

The purpose of a school council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. (Reg. 612/2.1)

A school council may make recommendations to the principal of the school or to the Board on any matter. (Reg. 612/20)

The school council is an advisory body which consists of elected parents, teacher(s), principal/vice principal, support staff, community representative(s), secondary school students, (elementary where appropriate) and a representative from the Ontario Home and School Association, if such a group exists in the school. (Reg. 612/3.8)

RESPONSIBILITIES

The School Council shall:

- Consult with parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the council. (Reg. 612/23)
- Develop by-laws that govern election procedures, filling vacancies, a conflict of interest, and a conflict resolution process. (Reg. 612/15.2)
- Keep minutes of meetings and records of financial transactions available at the school for a period of four years, for examination without charge by any person. (Reg. 612/16)
- Produce an annual written report of the council activities, including financial activities, to be submitted to the principal and the Board. (Reg. 612/24)

The Principal shall:

- Act as a resource person to the school council, and assist the council in obtaining information relevant to its functions, including information relating to relevant legislation and policies. (Reg. 613/20)
- Solicit the views of the school council with respect to:
 - School policies and guidelines that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents.
 - A local code of conduct and a local student dress code.
 - New education initiatives that relate to students or to the accountability of the education system to parents.
 - School action plans for improvement based on EQAO results and communication of those plans to the public. (Reg. 613/1-3)
- Consider each recommendation made by the council and advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation. (Reg. 613/18)
- Distribute the school council's annual report to every parent/guardian and post it in an accessible location. (Reg. 613/24.3)
- Distribute materials intended for school councils from the Ministry of Education to school council members and post them in an accessible location. (Reg. 613/12.1)
- Give written notice of the elections to parents at least 14 days before the election and post such notice in an accessible location. (Reg. 612/6 & 7)
- Attend every meeting of the school council. (Reg. 613/3.16)

The Board of Education shall:

- Solicit the views of school councils concerning the development of policies and guidelines with respect to pupil achievement and the accountability of the education system to parents, including: codes of conduct, dress codes for students, allocation of funds to school councils, fundraising, conflict resolution processes, re-imburement of expenses incurred by school council members, education improvement plans, and selection criteria for principals and vice principals. (Reg. 612/19.1)
- Consider each recommendation made to the Board by school councils and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation. (Reg. 612/21)

The Ministry of Education:

- Shall report to school councils annually on education issues in the province and may provide them with information on their roles and responsibilities. *(Reg. 612/10.1)*
- May collect names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of school council members and may share this information with the Ontario Parent Council. *(Reg. 612/9.1-2)*

ELECTIONS

- The chair or co-chair shall be a parent member of the council and shall be elected by council members. *(Reg. 612/7.1)*
- A person is qualified to be a parent member of a school council if he/she is a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school. *(Reg. 612/4.1)*
- A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members if he/she is a parent of a student who is enrolled in the school. *(Reg. 612/4.3)*
- Election of all school council members shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, with 14 days advance notice. *(Reg. 612/4.4 and Reg. 612/12.4)*
- Elections of parent members shall be by secret ballot. *(Reg. 612/4.8)*
- The term of office is one year (members may be re-elected for more than one term). *(Reg. 612/6.1)*
- 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. *(Reg. 612/7.1)*
- Teacher member(s) are elected by teachers; support staff are elected by support staff; student members(s) are elected by students; community member(s) are appointed by the council. *(Reg. 612/5.1-4)*

MEMBERSHIP

- The majority of school council members must be parents/guardians of pupils enrolled in the school. The specific numbers of members in each category are determined by the by-laws. *(Reg. 612/3.4 & 4.1)*
- Board employees who work at their child's school are not eligible for election as school council parent members in that school *(Reg. 612/3.5, 4.2)*
- Board employees who stand for school council election as parent members in their child's school (where they do not work), must disclose their employment with the board. *(Reg. 612/3.5, 4.2)*
- Board employees are not eligible to be chair or co-chair of any school council in that Board. *(Reg. 612/8.3)*
- A school trustee is not eligible to be a member of a school council. *(Reg. 612/3.6)*
- Sub-committees may include non-elected members of the school community and must include at least one parent member of the school council. *(Reg. 612/13.2-3)*

MEETINGS

- The school council shall meet at least four times during the school year to discuss and decide on matters that it has the authority to consider. *(Reg. 612/12.1)*
- A majority of parents must be present to have a duly constituted meeting of the school council (quorum). *(Reg. 612/12.3)*
- A newly elected school council shall meet within 35 days of the school year on a date set by the principal. *(Reg. 612/12.2)*
- Each elected member of the school council is entitled to one vote. Principals are not eligible to vote. *(Reg. 612/14.2-3)*
- All school council meetings shall be open to the public. *(Reg. 612/12.4)*

FUNDRAISING

- A school council may engage in fundraising activities *(Reg. 612/22.1)*
- The fundraising activities of the school council shall be conducted in accordance with applicable Board policies, and for a purpose approved by the Board. *(Reg. 612/22.2(A,,B))*
- A school council shall not be incorporated. *(Reg. 612/17)*

This summary of the Regulations of the Ontario Ministry of Education concerning the Role of School Councils (#612, #613) was prepared by Community Services staff, Student & Community Services Department, Toronto District School Board, 416-397-3528.