

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 110

School Councils

The Director of Education, together with the staff members and Trustees of Limestone District School Board, believes that relationships between schools and their communities can be enhanced through the establishment of local school councils. The school councils serve as an ongoing mechanism for effective communication and consultation among system leaders, the staff in each school, the school community, the Board and the Ministry of Education. The main purposes of school councils are as follows:

- to promote student academic success;
- to increase parental involvement in schools to promote greater understanding of the education process and to enhance the accountability of the education system;
- to provide parents, staff, students and community members with a forum to learn about education and community needs;
- to provide a meaningful advisory role for parents and the community; and
- to enhance communication and foster partnerships among parents, communities, teachers and administrators

Each school in the jurisdiction shall establish a school council. The district is committed to providing, within its means, the resources necessary for an effective partnership between parents and schools.

It is expected that the school councils will operate under this administrative procedure and that each school council shall develop a constitution, by-laws or terms of reference based on the procedural guidelines contained in this document.

1.0.0 DEFINITIONS:

In this administrative procedure:

All references to “the Board” refer to Limestone District School Board;

“Meeting” does not include a training session or other event where a school council does not discuss or decide matters that it has authority to decide;

“Parent” means:

- (a) in respect of a school council, a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school, and includes a guardian as defined in section 1 of the Act, and
- (b) in respect of a parent involvement committee of a board, a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in a school of the board, and includes a guardian as defined in section 1 of the Act; (“père ou mère”)

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“Parent member” means:

- (a) in respect of a school council, a member of the council who is elected to the council in accordance with section 5.0.0 or who fills a vacancy created by a parent member ceasing to hold office, and
- (b) in respect of a parent involvement committee, a member of the committee who is appointed or elected to the committee in accordance with section 5.3.0 of AP 114 or who fills a vacancy created by a parent member ceasing to hold office

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

2.0.0 MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION

2.1.0 The membership of a school council shall be elected or appointed, as appropriate, from, but not be limited to, all parents or guardians of students in the school, the school principal, students (optional in elementary schools), teaching and support staff, plus appointed community members.

2.2.0 Each school site shall elect a school council that has, at minimum, the following members:

- 1. 7 parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school (6 if no student representative); or a number determined by an individual school council and set in a by-law;
- 2. at least 1 community representative (e.g. representative of individuals and groups without students in the school, including senior citizens, business people, professionals) appointed by the other members of the council; a school council may specify by by-law that the council shall include two or more community representatives, appointed by the members of the council;
- 3. a student (optional in elementary schools based on decision of the principal in consultation with the school council);

In the case of a school with one or more secondary school grades:

- i. one pupil enrolled in the school who is appointed by the student council, if the school has a student council; or
- ii. one pupil enrolled in the school who is elected in accordance with Section 4.0.0, if the school does not have a student council;

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4. the school principal
5. a member of the teaching staff of the school, other than the principal or vice-principal or any other teacher, elected in accordance with Section 4.0.0.
6. a member of the school-based support staff who is employed at the school, other than the principal, vice-principal or any other teacher, elected in accordance with Section 4.0.0.
7. potentially, one person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education or Parent Partenaires en Education, if the association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education or Parent Partenaires en Education is established in respect of the school.

2.3.0 Councils may choose to become larger for a variety of reasons such as to accommodate additional community representatives. However, parents and guardians must always be in the majority on the council.

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

- a) he or she is not employed at the school; and
- b) the other members of the school council are informed of the person's employment before the appointment.

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

2.3.3 Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 do not apply in respect of a school that is established primarily for adults.

2.3.4 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.

3.0.0 ELECTION OF PARENT MEMBERS

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

3.2.0 A person is qualified to be a parent member of a school council if he or she is a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.

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- 3.3.0 Despite Section 3.2.0, a person is not qualified to be a parent member of a school council if:
- a) he or she is employed at the school; or
 - b) he or she is not employed at the school but is employed elsewhere by the Board that established the school council, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment.
- 3.4.0 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.
- 3.5.0 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.
- 3.6.0 Despite Section 3.5.0, 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 that established the school council.
- 3.7.0 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.
- 3.8.0 The notice required by Section 3.7.0 may be given by:
- a) notice to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent;
 - b) posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents;
 - c) placing a notice in the school planner; and/or
 - d) posting a notice on the school's web-site.
- 3.9.0 The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.
- 3.10.0 If there is a tie for the final position for a representative on the school council, the winner shall be determined by draw.
- 3.11.0 Election proceedings shall be supervised by the school principal or designate.

