**KAWARTHA PINE RIDGE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

**Section:** **Board and Community**
- **Organizations**

**Policy Code: B-6.1**

**Policy:** **SCHOOL COUNCILS**



The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board values the contribution of school councils in its policy development. The Board supports and encourages the responsible and active advisory role of school councils.

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board recognizes that education is a shared responsibility between parent(s)/guardian(s), students, teachers, principals, school boards, government, and the community and that all partners in education have a responsibility to work together, co-operate and communicate with one another. The Board values the role that parent(s) /guardian(s) play in the education of their children and therefore encourages and supports the responsible and active advisory role of school councils in policy development, communication within the education system and in the creation of positive school environments.

The Education Act, Regulation 612, mandates that all schools be required to establish school councils and that all schools have a school council election each year within thirty calendar days of the start of the school year. Regulation 612 further clarifies the role of school councils, and many of the requirements in this policy are taken directly from provincial regulations.

This policy recognizes the authority of the principal and others, as prescribed in the Education Act and Ministry of Education regulations, to identify, promote and implement the policies, programs and plans of the Board. The Board recognizes the advisory role of school councils in the development of Board policies. School councils will operate within Board policies and procedures and comply with all relevant legislation including the Education Act and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

## 1. School Council Purpose

1.1 In accordance with provincial regulations, the purpose of the school councils is, through the active participation of parents and other community members, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

1.2 A school council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with Regulation 612 to the principal of the school and to the Board.

## 2. School Council Composition

2.1 Members of the school council shall include:

2.1.1 parent(s)/guardian(s) of students enrolled in the school;

2.1.2 community representatives;

2.1.3 a student (mandatory in secondary schools, strongly recommended for Grade 7 or 8 students, and at the discretion of the principal in elementary schools in consultation with other members of the school council);

2.1.4 the school principal;

2.1.5 a teacher;

2.1.6 a support staff member; and

2.1.7 one person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations if the association is established in the school.

2.2 Membership in a school council shall be determined in the following ways:

2.2.1 parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be elected at a general meeting by parent(s)/ guardian(s) of students enrolled in the school;

2.2.2 the student representative shall be appointed by the student council, or, in the case of elementary schools, by the principal;

2.2.3 the teacher representative shall be elected by members of the teaching staff;

2.2.4 the support staff member shall be elected by members of the support staff;

2.2.5 the school principal shall be a designated member; and

2.2.6 community representatives shall be appointed by a school council, and every effort should be made to reflect the socio-economic diversity, business affiliations, and demographic makeup of the community.

2.3 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 the elections until the date of the first meeting of the school council in the next school year. The first meeting must take place within thirty-five calendar days of the first day of the school year, after the elections have been held.

2.4 A member of a school council may be re-elected or reappointed, unless otherwise provided by the by-laws of the council.

2.5 The election of parent/guardian members shall be by secret ballot or by acclamation if the number of nominees does not exceed the number of parent/guardian openings on the school council.

2.6 A person is not qualified to be a parent/guardian member of a school council if the person is employed at the school. If the person is employed elsewhere by the Board, the person must take reasonable steps to inform voters of that employment before the election. This person cannot be the chairperson or co-chairperson of the council.

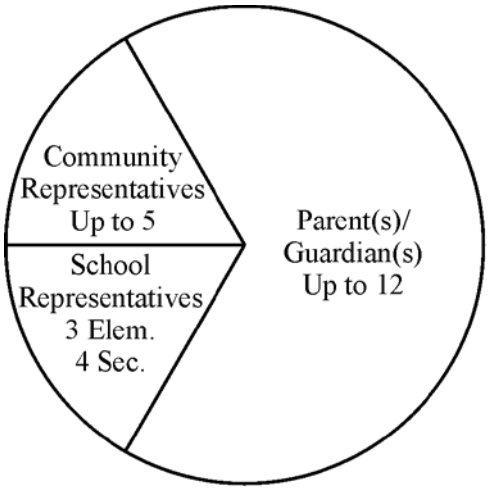
2.7 A Board employee cannot be appointed as a community representative unless the employee is not employed at the school, and the other members of the school council are informed of the person's employment before the appointment.

2.8 Trustees and supervisory officers of the Board shall not be school council members, but will serve as a resource to school councils. The local trustee(s) and the local superintendent shall receive an electronic copy of the agenda, in advance, of all school council meetings and shall receive an electronic copy of the minutes of such school council meetings.

