

#1136592

GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION OF PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS

In keeping with the Board's support for the active involvement of parents in schools and the creation of parent organizations, as expressed in Policy KMA - Parent Organizations, the following guidelines are provided for the reference of Parent Advisory Councils. The guidelines suggest rules of procedure and operation which may be helpful to Parent Advisory Councils. Further, the guidelines could form the basis of a constitution which Parent Advisory Councils may wish to adopt.

1. Functions of Parent Advisory Councils

The functions of Parent Advisory Councils may include the following:

- 1.1 to ensure that every program and activity of the Parent Advisory Council recognizes that the student is the most important and vital component in the educational system;
- 1.2 to act as a resource organization to the school, filling those needs not already covered by the government bodies or by other means;
- 1.3 to act as a resource organization to parents, providing information and assistance on school or Divisional activities, and activities which will enable them better to assist their students with their studies;
- 1.4 to facilitate effective communication between the community, the students, and the staff and administration of the school on matters of common interest;
- 1.5 to provide a regular forum for communication, liaison, and exchange of ideas and information among the members of the Parent Advisory Council;
- 1.6 to assist and improve the educational process without usurping administrative authority;

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- 1.7 to receive reports from the Principal regarding school programs, policies, organization, and activities, and to advise the Principal thereon;
- 1.8 to assist the Principal, where applicable, to become knowledgeable about current business, industry, and labour practices, and changing employment opportunities for students;
- 1.9 to receive reports and recommendations from students, where applicable, and to advise the Principal regarding student activities;
- 1.10 to advise on and initiate school-supportive adult activities in the school and community;
- 1.11 to review such Division policy proposals as may from time to time be presented for consideration by the Division’s Board of Trustees, and to respond accordingly;
- 1.12 to form affiliations, where deemed appropriate by the Executive, with appropriate school-supportive organizations such as the Canadian Education Association, the Home and School/Parent Teacher Federation, and other similar educational organizations and associations;
- 1.13 to advise the principal about school policies, activities and organization, including
 - i. departmental and locally developed curricula
 - ii. cultural and extracurricular activities
 - iii. student discipline and behaviour policies
 - iv. community access to school facilities
- 1.14 to advise the principal about fund-raising and participate in fund-raising activities;
- 1.15 to advise the school board about the process of hiring and assigning principals; and such advice, if offered, to be submitted to the board
 - i. in writing
 - ii. before the end of February

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- 1.16 to advise the principal and the school board about an annual budget for the school; and such advice, if offered, to be submitted to the board
 - i. in writing
 - ii. by January 15th

- 1.17 to participate in developing an annual school plan

2. Duties of Parent Advisory Councils

- 2.1 A Parent Advisory Council shall communicate with parents of children attending the school and community members so that it can properly represent their priorities and concerns.
- 2.2 A Parent Advisory Council shall establish a means whereby it is regularly accountable to the school and community for its activities and expenditures.
- 2.3 All agenda items put forth shall pertain to school business and/or must pertain to the mandates set forth by the parent advisory council.

3. Membership of Parent Advisory Councils

- 3.1 All parents and/or guardians of the students attending the school shall be members of that school's Parent Advisory Council, and shall be eligible to vote at all Council meetings, including the Annual Meeting to Elect the Parent Advisory Council Executive.
- 3.2 The Principal (or designate), a minimum of one teacher (and an alternate) elected by the school staff, and a minimum of one student in the case of secondary schools, shall be members of the Council, with voting rights to be determined locally.
- 3.3 Citizens residing within the school's catchment area may be associate members of the Parent Advisory Council. Associate members may attend meetings of the Parent Advisory Council. Associate members shall be non-voting members of the Parent Advisory Council.

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4. Meeting Requirements for Parent Advisory Councils

- 4.1 The Council shall meet a minimum of two times during each school year, once for the Annual Meeting to Elect the Parent Advisory Council Executive and one additional time, for a minimum total of two Council meetings.
- 4.2 Planning for Council Meetings shall be the responsibility of the Executive. It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure that agenda items adhere to the mandate of the Council.
- 4.3 Eligible voters at all Council meetings shall be as described in Section 2, above.
- 4.4 The Principal shall advertise all meetings of the Parent Advisory Council in the school newsletter at least one week in advance of the date of the meeting.
- 4.5 The Principal or designate shall be present at all meetings of the Parent Advisory Council.
- 4.6 Any 20 parents may demand by written submission stating the purpose, that the President call a General Meeting of the Council.
- 4.7 Meeting minutes are a permanent, legal record of the Parent Advisory Council meeting. Minutes must include the name of the group, the date, time and location of the meeting and all individuals present, absences and regrets. Meeting discussions should be recorded as a brief and objective summary of the key points made during the discussion of the agenda item. Minutes should include what was done and not what was said. (e.g.: The entire and exact conversation is unnecessary.) Names should only be recorded when a motion or action item is recorded.

