



Policy Section: **Community Relations**

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Policy Name: **School Councils and Parent Involvement Committee**

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Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board (hereinafter known as the Board or KPDSB) that each school shall annually establish and maintain a School Council which will be instrumental in supporting school quality. School Councils shall operate in accordance with this policy and make the overall interests of the school and students their first concern.

School Council Mandate

School Councils shall operate within the parameters of the Education Act, Regulations 612/00, 613/00, 298, and other relevant legislation. School Councils shall act in an advisory capacity to the school's Principal and will place the overall interests of the students and the school first. School Councils shall also operate within the guidelines of the Board's policies and agreements, including Collective Agreements. While the Board recognizes the important advisory role of the School Councils, it is the policy of the Board that the ultimate responsibility for the administration and management of the day-to-day operation of the school, and the system, rests with the Principals, Superintendent(s) of Education, and the Director of Education.

The purpose of the School Councils are:

- To advocate for and consider the overall interests of the school and students;
- To work in partnership with schools;
- To encourage and honour student achievement and success through active participation of parents/guardians;
- To establish effective communication within the school community;
- To increase participation of parents/guardians in the education of their children; and
- To enhance the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians and communities through their active participation.

Cross Reference

Ontario Regs: 612/00, 613/00, 298

Policies

101, Strategic Improvement Planning

303, School Improvement Planning

306, Use of Volunteers

320, Appropriate Dress for Students

602, Travel, Meeting, and Hospitality Expenses

608, School Fundraising

Procedures

320, Appropriate Dress for Students

Parent Involvement Committee Terms of Reference and Procedures 2011

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The primary way to achieve these purposes is by making recommendations to the Principal of the school and to the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board in accordance with this policy (see page 7, *section 6. c*) and Ontario Regulation 612/00.

Rationale

Keewatin-Patricia District School Board recognizes that education is a shared responsibility involving schools, students, families, and members of the community. School Boards are required to establish School Councils in accordance with Regulation 612/00 of the Education Act.

Regulations

1. Administrative Detail

- a) It is the responsibility of the Principals to implement this policy in accordance with Regulations 612/00, 613/00, and 298.

2. Membership

The School Council shall ensure that parents/guardians constitute the majority of the members of the School Council. It is expected that the membership on a School Council shall reflect the diversity of the school community. In the event that the elected parents/guardians do not reflect the diversity in terms of demographics, divisional representation (i.e., primary, junior, intermediate, senior, etc.), and all related programs (i.e., extra-curricular, etc.), the School Council shall consider the issue of balance in the selection of community representatives. The size of the School Council shall be set by the By-laws at the school level.

a) Parents/Guardians:

- i) The parent/guardian representative shall be elected by and from parents and guardians of students currently enrolled in the school and shall form the majority of the School Council.
- ii) A Trustee of the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board cannot be a member of a School Council within the Board.
- iii) Board employees are not eligible to run for School Council as a parent/guardian representative in a school where they are employed as per Ontario Regulation 612/00. This includes casual employees at the school.

- b) Principals:
The Principal of the school shall be a non-voting member of the School Council.
- c) Teachers:
One (1) teacher, other than the Principal or Vice-Principal employed at the school, shall be elected as per Ontario Regulation 612/00, the Ministry of Education Election Procedure and sections 3.a)iii and 3.b) of this policy.
- d) Non-Teaching Staff:
One (1) person employed at the school, other than the Principal, Vice-Principal, or a teacher, shall be elected as per Ontario Regulation 612/00, the Ministry of Education Election Procedures and sections 3.a)i and 3.b) of this policy.
- e) Student Representatives:
Does not apply to schools primarily for adults.
- i) In secondary schools with a Student Council, one (1) student enrolled in the school shall be appointed by the Student Council;
- ii) In secondary schools without a Student Council, one (1) student enrolled in the school shall be elected as per Ontario Regulation 612/00, the Ministry of Education Election Procedure, and sections 3.a)i and 3.b) of this policy; or
- iii) In elementary schools, the Principal shall appoint one (1) student enrolled in the school if the School Council decides to include a student.
- f) Community Representatives:
- i) The School Council shall appoint at least one (1) community representative. More community representatives may be appointed as long as the majority of School Council members are parents/guardians.
- ii) Employees of the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board are not eligible to be community representatives on School Councils unless:
- The person is not employed at the school; and
 - The School Council is informed of the person's employment before the appointment.

