



Policy: Catholic School Advisory Councils

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Belief Statement:

As a Catholic learning community, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board believes in the importance of the partnership of school, home, parish and community as a means of enhancing student success in a Catholic school environment. To support this partnership, each elementary and secondary school will establish a Catholic School Council which will act in an advisory capacity. The Council shall be supportive and in concurrence with the distinctive character, philosophy, and goals of Catholic education, as well as respectful of the faith and traditions of the Catholic Church.

Policy Statement:

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board will ensure that:

- § Catholic School Advisory Councils provide for parents, students, staff, parish and other community members the opportunity to be actively involved in an advisory capacity in the operation of their local school and in the provision of Catholic educational services.
- § The Catholic School Advisory Councils operate within the parameters of the Education Act and Regulations, Board and school policies.

Glossary of Key Policy Terms – N/A

References

- Regulation 612
- Regulation 613
- Implementation of the Ontario Parent Involvement Policy
- Ministry Support to Enhance Parent Involvement
- Helping Ontario Parents Get Involved in Their Children’s Education
- Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools



Catholic School Advisory Councils AP 200.31

Procedure for:	Principals, School Councils	Adopted:	June 11, 2001
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Purpose

The administration procedure will outline the duties of all stakeholders in the Catholic School Advisory Council.

Responsibilities

All Board personnel shall follow this administrative procedure. Specific directions for members of the Catholic School Advisory Council are provided throughout this administrative procedure.

Information

The purpose of School Councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system.

- § A School Council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations to the principal of the school.
- § School Councils may make recommendations to the principal or Board on any matter.

The Director of Education or designate must consult School Councils on a number of specified matters, including the development and implementation of policies relative to:

- § The school district's Code of Conduct,
- § New education initiatives,
- § Action plans for student improvement based on test results from EQAO,
- § The process and criteria for selection and placement of principals and vice-principals,
- § Fundraising by School Councils,
- § Internal conflict resolution procedures that affect the work of School Councils, and
- § Reimbursement of expenses incurred by council members.

Procedures

The following outlines the responsibilities and procedures of the members of a Catholic School Advisory Council.

1.0 Catholic School Advisory Council

The purpose of the Catholic School Advisory Council is as follows:

- § To promote Catholic faith and gospel values.
- § To enhance the accountability of the education system to parents and improve pupil achievement through the active participation of parents
- § A school advisory council's primary means of achieving its purpose is to make recommendations in accordance with Ontario Regulation 612 to the principal of the school and the Board.
- § To advise the principal on any of the following matters if they have been identified by the Council as priorities on a yearly basis:
 - The determination of the focus of the School Improvement Plan establishing curriculum goals and priorities.



- The school Code of Conduct in accordance with the Board Policy.
- The school's response to Board and province-wide test results.
- The prioritization of items to be included on the capital request form.
- School-community communication strategies.
- Review and implementation of Board policies at the local level.
- Other items identified by the principal or School Advisory Council: A School Advisory Council may make recommendations to the principal of the school or to the Board on any matter.

§ Advise the Board on:

- Methods for the collection, on a system-wide basis, of parents' views and preferences concerning the school year calendar.
- The selection of principals/vice-principals in accordance with Board policy, practice and collective agreements.
- Procedures for the community use of school facilities.

§ In addition to their advisory responsibilities:

- Establish their goals, priorities and procedures.
- Organize information and training sessions to enable members of the Council to develop their skills as Council members.
- Hold a minimum of four meetings per year (all meetings shall be open to all members of the school community).
- Promote the best interests of the school community.
- Facilitate communication among home, school, parish and community.
- Foster positive relations among parents, students, staff and the local community.

§ School Advisory Councils will comply with Freedom of Information and Protection of Personal Privacy Legislation in matters relating to individual staff and students.

2.0 Makeup of a Catholic School Advisory Council

- § The majority of the School Council must be composed of parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school (and a majority of the School Council must also be Roman Catholic). This may include a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and an appropriate number of Members at Large to create a majority of parent members. These positions are set out in the School Council's by-laws and the term of office is one year.
- § All parent councils are required to develop by-laws setting out the operating rules for the council.
- § School Councils are required to meet at least four (4) times during the school year. The first meeting must be within the first 35 days after elections. A School Council is entitled to hold its meetings at the school and all meetings must be open to the public. A School Council meeting cannot be held unless a majority of the current members of the Council are present at the meeting and a majority are parent members.
- § Employees of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board cannot serve as Chair or Co-Chair of the School Council. Anyone who is employed at the school may not be a parent member of the School Council. Anyone who is an employee elsewhere in the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board may only be a parent member if they inform people of that employment.
- § The principal shall, on behalf of the council, give written notice of dates, times and locations to each parent.
- § Every school is required by law to hold School Council elections within the first 30 days of the school year and notice of elections must be given to all parents at least 14 days before the date of the election. School Council members must include:
 - The principal (or vice-principal), who is a non-voting member,
 - One teacher,
 - One non-teaching employee,
 - One student in secondary schools (optional for elementary schools),
 - One or more community representatives appointed by the elected council,
 - The Pastor or Parish designate, and



- A representative from the recognized parent associations in the School Council Handbook of which OAPCE is one, as applicable.

