

Procedure Title	School Council		
Date of Issue	February 17, 2004	Related Policy	BP 1620-D
Revision Dates	September 26, 2007; March 20, 2013; September 18, 2018	Related Forms	
Review Date		Originator	Administrative Council
References			
Ontario Regulation 612/00; School Councils: A Guide for Members; BP 4655-D "Fundraising"; BP 1401-D "Conflict of Interest; BP 1622-D "Home and School Associations"			

1.0 RATIONALE

- 1.1 Consistent with Bluewater District School Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, Bluewater District School Board holds the beliefs that school councils provide important and necessary partnerships with students, staff, parents/guardians, trustees, and community members.
- 1.2 Through actions and beliefs Bluewater District School Board promotes the following objectives for school councils:
 - a) to improve pupil achievement through the promotion of parental and community participation in the education process;
 - b) to act in an advisory capacity to the school principal, and where appropriate the board;
 - c) to provide parents and students with a more responsible and active role in education programs and services; and
 - d) to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

2.0 CODE OF CONDUCT

- 2.1 Council members will maintain confidentiality.
- 2.2 Council members will recognize and respect the rights and responsibilities of all members of our school communities, including individual students, and employees of Bluewater District School Board.
- 2.3 School council meetings will focus on issues and action plans and will not include discussions about individuals, including parents, students, employees, trustees or other members of the school council.
- 2.4 School council members will identify any agenda items where they have a conflict of interest, as described in board policy BP 1401-D "Conflict of Interest".

3.0 COMPOSITION OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

- 3.1 The principal of the school shall facilitate the establishment of and operation of the school council and will be responsible for providing advice to the council to operate within the Education Act and its regulations, Ministry of Education guidelines, Bluewater District School Board policies, procedures, and contractual agreements. The school council shall be established within the first 30 days of each school year.

- 3.2 Members of a school council shall include, but not be limited to:
- a) parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school who are elected by parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school;
 - b) community representative appointed by the other members of the school council;
 - c) principal of the school or designate;
 - d) a teacher representative who is elected by members of the teaching staff;
 - e) a support staff representative who is elected by other support staff;
 - f) a student for a secondary school council (the student can be appointed by the student council or elected if the school does not have a student council);
 - g) a student for an elementary school council (optional - subject to consultation between the school principal and the school council);
 - h) a person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations (OFHSA), if such an association exists in the school (see BP 1622-D "Home and School Associations").
- 3.3 The majority of members will be parents/guardians

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Responsibilities of the School Council

- 4.1.1 The role of the school council is advisory, and within this capacity they may provide assistance to the principal and, where appropriate, school board trustees in their decision-making on educational issues.
- 4.1.2 School councils must operate within the Education Act and its regulations, Ministry of Education guidelines and Bluewater District School Board policies, procedures and contractual agreements.
- 4.1.3 Advisory Responsibilities
- a) school calendar;
 - b) school code of conduct;
 - c) school dress code;
 - d) program goals and curriculum delivery;
 - e) school-community communications;
 - f) criteria for the selection of principals and vice-principals;
 - g) community partnerships related to social, health, recreational, and nutritional programs;
 - h) community use of school facilities;
 - i) participate in school accommodation reviews;
 - j) development, implementation and review of board policies;
 - k) the establishment or amendment of board policies and guidelines that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents;
 - l) the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents;
 - m) board action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of pupils, and the communication of those plans to the public;
 - n) promoting parent involvement activities and initiatives;
- 4.1.4 In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the school council shall:
- a) establish by-laws, to govern the elections and filling of vacancies; a copy of current by-laws must be forwarded to the area superintendent of education.
 - b) establish procedures, set priorities and goals;
 - c) hold a minimum of four meetings per year (all meetings are open to the public);
 - d) communicate on a regular basis with parents and other members of the community to ensure that their views are being represented with regard to matters being addressed by the council;
 - e) regularly report the activities of the council to the school community;
 - f) keep minutes of all the meetings and records of all financial transactions.

