

# POLICY 17 – SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The Board’s strategic goal for ‘Our Community’ states:

“We seek to build with our community shared ownership and responsibility for the well-being and education of our children and youth”.

A School Community Council is one mechanism where shared responsibility will enhance the learning success and well-being of all children and youth. The Board believes in ensuring that parents, families and community members have opportunities for involvement in children’s learning and in school planning. In accordance with *The Education Act, 1995*, the Board’s policy will adhere to the legislation and regulations for School Community Councils.

## 1. Role and Responsibilities of the Board of Education

- 1.1. The role of the Board of Education is to embrace the opportunity that School Community Councils represent and receive advice and information from the School Community Council where appropriate.
- 1.2. The Board of Education shall:
  - 1.2.1. provide a Board policy for School Community Councils and companion policies that form the parameters of the School Community Councils’ work as required;
  - 1.2.2. delegate appropriate responsibilities with respect to School Community Councils to the Director of Education;
  - 1.2.3. determine and approve an annual grant to each School Community Council;
  - 1.2.4. recommend to the Minister the merging of more than one School Community Council when appropriate and when the affected School Community Councils are in agreement with the decision; and
  - 1.2.5. recommend to the Minister the separation of an amalgamated School Community Council and establish two or more School Community Councils when appropriate and when the affected School Community Councils are in agreement with the decision.

## 2. Role and Responsibilities of the Director of Education

- 2.1. The Director of Education shall:
  - 2.1.1. designate a senior administrative employee to be responsible for each School Community Council;
  - 2.1.2. provide companion administrative procedures that form the parameters of the School Community Councils’ work;

- 2.1.3. appoint an employee of the Division, other than any member of that School Community Council, to be the returning officer for the election of members of the School Community Council;
- 2.1.4. appoint as members to each school's School Community Council the school principal, one teacher from the school staff, and in consultation with the School Community Council, any other individuals;
- 2.1.5. appoint an individual to the school's School Community Council if there is a vacancy in an elected member's position;
- 2.1.6. approve each school's strategic plan in accordance with the following criteria. The plan shall:
  - 2.1.6.1. align with the School Division plan,
  - 2.1.6.2. be developed under the leadership of the school principal in cooperation with the School Community Council and the school staff,
  - 2.1.6.3. focus on improved student learning, and
  - 2.1.6.4. indicate the role of the School Community Council in supporting the plan;
- 2.1.7. approve each School Community Council's constitution and amendments; and
- 2.1.8. provide orientation, training, development and networking opportunities for School Community Councils.

### **3. Role and Responsibilities of School Community Councils**

- 3.1. School Community Councils shall:
  - 3.1.1. work within the parameters of Board policy and administrative procedures;
  - 3.1.2. under the leadership of the school principal, and in cooperation with the school staff, develop and recommend to the Director of Education a school strategic plan that is aligned with the School Division Strategic Plan and the criteria identified in section 2.1.6;
  - 3.1.3. enhance its understanding regarding the:
    - 3.1.3.1. learning and well-being needs of the students,
    - 3.1.3.2. community's economic, social and health needs, and
    - 3.1.3.3. resources and supports available to the school and community;
  - 3.1.4. encourage and facilitate parent and community engagement in the school;
  - 3.1.5. perform any activities assigned to it in the school's strategic plan approved by the Director of Education;

- 3.1.6. provide advice regarding the school's student code of conduct, grade discontinuance, and school closure;
  - 3.1.7. participate in orientation, training, development and networking opportunities in order to enhance its capacity to fulfil its responsibilities; and
  - 3.1.8. meet at least five times each year, in addition to an annual general meeting, and any other time at the call of the chairperson.
- 3.2. School Community Councils may within the parameters set by the Board in policy and administrative procedures:
- 3.2.1. provide advice to the Board of Education respecting Board policies, programs and educational service delivery, excluding service delivery by a specific staff member;
  - 3.2.2. provide advice to the school staff respecting school programs;
  - 3.2.3. provide advice to other organizations, agencies and governments on the learning and well-being needs of students;
  - 3.2.4. reimburse their members for expenses incurred on behalf of the School Community Council.

