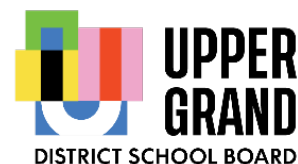


School Councils and the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) Procedures Manual 201-A



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1. General

These procedures govern the establishment and operation of school councils and the Parent Involvement Committee of the board.

2. Terms and Definitions

PIC

In this policy and procedures, PIC means the Parent Involvement Committee of the board.

Parent

In this policy and procedures, parent means parent or guardian of a student who is enrolled in a board school.

Parent Member

In this policy and procedures, a parent member means a parent who is elected to, or fills a vacancy on a school council, and a parent who is elected or appointed to, or fills a vacancy on the PIC.

Meeting

In this policy and procedures, a meeting does not mean a training session or other event where the school council or the PIC does not discuss or decide matters that it has the authority to decide.

3. School Councils

3.1 Membership – Parents

- 3.1.1 Each school council may set the number of parent members by school council by-law. School councils will make every

reasonable effort to have a minimum of five (5) parent members reflecting the diversity of their school community.

3.1.2 Parents will form the majority of the members of a school council.

3.1.3 Parent members will be elected by parents of students currently enrolled in the school, as determined by the election procedure outlined in the school council's by-laws.

3.1.4 Any parent of a student in a school is eligible to be elected to a school council unless the parent is a board employee who works in the school.

3.1.5 Parents who are board employees may be elected to a school council in their child's school if they do not work in that school. They will be required to take reasonable steps to inform qualified voters before the election for parent members of their employment by the board.

3.2 **Membership – Community Representatives**

3.2.1 Each school council will appoint at least one community representative.

3.2.2 A school council may specify by by-law that it will include two or more community representatives.

3.2.3 Board employees cannot be appointed as community representatives if they are employed at the appointing school.

3.2.4 Board employees may be appointed as community representatives in a school where they are not employed. They will be required to take reasonable steps to inform the members of the school council of their employment by the board before their appointment.

3.3 **Membership – Student Representatives**

3.3.1 In the case of a secondary school, one student enrolled in the school who is appointed to the school council by the student council.

- 3.3.2 If there is no student council in a secondary school, one student will be elected to the school council by the students of the school.
- 3.3.3 In elementary schools, the principal may, after consultation with the school council, appoint one pupil from the school to the school council.

3.4 Membership – Principal

- 3.4.1 The principal of the school will be a non-voting member of the school council.
- 3.4.2 Principals may delegate any powers or duties they have as a member of the school council, or under the *Education Act* and Regulations that deal with the principals' duties respecting school councils, to the vice-principal of the school.

3.5 Membership – Teachers

- 3.5.1 Each school council will have a teacher employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal.

3.6 Membership – Non-Teaching Staff

- 3.6.1 Each school council will have a staff member, who is not the principal, vice-principal or teacher at the school.
- 3.6.2 Non-teaching staff members include all members of the board's non-teaching bargaining units, and noon-hour supervisors.

3.7 Membership – Other Parent Members

- 3.7.1 One person chosen by the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations will be appointed to the school council if the association is established in respect of the school.

3.8 Membership – Trustees

- 3.8.1 Trustees elected to the Board cannot be members of a school council in the jurisdiction of the board.

3.9 Elections/Appointments and Terms of Office

- 3.9.1 Parent members of a school council will be elected or appointed for a one-year term.
- 3.9.2 Parent members hold office from the later of the date of election or appointment, and the date of the first meeting of the school council after their election or appointment, and until the first meeting of the school council following the election held in the next school year.
- 3.9.3 Parent members may be re-elected or re-appointed unless otherwise provided for in the by-laws of the school council.

3.10 Election of Parent Members

- 3.10.1 Each school council will make by-laws governing the procedures for elections of parent members, and filling of vacancies in the parent membership of the school council.
- 3.10.2 Each school council will hold elections for parent members during the first thirty (30) days of each school year.
- 3.10.3 The date of the election will be fixed by the chair or co-chairs of the school council in consultation with the principal of the school.
- 3.10.4 The principal will give written notice of the date, time and location of the election of parent members at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the election to every parent of a student who is enrolled in the school. The notice may be provided to the child enrolled in the school for delivery to the parent, by posting the notice in the school in a location accessible to parents, or by other written or electronic means.
- 3.10.5 The election of parent members of the school council will be by secret ballot.
- 3.10.6 All parents of students in the school are qualified to vote in the election of parent members of the school council.
- 3.10.7 Parent members may be acclaimed to a school council.

3.10.8 If a new school is established, the first election of parent members to the new school council will be held during the first thirty (30) days of the school year on a date fixed by the board.

