

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

1. Preamble

Lakehead District School Board recognizes that education is a shared responsibility involving schools, students and their families, and members of the community. Research has shown that a strong relationship exists between success in school and parental/guardian involvement in the educational process. Community members offer expertise and experience that may be a benefit to students. Regulation 612/00, Reg. 298 11 (12-20) and "School Councils, A Guide for Members, 2002" are referenced in these procedures and should be consulted for additional information regarding school councils.

School councils are not intended to replace or absorb existing parent/community associations without the consent of such associations.

It is the policy of Lakehead District School Board that each school in its jurisdiction annually establish and maintain a school council which will be instrumental in supporting school growth. The procedures outlined will provide clear parameters for the operation of school councils, while allowing enough procedural flexibility to accommodate individual school community needs.

2. Purpose (O. Reg. 612/00, s. 2)

2.1 The purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

2.2 A school council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with Regulation 612/00 to the principal of the school and the Board that established the council.

3. School Council Mandate

The school council shall act in an advisory capacity to the school's principal and, where appropriate, to the Board for the continued promotion of student learning and will place the overall interests of the students and school first.

School councils shall operate within the parameters of the Education Act and other relevant legislation, the Board's Operational Plan, and Board policies and agreements, including collective agreements.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

The objectives of school councils are:

- to focus on successful learning;
- to plan for school growth;
- to establish effective communication within the school community;
- to establish effective approaches to consultative and collaborative strategies between home, school and community; and
- to increase participation of parents/guardians in the education of their children.

4. Advisory Roles of the School Council

4.1 School councils are advisory bodies that provide advice with a school-wide focus, to the principal and, where appropriate, to the Board on items such as, but not limited to:

- local school calendar of events;
- school code of student behaviour;
- curriculum and program goals and priorities;
- responses of the school or Board to achievement in provincial and Board assessment programs;
- Board selection and placement of principals by providing information on the needs of the school (goals and profile of the school);
- school budget priorities, including local capital improvement plans;
- school/community communication strategies;
- methods of reporting to parents and the community;
- extracurricular activities in the school;
- school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational 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; and
- professional development activities for council members.

4.2 In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the school council shall:

- promote the best interests of the school community;
- establish goals, priorities and procedures; and
- enable members of the council to develop their skills as members by promoting attendance at Board-organized training sessions.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

5. Definitions and Interpretations (Reg. 612/00, s.1)

5.1 School Community

- students enrolled;
- parents and guardians;
- administration, teaching staff and non-teaching staff; and
- community members and partners.

5.2 School

The body of school pupils that is organized as a unit for educational purposes under the jurisdiction of the Board, and includes teachers and other staff members associated with such unit.

5.3 Parent/Guardian

"Parent" includes "guardian".

"Guardian" means a person who has lawful custody of a child, other than the parent of the child, as defined in the Education Act.

5.4 Community Member

A community member is an English-language public Board supporter who does not have children in the school.

5.5 Meeting

A session where a school council discusses or decides matters that it has authority to decide.

5.6 Parent Member

A member of a school council who is elected to the council in accordance with O. Reg. 612/00, s.4 (1), or who fills a vacancy created when a parent member ceases to hold office.

5.7 In the case of a school that is established primarily for adults, a reference in this regulation to a parent or to a parent of a pupil shall be deemed, with necessary modifications, to be a reference to a pupil who is enrolled in the school.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

6. Membership (O. Reg. 612/00, s.3)

6.1 While all members of council are equal partners, parents shall form a majority.

6.2 A school council of a school will be comprised of the following members:

- parents/guardians - parents shall form the majority of the school council;
- community representatives - minimum of one;
- teacher(s) – minimum of one;
- non-teaching staff - minimum one; and
- principal or designate.

6.2.1 Student:

- In the case of an elementary school, one pupil enrolled in the school who is appointed by the principal of the school, if the principal determines, after consulting the other members of the school council, that the council should include a pupil.
- The case of a school with one or more secondary school grades:
 - one pupil enrolled in the school who is appointed by the student council, if the school has a student council; and
 - one pupil enrolled in the school who is elected by secondary students if the school does not have a student council.