#### **4. Accountability and Reporting Procedures**

- 4.1. The Board is accountable to the province of Saskatchewan for the implementation and operation of School Community Councils and will report on the status of the councils to Saskatchewan Learning on an annual basis as a part of the Division's Continuous Improvement Framework report.
- 4.2. The Board is accountable to School Community Councils for providing direction through policy development and strategic planning, as well as the provision of resources through the budget process.
- 4.3. No Board of Education Trustee can serve as a voting member of a School Community Council.
- 4.4. The Director of Education is accountable to the Board for the roles and responsibilities delegated to him/her. The Director of Education will complete a monitoring report regarding the initiatives and accomplishments of the School Community Councils in the Division. The report will be referenced to the Director of Education's evaluation and submitted annually to the Board.
- 4.5. School Community Councils are accountable to the Board. Each School Community Council shall prepare and provide to the Director of Education and the parents, guardians and community members by June 30th of each year:
  - 4.5.1. a one page report summarizing its initiatives and accomplishments for the preceding school year on the template provided by the Division; and

- 4.5.2. a financial statement outlining the expenditure of funds related to the operation of the School Community Council for the preceding school year on the template provided by the Division.
- 4.6. A School Community Council must retain the minutes for each Council meeting and the annual fiscal statements for at least 7 years in the school, making them available to the Board upon request.
- 4.7. In consultation with a School Community Council's chairperson, a ward trustee shall make an effort to attend at least one meeting per year of each school's School Community Council in his/her ward.
- 4.8. The ward trustee shall inform the School Community Council's chairperson of his/her wishes to attend a council meeting prior to the meeting date.

## **5. Membership of the School Community Council**

- 5.1. The Board encourages and enables School Community Councils to embrace a wide membership of parents and community so that the membership is as representative of the school community as possible. The maximum number of Executive Council members shall be 50 people including elected, representative and appointed positions.
- 5.2. Subject to the other requirements of the Act respecting eligibility, the membership of School Community Councils shall include:
  - 5.2.1. nine elected members to represent parents or guardians of students in the school and community members as defined in section 6.7.2. In the event that there are fewer than five elected, the Director of Education may appoint sufficient members as per section 2.1.5 to ensure that there are at least five members. The Director of Education shall request recommendations from the School Community Council for such appointees;
  - 5.2.2. if practicable, one or two students who attend that school who are enrolled in the secondary level; and
  - 5.2.3. representation of First Nations if there are students who live on reserve and attend a school within the Saskatoon Public School Division.
- 5.3. The majority of elected members in section 5.2.1 must be parents or guardians of students who attend the school.
- 5.4. With the exception of the first year of establishing a School Community Council as defined in section 6.6, each elected member holds office for two years and is eligible for re-election.
- 5.5. Each School Community Council shall select from its elected members, student member(s), and First Nation Band representative(s), a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and any other positions as outlined in the council's constitution.
- 5.6. The Director of Education shall appoint as members to each school's School Community Council:

- 5.6.1. the principal of that school; and
- 5.6.2. one teacher from that school; and
- 5.6.3. any other individuals in consultation with the other members of the council.
- 5.7. Each appointed member of a School Community Council holds office for two years and is eligible for reappointment.
- 5.8. Any student who is appointed as a member of a School Community Council holds office for one year and is eligible for reappointment.
- 5.9. A School Community Council member shall vacate his or her office as a member of the School Community Council if the member:
  - 5.9.1. is convicted of an indictable offence;
  - 5.9.2. is absent from three or more consecutive meetings of the School Community Council without the authorization of the School Community Council; or
  - 5.9.3. ceases to be eligible for election as a member pursuant to *The Education Act, 1995*, the regulations or the policies of the Board of Education.

## **6. Election Procedures for School Community Councils**

- 6.1. The Director of Education shall, for each School Community Council, appoint an employee of the Board, other than any member of that School Community Council, to be the returning officer for the election of members.
- 6.2. A returning officer shall provide at least four weeks' notice to the public before a public meeting is held to elect members of a School Community Council.
- 6.3. The notice shall state:
  - 6.3.1. the purpose of the meeting;
  - 6.3.2. school attendance area or the geographic area for the community member representation;
  - 6.3.3. where any policies or procedures developed by the Board of Education respecting the election of the School Community Council can be reviewed; and
  - 6.3.4. the date, time and location of the meeting.
- 6.4. The notice shall be advertised or posted in such a way that it would be reasonably expected to reach the parents or guardians of students for that school and community members as defined within the school's attendance or geographic area.
- 6.5. The elected members shall be elected at the public meeting by secret ballot.
- 6.6. In the first year of establishing a School Community Council one-half of the elected members will serve a one-year term, and one-half will serve a two-year term to ensure continuity of the council.

