

SCHOOL COUNCILS

Background

The right of parents to be involved in their children's education and for parents, community members, and school staff to be involved in making decisions about the education of students must be recognized. To that end, HPSPD encourages the establishment of school councils in each of its schools to provide an opportunity for their members to have meaningful involvement in schools and the education process by consulting with the Principal, making recommendations, and supporting school activities.

Procedures

1. General

- 1.1. School councils shall be established, organized and operated according to the provision and specifications of the *Education Act* and *School Councils Regulation*.
- 1.2. If a school is required to hold an establishment meeting, the Principal must give notice to the following persons of the meeting:
 - 1.2.1. a parent of each student enrolled in the school;
 - 1.2.2. a parent of each student enrolled in an Early Childhood Services program at the school;
 - 1.2.3. the school staff;
 - 1.2.4. other members of the school community who, in the Principal's opinion, should be given notice.
- 1.3. A notice under subsection (1.1) must
 - 1.3.1. describe the purpose of the meeting;
 - 1.3.2. set out the time, date and location of the meeting, and
 - 1.3.3. be given at least 10 school days before the date of the meeting.
- 1.4. A notice to persons referred to in number (1.2) must
 - 1.4.1. meet the requirements set out in number (1.3) and
 - 1.4.1.1. be posted on the website and in 1 or more locations that are accessible to the public in the area around the school,
 - OR
 - 1.4.1.2. be advertised in a publication that is circulated to the general public in the area around the school.
- 1.5. The school council will make recommendations to the Principal. This exchange of ideas and opinions between the partners will usually be on an equal basis. If the Principal does not use the recommendations provided by the school council, the Principal shall inform the school council on what basis the decision was made.

2. Establishment of School Council

- 2.1. For any school year, the first meeting of the council must be held not sooner than 10 days and not later than 40 school days after the start of the school year or as specified by the By-Laws.
- 2.2. If there are fewer than five parents in attendance at that meeting, the Principal shall establish an advisory committee consisting of the Principal, a teacher, a community representative (who is not a parent of a student enrolled in the school), at least one parent and (if a senior high school) a student for that year, and shall call a meeting not later than 40 school days after the start of the next school year for the purpose of establishing a school council for that school.

3. Suspension of School Council

- 3.1. The Superintendent may suspend the operation of a school council until the following year if it fails to meet a quorum for three consecutive meetings.
 - 3.1.1. The Principal shall advise the Superintendent after the third scheduled meeting if such events occur. If the school council is suspended or dissolved, the Principal shall establish an advisory council (as per #2 above) for the remainder of that year or until another school council is formed.
 - 3.1.2. The Superintendent will notify the Board if the operation of a school council is suspended.

4. Bylaws

- 4.1. Subject to the parameters established by the *Education Act* and Regulations, each council shall determine its objectives and the nature of its involvement in school matters and shall establish a constitution and by-laws governing its organization, meetings and the conduct of its affairs, including a process for resolution of internal council disputes.
- 4.2. A copy of its by-laws, currently in effect, shall be forwarded to the Superintendent.

5. Fundraising

- 5.1. No school council may be registered under the *Societies Act* or Part 9 of the *Companies Act*. The main purpose of the school council is to advise the Principal about school related issues. HPSD, therefore does not allow school councils to do fundraising.
 - 5.1.1. School councils may not have a bank account. All money used by the school council must go through the school's School Generated Funds (SGF).
- 5.2. School parents may incorporate as a society.
 - 5.2.1. This society may function independently of the school council.
 - 5.2.2. This society must have its own by-laws and maintain its own minutes, and should act at "Arms' length" from the school council.
 - 5.2.3. Wherever possible, the executive members of the society should be persons different than those who are executive members of the school council.
 - 5.2.4. Where such a society exists and is contemplating undertaking a fund raising activity where there exists the opportunity for significant financial loss, the proposed activity must be approved by the Superintendent prior to the activity being undertaken.
 - 5.2.5. The Fundraising Society may have its own bank account.
- 5.3. Fundraising groups have legal authority, ability and liability. The group must cover their own liability insurance, and understand their risks.
- 5.4. The Superintendent will make a financial contribution to each school council on a yearly basis.
 - 5.4.1. The level of this contribution, to help defray operational expenses, will be set annually following budget approval.
 - 5.4.2. This contribution will be paid upon submission of the council's list of executive members to the Superintendent.
- 5.5. The Board will pay for two registrations for school council members to attend the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) Conference.
- 5.6. The Board will provide the school council up to \$350.00 for PD activities.
 - 5.6.1. This fund may be used to offset expenses incurred by members attending the ASCA conference.
- 5.7. A school council may receive donations on behalf of a Board but no school council shall raise funds or otherwise solicit donations in any manner that would require a gaming license under the *Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act*.