6.3 Despite Section 7.2, a person is not qualified to be a parent member of a school council if:

- they are employed at the school; or
- they are not employed at the school but is employed elsewhere by the Board that established the school council, unless they take reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment.

6.4 A person who is employed by the Board cannot be appointed as a community representative on the school council unless:

- they are not employed at the school; and
- the other members of the school council are informed of the person's employment before the appointment.

6.5 A trustee of the Board cannot be a member of a school council established by the Board.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

6.6 If fewer than the required number of parents are willing and able to stand for election, the school council will maintain vacant positions as it begins its work, and continue to seek involvement of parents through outreach strategies.

6.7 It is expected that the membership of the school council will reflect the diversity of the school community.

7. Election of Parent Members (O. Reg. 612/00, s.4 & 6)

7.1 The term of office for elected and appointed positions on the school council shall be one year or less. Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms.

7.2 A person is qualified to be a parent or guardian member (hereinafter collectively referred to as “parents”) of a school council if he or she is a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.

7.3 A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members of a school council if he or she is a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.

7.4 An election of parent members of a school council shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair or co-chairs of the school council after consulting with the principal of the school.

7.5 Despite Section 7.5, if a new school is established, the first election of parent members to the school council shall be held during the first 30 days of the school year, on a date that is fixed by the Board.

7.6 The principal of a school shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, on behalf of the school council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.

7.7 The notice required may be given by:

- notice to the parent’s child for delivery to his or her parent; and
- posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

7.8 The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.

7.9 The school council shall assist in the organization of elections.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

8. Other Elections (O. Reg. 612/00, s.5)
- 8.1 The elections of the student, teacher and non-teaching staff member shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year.
- 8.2 A person is qualified to vote in the election of the teacher member if they are a teacher, other than the principal or vice principal, who is employed at the school.
- 8.3 A person is qualified to vote in an election of a non-teaching staff member if they are a person, other than the principal, vice principal, or any teacher who is employed at the school.
- 8.4 A person is qualified to vote in an election of a student if they are a pupil enrolled in the school per 6.2.6.2 (ii).
9. Terms of Office (O. Reg. 612/00, s.6)
- 9.1 A person elected or appointed as a member of a school council holds office for one year from the latter of:
- the date they are elected or appointed; or
 - the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections held under Sections 7 and 8 in the school year, until the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections held under Sections 7 and 8 in the next school year.
- 9.2 A member of a school council may be re-elected or re-appointed, unless otherwise provided for in the by-laws of the school council.
10. Vacancies (O. Reg. 612/00, s.7)
- 10.1 A vacancy in the membership of a school council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the school council.
- 10.2 If an election is held to fill a vacancy in the membership of a school council, Section 7 or 8 applies, with necessary modifications to the election.
- 10.3 A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the school council from exercising its authority.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

11. Officers (O. Reg. 612/00, s.8)

- 11.1 A school council shall have a chair or co-chairs.
- 11.2 A chair or co-chair of a school council must be a parent member of the school council, and shall be elected by the members of the school council.
- 11.3 A person who is employed by the Board cannot be the chair or co-chair of the school council.
- 11.4 A school council may have such other officers as are provided for in the by-laws of the school council.
- 11.5 Subject to Sections 9.2 and 9.3, vacancies in executive positions shall be filled in accordance with the by-laws of the school council.
- 11.6 The chair or co-chair shall prepare the agenda for school council meetings in consultation with the principal and shall chair the meetings.
- 11.7 In all communication, the officers of school councils have a responsibility to ensure that when they speak on behalf of the school council, they are expressing the wishes of the school council.

12. Remuneration (O. Reg. 612/00, s.11)

- 12.1 A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of a school council.
- 12.2 School council members will be reimbursed for Board-related expenses according to existing Board policies and procedures.