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4.0.0 OTHER ELECTIONS

- 4.1.0 The elections of members of school councils referred to in Section 2.2.0, subsections 3, 5 and 6 shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year.
- 4.2.0 A person is qualified to vote in an election of a member of a school council referred to in Section 2.2.0, subsection 5, if he or she is a teacher, other than the principal or vice-principal, who is employed at the school.
- 4.3.0 A person is qualified to vote in an election of a member of a school council referred to in Section 2.2.0, subsection 6, if he or she is a person, other than the principal, vice-principal or any other teacher, who is employed at the school.
- 4.4.0 A person is qualified to vote in an election of a member of a school council referred to in Section 2.2.0, subsection 3 (ii) if he or she is a pupil enrolled in the school.

5.0.0 TERMS OF OFFICE

- 5.1.0 A person elected or appointed as a member of a school council holds office from the latter of:
- a) the date he or she is elected or appointed; and
 - b) the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections held under Sections 3.0.0 and 4.0.0 in the school year

until the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections held under Sections 3.0.0 and 4.0.0 in the next school year.

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

6.0.0 VACANCIES

- 6.1.0 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.
- 6.2.0 If an election is held to fill a vacancy in the membership of a school council, Sections 3.0.0 and 4.0.0, as the case may be, apply, with necessary modifications, to the election.
- 6.3.0 A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the school council from exercising its authority.

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7.0.0 OFFICERS

- 7.1.0 A school council shall have a chair or, if the by-laws of the school council so provide, two co-chairs.
- 7.2.0 A chair or co-chair of a school council must be a parent member of the school council, and shall be elected by the member of the school council.
- 7.3.0 A person who is employed by the Board that established the school council cannot be the chair or co-chair of the school council.
- 7.4.0 A school council may have such other officers as are provided for in the by-laws of the school council.
- 7.5.0 Subject to Sections 7.2.0 and 7.3.0, vacancies in the office of chair, co-chair or any other officer of a school council shall be filled in accordance with the by-laws of the school council.
- 7.6.0 The chair or co-chair shall prepare the agenda for school council meetings in consultation with the principal and chair the meetings.
- 7.7.0 The chair or co-chair shall consult, on behalf of the school council, with senior Board staff and Trustees as needed, and arrange for the school council to be represented at related functions and meetings.
- 7.8.0 The chair or co-chair shall provide for regular communication among the school council, parents, the community, and existing organizations within the school, as well as with other school councils.

8.0.0 MINISTRY POWERS AND DUTIES

- 8.1.0 As part of its accountability to parents, the Ministry shall report annually to members of school councils on education in the province.
- 8.2.0 The Ministry may,
- (a) make other reports to members of school councils; and
 - (b) provide information to members of school councils respecting the roles and responsibilities of school councils

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9.0.0 OTHER ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

Other elected members of the school council may:

- 9.1.0 Participate in information, training and orientation sessions;
- 9.1.1 Participate in school council meetings;
- 9.1.2 Act as links between the school and the community;
- 9.1.3 Encourage the participation and involvement of all parents within the school;
- 9.1.4 Encourage the support of the community for the school; and
- 9.1.5 Support the projects and activities undertaken by the school council.

10.0.0 REMUNERATION

- 10.1.0 No financial remuneration is provided for any member of a school council for his or her work as a member of the council.
- 10.2.0 The Board that established a school council shall reimburse members and officers of the school council in accordance with Administrative Procedure 111 School Council Financial Regulations, for expenses they incur as members or officers of the school council.
- 10.3.0 This does not preclude the Board from providing resources and training for school council members.

11.0.0 ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

- 11.1.0 The principal of a school may delegate any of his or her powers or duties as a member of the school council, including any powers or duties under this administrative procedure, to a vice-principal of the school.
- 11.2.0 In addition to his or her duties under this procedure, the principal of a school shall perform the duties relating to school councils that are imposed on the principal by *Ontario Regulation 298—Operation of Schools* and amended by *Regulation 612* as follows:
 - 11.2.1 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 that are identified by the Ministry as being for distribution to the members of school councils.