3.11 Other Elections

3.11.1 The principal, in consultation with the school council and the teaching and non-teaching staff of the school, will establish election procedures for the teaching and non-teaching staff members if a vote is required. These elections will be held during the first thirty (30) days of the school year.

3.11.2 All teachers employed at the school other than the principal or vice-principal are qualified to vote for the teacher member on the school council if a vote is required.

3.11.3 All non-teaching staff members are qualified to vote for the non-teaching staff member on the school council.

3.11.4 All pupils enrolled in a secondary school are qualified to vote for the student member of the school council if the school does not have a student government organization.

3.11.5 The principal, in consultation with the school council, will establish election procedures for the student member, as required.

3.12 Vacancies

3.12.1 Vacancies on a school council occur when:

- all positions have not been filled after elections
- an insufficient number of candidates present for election
- a member resigns
- a member is unable to fulfill the role and responsibilities of a school council member

3.12.2 Each school council will establish a by-law for filling vacancies on the school council.

3.12.3 Vacancies may be filled by election and/or appointment.

3.12.4 An election process established by a school council may be modified as required to fill a vacancy on the school council.

3.12.5 A vacancy on a school council does not prevent the school council from exercising its authority.

3.13 **Officers**

3.13.1 Each school council will have a parent member chair elected by the members of the school council.

3.13.2 A school council may have two parent member co-chairs if specified by by-law, and elected by the members of the school council.

3.13.3 Board employees, who are members of school councils, may not serve as the chair or co-chair of a school council.

3.13.4 A school council may have other officers if specified by by-law.

3.13.5 A process for filling vacancies in the office of chair, co-chair or any other officers of a school council will be specified by by-law.

3.14 **Remuneration**

3.14.1 School council members will not receive remuneration for serving as a member or an officer of a school council.

3.14.2 The reimbursement of school council members for expenses incurred when acting on behalf of the school council is governed by board policy.

3.15 **Meetings**

3.15.1 Each school council will meet not less than four (4) times during a school year.

3.15.2 Each school council will meet within thirty-five (35) days of the start of the school year, after elections are held. This date will be fixed by the school principal.

3.15.3 School councils are entitled to hold meetings at the school.

- 3.15.4 School council meetings will be open to the public. All meetings must be held in a location that is accessible to the public.
- 3.15.5 Written notice of the dates, times and locations of school council meetings will be given by the principal on behalf of the school council to all parents of pupils enrolled in the school. The notice may be provided to the child enrolled in the school for delivery to the parent, by posting the notice in the school in a location accessible to parents, or by other written or electronic means.
- 3.15.6 A meeting of a school council cannot be held unless a majority of the current members of the council are present at the meeting, and a majority of the members present are parent members.

3.16 **Committees**

- 3.16.1 A school council may, by by-law, establish committees to make recommendations to the school council.
- 3.16.2 Every committee of a school council must include at least one parent member of the school council.
- 3.16.3 A committee of a school council may include persons who are not members of the school council.
- 3.16.4 School council committees are entitled to hold meetings at the school. All committee meetings must be open and accessible to the public.
- 3.16.5 The process of notification of committee meetings to parents of students enrolled in the school will be determined by the school council.

3.17 **Decision Making**

- 3.17.1 School councils are advisory bodies and every attempt should be made to reach decisions through consensus.
- 3.17.2 Consensus is a form of group decision-making based on willingness to consent and support. Consensus is reached when all members of the school council, including the chair/co-chairs

are willing to accept and support an idea or concept as the best choice for the entire school council.

3.17.3 In the event that consensus cannot be achieved, a vote may be taken.

3.17.4 Each school council member will have one vote in votes taken by the school council or in committees of the school council.

3.18 **Conflict of Interest**

3.18.1 Each school council will establish a by-law for participation in school council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest.

3.18.2 A conflict of interest by-law will direct a member of a school council who has a personal financial interest in a matter before the council to declare such a conflict, refrain from participating in the decision-making and/or voting on the matter, or attempting to influence the decision-making or vote on any such matter.

3.19 **Conflict Resolution**

3.19.1 Each school council will establish a by-law establishing a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes, based on board policy.

3.19.2 School council members will make every effort to resolve conflicts themselves.

3.19.3 If a school council is unable to resolve an internal dispute, the chair and/or co-chair and the principal may contact the appropriate superintendent of education for assistance.

3.19.4 The superintendent of education will, in consultation with the principal and/or the chair or co-chairs of the school council, determine the approach to be used in the attempt to resolve the conflict.