3. Elections of School Council Members

- a) Elections of all members shall be held during the first thirty (30) days of each school year, on a date fixed by the Chair or Co-Chair(s) of the School Council after consultation with the Principal of the school.

If a new school is established, the first election of members shall be held during the first thirty (30) days of the school year, on a date fixed by the Board. The Board will set a common election period for the purpose of enhanced communication.

- i) A person is eligible to be a parent/guardian member of a School Council if they are a parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the school, unless:
 - They are employed at the school; or
 - They are not employed at the school but are employed elsewhere by the Board and the individual has not taken reasonable steps to notify people eligible to vote in the election of parent/guardian members of their employment.
 - ii) A person is eligible to vote in an election of parent/guardian members of a School Council if they are a parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the school. The vote shall be by secret ballot.
 - iii) Only teachers employed at the school are eligible to vote for a teacher representative who is employed at the school.
 - Neither the Principal nor Vice-Principal shall be a teacher representative or vote for a teacher representative.
 - iv) Non-teaching staff employed at the school, excluding Principal(s)/Vice-Principal(s), are eligible to vote in an election of the non-teaching staff representative of the School Council.
 - v) In a secondary school where there is no Student Council, a person is eligible to vote in an election of a pupil enrolled in the school if they are a pupil enrolled in the school.
- b) School Councils shall outline a specific election process in their constitution/ procedural guidelines.
- c) Notice of School Council Elections:
The Principal of a school shall, at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the election of parent/guardian members, 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. The principal may give notice by email or other electronic means, sending a note home with each pupil and posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents/guardians.

4. Term of Office

- a) A term of office shall not exceed one (1) year;

- b) Members may be elected/appointed for additional terms at subsequent elections unless otherwise provided by the By-laws of the School Council; and
- c) All School Councils shall be in place within thirty (3) days of the start of the school year.

5. Membership Vacancies

- a) Vacancies may occur when either:
 - i) Positions on the School Council have not been filled after election and appointment; or
 - ii) A member resigns.
- b) A School Council shall fill a vacancy by election or appointment in accordance with the By-laws of the School Council.
- c) A term of office ends (for the filled vacancy) with the current School Council's term of office.
- d) A vacancy in the membership of a School Council does not prevent the School Council from exercising its authority unless the number of vacancies means that parents/guardians no longer form the majority or that the number of vacancies will not meet the By-law requirements for quorum in the School Council By-laws.

6. Role of the School Councils

- a) Consultation:
School Councils shall consult with parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the School Council.
- b) Advisory Authority:
School Councils may make recommendations to the Principal or to the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board on any matter, excluding personnel matters and other matters that the Board is required to deal with in-camera such as: the security of property, the acquisition or disposal of a school site, negotiations of litigation affecting the Board as set out in the Education Act. The Principal shall consider each recommendation and, in a timely manner, shall advise the Council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.
 - i) Each School Council shall annually:
 - Review the school code of conduct;

- Review the school improvement plan;
 - Establish annual priorities or goals;
 - Participate in the development of School Improvement Plans; and
 - Submit an annual report on its activities and fundraising as per section 8.f).
- c) Recommendations made in writing to the Board shall be considered by the Board and the School Council shall be advised in writing of the action taken in a timely manner. Recommendations so made, shall reflect the majority opinion of the School Council in the form of a resolution.
- d) Consultation by Board:
The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board shall consult School Councils on the following issues:
- i) Policies and implementation plans with respect to the Code of Conduct regarding the conduct of persons in schools;
 - ii) Policies and implementation plans with respect to appropriate dress for pupils;
 - iii) Policies with respect to fundraising;
 - iv) Policies with respect to conflict resolution for internal School Council disputes;
 - v) Policies with respect to reimbursement by the Board of expenses incurred by School Councils;
 - vi) Policies with respect to the allocation of funding by the Board to School Councils;
 - vii) School Improvement Plans and the communication of these plans to the public;
 - viii) The process and criteria applicable to the selection of Principals and Vice-Principals and the process and criteria applicable to the placement of Principals and Vice-Principals;
 - ix) The development of implementation plans for new Ministry mandated education initiatives that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system; and
 - x) Other areas determined by the Ministry of Education and the Board.