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- 11.2.2 The principal shall post any materials distributed to members of the school council under Section 15.0.0 of this procedure in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.
- 11.2.3 The principal shall meet the requirements of Section 15.0.0 of this procedure in each school year not later than 30 days following the election of parent members of the school council.
- 11.2.4 The principal of a school shall attend every meeting of the school council, unless he or she is unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond his or her control. The principal may designate the vice-principal of the school as referred to in Section 11.1.0.
- 11.2.5 The principal of a school shall act as a resource person to the school council and shall assist the council in obtaining information relevant to the functions of the council, including information relating to relevant legislation, policies and procedures.
- 11.2.6 The principal of a school shall consider each recommendation made to the principal by the school council and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.
- 11.2.7 In addition to his or her other obligations to solicit the views of the school council under the *Act* and the regulations, the principal of a school shall solicit the views of the school council with respect to the following matters:
- i) a local code of conduct established under subsection 303(1) or (2) of the *Act* governing the behaviour of all persons in the school;
 - ii) school procedures or guidelines related to procedures and guidelines established by the Director of Education under subsection 302(5) of the *Act* respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the Board's jurisdiction;
 - iii) 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 a local code of conduct established under subsection 303(1) or (2) of the *Act* governing the behaviour of all persons in the school; and

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- implementation plans for school procedures or guidelines related to procedures and guidelines established by the Board under subsection 302 (5) of the *Act* respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the Board's jurisdiction.
- school 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.

11.3.0 Subsection 11.0.0 does not limit the matters on which the principal of a school may solicit the views of the school council.

12.0.0 BOARD/PARENT CONSULTATION

12.1.0 In addition to its other obligations to solicit the views of school councils under the *Act*, every Board, through the Director of Education, shall solicit the views of the school councils established by the Board with respect to the following matters:

12.1.1 The establishment or amendment of administrative procedures and guidelines that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including:

- (i) procedures and guidelines established under subsection 302(1) of the *Act*, with respect of the conduct of persons in schools within the Board's jurisdiction;
- (ii) procedures and guidelines established under subsection 302(5) of the *Act* respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the Board's jurisdiction;
- (iii) procedures and guidelines respecting the allocation of funding by the Board to school councils;
- (iv) procedures and guidelines respecting the fundraising activities of school councils;
- (v) procedures and guidelines respecting conflict resolution processes for internal school council disputes; and
- (vi) procedures and guidelines respecting reimbursement by the Board of expenses incurred by members and officers of school councils.

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12.1.2 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:

- (i) implementation plans for procedures 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
- (ii) implementation plans for procedures and guidelines established under subsection 302(5) of the *Act* respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the Board's jurisdiction.

12.1.3 Board action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of pupils, and the communications of those plans to the public.

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

12.2.0 Section 12.1.0 does not limit the matters on which a Director of Education or Board may solicit views of school councils.

12.3.0 A school council shall consult with parents of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the council.

13.0.0 ADVISORY AUTHORITY OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

13.1.0 A school council may make recommendations to the principal of the school, the Director, or to the Board that established the school council on any matter. A school council may also liaise with Limestone District School Board through the School Council Liaison Committee (Parent Involvement Committee or PIC).

13.2.0 In addition to its responsibilities, each school council shall collaborate with the school principal and the Director of Education or designate(s) to:

- 13.2.1 Establish its constitution, by-laws or terms of reference and a procedure for election of members;
- 13.2.2 Organize information, training and orientation sessions for members of the school council, as needed; and
- 13.2.3 Promote the best interests of the school community.

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- 13.3.0 The establishment of a school council should not preclude the formation of other supporting volunteer organizations within the school.
- 13.4.0 School councils may not be involved in issues relating to performance of individual staff members, as this is covered in collective agreements, administrative procedures, and legislation.
- 13.4.1 Individual members of the school council and school community shall deal directly with the staff member and/or the principal to resolve specific student/teacher issues.
- 13.5.0 The school council shall participate in the development of the School Profile.
- 13.6.0 The district 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 duties on behalf of the Board.
- 14.0.0 ADVICE TO DIRECTOR/BOARD AND DUTY TO RESPOND
- 14.1.0 Advice to the Director of Education or to the Board through the Director can be provided through existing administrative procedures:
- 14.1.1 The school council can request that the principal bring its advice to the attention of the appropriate supervisory officer;
- 14.1.2 The school council can put its advice in writing to the Director or chair through the secretary of the Board (i.e. the Director);
- 14.1.3 The school council can request in writing an opportunity to make a presentation to the Board;
- 14.1.4 The school council can communicate directly with the Director or school trustee.
- 14.1.5 The Director or Board may seek advice from school councils on relevant topics.
- 14.1.6 The Director or Board shall consider each recommendation made by the school council and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.
- 15.0.0 MEETINGS
- 15.1.0 A school council shall meet at least four times during the school year, with one meeting being for the purpose of holding elections for parent members.

