



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM

APSC001 Catholic School Councils

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MEMO TO: All Staff

FROM: Director of Education

PURPOSE

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board recognizes that education is a shared responsibility involving school staff, students and their families, and members of the community and parish. The purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. It is expected that Catholic School Councils will provide a forum for people interested in Catholic Education to work co-operatively together to develop common goals at the board and school level.

It is the policy of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board that every school within its jurisdiction shall have a Catholic School Council to act in an advisory capacity to the school principal to improve the overall effectiveness of the school. The Catholic School Council Board Liaison Committee will also act in an advisory capacity to the Waterloo Catholic District School Board through the Director of Education or designate to improve the Catholic Education System.

REFERENCES

Sharing Our Journey
The Education Act & Regulations
School Council Regulation 612
School Council Regulation 613
WCDSB Business and Financial Services Manual
School Council Handbook – A Guide for Members

COMMENTS

School councils are an integral part of the governance structure of Catholic School Boards. This policy memo and the procedures that it establishes to operate school councils must always be viewed within the context of our Board's Mission for learners in a Catholic School System. The policy must be implemented in the spirit of *Sharing our Journey* and the basic constitutional entitlement to separate management and control on the part of the Roman Catholic "Class of Persons" referred to in and protected by s.93 (1) of the Constitution Act 1867.

1. School Council decision-making shall be by consensus with the exception of the election of the Chair or Co-Chairs. Voting on council matters shall only occur when consensus cannot be attained.
2. School Councils are subject to the policy and administrative procedures of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board.

GUIDELINES

Composition of School Councils

A school council shall include:

1. Parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school (except in adult day school where parent positions shall be held by students).
2. The principal of the school.
3. One teacher who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal, elected in accordance with section 4 of Regulation 612.
4. One person who is employed at the school, other than the principal, vice-principal or any other teacher, elected in accordance with section 5.
5. One student (mandatory for secondary schools; optional for grade 7 and 8 students for elementary schools).
6. One community representative appointed by other members of council.
7. Parish representative wherever possible.

The following chart sets out the composition of the school council. A member of a school board cannot be a member of a school council established by the school board. In addition, the following rules apply:

Composition of School Councils

Type of Member	Limitations	Number of Members	Manner of Election/ Appointment
Parent	<p>The parent member must be the parent of a student enrolled in the school.</p> <p>A board employee who works at the school his or her child attends is <i>not</i> eligible to serve as a parent member of the council. A board employee who works at the school his or her child attends may, however, be elected as either the teaching or non-teaching staff representative.</p>	<p>The number of parent members may be specified in a school council by-law.</p> <p>Parent members must constitute a majority of the members of the school council.</p>	Parent members are elected by the parents of pupils enrolled at the school.
Principal	Principal is not allowed to vote.	One - May delegate responsibilities to vice-principal.	
Teacher	<p>The teacher member must be employed at the school.</p> <p>The teacher member cannot be the principal or a vice-principal.</p>	One	The teacher member is elected by other teachers employed at the school, other than the principal and vice-principal.
School Employee	The school employee member cannot be a teacher, principal or vice-principal at the school.	One	The school employee member is elected by other school employees, other than the principal, vice-principal and teachers.
Pupil - Schools with one or more secondary grades	The pupil member must be enrolled in the school.	One	If the school has a student council, the pupil member is appointed by the student council. If the school does not have a student council, the pupil member is elected by the other pupils enrolled in the school.
Pupil – Schools with no secondary grades	The pupil member must be enrolled in the school.	One or None	If the principal determines, after consulting with other members of school council, that the school council should include a pupil, the principal appoints a pupil member.
Parish	The member must belong to the school parish.	One	The individual is appointed by the pastor.
Community Representative	The community representative member cannot also be a school board employee unless: (a) he or she is not employed at the school; and (b) other members of the school council are informed of the person's employment before the appointment.	One (or more if specified in the school council by-law)	The community representative member is appointed by the other members of the school council.
Person selected by an association which is a member of either: (a) Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations; (b) Ontario Associations of Parents in Catholic Education; or (c) Parent Partenaires en Education	The association must be established in respect of the school council.	One	The individual is appointed by the association.

Election of Parent Members

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.

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 council, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment.

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 at the school.

