



ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCILS (Policy Statement: Catholic School Councils)

Purpose

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide guidelines to assist parents/guardians, principals, teachers and the school communities of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board to support the Catholic School Councils.

References

Regulation 612

Regulation 613

Education Act

School Councils: A Guide for Members Revised 2002

Ministry of Education

Procedures

1. Mandate of Catholic School Councils

Each member of the Catholic School Council (hereinafter referred to as the Council) shall commit to the mission statement of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board. Councils are advisory bodies which will make recommendations to assist the Principal and, where appropriate, school board trustees, in their decision-making on educational issues as outlined in Regulation 612/00. The advice should be based on consultation of the school community, and the best interests of students throughout the school. Councils must operate within the legislation of the Ministry of Education and Board policies and procedures.

2. Membership

2.1 A Council shall be composed of the following members:

- a) parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school;
- b) school principal;
- c) one teaching representative;
- d) one non-teaching representative;

- e) one student (in elementary schools, at the discretion of the Principal and Council, mandatory in secondary schools);
 - f) parish priest or designate (parish representative) in accordance with by-laws;
 - g) one community representative appointed by the other members of the Council and,
 - h) one person appointed by the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education.
- 2.2 Parents and guardians shall form the majority of the Council except in adult day schools where parent positions may be held by students.
- 2.3 Each Council will endeavour, in composition and function, to reflect the school community it represents. Given the advisory nature of the Council and that some parents of students attending Catholic schools may not be Catholic, non-Catholic parents/guardians may be elected to the Council but may not act as the Chair of the Council. Catholics will make up the majority on the Council. Where there is not a majority of Catholics elected to the Council, the Principal, with the assistance of the School Council Chair, shall actively encourage additional Catholic parents/guardians to seek a council position to ensure that the Council has a majority of Catholic members.
- 2.4 Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in a Catholic school will have a right to serve and will be eligible to participate on a Council. All parents/guardians will support and abide by the philosophy and teachings of the Catholic Church, the Mission Statement and Guiding Principles of the Board.
- 2.5 A person who is employed by the Board that established a Council cannot be appointed as a community representative on the Council unless,
- a) he or she is not employed at the school; and
 - b) the other members of the Council are informed of the persons employment before the appointment (does not apply to schools established for adults).
- 2.6 A member of the Board cannot be a member of a Council established by the Board.

3. Election of Parent Members

- 3.1 A person is qualified to be a parent member of a Council if he or she is a parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.
- 3.2 Despite section 3.1, a person is not qualified to be a parent member of Council, if:
- a) he or she is employed at the school; or
 - b) he or she is not employed at the school but is employed elsewhere by the Board that established the Council, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment.
- 3.3 The Chair of the Council shall be a member who is either a parent or guardian of a student in the school and a Catholic. The Chair shall be elected by the members of Council.
- 3.4 A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent/guardian members of a Council if he or she is

a parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.

- 3.5 An election of parent/guardian members of a Council shall be held during the first thirty (30) calendar days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the Chair of the Council on the last meeting of the previous year, in consultation with the Principal of the school.
- 3.6 Despite section 3.5, if a new school is established, the first election of parent/guardian members to the Council shall be held during the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school year, on a date that is fixed by the Board that established the Council.
- 3.7 The Principal of a school shall, at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the election of parent/guardian members, on behalf of the Council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent/guardian of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.
- 3.8 The notice required by section 3.7 may be given by:
 - a) giving the notice to the parent/guardians child for delivery to his or her parent/guardian; and
 - b) posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents/guardians.
 - c) posting notice electronically on the school website.
- 3.9 Voting shall be carried out using secret ballots. The results of the elections shall be announced but the actual vote counts shall not be disclosed. Voters must appear in person to exercise this right.
- 3.10 Where the slate of candidates for parent or guardian representation is not comprised of a majority of Catholic parents or guardians and that circumstance cannot be readily corrected, the Principal shall alert the Director of Education. At the discretion of the Director of Education, the nomination process may be reopened.
- 3.11 Election procedures shall be supervised by the Principal. Ballots will be destroyed immediately following the vote count and declaration of successful candidates.
- 3.12 If all the elected positions are not filled through the election process, the Council shall proceed. However, the Council should seek members to fill the vacant positions through outreach into the community. Willing individuals may be appointed by majority vote of the Council for the remainder of the term.