3.19.5 Approaches for resolving conflicts could include, but are not limited to:

- assistance by the superintendent of education for the school
- assistance by a trained facilitator/mediator from within the system
- assistance by an outside trained facilitator/mediator

3.20 Incorporation

3.20.1 A school council will not be incorporated.

3.21 Records and Reporting

3.21.1 A school council will keep minutes of all its meetings and records of all its financial transactions which will be available at the school for examination without charge.

3.21.2 Minutes will be retained for a period of four (4) years.

3.21.3 Financial records will be retained for a period of seven (7) years.

3.21.4 Each school council will submit a written report on its activities to the principal of the school and the school board on an annual basis.

3.21.5 The annual report will include a report on fundraising activities.

3.21.6 A copy of the annual report will be provided to every parent of a student enrolled in the school by giving the report to the parents' child for delivery to the parent and/or by posting the report electronically and/or in the school in a location accessible to parents.

3.22 Fundraising

3.22.1 A school council may engage in fundraising activities that are conducted in accordance with and for a purpose that is approved by the board or authorized by board policy.

3.22.2 Funds raised by a school council will be used in accordance with board policies.

3.23 Liability Insurance

- 3.23.1 The board recognizes that school council members are volunteers and are covered by the board's liability insurance as long as they are acting within the scope of their duties on behalf of the board.
- 3.23.2 School councils will be required to purchase liability insurance for any activities they conduct which are not approved and directed by a school employee, such as the principal, or held off school property. (See Appendix A - OSBIE Advisory Bulletin).
- 3.23.3 School council insurance can be purchased through OSBIE through the board's insurance contract or from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) by contacting them directly at 416-340-2540.
- 3.23.4 School councils and parent groups should refer to the "School Council Insurance Information" memorandum, as updated from time-to-time, which is available in the board's UGshare database, on the [PIC Website](#) and also sent annually to school council chairs, for risk management information pertaining to non-school endorsed events requiring babysitting and events with alcohol.

3.24 Role of School Councils

- 3.24.1 School councils are advisory bodies which may make recommendations to the school principal or the board on any matter excluding:
- personnel matters and collective agreements
 - the security of property
 - the acquisition or disposal of a school site
 - negotiations or litigation affecting the board
 - individual student or parent issues
- 3.24.2 School councils will consult with parents of students enrolled in the school about such matters under consideration by the council.
- 3.24.3 School councils will establish by-laws that address the election procedures and filling of vacancies in membership, the

participation of members of school councils in cases of conflict of interest, and a process for internal conflict resolution.

3.24.4 School councils may establish by-laws, within the direction of this policy and procedures that address:

- the name, purpose and objectives of the council
- membership and officers of the council and their responsibilities
- provisions with respect to council meetings, quorum and voting rights of members
- committees of council and their composition
- rules for conduct of meetings

3.24.5 School councils will provide advice to the principal, and where appropriate, to the board, on any matters it identifies as priorities. These could include:

- school calendar of events
- school code of conduct
- curriculum and program goals and priorities
- responses of the school or board to achievement in provincial and board assessment programs
- recommendations about the process of hiring and assigning school administrators and staff, within the existing collective agreements and board policy (e.g., preparing goals and profile of the school to assist in the selection and placement process)
- school budget priorities, including local capital improvement plans
- school/community communication strategies
- methods of reporting to parents and the community
- co-instructional activities in the school
- school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreation and nutrition programs

- community use of school facilities
- local coordination of services for children and youth
- development, implementation and review of board policies at the local level

3.24.6 In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the school council will:

- ensure that its prime objective is to improve student achievement and well-being
- promote the best interest of the school community
- establish goals, priorities, and procedures
- promote attendance at organized board-level training sessions to help council members develop their skills

3.24.7 School council members will:

- place the overall interest of the school and students first
- participate in council meetings
- participate in information and training programs
- act as a link between the council and the community
- support and encourage the engagement of parents and others within the school community
- seek to reach consensus in the decision-making processes of the council

3.24.8 The chair/co-chair of the council will:

- call all school council meetings following the first meeting of the school year which will be convened by the principal
- prepare the agenda for meetings in consultation with the principal
- chair the meetings
- ensure that the minutes of meetings and financial records are recorded and maintained as established by this policy and procedures

- participate in information and training programs
- involve and communicate with the principal in the planning of all school council activities and/or initiatives that will involve or have an impact on the school staff or students
- encourage diversity in committees
- facilitate collaborative decision-making and consensus
- consult with senior board staff and trustees as required
- ensure that the annual report is prepared for the principal, school community and the board