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.

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.

The principal of the 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.

The notice required, may be given by,

- a) Giving the notice to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parents; and
- b) Posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.

Term of Office

The term of office for school council members is one year. The term of office runs from the later of:

- a) the date of the members election or appointment; and
- b) the date of the first school council meeting after the election, until the date of the first school council meeting after the elections in the following year.

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

Vacancies

A vacancy in the membership of a school council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the council.

A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the council from exercising its authority.

Officers

- A school council must have a chair or if the bylaws of the school council so provide, two chairs. A chair must be a parent member and must be elected by the other members of the school council. A school council may have such other officers as are provided for in the by-laws of the council.
- A person who is employed by the board cannot be the chair or co-chair of the council.

Collection of Information

The Ministry may collect the names, mailing addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of the Chair and/or Co-Chairs of a school council and other members of the council. The information can only be collected with approval from individual council members.

The Ministry may disclose the above information to the Ontario Parent Council.

Ministry Powers and Duties

As part of its accountability to parents, the Ministry shall report annually to members of school councils on education in the province.

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.

Remuneration

A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of a school council.

Members of council requested by the board to attend events as part of board business will be reimbursed as outlined in the Business and Finance Manual entitled "Expense Reimbursement".

Meetings

School councils must meet at least four times during the school year, at a location that is accessible to the public. The principal is required on behalf of the school council, to provide written notice of such meetings to the parents of pupils enrolled in the school.

School council meetings cannot be held unless a majority of the current members of council are present, and the majority of those present must be parents.

All meetings of school council are open to the public.

The principal must provide written notice to every parent or pupil outlining dates, times and location of the meeting. This notice may be given by posting the notice in the school in an accessible location, or for delivery to the parent by the child.

Committees

The school council may establish committees to make recommendations to the school council. Every such committee must include at least one parent member, and may include individuals who are not members of the school council.

By-laws

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

A school council must make by-laws that govern election procedures, the filling of vacancies, the establishment of roles respecting participation in school council proceedings.

Dispute Resolution

When a disagreement arises, school council members and principals are encouraged to meet and discuss the concern in an effort to resolve the dispute internally.

Individual councils are advised to create their own mechanism to internally resolve disputes.

If, after a meeting, there is still disagreement or the relationship cannot be improved, the following dispute resolution process should be used:

- a) The principal shall ask the School Superintendent of Education to appoint a mediator to attend a meeting of the parties in attempt to resolve the problem or improve the relationship.
- b) The mediator shall be neutral and shall not render any decision in the matter, but shall assist the parties in resolving the problem or improving the relationship.
- c) At the meeting, the mediator shall explain his/her role to the school council or member, and invite those present to each outline their concerns and proposed solutions. The mediator shall assist the parties in coming to the resolution that would most benefit the school.
- d) The mediator shall report the resolution, or lack of resolution, to the school's Superintendent of Education.
- e) Where the mediator reports a lack of resolution, the School's Superintendent of Education shall request a written report from each party outlining the perceived problems and attempts at resolution. This report shall be forwarded to the Director of Education.
- f) The Director of Education shall review the situation and make recommendations accordingly.

Minutes and Financial Records

School councils will keep minutes of all its meetings and records of all its financial transactions for four years. The minutes and records shall be available at the school for examination by any person.

Incorporation

A school council cannot be incorporated.

Role of the Principal

The principal must promptly distribute to each member of school council any materials that have been identified by the Ministry for distribution to school council members.

Attend every school council meeting.

Act as a resource person to the school council and assist the school council in obtaining information relevant to its functioning.

Consider recommendations made by school council and advise the council of the action taken in response to their recommendations.

Powers and Duties of School Councils

Pursuant to the School Council Regulation, school councils have the following express powers and duties:

- School Councils may make recommendations to the principal of the school or the school board on any matter. See **Appendix A** for specific areas requiring mandatory/possible school council input.
- School Councils may engage in fundraising activities, provided: Board Policy Memorandum *APB 007 – Sales and Fundraising Memorandum* & Board Policy Memorandum *APB 004 - Record Keeping for Schools –Non - Board Funds* are adhered to.
- The fundraising activities are to raise funds for a purpose approved by the school board or authorized by board policies according to *APB 007 – Sales and Fundraising Memorandum* & *APB 004 - Record Keeping for Schools –Non Board Funds*.
- The funds are used in accordance with applicable board policies (APB 007 and APB 004).
- School Councils may consult with parents of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the school council.