4. Other Elections/Appointments of Other Members

The elections and appointments shall be accommodated during the first thirty (30) calendar days of each school year.

- 4.1 Community representatives shall be appointed by the Council.
- 4.2 The student representative shall be elected by students.

- 4.3 The school Principal shall be a designated member. Where a school is annexed to another school, the Vice-Principal may be designated by the Principal to serve in his/her place.
- 4.4 The teacher representative shall be elected by members of the teaching staff.
- 4.5 The non-teaching staff member shall be elected by members of the non-teaching staff.
- 4.6 A school employee may serve on the Council in their capacity as elected teacher or non-teaching representative only.
- 4.7 Eligible voters shall vote only if in respect to any available opening(s) in their representative group.

5. Term of Office

- 5.1 A person elected or appointed as a member of a Council holds office from the later of:
 - a) the date he or she is elected or appointed; or
 - b) the date of the first meeting of the Council after the elections held under Sections 3 and 4 in the school year, until the date of the first meeting of the Council after the elections held under Sections 3 and 4 in the next school year.
- 5.2 A member of a Council may be re-elected or reappointed, unless otherwise provided by the by-laws of the Council.

6. Vacancies

- 6.1 A vacancy in the membership of a Council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the Council.
- 6.2 If an election is held to fill a vacancy in the membership of a Council, the provision of Sections 3 and 4, as the case may be, apply with necessary modifications, to the election.
- 6.3 A vacancy in the membership of a Council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority.

7. Officers

- 7.1 Councils may have a Chair in accordance with the by-laws.
- 7.2 The Chair must be a Catholic parent and elected by the members.
- 7.3 The Chair must not be an employee of the Board.
- 7.4 Other officers are provided for in the by-laws of the Council.

8. By-Laws

- 8.1 Each Council will be required to pass a minimum of three (3) by-laws addressing the following:

- a) a by-law governing the election procedures and the filling of vacancies;
 - b) a by-law that establishes rules respecting participation in Council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest;
 - c) a by-law that establishes rules respecting participation in Council proceedings and procedures for managing internal Council disputes.
- 8.2 Each Council may pass such other by-laws that it deems appropriate to manage and support the smooth operation of the Council.
- 8.3 Each Council shall pass by-laws as determined by Board Policy.
- 8.4 The by-laws shall be reviewed annually for compliance with Ontario Regulation 612/00, or as amended, and in compliance with Board Policy.
- 8.5 The by-laws are to be in a form acceptable to the Board.

9. Council Procedures

- 9.1 At the first meeting of the school year, the Council, excluding the Principal, shall elect a Catholic parent/guardian of the school to serve as Chair. In addition, a Co-Chair, a Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer may be elected as provided in the by-laws.
- 9.2 Each Council will develop its own constitution, to be reviewed annually.
- 9.3 Each Council will develop a by-law governing the conduct of its members with the minimum following elements:
- a) a focus on student learning and what is otherwise best for students in the school;
 - b) the need to keep in mind the values and priorities of the entire community;
 - c) privacy of information provisions;
 - d) safeguards against control by special interests.
- 9.4 Councils will operate in a manner that is non-judgmental, is based on no fault discussion and uses consensus and compromise as the usual method for developing recommendations and plans.
- 9.5 No Council can be incorporated.

10. Minutes and Records

- 10.1 A Council shall keep minutes of all of its meetings and records of all of its financial transactions for a minimum of four years.
- 10.2 The minutes and records shall be available at the school for examination without charge by any person.
- 10.3 If a school has a website, the current year's minutes and records may be posted.

