
Administrative Procedures Memorandum A7200 – School Council

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Contact	School Services
References	Policy 4310 – School Councils APM A7630 – Code of Conduct Ontario Regulation 612/00 - School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees

1. Rationale

School councils play a crucial role in bridging the gap between home and school, fostering a collaborative environment where parents/guardians can contribute to the educational landscape. Engaging in a school council allows for a shared voice in the decision-making process, ensuring that the perspectives of families are considered alongside those of educators. School councils advocate for the needs and well-being of students, addressing critical issues, enhancing educational outcomes, and improving student achievement. This administrative procedures memorandum (APM) details the requirement for school councils in all schools of the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB).

2. Election of parent/guardian representatives

- 2.1 The school council chair or co-chairs will consult with the administrator to set a date for an election to be held within 30 calendar days of the start of the school year. The administrator will provide notice of the date, time, and location 14 days prior to the election to the school community, including parents/guardians, staff, and students.
- 2.2 Parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school are eligible to run as parent/guardian representatives (except when specifically prohibited as per Policy 4310). Staff are not eligible to run as a parent/guardian representative at their child's school if they are employed at that school. If they are employed elsewhere in the board, they may run as a parent/guardian representative providing they inform the parent/guardian community of their employment prior to the election.
- 2.3 Parent/Guardian Candidate Nomination forms ([FORM A7200 - 1](#)) shall be filed by all candidates for elected positions on the school council. The submission deadline for the nomination forms will be determined annually by the administrator.
- 2.4 Elections for school council shall be conducted by secret ballot ([FORM A7200 - 2](#)). Neither proxy nor absentee voting is permitted. An alternative voting process may be approved by the superintendent of education where appropriate.

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- 2.5 All parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school are eligible to vote for parent/guardian representatives.
 - 2.6 All eligible voters shall be entitled to cast one vote for each of the candidate positions available at their school. Casting more than the maximum number of votes permitted in the category spoils the ballot.
 - 2.7 Council members are elected based on the highest tally of votes received. If there is a tie for the final position, and two or more nominees are tied, respecting the fewest votes, those nominees shall draw lots (numbers) to determine which name(s) shall be dropped from the ballot. The nominee(s) who draw the lowest number(s) will be dropped from the ballot.
 - 2.8 No individual campaign literature for school council elections may be distributed or posted in the school or on school property.
 - 2.9 School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
 - 2.10 The election proceedings shall be supervised by the school administrator.
 - 2.11 If all elected positions have not been filled at the end of the election process, and vacancies exist, an election will be held at a later date and/or the newly constituted school council shall appoint the necessary number of eligible persons to serve for the balance of the term of office. If appointments fail to fill all positions, the school council shall proceed to operate if a parent/guardian majority exists.
 - 2.12 All appointments to the school council are by majority vote of the members at the meeting. Appointments shall be made at a public meeting with appropriate public notice of the meeting.
 - 2.13 At the conclusion of the election proceedings the administrator shall complete the Summary of Election Procedures ([FORM A7200 - 3](#)).
 - 2.14 Appeals related to the school council election shall be provided to the administrator in writing within three days of the election. If the situation is not resolved to the satisfaction of the appellant, the situation will be resolved by the superintendent of education.
 - 2.15 The administrator shall call the first meeting of the school council within 35 calendar days of the start of the school year.
 - 2.16 Election of a school council chairperson
 - 2.16.1 The school council shall elect a chair or co-chairs. The chair (co-chairs) must be a parent/guardian member who is not employed by the board.

- 2.17 Appointment of community representatives
- 2.17.1 The school council shall appoint a community representative(s). A person is not eligible to be a community representative if they are employed at the school. If employed by the board, they must inform the council of their employment prior to their appointment.

3. Election of staff representatives

- 3.1 The administrator will make the necessary arrangements for school council staff representatives to be elected.
- 3.2 Anyone assigned to the staff of the school (full or part-time) may be a candidate.
- 3.3 Part-time staff who are assigned to more than one location may only hold one school council position.

4. Election/appointment of student representatives

- 4.1 In secondary schools:
- 4.1.1 a student, or students, enrolled in the school who is/are elected by students registered at the school or appointed by the school administrator, if the school does not have a student council; or,
- 4.1.2 a student, or students, enrolled in the school who is/are appointed by the student council.
- 4.2 In elementary schools:
- 4.2.1 a student, or students, enrolled in the school who is/are appointed by the administrator of the school, if the administrator determines, after consulting with the other members of the school council, that the council should include a student; or,
- 4.2.2 a student, or students, enrolled in the school who is/are appointed by the student council.

5. Election results

The administrator shall make the names of the members of the school council known to the school community, including parents/guardians, staff, and students, within 30 calendar days following the election of school council members.

6. Procedures at school council meetings

- 6.1 Standards of behaviour

All council members shall conduct themselves in accordance with the SCDSB Code of Conduct (APM A7630 – Code of Conduct).

6.2 Absence of chair

In the absence of the chair, the council will choose, by majority vote of members present, an acting chair for the meeting.