- All School Councils must submit an annual written report to the principal of the school and the school board regarding their activities as outlined in **Appendix C** and (APB 004). The principal must provide the report to the parents of pupils enrolled in the school.

Annual Report

Every school council shall submit an annual written report on its activities to the principal of the school and to the board that established the council, by the last week of June in the current school year. **See Appendix C**

If the school council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report on those activities as outlined in APB 004. (If school council did not engage in fundraising activities, the annual written report on non-board funds must still be submitted as outlined in APB 004).

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.

By giving the report to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent: and

Posting the report in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

APPENDIX A

Consultations by School Boards

The following table outlines the area in which boards and principals are required to consult with school councils.

Area Requiring Consultation With School Councils	By Boards	By Principals
Policies Under Development and/or Review	All initiatives that relate to the improvement of student achievement or enhance the accountability of the system to parents	All initiatives that relate to the improvement of student achievement or enhance the accountability of the system to parents
	Provincial code of conduct to be reviewed every three years after first year of implementation	School policy regarding code of conduct
	Appropriate dress policy review every five years after first year of implementation	School policy regarding appropriate dress for students
	Reimbursement of expenses incurred by school council members	
	Fund-raising activities by school council members	
	Policy or process for resolving internal school council disputes	
Planning	Board action plans for improvement of EQAO test results	School action plans for improvement based on reports of EQAO test results
	Development of communication plans regarding the board's action plans for improvement	Development of communication plans regarding the action plans for improvement
	Development of principal profile (Appendix B) – every three years after first year of implementation	Development of principal profile (Appendix B) – every three years after first year of implementation
Implementation plans	Any new education initiatives at the board level	Any new education initiatives at the school level (i.e. APC013 - Police Protocol - School Crisis Plan)
	Board policy regarding the code of conduct for students	School policy regarding the board policy on the code of conduct for students
	The board policy regarding appropriate dress	School implementation plan for the board policy regarding appropriate dress
		Annual review of the decision to recite the pledge of citizenship on a daily basis

Possible Additional Areas for Consultation With School Councils

The following table outlines areas in which boards and principals may consult with school councils.

Possible Additional Areas for Consultation With School Councils	By Boards	By Principals
Local school year calendar, including the beginning and end of the school year (modified school year calendar)	X	
Scheduling special school events		X
Board policies regarding field trips for students	X	
School policies regarding field trips for students		X
List of approved activities to fulfil the mandatory community involvement requirement as stated in policy/program memorandum PPM 124	X	
Review of the board's safe-arrival policy and implementation plan as required in PPM 123		X
Review of the school's safe-arrival policy and implementation plan as required by PPM 123	X	
Use of volunteers in the school	X	X
School closures	X	
Twinning schools	X	
Review of school boundaries	X	X
Naming of new schools and other board property	X	
Bussing and transportation of students	X	X
Capital improvement plans for schools	X	X
Purchase of textbooks and other learning materials		X
Developing principal profiles	X	
Developing school profiles		X
Student – homework policies	X	X
School/classroom organization		X
Additional funds to school councils according to their local priorities	X	
School budget priorities		X

APPENDIX B PRINCIPAL PROFILE

Area of Focus	Indicators	Not Important			Important	
		1	2	3	4	5
Building a shared vision and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates the core values, guiding principles of a Catholic school and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations Involves staff, school council and the community in the development of a shared vision Communicates the vision to staff students the school councils parents and the community Involve all parts of the community in support of the school's vision Works with staff, school council, parents and other community members to establish the school goals Goals for the school are clearly articulated, easily understood and broadly communicated 					
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes positive attitude and respectful communications among staff, students, parents and the community Approachable Effective listening, speaking and writing 					
Program review and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates knowledge of curriculum program requirements including the development of Individual Education Plans (IEP's) Conducts systematic review of all programs with input from staff, students, school council and parents Ensures that EQAO test results form an integral part of program reviews and subsequent development of plans for student achievement Communicates school Implementation plans to staff, parents, school council and the community 					
Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting student progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures that staff understand and implement a variety of assessment and evaluation measures Assessment results are used to review school program Student results are communicated clearly to parents Encourages the use of Exemplars to determine student levels of achievement Communicates student progress to parents on an ongoing basis Informs parents about curriculum, assessment and evaluation policies 					
Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fosters meaningful involvement of parents through frequent communications to the community Solicits and welcomes views and opinions of the school council, parents and other community partners in the decision making process Promotes an environment that values diversity and team building Focuses on intense communications and information sharing 					
Staff development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities are provided through staff meetings to share in decision making process and professional development Allows staff to manage their own decision making committees Showcases examples of teacher leadership and celebrates them when they emerge Provide individual staff members with support when they need it Offers opportunities for peer mentoring, supports professional teaching, and shares professional literature Fosters a climate of learning 					