11. Committees

- 11.1 Council may establish committees to make recommendations to Council in accordance with the by-laws.
- 11.2 Every committee must include at least one parent member of Council.
- 11.3 A committee may include non-members of Council.
- 11.4 Committee meetings may be held in the school, and must be open and accessible to the public.

12. Voting

- 12.1 Each member of a Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the Council.
- 12.2 Each member of a committee of a Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee.
- 12.3 The Principal of the school is not entitled to vote in either Council or committee votes.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

- 13.1 A Council is an advisory body and may provide advice to the Principal and, where appropriate, to the Board on any of the matters listed below which the Council identifies as priorities:
 - a) the spiritual life of the school;
 - b) local school year calendar;
 - c) school code of student behaviour;
 - d) curriculum and program goals and priorities;
 - e) the responses of the school or school board to achievement in provincial and board assessment programs;
 - f) preparation of the school profile;
 - g) selection of Principals, by providing to the Board a report on school/community needs and special characteristics required of the Principal;
 - h) school budget priorities, including local capital improvement plans;
 - i) school-community communication strategies;
 - j) methods of reporting to parents and to the community;
 - k) extracurricular activities in the school;
 - l) school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreation, and nutrition programs;
 - m) community use of school facilities;
 - n) local coordination of services for children and youth;
 - o) development, implementation, and review of board policies at the local level or on any matter, in accordance with its constitution.
- 13.2 In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the Council shall:
 - a) promote the best interests of Catholic education locally and provincially;
 - b) establish its goals, priorities and procedures;

- c) hold a minimum of four meetings per year (all meetings shall be open to members of the school community);
- d) consult with parents of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the Council;
- e) communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by the Council, and to report on the activities of the Council to the school community;
- f) fundraise, according to Board Policy;
- g) ensure that the funds raised by it are used and accounted for in accordance with any applicable policies established by the Board;
- h) establish subcommittees as appropriate (which could include any existing parent-school organizations);
- i) with the Principal, serve as a link between the school and the community.

13.3 The Chair of the Council shall:

- a) ensure that emphasis is placed on our Catholic identity and focus;
- b) communicate with the Principal;
- c) prepare the agenda for the meetings in consultation with the Principal at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting;
- d) call Council meetings;
- e) chair the meetings;
- f) ensure that the minutes of the meetings are recorded and maintained;
- g) prepare an annual report in accordance with the Regulations and/or Board Policy;
- h) consult with the Principal prior to the release of communication to the community, Board staff, trustees or the Board itself. (Note: such communication shall normally be sent at the request and with the concurrence of the Council.)
- i) ensure that there is regular communication with the school community concerning Council matters;
- j) consult with the Principal, senior Board staff and trustees, as required.

13.4 The Principal (or designated Vice-Principal) shall:

- a) ensure that emphasis is placed on our Catholic identity and focus;
- b) facilitate the establishment of the Council and assist in its operations;
- c) support and promote Council activities;
- d) seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility;
- e) act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies, and collective agreements;
- f) assist the Council and Chair as to the distinction between issues for which he/she is responsible and those which are appropriately attended to by the Council;
- g) obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions;
- h) communicate with the Chair of Council, as required;
- i) prepare the agenda for meetings in consultation with the Chair at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting;
- j) provide the Chair of the Council with access to the Board Policy Manual;

- k) encourage the participation of parents/guardians from all groups and of other people within the school community;
- l) ensure that copies of the minutes of the Council meetings are kept at the school;
- m) assist the Chair in communicating with the school community;
- n) consult with the Chair prior to the release of communication to the community concerning Council matters;
- o) maintain his/her authority, responsibility and rights as mandated by Board Policy and the Education Act Regulations of the Province of Ontario;
- p) provide, from the school's budget, funds to support the work of the Council;
- q) delegate any of his or her powers or duties as a member of the Council including any powers or duties under this Regulation to a Vice-Principal of the school;
- r) perform the duties relating to Councils that are imposed on the Principal by Regulation 612/00 or as amended.