13. Consultation by Board (O. Reg. 612/00, s.19)

- 13.1 In addition to its other obligations to solicit the views of school councils under the Act, every Board shall solicit the views of the school councils established by the Board with respect to the following matters:
 - 13.1.1 The establishment or amendment of Board policies and guidelines that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including:
 - 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;

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

- policies and guidelines established under subsection 302 (5) of the Act respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the Board's jurisdiction;
- policies and guidelines respecting the allocation of funding by the Board to school councils;
- policies and guidelines respecting the fundraising activities of school councils;
- policies and guidelines respecting conflict resolution processes for internal school council disputes; and
- policies and guidelines respecting reimbursement by the Board of expenses incurred by members and officers of school councils.

13.1.2 The development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including:

- 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; and
- 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.

13.1.3 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.

13.1.4 The process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice principals.

13.2 Subsection (1) does not limit the matters on which a board may solicit the views of school councils.

14. Role of the Principal (O. Reg. 612/00, s.18, and Reg. 298 11(12-20))

14.1 The principal of a school may delegate any of their powers or duties as a member of the school council to a vice principal of a school.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

14.2 In addition to their duties under this procedure, the principal of a school shall perform the duties relating to school councils that are imposed on the principal by Regulation 298 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario, 1990 (Operations of Schools-General) as follows:

- the principal of a school shall provide for the prompt distribution to each member of the school council of any materials received by the principal from the Ministry of Education that are identified by the Ministry as being for distribution to the members of school councils;
- the principal shall post any materials distributed to members of the school council in the school in a location that is accessible to parents;
- the principal or designate shall attend every meeting of the school council;
- the principal of a school shall act as a resource person to the school council and shall assist the council in obtaining information relating to relevant legislation, regulations and policies;
- the principal shall consider each recommendation made by the school council and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation; and
- the principal of a school shall make the names of the members of the school council known to the parents/guardians of the pupils enrolled in the school, by publishing those names in a school newsletter or by such other means as is likely to bring the names to the attention of the parents/guardians.

15. Advisory Authority and Responsibilities of School Councils (O. Reg. 612/00, s.19, 20, 23)

15.1 School councils shall communicate regularly with parents/guardians and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to advice being provided by the council, and to report on the activities of the council to the school community.

15.2 In addition to its other obligations to solicit the views of school councils under the Education Act, the Board shall solicit the views of the school councils as outlined in Regulation 612/00.

15.3 A school council may make recommendations to the principal of the school or to the Board on any matter.

15.4 In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the school council:

- may organize information, orientation and training sessions for members as needed; and
- shall promote the best interest of the whole school community.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

15.5 Under the “Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act” (1989), councils cannot access information on individual students or staff. Councils shall not be involved in issues relating to the performance of individual staff members. Individual members of the school community shall deal directly with the staff members and/or principal to resolve specific concerns.

16. Advice to Board and Duty of Board to Respond (O. Reg. 612/00, s.21)

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

16.2 Advice to the Board can be provided through existing Board procedures:

- the council can request that the principal bring its advice to the attention of the appropriate supervisory officer;
- the council can put its advice in writing to the chair of the Board through the secretary; i.e., the director of education of the Board;
- the council can request in writing an opportunity to make a presentation to the Board;
- the council can communicate directly with a school trustee; and
- the Board may seek advice from school councils on relevant topics.

17. Constitution and/or By-laws (O. Reg. 612/00, s.15)

17.1 A school council may make by-laws governing the conduct of its affairs.

Every school council shall make the following by-laws:

- 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; and
- a by-law that provides for a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes, in accordance with any applicable policies established by the Board.

17.2 The school council shall review its constitution and/or by-laws at regular intervals.

18. Meetings (O. Reg. 612/00, s.12)

18.1 There shall be a minimum of four scheduled meetings during the school year.

18.2 The first meeting shall be within the first 35 days of the school year, after the elections, on a date fixed by the principal of the school (in consultation with the chair).