6. Reporting and Minutes

- 6.1. The Chair of each school council shall prepare and provide to the Superintendent, by June 1 of each year, an annual report:
 - 6.1.1. summarizing the activities and accomplishments of the school council in the previous school year, and,
 - 6.1.2. including a financial statement relating to the money handled by the school council in the previous school year, if any, and how the funds were used.
- 6.2. The Superintendent may annually convene a meeting at which school councils will be invited to present their reports.
- 6.3. The Principal will retain a copy of the minutes of each school council meeting for at least 7 years.

7. Collection and use of personal information

- 7.1. The school council is responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of all members of the school community. It must ensure that collection and use of personal information is performed in accordance with the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA).

- 7.2. Personal information (name, contact information of parents and/or students, images, etc.) must be collected directly from parents. The school can also provide the information to the school council IF parents have consented for the school to provide the school council with the information collected on the student registration form.
- 7.3. School councils must inform parents how the personal information they have collected will be used. Typically, school councils use the information to contact parents regarding school council business (e.g., newsletters, meeting and events hosted by the school council).
- 7.4. School councils must ensure that:
 - 7.4.1. the information is used for the purpose it was collected;
 - 7.4.2. the information is kept confidential and secure;
 - 7.4.3. only individuals who require the information to carry out their duties have access to it;
 - 7.4.4. they have a plan to manage and keep secure the personal information of parents and student;
 - 7.4.4.1. How long consent forms will be kept, and where
 - 7.4.4.2. At the end of the year, the lists are deleted, paper copies are shredded, etc.
 - 7.4.5. all members understand their responsibility and the requirement to protect and use personal information in accordance with the reason it was collected;
 - 7.4.6. a member of the school council executive can respond to questions that may arise about the council's handling of personal information, and
 - 7.4.7. the personal information is not used for any other purpose without consent

8. Newsletters

- 8.1. The purpose of a school council newsletter is to communicate school council business with parents. The school council should not include school news in the school council newsletter. The school has its own platforms to communicate with parents and school councils may not have access to the most current information parents require.

9. Resolution of Conflict

- 9.1. HPSD acknowledges there may be occasions when the School Council's advice and School Administration's decision regarding a specific issue may differ. In the event of such a dispute, the Chair of the School Council and/or Principal shall bring the matter to the attention of the Superintendent.
- 9.2. The Superintendent will designate a member of the Senior Leadership Team/Division Administration to:
 - 9.2.1. Meet with the involved parties in an attempt to mediate the matter.
 - 9.2.2. If the matter is resolved a copy of the resolution is shared with the School Council and the principal, as well as the Superintendent.
- 9.3. If the matter cannot be resolved through mediation:
 - 9.3.1. The Chair of the School Council shall submit a written appeal to the Superintendent.
 - 9.3.1.1. Written appeals should contain the necessary details to support the position of the school Council;
 - 9.3.1.2. A copy of the appeal shall be sent to the Principal;
 - 9.3.1.3. Appeals filed on behalf of the School Council shall only be accepted if they represent the views of the School Council voted on at a regular meeting of the Council at which a quorum is present;
 - 9.3.2. The Superintendent shall review the appeal and may request additional information from each party;
 - 9.3.3. The Superintendent will make a decision respecting the appeal and inform the parties in writing within fourteen (14) days, unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties;
 - 9.3.4. The decision of the Superintendent is final.
- 9.4. In the event an irreconcilable and counterproductive difference continues, it is the responsibility of the School Principal and/or School Council to bring this to the attention of the Superintendent.
 - 9.4.1. The Superintendent shall work with the School Council in attempting to resolve the difference.

9.4.2. If the Superintendent is unable to resolve the issue, the Superintendent shall inform the Board. The Board may request the Minister to dissolve the School Council pursuant to Section 55 of *the Education Act*.

10. Appeal of Board Policies and Administrative Procedures

10.1. If a School Council finds itself in disagreement with Administrative Procedures, the School Council may write a letter to the Superintendent outlining the concerns with a copy being sent to the Principal.

10.1.1. The Superintendent will provide a written response to the School Council regarding their concerns.

10.2. If a School Council finds itself in disagreement with Board Policy, the School Council may write a letter to the Superintendent outlining the concerns with a copy being sent to the Board and the Principal.

10.2.1. The Board, may ask the School Council and/or the principal to make a delegation at their regular Board meeting and/or, will provide a written response to the School Council regarding their concerns.

10.3. Concerns filed on behalf of the School Council shall only be accepted if they represent the views of the School Council voted on at a regular meeting of the Council at which a quorum was present.

References

Education Act, Section 55

School Councils Regulation 94/2019

PIPA Personal Information Protection Act