13.5 The Members of the Council shall:

- a) ensure that emphasis is placed on our Catholic identity and focus;
- b) participate in Council meetings;
- c) encourage the participation of parents/guardians from all groups, and of other people within the school community.

13.6 The School Board shall:

- a) ensure that emphasis is placed on our Catholic identity and focus;
- b) support the establishment and operation of the Council through ongoing training and development programs;
- c) every board shall establish policies respecting the reimbursement of members and officers of Councils established by the Board;
- d) maintain its authority, responsibilities and rights as mandated by the Education Act and Regulations of the Province of Ontario and Board Policy;
- e) facilitate communications between the Councils within its jurisdiction;
- f) consider all recommendations by Councils and advise Councils of actions taken in response to recommendations.

14. **Consultation by Board**

14.1 In addition to its other obligations to solicit the views of Councils under the Act, every board shall solicit the views of the Councils established by the Board with respect to the following matters:

- a) the establishment of amendment of Board policies and guidelines that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians, including:
 - i) policies and guidelines established under subsection 302(1) of the Act with respect to the conduct of persons in schools within the Board's jurisdiction;
 - ii) policies and guidelines established under subsection 302(5) of the Act respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the Board's jurisdiction;
 - iii) policies and guidelines respecting the allocation of funding by the Board to Councils;

- iv) policies and guidelines respecting the fundraising activities of Councils;
 - v) policies and guidelines respecting conflict resolution processes for internal Council disputes, and
 - vi) policies and guidelines respecting reimbursement by the Board of expenses incurred by members and officers of Councils;
- b) the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians, including:
- i) implementation plans for policies and guidelines established under subsection 302(1) of the Act with respect to the conduct of persons in schools within the Board's jurisdiction;
 - ii) implementation plans for policies and guidelines established under subsection 302(5) of the Act respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the Board's jurisdiction;
- c) Board action plans for improvement based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of pupils, and the communication of those plans to the public;
- d) the process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals.

14.2 Subsection (1) does not limit the matters on which a board may solicit the views of the Councils.

14.3 The Board that established a Council 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.

15. **Meetings**

15.1 Each Council will establish a meeting schedule of at least four (4) meetings per school year, all of which shall be open to members of the school community. The dates of meetings shall be publicized through written notice to parents/guardians and posted in the school.

15.2 Council shall meet within the first thirty-five (35) days of the school year (after elections) on a date fixed by the principal.

15.3 A Council meeting cannot be held unless:

- a) a majority of the current members of the Council are present;
- b) a majority of the members who are present are parent members, and
- c) the Principal or Principal designate is present.

15.4 All meetings are open to the public.

16. **Conflict Resolution**

16.1 In order to avoid unnecessary conflict, Councils shall:

- a) adhere to defined roles and responsibilities as per Section 13;

- b) refrain from discussion of students, parents/guardians, staff members, trustees, or other Council members (as per Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Information);
- c) have no involvement in selection or evaluation of teaching and non-teaching staff.

16.2 In the situation that an irresolvable conflict inhibits the activity of the Council, the following process will be followed:

- a) the Chair and/or Principal will contact the Superintendent of the school, in writing and a copy of this correspondence will be directed to the Chair or the Principal;
- b) the Superintendent will meet with the Chair and the Principal, in a timely fashion, to mediate - the Superintendent may request to meet with the whole Council or with appropriate staff, as deemed necessary;
- c) If the matter cannot be resolved and the work of the Council is rendered impossible, the Superintendent may refer the matter to the Director of Education for mediation.

Appendices

Forms

Associated Documents

Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board Parent Involvement Committee By-Laws

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