In matters in which the Board must consult, the consultation shall be initiated through School and Board websites and local Media from the Director of Education, or Designate, seeking input and outlining an appropriate timeframe for such input.

On all other issues, consultation will occur at the discretion of the Board.

7. Responsibilities of School Council Members

a) School Council Members:

The members of the School Council shall:

- i) Place overall interests of students and the school first;
- ii) Participate in School Council meetings;
- iii) Participate in information and training programs if possible;
- iv) Act as a link between School Council and the community;
- v) Encourage the participation of parents/guardians and others within the school community;
- vi) Seek to reach consensus in the decision-making processes of the School Council;
- vii) Not speak on behalf of the School Council regarding Board policies and affairs unless authorized by the Council to do so; and
- viii) Be accountable to the school community for their actions.

b) The Chair/Co-Chair:

The Chair/Co-Chair must be elected from among the parent/guardian members of the School Council but shall not be employed by the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board.

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

- Call School Council meetings;
- Prepare the agenda for meetings in consultation with the Principal;
- Chair the meetings;
- Ensure that the minutes of the meetings are recorded, circulated, and maintained;
- Communicate with the Principal (i.e., involve the Principal in the planning of all School Council activities and/or initiatives that involve or impact upon the school's staff or students, etc.); and
- Be a member of the Parent Involvement Committee and attend meetings as a representative of their School Council.

ii) The Chair/Co-Chair of the School Council may and should:

- Ensure that parent/guardian consultation has been sought before the decision-making process begins;
- Participate in information and training programs if possible;
- Encourage collaborative decision-making;
- Ensure that there is regular communication with the school community; and
- Consult with Senior Administration and Trustees as required.

- iii) The Chair/Co-Chair, in consultation with the Principal, shall be responsible for communications on behalf of the School Council.
- c) The Principal:
- i) The Principal of the school shall:
- Attend all School Council meetings;
 - Adhere to responsibilities outlined in Regulations 298, 612/00, and 613/00 regarding School Councils;
 - Ensure that copies of the minutes of the School Council's meeting(s) are kept at the school in an area easily and comfortably accessible to parents/guardians (i.e., school library, posted on the school's website, etc.);
 - Facilitate and assist the School Council and the Chair in its operation;
 - Seek input and consider all recommendations from the School Council and advise the School Council of the action taken in response to its recommendations;
 - 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;
 - Maintain regular communication with the Chair/Co-Chair of the School Council;
 - Assist the School Council in communication with the school community;
 - Encourage the participation of parents/guardians and other people within the school community;
 - Approve all materials from the School Council distributed through the school; and
 - Promptly distribute materials identified by the Ministry for distribution to School Councils. These materials shall also be posted in a prominent location accessible to parents/guardians.
- ii) The Principal of the school may:
- Delegate the duties to the Vice-Principal where appropriate; and
 - Encourage the School Council to exercise its advisory capacity whenever input is being sought by the Board or Ministry.

8. Operations of School Council

a) Meetings:

- i) A School Council shall meet at least four (4) times during the school year.
- ii) A School Council shall meet within the first thirty-five (35) days of the school year after elections are held. The date of the first meeting is decided by the Principal.
- iii) On behalf of the School Council, the Principal shall give written notice of the dates, times, and locations of the School Council meetings to every parent/guardian of students enrolled in the school on the date of the notice. Such notice may be posted in the school in a prominent location accessible to parents/guardians and/or given to students for delivery to parents/guardians/
- iv) All meetings shall be open to the public in a location accessible to the public. School Councils are entitled to hold meetings at the school.
- v) A meeting of the School Council cannot be held unless a majority of the current members of the School Council are present at the meeting, and a majority of the members of the School Council who are present at the meeting are parent/guardian members.

b) Committees:

A School Council may establish committees to make recommendations to the School Council. Every committee must include at least one (1) parent/guardian member of the School Council but may include non-members of the School Council. Committee meetings are subject to items 8.a)iii and 8.a)iv.