5. Annual Meeting Requirement

- 5.1 The Annual Meeting to elect the Parent Advisory Council Executive (hereinafter called the "Annual Meeting" shall be held no later than the third week of October of each school year.
- 5.2 The Annual Meeting shall be publicized as follows:

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- i. By special notice in the school communications in the spring of the preceding year.
- ii. By special notice in the school communications twice in the fall, the second notice no later than one week in advance of the date of the meeting

The Principal of the school shall ensure that all arrangements and preparations are made, and shall be the chairperson of the Annual Meeting for the period of the elections.

- 5.3 The Annual Meeting shall be held at the school.
- 5.4 The eligible voters for the Annual Meeting shall be all members of the Council as described in Section 2, above. The first order of business shall be to determine voting privileges of staff and shall be decided by a vote of parent/guardian members only.
- 5.5 The quorum of the annual meeting to elect an Executive shall be a number of parents equal to or greater than five percent of the student enrolment of that school. In the event such a quorum is not reached, those assembled, may, by specific resolution for that year only, set aside the requirement for the 5% quorum.
- 5.6 The purpose of the Annual Meeting is:
 - i. to elect an Executive as defined in section 5 below.
 - ii. To give the newly-elected members of the Parent Advisory Council Executive and the Principal the opportunity to hear from parents regarding possible matters for attention during the coming year.

6. Executive of the Parent Advisory Council

- 6.1 The Executive of the Parent Advisory Council shall consist of a minimum of 5 members:

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Principal

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- 6.2 The school principal is automatically a member of the Executive, and shall be consulted in all matters pertaining to the school. The voting rights of the principal on the executive shall be as determined under section 5.4.
- 6.3 The Parent Advisory Council may elect additional members-at-large as deemed appropriate.
- 6.4 No elected member of the Executive may hold the same office for more than 3 consecutive years.
- 6.5 The Executive shall take direction from the general membership of the Parent Advisory Council.
- 6.6 The Executive shall ensure that proper financial procedures are followed by the organization, as detailed later in this policy.
- 6.7 The Executive shall have the power to conduct the routine and emergency business of the Parent Advisory Council and shall carry out such commitments as may be made by the general membership of the Parent Advisory Council at Parent Advisory Council meetings.
- 6.8 A quorum of the Executive shall be two fifths (2/5) of its members.
- 6.9 Terms of Office of Executive Members:
 - i. No elected member of the Executive may hold the same office for more than 3 consecutive years.
 - ii. Any staff member on the Executive shall hold a one-year term (elected annually). The membership of students on the Executive is to be determined locally.
 - iii. If an elected Executive member resigns, or ceases to be a member, the Executive may appoint another member to replace the person at the next Executive Meeting.

7. Duties of Executive

7.1 President

- i. shall chair meetings of the Council and the Executive;

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- ii. shall be ex-officio member of any sub-committees which may be struck by the Council or the Executive;
- iii. shall take direction from the Council regarding Council business, and shall work in close consultation with the school principal;
- iv. shall direct all activities of the Council between regular meetings; and
- v. shall be responsible to the Council.

7.2 Vice-President

shall assume the duties and responsibility of the president during the absence of same; and other duties as may be assigned.

7.3 Secretary

- i. may maintain, in a space at the school provided therefore by the Principal, and in close consultation with the Principal, copies of all records pertaining to the Parent Advisory Council and Executive;
- ii. shall be responsible for any correspondence issued under the direction of the Parent Advisory Council or Executive;
- iii. shall take the minutes at all meetings of the Council and Executive;
- iv. shall, within two weeks after any Council or Executive meeting, provide to the members of the Executive copies of all Council or Executive minutes, and shall forward copies to the Principal, who shall, in turn:
- v. post one copy for general public information, and
- vi. retain one copy on file at the school for a seven-year period, for audit purposes and school division reference
- vii. one copy for distribution to trustees
- viii. Meeting minutes are a permanent, legal record of the PAC meeting. Minutes should include what was done and not what was said. Minutes must include the name of the group, the date, time and location of the meeting and all individuals present, absences and regrets. Meeting discussions should be recorded as a brief and objective summary of the key points made during the discussion of the agenda item. The entire and exact conversation of “who said what” is unnecessary. Names should only ever be recorded in the attendance section of the minutes when a motion or action item is recorded. They are not necessary for a summary of the dialogue.

