

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE NO. 130

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Background

In accordance with the *Education Act*, the formation of school councils as advisory to the principal of the school and the elected trustees is encouraged throughout the Division. The participation of parents in school councils supports the notion of parents as the primary educators of their children.

Initial Establishment

1. The principal shall call a general meeting of the parents of students attending the school. The notice of the meeting shall include the purpose and time of the meeting and be communicated to parents using available channels of communication, including the parish bulletins, at least 10 school days prior to the meeting. The first meeting must be held within 40 days after the start of the school year.
2. A minimum of five parents must be present in order for the meeting to proceed.
3. The first item of business at the meeting will be the election of a chairperson for the meeting. The chairperson must be a parent of a student enrolled in the school (unless no parent is willing to be nominated).
4. The chairperson will then provide for discussion on:
 - the level of involvement the parents of students want,
 - the matters on which the school council will advise the principal,
 - the frequency of council meetings,
 - the model of governance to be followed, and
 - the role of members of the executive.
5. The meeting shall then determine the number of parents that should be the members of the council and length of term of office for each.
6. The meeting shall then proceed with the election of the council chair and the other members of the council as determined by those in attendance at the meeting.

Membership

1. A majority of the members of the school council must be parents of students attending the school and:
 - the principal of the school,
 - at least one teacher elected by members of the teaching staff,
 - at least one student, if the school is a senior high school, elected by the student body
2. The school council shall have five or more persons.
3. Should a parent member of the executive resign during the school year, the remaining members may elect another parent to fill the vacancy.
4. Should a teacher or student member resign during the school year, the replacements should be chosen in the same way as were those that resigned.

Continuity

The membership is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for the election of parent members so that the continuity of the school council is maintained from year to year.

Operation

1. The school council shall follow the administrative procedures for school councils established for the Division.
2. The school council may make rules with respect to the operation of the council.
3. The school council will vote upon issues under consideration according to the council bylaws.

Roles and Responsibilities of the School Principal and the School Council Chair

1. The principal, following the establishment of a school council, shall notify the Superintendent of the membership.
2. The principal shall file a copy of the council's constitution with the Superintendent.
3. The school council chair shall communicate in writing to the Board those motions of the school council that constitute advice to the Board.

4. The principal shall notify the Superintendent if a school council is not carrying out its responsibilities in accordance with the *Education Act* and the administrative procedures of the Division.

Relationships of a School Council to the Principal and the Board

1. A school council is advisory to the principal of the school and to the Board respecting any matter relating to the school.
2. The Board has delegated to school councils the authority to raise funds that are not subject to the reporting procedures of the Societies Act of the Province of Alberta. Should a school council plan to raise more than \$25,000 in a given year, they are required to obtain a license in accordance with Section 14 of the Charitable Fundraising Act.

Reporting Requirements

The school council shall submit to the Board by September 30 of each year, for the preceding school year, copies of:

1. Financial statements for any money handled by the school council,
2. A report on how funds handled by the school council were used,
3. A report outlining the activities of the school council, and
4. Minutes of each meeting.

Appeal Procedures for Disputes on Policies Proposed or Adopted for a School Between a Principal and a School Council

The principal and the school council are encouraged to utilize the following appeal procedures whenever a dispute arises between the principal and the school council regarding policies proposed or adopted for the school.

In the event of such a dispute, either the chair or the principal may submit a written appeal to the Board regarding the dispute, within a reasonable time after which the dispute arose.

1. When the need to hear an appeal arises, the Board or a committee established by the Board to hear the appeal, shall establish a hearing date, time and place which allows the parties to the appeal sufficient time to prepare for the appeal. This may include arranging to be represented by legal counsel.

2. The Superintendent may be present to assist the Board or the committee established by the Board, except in those cases where it is his/her decision that is being appealed. In those cases, he/she shall attend to make representation to support his/her position.
3. The chair of the Board or of the committee established by the Board to hear the appeal shall be guided by the following:
 - a. Introduction of the participants to the hearing,
 - b. Explain the purpose of the appeal hearing, which is to:
 - i. to provide an opportunity for both parties to make representations surrounding the disputed issues, and in support of their position before a decision on the appeal is made,
 - ii. to permit each party to hear the other party and to respond to statements made by the other party, and
 - iii. to allow trustees to know the facts and disputed issues and to hear any evidence or information they deem relevant prior to making a decision in respect of the appeal.
 - c. The school council chair and principal will be given an opportunity to review their positions regarding the dispute and the policy proposed, or adopted for the school, and the issues surrounding the dispute. The party making application for the appeal shall proceed first and be given a full and ample opportunity to raise concerns before the Board. The other party shall then be given ample time to explain their position regarding the disputed matter.
 - d. In the event that the Superintendent has been asked by the parties to the appeal to give a decision with respect to the matter under appeal, the Superintendent shall be entitled to make representations regarding his findings and his recommendation as to the resolution of the dispute to the Board.
 - e. Each party to the dispute shall be given ample opportunity to respond to the concerns raised by themselves and the Superintendent's proposed resolution to the dispute.
 - f. Members of the Board or the committee and executive staff may question the parties to clarify the facts.
 - g. The Board or the committee established by the Board will discuss the matter in the absence of the parties and the executive staff.

- h. The Board or the committee will make a decision in respect of the appeal and advise the parties in writing regarding the decision and the reasons for that decision which will be final and binding.

Dissolution

The Board may request the Minister to dissolve a school council in accordance with the *Education Act*. The Board may also request the Minister to dissolve a school council if one of the following conditions prevail:

1. Fraudulent, criminal or unethical behavior,
3. Internal dissension,
3. Adversarial relationships with staff,
4. Refusal to follow the administrative procedures of the Division or to carry out its responsibilities in accordance with the *Education Act* and provincial regulations,
5. Disruptions of the educational climate, or
6. Unresolved disputes between the school council and the principal.

References: Section 55 of the Education Act