3.25 **Role and Responsibilities of the Board**

3.25.1 The board will consult with school councils on the following matters:

- policies, procedures and implementation plans relating to the board's Code of Conduct
- policies, procedures and implementation plans relating to the board's Appropriate Dress Policy and Procedures
- policies and procedures relating to the allocation of funding for school councils
- policies and procedures relating to the reimbursement of expenses incurred by members and officers of school councils
- policies and procedures relating to fundraising activities
- policies and procedures regarding conflict resolution processes for internal school council disputes
- action plans for improvement based on the results of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) testing, and the communication of the plans to the public
- the process and criteria for the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals
- implementation plans for new ministry-mandated initiatives relating to pupil achievement, well-being or the accountability of the education system

3.25.2 The board may, at its discretion, consult with school councils on other matters.

3.25.3 The board will consider recommendations made to it by a school council and advise on the action taken in response to any recommendations.

3.25.4 The board will support ongoing leadership training for school council members, PIC members and administrators, and provide expertise to school councils through the PIC.

3.26 **Role and Responsibilities of the Principal**

3.26.1 The principal of the school will:

- attend all school council meetings
- support and promote the school council's activities
- adhere to responsibilities as outlined in the *Education Act* and Regulations 298, 612/00, 613/00, regarding school councils and seek input from the school council on the following matters:
 - the school's Code of Conduct and its implementation
 - determining and implementing appropriate dress for pupils of the school
 - school action plans for improvement based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) test results, and communication of these action plans
- consider the views of the school council in the annual review of the school's opening or closing exercises
- maintain regular communications with the chair/co-chair of the school council
- consult with the school council chair/co-chair on the preparation of the agenda of school council meetings

- ensure that copies of the minutes of meetings and financial records of the school council are maintained, are made available, and are easily accessible in the school
 - act as a resource to the school council on legislation, regulations, board policies and collective agreements
 - obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make informed decisions
 - assist the school council in communication with the school community
 - encourage the participation of parents and other people within the school community
 - consider all recommendations from the school council and advise on the action taken in response to any recommendations
 - approve all printed materials and/or electronic materials from the school council distributed through the school
 - promptly distribute and make available materials in the school identified and provided for school councils by the ministry
- 3.26.2 The principal may, at their discretion, consult with school councils on other matters.
- 3.26.3 The principal will consider recommendations made to them by a school council and advise on the action taken in response to any recommendations.
- 3.26.4 The principal will support ongoing leadership training for school council members.

4. Parent Involvement Committee

4.1 Purpose

- 4.1.1 The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) will develop strategies and initiatives that the board and the Director of Education could use to effectively communicate and engage parents in improving

student achievement and well-being, and advise them on their use.

4.1.2 The PIC will communicate information from the ministry to school councils and parents.

4.1.3 The PIC will work with school councils and board employees through the Director of Education to:

- share practices to engage parents effectively, including those parents that find engagement challenging, in their children's learning
- identify and reduce barriers to parent engagement
- help ensure schools create a welcoming environment for parents
- develop skills and acquire knowledge that will assist PIC and school councils to do their work

4.1.4 The PIC will determine how funding for parent involvement is to be used in consultation with the Director of Education and according to board policy.

4.2 **Membership**

4.2.1 The membership of the Parent Involvement Committee will include:

- the number of parents specified in the by-laws of the committee
- the Director of Education or their designate
- one member of the Board (trustee) appointed by the Board
- the number of community representatives as specified in the by-laws of the committee who are not parent members of the committee or employees of the board

4.2.2 The board, subject to the by-laws of the committee, may appoint one or more of the following to the committee:

- one elementary principal
- one secondary principal
- one elementary teacher who is not a principal or vice-principal
- one secondary teacher who is not a principal or vice-principal
- one other board employee who is not a principal, vice-principal or teacher

4.3 **Terms of Office**

- 4.3.1 The Parent Involvement Committee will appoint or elect members to the committee before November 15 of the school year.
- 4.3.2 Parent members will form a majority of the committee.
- 4.3.3 Parent members will serve for one or two terms as specified in the PIC's by-laws, and may be reappointed or reelected for more than one term if specified in the by-laws.
- 4.3.4 The term of office of the members appointed by the board will be determined by the board, and will have no effect unless the person agrees to the appointment.
- 4.3.5 The board will appoint its representatives before November 15 of the school year and before the first meeting of the PIC.

4.4 **Election/Appointment of Parent Members**

- 4.4.1 Parent members will be appointed or elected according to the by-laws of the committee.
- 4.4.2 A person is qualified to be appointed or elected as a parent member of the committee if they are employed by the board and provides this information to the PIC at the first committee meeting.