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

18.3 A meeting of a 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 members.

18.4 All meetings of a school council shall be open to the public.

18.5 A school council is entitled to hold its meetings at the school.

18.6 All meetings of a school council shall be held at a location that is accessible to all the public.

18.7 The principal of a school shall, on behalf of the school council, give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the school council to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.

18.8 The notice required may be given by:

- giving the notice to the parent's child for delivery to their parent; and
- posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

19. Committees (O. Reg. 612/00, s.13)

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

19.2 Every committee of a school council must include at least one parent member of the school council.

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

19.4 Sections 18.4 to 18.8 apply, with necessary modifications, to committees of school councils.

20. Minutes and Financial Records (O. Reg. 612/00, s.16)

20.1 A school council shall keep minutes of its meetings and financial transactions.

20.2 The minutes and records shall be available at the school for examination by any person without charge.

20.3 Sections 20.1 and 20.2 do not apply to minutes and records that are more than four years old.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

20.4 In compliance with Board policy, the principal of the school shall be one of the signatories of all accounts and financial records.

21. Annual Report (O. Reg. 612/00, s.24)

21.1 Every school council shall annually submit a written report on its activities to the principal of the school and to the appropriate superintendent by October 15 of each year (Appendix A).

21.2 If the school council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report on those activities.

21.3 The principal shall, on behalf of the school council, give a copy of the report to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the copy is given, is enrolled in the school.

21.4 Section 21.3 may be complied with by:

- giving the report to the parent's child for delivery to their parent; and
- posting the report in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

22. Incorporation (O. Reg. 612/00, s.17)

A school council shall not be incorporated.

23. Voting (O. Reg. 612/00, s.14)

23.1 Each member of a school council is entitled to one vote.

23.2 Each member of a committee of a school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee.

23.3 The principal of the school is not entitled to vote.

23.4 Council members will identify all agenda items and/or issues with which they have a conflict of interest.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

24. Fundraising (O. Reg. 612/00, s.22)
- 24.1 A school council may engage in fundraising activities to benefit the school it represents subject to sections 24.2 and 24.3.
- 24.2 A school council shall not engage in fundraising activities unless the activities are conducted in accordance with any applicable policies and procedures established by the Board.
- 24.3 A school council shall ensure that the funds it raises are used in accordance with any applicable policies and procedures established by the Board.
- 24.4 If a school council makes a decision to engage in fundraising in support of its school, the council shall appoint, by resolution, a parent member to serve as treasurer.
25. Insurance for School Councils
- 25.1 The Board recognizes that school council members are volunteers, and, as such, are covered by the Board's liability insurance as long as they are acting within the scope of their school council duties on behalf of the school, as sanctioned by the principal.
- 25.2 School councils should be aware of the liability and insurance coverage issues outlined in the Ontario School Board's Insurance Exchange (OSBIE) Risk Management Advisory, S-1 (Appendix B), and review their activities annually based on this Advisory.
26. Recommendations
- 26.1 Recommendations and decisions of school councils that are broader in scope than the local school may be referred to the Board or the appropriate committee of the Board through the supervisory officer.
- 26.2 Recommendations and decisions that are specifically related to the school shall be referred to the school principal.
- 26.3 Should the Board wish further clarification of recommendations/decisions received, it may, from time to time, invite representatives from the council(s) to speak on behalf of the recommendation/decision.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS	8000
SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES	8080

27. Review

These procedures shall be reviewed in accordance with 2010 Policy Development and Review Policy.

<u>Cross Reference</u>	<u>Date Received</u>	<u>Legal Reference</u>
Policy 8080, "School Council Policy"	May 26, 1998	Ontario Education Act R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298
Policy & Procedures 8012, "Fundraising in the Schools"	<u>Date Revised</u> May 27, 2003 June 22, 2010 April 24, 2018 February 24, 2026	O. Reg. 612/00 O. Reg. 613/00