall call the first meeting of the School Council within the first 35 days of the school year

- The chair of the School Council, who must be a parent, shall be elected by members of the School Council. This election shall occur within thirty (30) days of the first School Council meeting.

Election of Staff Representatives

36.The Principal, will make the necessary arrangements for staff representatives to be chosen.

1. Anyone assigned to the staff of the school (full or part-time) may be a candidate.

Vacancies in membership

1. Vacancies occur:

a. when positions on the school council have not been filled after election and

 selections, or

b. when a member resigns, or

c. when a member is unable to fulfill the roles and responsibilities.

1. If there is a vacancy, the council may appoint a representative, or hold an election, to fill the position until the next election.
2. If an executive member resigns from their executive position (Chair, or any other

executive position created by the council in their bylaws), then the executive position

should be filled by another parent member of council. If more than one member is

interested in the position, the council shall select by secret ballot. If the executive

member resigns from the council all together, then the executive position should be filled

by another parent member of council and the vacant parent member position on council

should be filled as described in number 39 above.

1. All appointments to the School Council are by majority vote of the members at the

meeting then serving on the School Council. Appointments shall be made at a public

meeting with appropriate public notice of the meeting.

1. If appointments or elections fail to fill all positions, the School Council shall continue to

function as long as quorum is achieved.

Procedure at any formal council meetings

1. In the absence of the Chair or Secretary, the council will appoint an acting chair/secretary for the meeting.
2. Quorum: a voting meeting of a School Council cannot be held unless,
3. a majority of the current members of the council are present at the meeting; and
4. a majority of the members of the council who are present at the meeting are

parent members.

1. In the absence of Quorum:

 a. No motions may be considered or approved.

 b. If a majority of parents wish the meeting to proceed in the absence of a quorum,

 the council will continue the meeting for purposes of discussion of issues.

1. Protocol for Decision Making

a. Consensus - The School Council is advisory in nature, and every attempt should be

 made to reach consensus. Consensus is a form of group decision-making based on

 the willingness to consent and support. Consensus is reached when all or most

 members of the council are willing to accept and support an idea or concept as the

 best choice.

b. Motions - Any member of the council may make a motion at any meeting, with no

 seconder required.

- each member of a School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by

the council.

 - each member of a committee of a School Council is entitled to one vote in

votes taken by the committee.

 - A member of the School Council may abstain from voting on any motion.

 - A motion is approved if a majority of the School Council members present

at the meeting vote in favour of it.

 - In compliance with Ontario Regulation 612/00, Section 14. (3), the

Principal of the school is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the School

Council or by a committee of the School Council.

Public Meetings

1. School Council events are open to the public. If requested, interested members of the public or council members themselves may participate in the meeting via teleconference, Zoom or other audio-visual means.
2. Parents of the school, who are not elected members of the School Council, can, at

 the discretion of the chair and council, participate in dialogue during any formal School

 Council meetings; however, are not able to vote should a vote be required.

1. Members of the public, who are not community representatives on the School

 Council and who are not parents of the school, are not able to participate in the

dialogue during any formal meetings. Members of the public are able to ask questions

during the Public Question Period.

1. Members of the public may participate in council dialogue when they have been

invited by the council to attend and provide input about a specific topic on the

agenda (e.g., settlement service provider in the community who provides

information about resources for parents).

1. Parents and members of the public attending the meeting, who are not School

Council members, can make a recommendation to the Chair that a particular

item be placed on the agenda of a subsequent meeting. The council can support

or deny the request at their discretion.

School council bylaws

1. The school council may create bylaws to address dispute resolution, conflict of interest, filling vacancies and the school council election process. The School Council may wish to create additional bylaws, including:
* a code of ethics
* general expectations for meetings
* membership of council
* role of the executive
* committees
1. Any such School Council bylaws must align with the Education Act and its regulations, Ministry of

Education and Training guidelines and Board policies, operating procedures

and contractual agreements.

1. The School Council shall review and revise its bylaws as needed. Revisions must be reviewed, discussed and approved by council.

The school council’s advisory role and the Principal

1. The Principal shall receive advice from the council as part of the process of making decisions.
2. In the case where the Principal does not accept, does not agree with or does not act upon the advice received, the Principal shall provide the School Council with the reasons for the decision.
3. If the School Council is considering any proposal with respect to the solicitation of donations, the Chair should consult with the Principal.

Liability insurance for the school council

1. The School Councils is to act in an advisory capacity and as a resource to the Principal and, when appropriate, to the Board. This contribution is recognized by and covered within the Authority’s liability insurance which extends coverage to members of the School Councils while they are working on behalf of the Authority on Board-authorized and approved activities. In the case of school activities, the activity would require the approval of the Principal.

Funding for the school council

1. Funding will not be provided for the School Council.

School council annual report

1. The chair of the School Council, no later than September 30th of the following school year, may submit to the Board of Trustees an annual report which shall include:

- a list of members

- a summary of meeting dates

- a summary of the council’s activities for the past year and may include such other matters that the School Council deems appropriate

- a financial statement summarizing financial transactions that occurred between September 1 and August 31

**RESOURCES**

[**Ontario Regulation 612/000**](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/000612)

[**School Councils: A Guide for Members**](https://www.ontario.ca/page/school-councils-guide-members)

[**Parents in partnership: a Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools**](https://www.ontario.ca/page/parents-partnership-parent-engagement-policy-ontario-schools)