



PROCEDURE PR.509.SCO

TITLE: SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS, CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

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1.0 OBJECTIVE

To outline the responsibilities of school councils when conducting annual elections and carrying out its activities as a duly constituted school council.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

2.1 School principals/school councils

3.0 PROCEDURES

Annual Elections

- 3.1 In accordance with School Councils Policy P.014.SCO, where elections are required to fill a seat or seats on the council, it is the responsibility of the school council to ensure that parent/guardian elections are conducted in a manner consistent with accepted principles of democratic elections (see also School Councils Policy P.014.SCO, Attachment 2).
The principal will ensure that elections of teaching and non-teaching staff and student representatives to the school council are carried out each fall by each of the constituent groups.
- 3.2 School councils may:
- a) appoint a nominating committee to be responsible for seeking parent nominations to the council for the following year. All persons nominated must indicate their acceptance.
 - b) require parent/guardian candidates to prepare and submit, on a legibly completed standard form, a brief summary of their experience and interest in the office to which they are seeking election (See forms on pages 18 and 19 of the [School Council Resource Guide](#)). The council will assemble a list of candidates, which may include candidates' profiles, and distribute it prior to the election to the school community, along with notice of the election date and process.
- 3.3 Notice of the elections will be given to the various electoral groups (parents/guardians, teaching staff, administrative and support staff and students) at least two weeks in advance of the election. In accordance with Policy P.014.SCO, Attachment 2, section 1.23 (d) (ii), the principal is responsible for giving notice of the date, time and location of

the parent/guardian election to the parents/guardians of all students enrolled in the school, both by giving the notice to the student for delivery to his/her parent/guardian and by posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents/guardians.

- 3.4 Elections for each electoral group will be held at the school on a date publicized in advance, as required under 3.3 above.
- 3.5 Where a school council chooses to hold the parent election at a meeting, nominations will be accepted until the time voting begins, provided the person nominated is present and agrees, or if the person is not present his/her written consent is delivered to the Chair of the election meeting. Alternatively, where a school council opts to hold the election through all or part of the day, advance notice of the time and date for the closing of nominations will be distributed in advance of the list and election notice described in 3.3 above.
- 3.6 For any positions for which the exact number of candidates required, or fewer, are nominated, the election will be declared to be by acclamation.
- 3.7 In the case of a tie vote, the tied candidates will draw lots to determine the election.
- 3.8 All elections will be conducted by secret ballot, and only the name of the successful candidate and the total number of votes cast will be announced (See form on page 21 of the [School Council Resource Guide](#)).
- 3.9 Voting in an election shall be open to all members of the representative groups. Voting by proxy is not allowed.
- 3.10 A vacancy in the membership of a school council during the year will be filled by election or appointment in accordance with this procedure and with the council's constitution/by-laws. In exceptional circumstances, after every reasonable attempt has been made to hold an election, a principal, in consultation with the appropriate Superintendent of Instruction and interested parents/guardians, may develop an interim structure for a school council for the current school year, until such time as a school council can be elected/appointed in keeping with this procedure.

School Council Constitution/By-Laws

- 3.11 Each school council will have a constitution and by-laws governing the conduct of its affairs that complies with Board Policy P.014.SCO: School Councils, and with this procedure.
- 3.12 Every school council's constitution/by-laws will include, at a minimum, the following:
 - a) the name, purpose and objectives of the council;
 - b) the membership and officers of the council;
 - c) the responsibilities of the officers and members of the council;
 - d) provisions with respect to council meetings, quorum and the voting rights of members;

- e) provisions for deciding on any affiliations of the council with other organizations such as the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC);
 - f) any committees of the council* and their composition;
- *N.B.: Written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the council and of meetings of all committees of the council is to be provided to the parents/guardians of all students enrolled in the school, both by giving the notice to the student for delivery to his/her parent/guardian and by posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents/guardians;
- g) rules for the conduct of meetings and for amendments to the constitution/by-laws of the council
 - h) provisions governing annual election procedures and the method for filling vacancies in the membership of the council which occur during the year, for example through election, rotation or by seeking volunteers;
 - i) a provision with respect to participation in school council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest;
 - j) a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes;

- 3.13 School councils wishing to specify a number of parent/guardian members beyond the required minimum under Policy P.014.SCO, Attachment 2, section 1.2 will specify this number in the council's constitution/by-laws.
- 3.14 For school councils that do not specify the number of parent/guardian members, the minimum numbers of five (elementary) and six (secondary) established in Policy P.014.SCO: School Councils, Attachment 2, section 1.2 will apply.
- 3.15 School councils wishing to select/appoint more than one community representative to the council must so specify in their constitution/by-laws. Eligibility for community representatives as set out in Policy P.014.SCO, Attachment 2, section 1.11 will apply.
- 3.16 School councils may specify in their constitution/by-laws that there may be a chair or two co-chairs of the council, and may limit the number of annual terms of office to which a council member may be elected.

4.0 PROVISIONS FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

In recognition of the changes to school operations as a result of Covid-19, the following provisions apply to this procedure for the 2021-2022 school year.

Definition of a Student

- 4.1 For the purposes of this procedure, a student enrolled in an Ottawa-Carleton Virtual School (OCV) shall also be deemed to be "enrolled in the school" which is considered their home school and to which they would return in the event of a return to in-person learning. This shall also include students new to the school and who are registered for OCV.

Eligibility of Parents of Students Registered in OCV to be elected at Home School

- 4.2 A parent of a child enrolled in an OCV school shall be entitled to seek election to the school council of the virtual school and, subject to section 4.3 and 4.4 may be elected to the school council of the school which is considered their child's home school.
- 4.3 A parent of a child enrolled in an OCV school may participate as a non-voting member of the school council at their child's home school.
- 4.4 Subject to sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 a parent of a student enrolled in an OCV school shall be eligible to seek election to a position on the school council at their child's home school, where an insufficient number of parents of students attending in person have put their names forward for election.
- 4.5 Where a parent of a child attending OCV has been elected to the school council of the home school, they are eligible for appointment to any position on the executive.

Location, Method and Timing of Elections

- 4.6 Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 3.1 to 3.10, all elections to school council shall be held electronically, following the process outlined in the procedure, with necessary modifications to allow for and support electronic voting.
- 4.7 For the purposes of determining the date of the election, the first day of school shall be deemed to be September 09th, 2021.
- 4.8 Where a school is unable to complete the election within the required timeline, every effort shall be made to hold the election as soon thereafter as practically possible.

Meetings of the School Council

- 4.9 Meetings of the school council shall be held virtually using Google Meet or some other platform which is agreed upon by the school council and the principal and meets the privacy and security requirements of the District.

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The Education Act, 1998, s. 170 (1), 17.1 and 170 (3)
Ontario Regulation 612/00, School Council Regulation and Ontario Regulation 613/00, Regulation to Amend Regulation 298.
OCDSB School Council Resource Guide
Board Policy P.014.SCO: School Councils
Board Policy P.135.CON: Community Use of School Facilities
Board Policy P.052.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools
Board Policy P.104.SCO: Student Dress Code
Board Policy P.067.SCO: Volunteers
Board Procedure PR.616.FIN: Accounting for School-Generated Funds
Board Procedure PR.540.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools
Board Procedure PR.555.SCO: Volunteers