4.5 **Vacancies**

- 4.5.1 The board will ensure that vacancies in parent member positions are advertised through a variety of means. Examples include ads

in school or school council newsletters, general circulation newspapers, radio or TV stations within the jurisdiction of the board, notices in schools and notices on the schools' and board's websites.

4.5.2 A vacancy in the membership of the PIC will not prevent the committee from exercising its authority.

4.6 **Officers**

4.6.1 The PIC will have a chair, or two co-chairs if specified in the by-laws.

4.6.2 The chair/ co-chairs must be parent members, and will be elected by the parent members for a two-year term at the first meeting of the committee in each school year that there is a vacancy in the office of chair/co-chairs.

4.6.3 An individual may not serve more than two consecutive terms as chair or co-chair.

4.6.4 An individual who has served one term or two consecutive terms as chair or co-chair may be reelected as chair or co-chair if at least one two-year term has elapsed since their last term as chair or co-chair.

4.6.5 The chair or co-chairs will act as spokespersons for the committee in communication with the Director of Education and the board.

4.6.6 The PIC may have such officers as specified in the by-laws of the committee.

4.6.7 Any officer vacancies on the committee will be filled in accordance with the by-laws of the committee.

4.7 **Meetings**

4.7.1 The PIC will meet at least four (4) times per year.

4.7.2 A meeting cannot be held unless:

- a majority of members present are parent members

- the Director of Education or designate is present
- the trustee appointed by the Board or their designate is present

4.7.3 Facilities for meetings considered by the board for the proper functioning of the committee will be made available to the PIC by the board.

4.7.4 All reasonable efforts will be made for members to participate by electronic means, and those participating electronically will be deemed to be present at the meeting.

4.7.5 All of the PIC meetings will be open to the public and held in a location that is accessible to the public.

4.7.6 A notice of each meeting will be provided to all members of the committee by the chair or co-chairs at least five (5) days prior to the meeting electronically or by regular mail (mailed five (5) days before the meeting), and by posting a notice on the board's PIC website.

4.8 **Remuneration**

4.8.1 A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member of PIC.

4.8.2 The reimbursement of PIC members for expenses incurred when acting on behalf of PIC is governed by board policy.

4.9 **Subcommittees**

4.9.1 Subcommittees may be established, with at least one parent member, to make recommendations to the PIC.

4.9.2 Subcommittees may have persons on them who are not members of the PIC.

4.9.3 Notice of subcommittee meetings will be called as are meetings of the PIC.

4.10 **Voting**

4.10.1 Only parent members and community representatives may vote on matters before the PIC.

4.11 **Minutes and Financial Records**

4.11.1 Minutes of meetings and all financial transactions will be kept by the PIC.

4.11.2 Minutes will be kept for four (4) years, posted on the board's website, sent electronically to all of the board's school councils, and available at the board office for examination at no charge for four (4) years.

4.11.3 Financial transactions will be kept for seven (7) years and will be available for examination at the board office for no charge for seven (7) years.

4.12 **Incorporation**

4.12.1 The PIC will not be incorporated.

4.13 **Delegation**

4.13.1 The Director of Education may delegate some or all of their powers or duties as a member of the PIC to a supervisory officer, and designate a supervisory officer to attend meetings of the PIC in their place.

4.13.2 The member of a Board (trustee) who sits on the PIC may delegate any of their powers or duties as a member of the PIC to another member of the Board, and designate another member of the Board to attend meetings of the PIC in their place.

4.14 **Consultation**

4.14.1 A board and the Ministry of Education may solicit and take into consideration the advice of the PIC with regard to matters that relate to student achievement and well-being.

4.14.2 The PIC may solicit and take into consideration the advice of parents of students enrolled in the board's schools with regard to matters under consideration by the committee.

4.14.3 The board shall inform the PIC of its response to advice provided to it by the committee.

4.15 **Conflict Resolution**

4.15.1 PIC will establish a by-law establishing a conflict resolution process for internal PIC disputes.

4.15.2 PIC members will make every effort to resolve conflicts themselves.

4.15.3 If PIC members are unable to resolve an internal dispute, the chair and/or co-chairs may contact the appropriate superintendent of education for assistance.

4.15.4 The superintendent of education will, in consultation with the chair or co-chairs of PIC, determine the approach to be used in the attempt to resolve the conflict.

4.16 **Summary of Activities**

4.16.1 Annually, a summary of the PIC's activities will be submitted to the Chair of the Board and the Director of Education, including how funding, if any, provided under the *Education Act* for the purposes of the PIC, was spent.

4.16.2 The Director of Education will provide the summary of the PIC's activities to the board's school councils and post the summary of activities on the board's website.