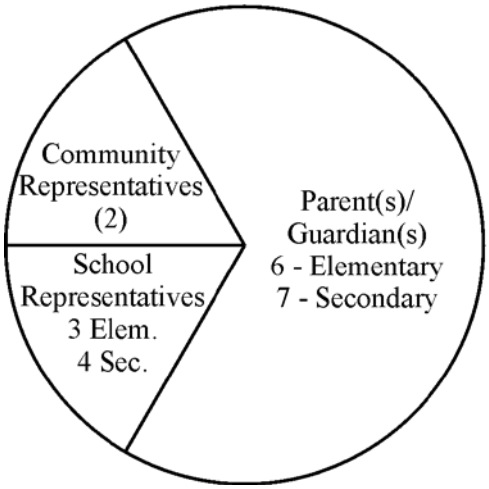
2.9 No remuneration will be given for serving as a member or officer of a school council.

2.10 The student representative shall be in good standing in the school.

2.11 Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall form the majority of the school council, except in the Centre for Individual Studies where parent/guardian positions shall be held by students representing each campus. It is expected that the membership of a school council will reflect the diversity of the school community. The recommended composition of school councils shall be consistent with the following chart.




Recommended Maximum Number 20




Recommended Minimum Number
11 - Elementary
13 - Secondary

In all schools which are initially unable to obtain these numbers, the school council may function as long as parent(s)/guardian(s) are in the majority. It is expected that a continuing effort will be made to fill vacant positions.

2.12 The principal or designated vice-principal must be in attendance for a school council meeting to take place.

2.13 Vacancy in the membership of a school council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the council.

2.14 Members of school councils must be elected and are therefore eligible to vote.

All parents/guardians and community members are encouraged to attend, and may provide input, at all school council meetings.

**3. School Council Members – Roles and Responsibilities**

3.1 A school council is a support and an advisory body to the principal to assist with improving learning for students and improving the school environment.

3.2 As a support group, a school council will provide advice to the school for implementation of program, communication of activities and promotion of the best interests of the school community, in consultation and co-operation with the principal.

3.3 As an advisory group, a school council may provide advice to the school principal and to the Board on any matter. This includes, but is not restricted to, the following:

3.3.1 school code of conduct;

3.3.2 curriculum and program goals and priorities;

3.3.3 the responses of the school or Board to provincial and Board assessments;

3.3.4 school dress code;

3.3.5 fundraising activities;

3.3.6 preparation of the school profile;

3.3.7 the process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals;

3.3.8 school budget priorities, including local capital-improvement plans;

3.3.9 school-community communication strategies;

3.3.10 methods of reporting to parent(s)/guardian(s) and the community;

3.3.11 extra-curricular activities;

3.3.12 school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational, and nutritional programs;

3.3.13 community use of school facilities;

3.3.14 local co-ordination of services for children and youth; and

3.3.15 development, implementation, and review of Board policies at the local level.

3.4 School councils shall focus on programs, policies, and procedures – not individual student or staff issues.

3.5 Each school council shall have its own constitution. The constitution shall have by-laws that address the areas of membership, quorum, governance, conflict resolution, election of officers, roles of officers and members, filling of vacancies, financial accountability, decision-making, purpose, scope of activities, communications, and proceedings in cases of conflict of interest.

3.5.1 The chairperson or co-chairpersons, as designated by school council constitution, shall be a member(s) who is also a parent/guardian, and shall be elected by the school council.

3.6 Each school council shall keep minutes of all its meetings and records of all of its financial records. The minutes and records shall be kept on file at the school for four years and made available, upon request, by any person, free-of-charge.

3.7 A school council shall not be incorporated.

3.8 All school councils shall:

3.8.1 establish goals, priorities, procedures, and terms of membership (i.e., attendance required at meetings);

3.8.2 organize information and training sessions as required, to enable members of a school council to develop skills as school council members;

3.8.3 hold a minimum of four meetings per year (all meetings shall be open and accessible to the public);

3.8.4 communicate regularly with parent(s)/guardian(s) and other members of the community to seek views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by a school council, and to report on the activities of a school council to the school community;

3.8.5 encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to take an active role as partners, with schools, in their child(ren)’s education;

3.8.6 All school council agendas and minutes shall be posted at the school in a place that is accessible to parent(s)/guardian(s) and electronically (where available) on the school web site, and parent(s)/guardian(s) should be made aware of this practice through the school newsletter at the beginning of each year;

3.8.7 promote the best interests of the school community;

3.8.8 produce an annual report on its activities, including any fundraising activities, and submit it to the principal, and to the Board through the appropriate administrative officer; and

3.8.9 act in good faith.

**4. School Council Voting**

Each member of the school council (excluding the principal) is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the council or a committee of the school council.

**5. School Council – Members Roles and Responsibilities**

5.1 The Board recognizes the principal as the Board's representative at the school and responsible for decisions for the school under the Education Act and Regulations, Board policy and administrative regulations.