- 6.7. The following individuals may stand for election to a School Community Council and cast a vote in a School Community Council election:
  - 6.7.1. a parent or guardian of a student who attends the school for that School Community Council;
  - 6.7.2. a community member who is an elector and resides within the attendance area, or the geographic area for that School Community Council's school, and is not a parent or guardian of a student who attends that school.
- 6.8. A parent/guardian may be a member of a School Community Council in as many schools as he/she has a child enrolled. This same parent/guardian is also eligible to hold the position of 'community member' for a School Community Council where he/she does not have a child enrolled, providing the school is within the attendance/geographic area in which he/she lives.
- 6.9. A community member may not be a member of more than one School Community Council for a school in which he/she is not a parent/guardian of a student in that school.

## 7. Constitution

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- 7.1. The Board recognizes the wide diversity of school communities and supports variance within each School Community Council's constitution.
- 7.2. Each School Community Council shall develop and submit to the Director of Education for approval a constitution that conforms to legislation and regulations and includes its:
  - 7.2.1. subcommittees and officers;
  - 7.2.2. schedule of meetings;
  - 7.2.3. means of public communication and consultation;
  - 7.2.4. code of conduct;
  - 7.2.5. decision-making processes; and
  - 7.2.6. complaint and dispute resolutions processes.
- 7.3. A School Community Council's constitution or any amendment to it, is not in effect until it is approved by the Director of Education.

## 8. Confidentiality

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- 8.1. No School Community Council and no member of a School Community Council shall engage in discussion or provide advice regarding personal confidential information or complaints about any student, employee of the Board, family member or guardian of any student or any member of the Board of Education.
- 8.2. All members of the School Community Council and the School Community Council will be subject to the provisions of *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of*

## **9. School Community Council Assembly**

- 9.1. The Board approves the establishment of a School Community Council Assembly for the purpose of providing orientation, training, development and networking opportunities. More specifically, the School Community Council Assembly meetings will:
  - 9.1.1. support the operation of the School Community Councils;
  - 9.1.2. support the School Community Councils' orientation and development regarding their roles and responsibilities;
  - 9.1.3. ensure alignment of school strategic plans with Board priorities;
  - 9.1.4. provide a mechanism for two-way communication between the Board and the School Community Councils; and
  - 9.1.5. provide an opportunity for networking among School Community Councils.
- 9.2. The Director of Education shall appoint an administrative liaison.
- 9.3. The School Community Council Assembly shall be comprised of up to two representatives from each School Community Council in the division.
- 9.4. Trustee representation to the School Community Council Assembly shall be established at the beginning of each school year.
- 9.5. School Community Council Assembly meetings shall be chaired by the Chair of the Board or designate and an elected co-chair from the Assembly.
  - 9.5.1. The elected co-chair for the Assembly will be determined each year at the annual spring meeting. Each School Community Council will have one vote.
- 9.6. The School Community Council Assembly shall meet a minimum of three times per school year. The agenda for each meeting will provide an opportunity for Board updates, networking opportunities with the Board and networking opportunities among School Community Councils. The agenda will be developed by the co-chairs and will focus on the following topics:
  - 9.6.1. Late fall – orientation and development to support council operations.
  - 9.6.2. Winter – overview of Division priorities and strategic planning development (Division & school level).
  - 9.6.3. Late spring – information on Division budget, annual plans and reports.
- 9.7. Additional School Community Council Assembly meetings may be held at the discretion of the co-chairs.

Legal Reference: Section 140.1 to 140.5, *The Education Act*  
Board Policy 14: Conflict Resolution  
Saskatoon Public Schools' Administrative Procedure 102: School Plans and Annual Reports  
Saskatoon Public Schools' Administrative Procedure 305: School Attendance Areas  
Saskatoon Public Schools' Administrative Procedure 354: Discipline  
Saskatoon Public Schools' Administrative Procedure 367: Student Bullying and Harassment

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