Committees must work in accordance with this policy, Ontario Regulation 612/00, and their own School Council By-laws and Operational Guidelines.

c) Voting:

Each member of the School Council or committee is entitled to one (1) vote in votes taken by the School Council or committee. The Principal is a non-voting member of a School Council or committee.

d) By-laws:

- i) A School Council may make By-laws governing the conduct of its affairs.
- ii) A School Council may wish to consider establishing an executive in its By-laws.
- iii) Every School Council shall make the following By-laws:



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- A By-law that governs election procedures and the filling of vacancies in the membership of the School Council.
- A By-law that establishes rules respecting participation in School Council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest.
- A By-law that establishes a conflict resolution process for internal School Council disputes. The By-law shall be in accordance with any applicable policies established by the Board.
- A By-law that sets the size of the School Council at the school level.

e) Fundraising:

School Councils may engage in fundraising activities. The activities and the funds raised shall be in accordance with Policy 603 – School Fundraising, established by the Board.

f) Annual Report:

Every School Council shall annually submit a written report on its activities and fundraising to the Principal and the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board. The Principal shall give every parent/guardian of current students a copy of the report on behalf of the School Council. The report may be given to each child for delivery to parents/guardians and posted in the school in a location accessible to parents/guardians.

g) Records:

A School Council shall keep minutes of all of its meetings and records of all of its financial transactions for a period up to four (4) years. Records shall be available at the school, in an accessible place, for examination by any person at no charge.

h) Incorporation:

A School Council shall not be incorporated.

i) Remuneration/Reimbursement:

No person shall receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of a School Council. The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board shall reimburse members and officers of a School Council in accordance with Board Policy 602 – Travel and Meeting Expenses for expenses they incur as members or officers of the School Council, where authorization has been granted prior to the travel occurring.



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j) Collecting Information:

The Ministry of Education may collect the names, mailing addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of any, or all, members of the School Council. This information is to consult and communicate directly with School Council members by the Ministry of Education and the Parent Engagement Office.

k) Liability:

School Councils have specific mandates as per Ontario Regulation 612/00, relevant Keewatin-Patricia District School Board policies, and their School Council By-laws and Operational Procedures. Operating within these policy frameworks, School Councils are covered under the Board's liability insurance.

l) Operational Resources:

School Council resources can be found on the Government of Ontario website: www.edu.gov.ca/eng/parents/PIC.html

9. Parent Involvement Committees

The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board has one (1) PIC that represents each area of the Board. The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) will follow the Terms of Reference and Procedures as established on April 26, 2011, or until revoked.

The Parent Involvement Committee shall focus on area initiatives and concerns. The Parent Involvement Committee shall act as a liaison among the School Councils, the community, and the Board of Trustees.

a) Membership:

- i) KPDSB Director or Designate.
- ii) One (1) voting representative appointed by each KPDSB School Council.
- iii) Two (2) appointed Trustees by the KPDSB.
- iv) One (1) KPDSB-PIC student representative.
- v) The number of community representatives specified in the By-laws of the committee.
- vi) The KPDSB-PIC parent/guardian members shall be in the majority.
- vii) One (1) KPDSB voting member shall be a student representative from the same secondary school that the Student Trustee is selected from.

b) Resource Staff:

- i) Superintendent of Education;
- ii) Area Trustee(s); and/or
- iii) Director of Education.

c) The Parent Involvement Committee shall:

- i) Focus on area concerns;
- ii) Support the sharing of information among School Councils;
- iii) Provide advice to the Superintendent of Education and the area Trustee(s) on any area matters;
- iv) Meet at least four (4) times during the school year; and
- v) Share agendas and minutes with the Trustees, the Director of Education, and Superintendents.

d) The Parent Involvement Committee may hold an event within the KPDSB in order to provide opportunities for School Council members to network and share information.

e) Responsibilities of Members:

- i) Represent the views and opinions of their School Council(s);
- ii) Share information from the Parent Involvement Committee meetings with their School Council(s);
- iii) Act as a link among School Councils, the community, and the Board; and
- iv) Attend meetings and/or ensure representation of their School Council(s).

f) The Director of Education, or Designate, shall:

- i) Attend all Parent Involvement Committee meetings;
- ii) Facilitate the scheduling, notification of meetings, and distribution of minutes;
- iii) Facilitate the election of a Chair;
- iv) Maintain regular communication with the Chair; and
- v) Act as a resource on Board initiatives, policies, laws, and regulations.

10. General

The Board may provide expertise, leadership, and training to School Council members and Principals on request.

Resource: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/HandbookPIC.pdf>