The principal of the school shall:

5.1.1 attend all meetings unless unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond the principal's control;

5.1.2 facilitate the establishment of the school council and assist in its operation;

5.1.3 support and promote the school council's activities;

5.1.4 provide for the prompt distribution to each member of the school council, of any materials sent by the Ministry of Education for distribution to the school council, and post the material in the school in a location that is accessible by parent(s)/guardian(s);

5.1.5 consider each recommendation made by the school council and advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation;

5.1.6 seek input from the school council on the establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parent(s)/guardian(s);

5.1.7 seek input from the school council on the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parent(s)/guardian(s);

5.1.8 seek input from the school council on school action plans for improvement, based on provincial assessment reports and the communication of those plans to the public;

5.1.9 act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies, and collective agreements (i.e., Education Act, and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act);

5.1.10 obtain and provide, where reasonable, information as required by the school council to enable it to make informed suggestions and advice;

5.1.11 maintain on-going communication with the chairperson(s) of the school council;

5.1.12 at least fourteen 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;

5.1.13 ensure that copies of the minutes and financial activities of a school council are kept at the school and made accessible to the public;

5.1.14 assist the school council in communicating with the school community;

5.1.15 encourage the participation of trustees, parent(s)/guardian(s) from all groups, and of other people within the community;

5.1.16 ensure that the school council follows Board policies and procedures;

5.1.17 post a copy of the school council’s annual report in a school location that is accessible to parents; and

5.1.18 act in good faith.

The principal of the school may delegate any of the principal's powers or duties as a member of the school council to a vice-principal of the school. The principal shall perform the duties relating to school councils that are imposed on the principal by Regulation 298 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990 (Operation of Schools – General).

5.2 The chairperson(s) of the school council, who shall be a parent/guardian member of the school council and elected by the school council, shall:

5.2.1 call school council meetings;

5.2.2 prepare the agenda for school council meetings in collaboration with the principal;

5.2.3 chair school council meetings;

5.2.4 ensure that minutes of school council meetings and financial records are recorded and maintained;

5.2.5 participate in information and training programs;

5.2.6 maintain on-going communication with the school principal and local school trustee(s);

5.2.7 consult with parent(s)/guardian(s) about matters under consideration by the school council by posting information for input in a school location accessible to parent(s)/guardian(s);

5.2.8 consult with senior Board staff and trustees as outlined in this policy under School Council Members – Roles and Responsibilities;

5.2.9 follow Board policies and administrative regulations;

5.2.10 encourage community representation;

5.2.11 ensure representation at school council association (regional school council) meetings; and

5.2.12 act in good faith.

5.3 The members of the school council shall:

5.3.1 attend and participate in school council meetings;

5.3.2 participate in information and training programs as needed;

5.3.3 act as a link between the school council and the community;

5.3.4 welcome the participation of parent(s)/guardian(s) from all groups and of other people within the community;

5.3.5 follow Board policies and procedures and comply with applicable legislation; and

5.3.6 act in good faith.

5.4 The school board will provide materials centrally that contribute to the understanding of various school council roles, including chairperson, secretary and treasurer. These materials will also help school councils meet their requirements, such as creating a constitution and handling School Generated Funds.

**6. School Council Committees**

6.1 A school council may, in accordance with its by-laws, establish committees to make recommendations to the council.

6.2 Every committee of a school council must include at least one parent/guardian member of the council.

6.3 A committee of a school council may include persons who are not members of the council.

**7. School Councils – Board Roles and Responsibilities**

7.1 The Board recognizes the valuable input school councils can provide to school and Board decision-making. A school council may make recommendations to the Board on any matter.

7.2 The Board will consider, during the budget process, an annual allocation to assist the school councils with communications and meeting costs.

7.3 The Board will seek advice of school councils on the establishment or amendment of Board policies and guidelines that relate to school councils, pupil achievement, or to the accountability of the education system to parent(s)/guardian(s), including:

7.3.1 policies and guidelines established under Subsection 302 (1) of the Education Act with respect to the conduct of persons in schools within the Board's jurisdiction;

7.3.2 policies and guidelines established under Subsection 302 (5) of the Education Act respecting appropriate dress for pupils;

7.3.3 policies and guidelines respecting the allocation of funding by the Board to school councils;

7.3.4 policies and guidelines respecting the fundraising activities of school councils;

7.3.5 policies and guidelines respecting conflict resolutions processes for internal school council disputes;

7.3.6 policies and guidelines respecting reimbursement by the Board of expenses incurred by members and officers of school councils; and

7.3.7 the process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals.

7.4 The Board shall consider each recommendation made to the Board by a school council and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.

7.5 The Board reserves the right to disband school councils which are in serious contravention of applicable legislation or established Board policy and administrative regulations.

7.6 Members of a school council shall be covered under the Board's liability insurance, if the activity or action is done in good faith, is within the parameters of this policy, and such activity/action adheres to the appropriate Acts, Regulations or Board policies and/or administrative regulations.

7.7 School councils cannot be signators to agreements/contracts on behalf of the Board or the school.