Area of Focus	Indicators	Not Important			Important	
		1	2	3	4	5
Effective student discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a safe, orderly environment in which students learn and work Policies and expectations about discipline and behaviour are clear, fair and easy to understand Teachers are expected to model good citizenship and positive behaviour Celebrates student success and achievement 					
Positive relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates appreciation for the contribution of staff, the school council, parents and other community members Publicly acknowledges staff for involvement in school activities and special events Displays energy and enthusiasm Inspires respect, and use humour to provide perspective Structures interactions are structured so all groups feel they are a meaningful part of the school community and ensures their involvement 					
Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models problem solving and communication strategies that staff can use when working with students, parents and colleagues Engages others in finding solutions Investigates issues thoroughly before taking actions Quickly identifies conflicts and acts to resolve them before they escalate 					
Supervision of staff in professional growth and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides leadership in ensuring that staff are well informed about education policies and practice. Is aware of current trends and issues, as well as threats and opportunities in the school environment Assists others in their professional growth Ensures staff understand they are expected to pursue their own professional growth Uses the school goals as the basis of discussion with individual teachers about their own professional goals and guides teachers toward improvement in their teaching practice 					
Management Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports teamwork Follows through on decisions jointly with teachers Allocates resources to support school goals Trusts staff to make decisions within the framework of school goals 					
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is up to date with technological advancements Promotes technology as a tool to gather, compile and sort information Uses technology as a communication tool and information sharing 					
Other Important Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 					

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE ANNUAL REPORT

Your school council must prepare and submit a written report outlining the council's goals, activities and achievements, including any fund – raising activities, to the school and the board at the end of its term. The principal, on behalf of the school council, must ensure that a copy of this annual report is provided to every parent who has a child enrolled in the school. A SAMPLE ANNUAL REPORT is provided below.

[Name of School] Council

**Annual Report
for the
_____ School Year**

Dear Parents and School Community:

Welcome back! We hope you had a safe and happy summer. The *[name of school]* School Council had a very rewarding *[insert year]* year. The school council held *[number]* meetings on *[list dates]* and worked on various issues during the school year including *[insert list]*. These meetings were open to the public to encourage input from parents and other members of the school community to inform our discussions of the various issues considered.

The purpose of the school council is to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents, through the active participation of parents. School councils are advisory organizations. A school council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations to the principal of the school and the school board. Boards and principals are responsible to consider recommendations made by each school council and advise the council (s) of the actions taken in response to the recommendations. Accordingly, included with this report is a summary of advice *[attach summary of advice and responses]* the school council has provided to the principal and to the school board, as well as responses from the principal and school board on how this advice was taken into account in decision-making.

Additional achievements of the school council in *[insert year]* included *[insert list]*. As well, fund-raising activities were conducted and the proceeds were used to fund projects in accordance with school board policies. These fund – raising activities are summarized in the attached financial summary *APB 004*. Further, a summary of financial activity related to school council's administrative activities is attached and is entitled *APB 004*. Minutes of meetings held and financial records are available for public inspection at the school office.

We wish to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the many individuals who volunteered their time to contribute to the success of the school council last year. Special thanks are due to the members of the *[insert year]* school council *[provide list]*. Finally, we would like to wish the best of luck to candidates in the September school council elections. Issues, which we foresee as being important matters for the consideration of the new school council following the September elections include *[insert list or discussion]*.

Sincerely,
Chair