3.0 Formation and Roles of a Catholic School Advisory Council

The officers of the council shall be:

- § Chair
- § Vice-Chair
- § Secretary
- § Treasurer

However, council may choose to have two Co-Chairs. The Executive Officers shall be elected annually by the elected members of the council.

The members of the Catholic School Advisory Council shall:

- § Participate in council meetings.
- § Participate in information and training programs.
- § Act as a link between the council and the community in support of school programs to improve pupil achievement.
- § Make recommendations to the principal and, where necessary, to the Board to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system.

The members of the Catholic School Advisory Council shall:

- § Make every effort to be as representative of the school community as possible.
- § Conduct their meetings in an invitational, harmonious manner in the context of Gospel Values.
- § Be entitled to one vote, in votes taken by the Council, should the Council make recommendations to the principal and/or Board through a voting process.
- § Receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in the normal course of their duties as Council members in accordance with Board policy, but shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a Council member.

4.0 Catholic School Advisory Council Chair

It is the responsibility of the Chair, in co-operation with the school principal to provide Catholic leadership and direction to the council and Executive Officers to ensure that goals, priorities and procedures of the Council promote Catholic faith and gospel values consistent with the mission and vision of the Board.

The Chair of the Council shall:

- § Call council meetings in consultation with the principal.
- § Prepare the agenda for council meetings in consultation with the principal.
- § Chair council meetings.
- § Ensure that the minutes of council meetings are recorded and maintained appropriately.
- § Ensure that records of all meetings and financial transactions are kept for minimum of four years and made available at the school for examination without charge to any person from the Catholic school community.
- § Participate in information and training sessions.
- § Communicate regularly with the school principal in an effort to work co-operatively to improve pupil achievement.
- § Ensure that there is regular communication with the Catholic school community.
- § Work collaboratively with the members of the Council to prepare and submit an annual written report on the activities of the council, including fund raising, to the principal and the Board. Consult with senior board staff as required.
- § Upon request, provide trustees with copies of the minutes of the meetings.
- § In addition, the Chair shall act as spokesperson for the council and carry out such other duties as shall be required from time to time.
- § Be a parent member of the committee but CANNOT be an employee of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board.



5.0 Catholic School Advisory Council Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall:

- § Assist the Chair in the discharge of his/her duties and perform such other duties as may be required by the Council or the Executive officers.
- § Assume the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair or in the event of the Chair's inability to serve.

6.0 Catholic School Advisory Council Secretary

The Secretary shall:

- § Keep a record of all meetings of the Council and the Executive Officers, and shall deal with all correspondence or communications directed to or required of the Council and the Executive.
- § Co-operate with the Chair to ensure that all minutes and records of the council are available at the school for examination by any person from the Catholic school community.
- § Perform such other duties as may be required by the Council and the Executive Officers.
- § Not usually assume the role of Chair in a meeting in the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair or in the event of their inability to serve, but may assume such other duties as may be required by the Council or the Executive Officers.

7.0 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

- § Keep full and accurate accounts for all receipts and disbursements of the Council in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and shall be guided by Board Policy for Fundraising in Schools in regard to banking and fund disbursements in accordance with such requirements as may be imposed by the Board or other relevant authority.
- § Provide at regular meetings of the Council an account of all transactions of the Council, including the financial position.
- § Prepare a full, annual Financial Statement for submission to the Council.
- § Perform such other duties as may be required by the Council or the Executive Officers of the Council.
- § Assume the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary
- § Co-sign all cheques with the principal on behalf of the Catholic School Advisory Council.

8.0 Committee Chair

- § Report to the Catholic School Advisory Council on a regular basis.
- § Act on behalf of the goals of the Catholic School Advisory Council.
- § Communicate with parents through the Catholic School Advisory Council newsletter.

9.0 Principal

- § Attends all Catholic School Advisory Council meetings.
- § Supports and promotes Catholic School Advisory Council activities.
- § Seeks input from the Council in areas outlined as an advisory responsibility and provide responses to the recommendations.
- § Acts as a resource on laws, regulations and Board policies.
- § Provides information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions.
- § Maintains regular communication with the Chair of the Council.
- § Assists the Council in communication with the school community.
- § Encourages the participation of parents and others within the school community.
- § Ensures that copies of the minutes of the Council's meetings are kept at the school.
- § Approves all printed materials distributed through the school.