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7.4 Treasurer

Shall be responsible for the financial accounting of the Parent Advisory Council, in the following manner:

- i. shall maintain records of all financial transactions of the Parent Advisory Council
- ii. shall be responsible for banking Council funds, and for arranging banking services
- iii. shall present a financial statement of the Parent Advisory Council's accounts at each meeting of the Executive, and at the Annual Meeting, and shall submit a copy of each financial report to the principal, who shall retain one copy on file at the school for a seven-year period, for audit purposes and school division reference.
- iv. an audit of the accounts of the Parent Advisory Council shall be done concurrently with the school funds audit.

8. Duties of the Principal (or designate)

- 8.1 Shall be present at all meetings of the Council;
- 8.2 Shall advise the Council and Executive on Division Policy;
- 8.3 Shall assist the Council and Executive in conducting Parent Advisory Council business. This may include:
 - i. arranging for use of school facilities for meetings and activities, where appropriate;
 - ii. providing consultation and advice on the organizational functioning of the Parent Advisory Council;
 - iii. providing occasional secretarial service, as available;
 - iv. providing normal photocopying requirements of minutes, notices of meetings, and routine correspondence at no charge
 - v. assisting the Parent Advisory Council in distributing information to the community, consistent with Board policy, under the review of the principal.
- 8.4 Shall provide to the Parent Advisory Council general information regarding all school activities, as appropriate

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8.5 Shall, at each Council meeting, present a report on school activities which may include areas such as the following:

- i. Selected Curricula (especially where change has occurred)
- ii. Student Discipline Policy
- iii. School Budget
- iv. School Staffing and Enrolment
- v. Co-curricular Activities

8.6 Shall provide the treasurer advance notice for upcoming audits.

9. Committees of the Executive

9.1 Committees are a useful part of any organization. They may include:
Standing Committee
Ad Hoc Committee
Special Committees

9.2 The chairpersons of the committees shall be determined locally.

9.3 The duties and activities of the committees should be assigned and approved by the Executive Committee.

9.4 Recommendations of committees for action should be reported to the Executive and approved by vote before action takes place.

10. Rules of Order, Quorums, Voting Procedures

10.1 The quorum of the annual meeting to elect an Executive shall be a number of parents equal to or greater than five percent of the student enrolment of that school. In the event such a quorum is not reached, those assembled, may, by specific resolution for that year only, set aside the requirement for the 5% quorum.

10.2 At meetings of the Parent Advisory Council Executive, two fifths of the Executive shall constitute a quorum.

10.3 Both the Council and the Executive shall follow Robert's Rules of Order as adopted by the St. James-Assiniboia School Division (copies available from the Division on request).

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- 10.4 At meetings of both Parent Advisory Council and the Parent Advisory Council Executive, decisions shall be on a majority vote basis, with all members of either the Council or the Executive, as applicable, present entitled to one vote on each matter of business. The president shall cast the deciding vote in the case of a tie.

11. Conducting the Financial Business of the Parent Advisory Council

- 11.1 At least three Executive members, if an Executive exists, or other members if an Executive does not exist are to be established as signing officers.
- 11.2 Two signing officers (if an Executive exists the President or Treasurer and one other) shall be required to sign all cheques written on behalf of the Parent Organization.
- 11.3 No cheques shall be issued to any signatory of a cheque.
- 11.4 No cheques shall be issued or signed unless there is adequate documentation provided, so that the signing officers have full knowledge of the purpose of the payment. Full documentation is required as soon as possible after the expenditure.
- 11.5 Any cheque for over \$ 50.00 shall be issued only by specific resolution of the Executive. (For on-going financial projects a single annual resolution addressing the requirements of the project by setting a maximum payment amount is recommended.)
- 11.6 Before making any major purchase or entering into a contract with any supplier or outside organization, the Executive is advised to consult with the school division, so that such a purchase or contract can be reviewed with respect to legal requirements, tax rebate or tax exemption benefits, and purchase and tendering requirements under the Public Schools Act. Local preference should be considered in major purchases by Parent Advisory Councils.

12. Parent Advisory Council Constitution

- 12.1 In cases where the school does not have on hand an established and duly adopted Constitution, the Parent Advisory Council

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Executive shall, as its first order of business, prepare and present to the next Annual Meeting of the Parent Advisory Council a draft constitution to govern the operation of the Parent Advisory Council.

- 12.2 Any Parent Advisory Council constitution shall adhere to the requirements of this policy, but may otherwise include such additional features as shall be approved by the Parent Advisory Council, by a two-thirds majority, at its next Annual Meeting.
- 12.3 The Principal shall submit a copy of the Constitution to the Superintendent.
- 12.4 Revision of the Constitution shall require a two-thirds majority.

APPROVED JUNE 22, 1993 Motion 12-04-93
REVISED SEPTEMBER 28, 1993 Motions 16-05-93, 16-06-93
REVISED May 24, 1994 Motion 12-05-94
REVISED June 11, 1996 Motion 11-02-96

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