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15.2.0 A school council shall meet within the first 35 days of the school year, after the elections held under Sections 3.0.0 and 4.0.0, on a date fixed by the principal of the school in consultation with the chair.

15.3.0 A meeting of a school council cannot be held unless,

- (a) a majority of the current members of the school council are present at the meeting; and
- (b) a majority of the members of the school council who are present at the meeting are parent members.

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

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

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

15.7.0 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.

15.8.0 The notice required by Section 15.7.0 may be given by,

- (a) a notice to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent;
- (b) posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents;
- (c) placing a notice in the school planner; and/or
- (d) posting a notice on the school's web-site.

16.0.0 COMMITTEES

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

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

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

16.4.0 Sections 15.4.0 to 15.8.0 apply, with necessary modifications, to committees of school councils.

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17.0.0 BY-LAWS

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

17.2.0 Every school council shall make the following by-laws:

- (i) A by-law that governs election procedures and the filling of vacancies in the membership of the school council;
- (ii) A by-law that establishes rules respecting participation in school council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest; and
- (iii) A by-law that, in accordance with any applicable procedures established by the Director, establishes a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes. See section 20.0.0 below.

17.3.0 The school council shall review its constitution, by-laws or terms of reference at least every two years.

17.4.0 The school council shall evaluate its activities and set goals annually that reflect the needs of students, community views and the school growth or improvement plan.

18.0.0 MINUTES AND FINANCIAL RECORDS

18.1.0 A school council shall keep minutes of all of its meetings and records of all of its financial transactions.

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

18.3.0 Sections 18.1.0 and 18.2.0 do not apply to minutes and records that are more than four years old.

18.4.0 Every school council shall annually submit a written report on its activities to the principal of the school and to the Director of Education.

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

18.6.0 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.

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18.7.0 Section 18.6.0 may be complied with by,

- (a) giving the report to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent; and
- (b) posting the report in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

19.0.0 INCORPORATION

19.1.0 A school council shall not be incorporated.

20.0.0 DECISION MAKING/VOTING

20.1.0 Decisions shall be made as follows:

20.1.1 The school council shall operate in a non-judgmental manner, respecting individual rights and confidentiality, employing no-fault discussions and reaching consensus through compromise.

20.1.2 The chair shall allow for participation in discussion by all members of council in attendance.

20.1.3 Every attempt should be made to reach consensus. Consensus is a form of group decision-making based on the willingness to consent and support. Consensus is reached when all members of the school council, including the chair, are willing to accept and support an idea or concept. School councils are encouraged to reach consensus.

20.1.4 Every effort shall be made to reach decisions through consensus. In the event that consensus cannot be achieved, the decision may be reached by taking a vote.

20.2.0 Subject to Section 20.4.0, each member of a school council referred to in Section 2.2.0. is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the school council.

20.3.0 Subject to Section 20.4.0, each member of a committee of a school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee.

20.4.0 The principal of the school is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the school council or by a committee of the school council.

20.5.0 A member of the school council may request that any matter not on the distributed agenda be postponed until the next regular meeting of the school council. Such items will not be decided on until the next regular meeting.

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21.0.0 FUNDRAISING

21.1.0 Subject to subsection 21.2.0, a school council may engage in fundraising activities.

21.2.0 A school council shall not engage in fund-raising activities unless,

- (a) the activities are conducted in accordance with Administrative Procedure 318 Advertising and Fund-Raising in Schools and Board Buildings, as established by the Director of Education; and
- (b) the activities are to raise funds for a purpose approved by the Director or authorized by any applicable procedures established by the Director.

21.3.0 A school council shall ensure that the funds raised by it are used in accordance with any applicable procedures established by the Director.

22.0.0 SCHOOL COUNCIL FAMILY OF SCHOOLS MEETING

22.1.0 School councils are encouraged to come together to share mutual interests, concerns and activities on a family of schools basis. Representatives to family of schools council meetings shall be determined by the individual school councils.

23.0.0 SCHOOL COUNCIL LIAISON COMMITTEE (PIC)

Membership on one or more school councils does not preclude membership on the School Council Liaison Committee (PIC) at the Board level.

Legal References:

Education Act S. 302-303 Consider Views of School Councils
Ontario Regulation 298 S. 11 (12) to (20) Duties of Principal: School Council
Ontario Regulation 612/00 School Councils
Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 122
Ministry of Education: School Councils: A Guide for Members

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