- § Financial statements and minutes from the previous meeting should be provided to all persons who attend each School Council meeting. These records must be kept at the school for seven (7) years and must be available for examination by any person without charge.

10.0 Elections

Parent Members:

- § An election of parent members shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year.
- § The principal shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election, give written notice of the DATE, TIME and LOCATION of the election to every parent.
- § Elections shall be by secret ballot.
- § All parents and guardians of pupils enrolled at the school are eligible to vote and must vote in person.

11.0 Other Elections

Other elections of teacher, non-teacher, and student shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year.

12.0 Terms of Office

A person elected or appointed holds office from the later of:

- § The date s/he is elected or appointed, or
- § The date of the first meeting of the school council after elections.

13.0 Vacancies

A vacancy shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with by-laws of Council.

14.0 Officers

- § A School Council shall have a Chair, or if the by-laws of council so provide, two Co-Chairs and the Chair (Co-Chair) must be a parent.
- § A person employed by the Board cannot be the Chair.

15.0 Meetings

- § A School Council shall meet at least four (4) times during the school year.
- § A School Council shall meet within the first 35 days of the school year after the election.
- § All meetings shall be open to the public and held at a location that is accessible to the public. A School Council is entitled to hold its meetings at school.
- § A meeting cannot be held unless a majority of members of Council are present, and the majority are parent members.
- § The principal shall, on behalf of Council, give written notice of the dates, times, and locations of these meetings to every parent.

16.0 Meeting Procedures

- § At the first council meeting, the council shall elect a Chair from the parent members and may elect a Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.
- § The council shall establish a meeting schedule (at least 4 meetings per year) and publicize these dates.
- § The council will prepare, publish and communicate its goals, priorities and operational (by-laws) procedures which guide its activities.
- § The School Council shall keep minutes of all its meetings and all of its financial transactions. The minutes and records shall be available for examination by any person.



- § The School Council may form committees to carry out specific functions; however, every committee must include at least one parent member of council and is subject to the same requirements as regular council meetings.
- § By-laws governing election procedures, filling vacancies, conflict of interest and conflict resolution processes must be established.
- § Every School Council shall submit, annually in June, a written report on its activities including fund-raising account, to the principal and the Board. The principal, on behalf of the council, must give a copy of the report to every parent.
- § Members of School Council cannot receive remuneration.

Note: The School Council will operate in a manner that is non-judgmental, is based on open discussion and uses consensus, collaboration and compromise as the usual method for developing recommendations and plans.

17.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The Board will strive to:

- § Support the on-going leadership training of School Council members.
- § Review and revise its policies in accordance with Regulation 612/00.
- § Continue to include parents and other members of the community in an advisory role at the Board level through committees, policy development, etc.
- § Provide a mechanism to facilitate communication among School Councils with the school district.
- § Support and encourage the various activities of Regional School Councils and local School Councils.

Catholic School Advisory Council members should strive to:

- § Attend every meeting, be punctual, respect agenda time limits and remain for the entire meeting.
- § Make every effort to be a representative of the school community.
- § Be entitled to one vote, in votes taken by the council should the council make recommendations to the principal and/or to the Board through a voting process.
- § Respect each other's opinions and views.
- § Consider an idea on its merit and not the personality or perceived desires of the presenter.
- § Generate trust among all members.
- § Participate fully, raise questions and not divert discussion into other areas.
- § Evaluate the process of the meeting to improve its effectiveness.
- § Maintain a sense of humour.
- § Remember that silence means consent.

The principal and Catholic School Advisory Council shall ensure that:

- § All fundraising activities are to be related to charitable, humanitarian, educational or services activities.
- § The principal, after consultation with the Catholic School Advisory Council, will approve all fundraising activities.
- § The purpose of each fundraising activity as determined by the principal and Catholic School Advisory Council is clearly identified to the school community before the fundraising commences.
- § Schools accurately account and manage all monies raised through fundraising activities in the manner established in the Board's School Funds Policy.

Definitions – N/A



References

Regulation 612
Regulation 613
Implementation of the Ontario Parent Involvement Policy
Ministry Support to Enhance Parent Involvement
Helping Ontario Parents Get Involved in Their Children's Education
Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools
BHNCDSB School Funds Policy 700.03
BHNCDSB Fundraising in Elementary Schools Policy 700.05
BHNCDSB Fundraising in Secondary Schools Policy 700.06