6.3 Quorum

The quorum for any meeting will be a majority of the members present and a majority of those present must be parent/guardian members.

6.4 Absence of quorum

6.4.1 If a majority of parents/guardians wish the meeting to proceed in the absence of a quorum, the council will continue the meeting for purposes of discussions of issues; however, item 6.4.2 will apply.

6.4.2 In the absence of a quorum, no motions may be considered or approved.

6.5 Motions

6.5.1 Any member of the council may make a motion at any meeting, with no seconder required.

6.5.2 Any parent/guardian may propose a motion for the council to consider at any meeting. If another parent/guardian seconds the motion, the chair will put the motion before the council.

6.5.3 If a majority of the council approves consideration of a motion proposed under item 6.5.2, the motion will be considered by the council in the same manner as any other motion.

6.6 Voting on motions

6.6.1 Each member of the council will have one vote on every motion (except when specifically prohibited as per Policy 4310 – School Councils).

6.6.2 A member of the council may abstain from voting on any motion.

6.6.3 A motion is approved if a majority of the council members present at the meeting vote in favour of it.

6.6.4 The council may at any time approve a motion allowing parents/guardians to vote on a particular motion at a particular meeting.

6.6.5 If a motion is approved under item 6.6.4, each parent/guardian present at the meeting will have one vote, and the motion will be approved if a majority of those voting vote in favour of the motion.

7. School council bylaws

School council bylaws must be developed by using [FORM A7200 - 4](#) as a template.

Additional roles and responsibilities of school council members are included as Appendix A.

8. Resolution of conflicts

Occasionally, a dispute may develop among school council members. It is expected that members and the administrator will make every effort to resolve the dispute themselves.

8.1 Resolving disputes internally

- 8.1.1 Council members will demonstrate respect for other council members at all times.
- 8.1.2 Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- 8.1.3 The chair will ensure all members of the council have the opportunity to speak.
- 8.1.4 Speakers will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- 8.1.5 The chair will focus the discussion on council issues.
- 8.1.6 The chair will clarify speaker statements, identify common points of view, and attempt to achieve a consensus among council members.
- 8.1.7 The chair may request disputing members of council to meet privately to find a mutually acceptable solution to the issue.
- 8.1.8 Members will adhere to the standards of behaviour outlined in APM A7630 – Code of Conduct.

8.2 Handling disruptive behaviour

- 8.2.1 If a council member(s) becomes disruptive during a meeting, the chair shall call for order.
- 8.2.2 If the disruptive behaviour continues, or order cannot be restored, the chair may ask for the removal of the disruptive individual(s). The reasons for the removal should be documented in the minutes.
- 8.2.3 Removing a member(s) from a council meeting may not prevent the member(s) from participating in future council meetings.

8.3 Resolving disputes through mediation

If it is apparent that a dispute cannot be resolved internally, the chair may ask the superintendent of education to help through a mediation process.

9. School council communication

- 9.1 To facilitate communication with the school community, other school council chairs, board staff, and the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), the school council chair and/or co-chairs shall use the council email address as provided by the board.
- 9.2 Council shall act in accordance with board appropriate use guidelines when communicating, subject to administrator approval.

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Roles and Responsibilities of School Council Members

Council members are to maintain a school-wide focus on all issues. Council meetings are not a forum for discussion about individual parents/guardians, students, staff, trustees, or other council members.

1. Responsibilities of the chair/co-chair include:
 - a. communicate with the school administrator;
 - b. prepare the agenda for school council meetings in consultation with the school administrator;
 - c. chair school council meetings;
 - d. ensure that the minutes of school council meetings and records of all financial transactions are recorded and maintained;
 - e. participate in information and training programs;
 - f. ensure that there is regular communication with the school community;
 - g. consult with senior board staff and trustees, when requested;
 - h. participate in establishing by-laws;
 - i. act in accordance with [APM A7630 – Code of Conduct](#); and,
 - j. abide by board policies and procedures.

2. Responsibilities of the council members include:
 - a. participate in council meetings;
 - b. participate in information and training programs;
 - c. act as a link between the school council and the community;
 - d. participate in establishing and following by-laws;
 - e. act in accordance with the SCDSB Code of Conduct; and,
 - f. abide by board policies and procedures.

3. Responsibilities of the administrator include:
 - a. facilitate the establishment of the school council and assists in its operation;
 - b. support and promote the council's activities;
 - c. consult with the school council on the development and implementation of school action plans;
 - d. consult with the council in any areas identified by the council as a priority;
 - e. act as a resource regarding the *Education Act*, regulations, and board policies relevant to the functions of the council;
 - f. obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make informed decisions;
 - g. communicate with the chair of the council, as required;
 - h. ensure that copies of the financial records and minutes of the council's meetings are kept at the school and available for examination;
 - i. encourage the participation of parents/guardians from all groups and other individuals within the school community

- j. provide for prompt distribution to school council members any materials received from the Ministry of Education identified for council members and post same;
- k. attend (or designate a replacement for) every school council meeting;
- l. does not vote in votes taken by the school council or council committees; and,
- m. participate in establishing the by-laws.