

School Council Basics presented at PIAC Parent Conference, 2014

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School Council Basics



What is PIC?

- PIC stands for Parent Involvement Committees (PIC)
- It is the 2005 Ontario Parent Involvement Policy of Ministry of Education (EDU)
- Each school board must have Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)
- It is an important advisory body to school boards
- It is a parent-led committee, the director and a trustee are also members

What is PIA

School Council Basics



What is a School Council?

- An organization in the school which provides “a forum through which parents and other members of the school community can contribute to improving student achievement and school performance”
- School Councils: A Guide for Members; Ontario Regulation 612/00 (2001, Revised 2002)
- School councils are governed by Ontario Regulation 612/00, and 613/00 made under Regulation 298
- School Council is **inclusive, accountable** and **transparent**
- School Councils are able to **make recommendations** to the principal and school board on any matter
- The **partnership** of school and community representatives on a school council helps to **build mutual understanding and interaction** between a school and its community, resulting in **benefits for both**

How does the School Council help you?

- Membership on a school council also benefits the individuals involved. The personal advantages of becoming a school council member include:
 - being an **important partner** in the education system, whose views are valued
 - **contributing** to the shared goal of improving **student achievement and well-being**
 - having a vehicle through which to **express opinions**
 - being able to keep **informed** about what is happening at the school and the board, and at the province

Regulations Governing School Councils



- **Ontario Regulation 612/00** and **Regulation 298** together address three key areas:
 - the purpose of school councils
 - operational matters, and
 - the obligation of boards and principals to consult with school councils
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School Council – Membership Requirements



- **Parents**

- parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the school
- Parent members form the majority
- A board employee **working at the same** school as the child attends eligible to serve as a parent member on the council
- A board employee **working at another school**, is eligible to serve as a parent member on the council of the school the child attends (they must pre-declare their employment)
- A Board employee **cannot** serve as a chair / co-chair of the council
- School Board Trustees are **not eligible** to be council members

- **Teachers**

- A Board employee can be a teaching / non-teaching council

School Council – Membership Requirements...con't



Student Representative(s) – Secondary Schools

- Should be enrolled in the school
- Can join committee work of a school council

Student Representative(s) – Elementary Schools

- Principal must consult school council if council wants a student
- If agreed by the school council, principal can appoint the student (principal may consider student advice on the appointment of a student)

In School with at least one secondary grade:

- There should be at least one student member
- Must be appointed by the student council, or
- Where there is no student council, student is elected by the student body

Regulations Governing School Councils



Election & Term of Office

- ~~Elections to be held in accordance with the regulations governing school councils.~~

Constitution & By-laws

- School councils are not required to develop lengthy constitutions, since Ontario Regulation 612/00 sets out the mandate and roles and responsibilities for school councils
- The regulation requires councils to develop by-laws to address the following areas:
 - election procedures
 - filling vacancies
 - conflict of interest
 - conflict resolution procedures

Regulations Governing School Councils...cont'd



Fundraising

- Fundraising activities may be conducted in accordance **with board policies**

Roles played by the Principal



Acting as an important source of information

- The **principal is the key source** of information for the school council
- The principal is a **link** between school council and Ministry, Board and School

Receiving and responding to school council recommendations

- Receiver of recommendations made by the council (e.g. special events, school policies regards field trips)
- Although the **principal is the ultimate "decider"**, he/she still has to report back to the council with the results of the recommendation

Roles played by the Principal... cont'd



Attending school council meetings

- The principal is required to attend and participate in every school council meeting
- Powers or duties can be delegated to the vice-principal

Ensuring that the school council is in place

- The school council works with the principal on many significant areas, and hence it's important that the school council is in-place early on in the year
- School council elections must be held within thirty days of the start of the school year (even if by acclimation)
- Elections must be held by secret ballot

Roles played by the Principal... cont'd



Distribution of information

- Notify the school community the logistics of the elections, at least 14 days in advance
- The **election results within 30 days** of the election
- Make documents relating to the council's proceedings available for a minimum of four years (**including minutes and financial statements**)

Working together

Consultation



Roles and Responsibilities of Council members



The Chair / Co-Chairs

- Are elected by the council members and must be a parent
- **Must not be employed by the school board**
- Is a voting member
- Duties may include:
 - arrange for meetings
 - prepare agendas
 - chair council meetings
 - ensure that minutes & financial statements of council meetings are recorded and maintained
 - facilitate the resolution of conflict
 - participate as ex-officio members of all committees established by the school council
 - communicate with the school principal on behalf of the council

Parent Representatives

- They are voting members
- Can participate on any committees established by the school council
- Contribute to the discussions of the school council
- Solicit the views of other parents and members of the community to share with the school council
- Observe the council's code of ethics and established by-laws

Student Representative(s)

- Is a voting member
- Contributes to the discussions of the school council
- Solicits the views of other students to share with the school council
- May participate on any committees established by the school council
- Communicates information from the council to other students
- Observes the council's code of ethics and established by-laws

Staff Representative(s)

- One each from the teaching and non-teaching staff
- **Are voting members**
- Contribute to the discussions of the school council
- Solicit views from



Community Representative(s)

- Is a voting member
- Contributes to the discussions of the school council
- Represents the community's perspective
- May participate on any committees established by the school council
- Acts as a bridge between the school and the community
- Observes the council's code of ethics and established by-laws

Representative of Home and School Association

- Is a representative of Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations
- Is a voting member
- Contributes to the discussions of the school council
- Acts as a bridge between the school and his / her association
- May participate on any committees established by the school council
- Observes the council's code of ethics and established by-laws

Legal Liability and Insurance

- School councils should refrain from engaging in activities beyond their assigned duties, such as:
 - Providing after school care
 - Running music programs
- For other activities, the Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE) provides insurance to school board & councils (at a cost). www.osbie.on.ca

School Council budget

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Where to use funds

- To enhance programs and experiences of the students

Parent Engagement Policy:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/policy.html>

http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/PE_Policy2010.pdf

School Councils: A Guide for Members:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/guide.html>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/council02.pdf>

Education Act R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 298 Operational of Schools - General

<http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/e>

School Council SC411



Who are they?

- Team members have received intensive training in school council operations and strategies to build successful school councils. The team has received specific training on Education Act –Ontario regulation 612/00 governing school councils.
- Team members are PARENTS with children in TDSB schools. Each member is active in their respective school communities and network with parents from across the Board to discover best solutions and practices for school councils.

Why contact them?

- Address questions regarding school council regulations and operations
- Share information on best practices to support and or improve school council operations

How to reach them?

Call SC411 at 416-397-3529, or 416-395-5040,

Email: info@torontopiac.com

Questions