Note: A co-chair, vice-chair, secretary and/or treasurer may be elected from the council members, if the council so decides, or its by-laws require this.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Chair

4.2.1 School council members will elect the chair from among the parent members.

Note: A person who is employed by Bluewater District School Board cannot be the chair or co-chair of the council.

4.2.2 The chair of the school council shall:

- a) consult with the school principal to establish a meeting schedule for the year;
- b) in consultation with school council members and the principal prepare the agenda for the meetings;
- c) chair the school council meetings;
- d) ensure that copies of the school council minutes and records of financial transactions are maintained at the school for the approved retention period (four years for minutes and six years for financial records) and that they are available for examination at the school by any person;
- e) participate in information and training programs;
- f) communicate with the principal;
- g) communicate regularly with the school community;
- h) consult with Superintendent(s) and trustee(s) as appropriate;
- i) prepare an annual report that is to be made available to all parents in the school community. The report is to be kept on file at the school, and the principal will share it with the Area Superintendent.

4.3 Responsibilities of School Council Members

Members of the school council shall:

- a) participate in council meetings;
- b) participate in information and training programs;
- c) act as a link between the school council and the community;
- d) encourage the participation and involvement of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community.

4.4 Responsibilities of the Principal

The principal of the school shall:

- a) attend all school council meetings;
- b) facilitate the establishment of the school council and assist in its operation;
- c) support and promote the council(s) in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities;
- d) seek input from the council in areas for which it has been assigned (see section 4.1.3 Advisory Responsibilities);
- e) act as a resource on laws, regulations, board policies and collective agreements;
- f) obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make informed decisions;
- g) consider each recommendation made to the principal by the school council and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation;
- h) maintain regular communication with the school council chair;
- i) assist the council in communicating with the school community;
- j) encourage participation of parents, students as appropriate, and other people from within the community
- k) include a summary of the school council's annual report in the school newsletter, noting that the full report is available at the school;
- l) ensure prompt distribution to school council members any materials received from the Ministry that are identified as being for distribution to members of the school council;
- m) post any materials distributed to school council members in a location that is accessible to parents.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1 Recommendations and decisions of school councils that are specifically related to the school shall be referred by the chair to the school principal.
- 5.2 Recommendations and decisions which are broader in scope than the local school should be referred by the chair to the school principal, for referral to the appropriate board official or board committee.

6.0 PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- 6.1 Consistent with the councils' role in encouraging parent involvement activities and initiatives, school councils will be the local body accountable for supporting parent involvement through requests for, and expenditure of, the funds allocated from the Ministry of Education to support local communication with parents. These funds will be made available for the development and support of parent sponsored initiatives. School councils will seek out the advice and ideas of other parents and partners to plan and implement processes that will involve more parents at the school level. School councils shall engage the participation of OFHSA incorporated Home and School Associations in parent involvement activities, where such an association exists at the school.
- 6.2 Board level parent involvement committees will be established by, and report directly to, the director of education. This committee will be chaired by a parent and the membership will include a majority of parents, as well as trustee representation and the director of education.

7.0 SCHOOL COUNCIL FUNDS

- 7.1 School council funds are defined as those monies raised by the school council, or monies directed to school councils from provincial grants.
- 7.2 School councils raising funds in the name of the school must comply with the expectations set out in board policy BP 4655-D "Fundraising", and its related procedures pertaining to school generated funds.
- 7.3 Funds raised by the school council are to be used for the purposes for which they were raised. The minutes of the school council meeting shall record the purpose of the fundraising activity.
- 7.4 School council funds must be deposited in the school bank account, where the principal of the school and up to three other persons are assigned signing authority. Cheques shall be signed by two (2) of the signing authorities; however, one of the signatures must be that of the principal.
- 7.5 The principal will ensure that the procedures, as outlined in the procedures for school generated funds AP 4657-D, AP 4658-D, AP 4659-D, AP 4660-D, and AP 4661-D, are adhered to.
- 7.6 When funds are to be expended from the school council account, the minutes of the school council meeting shall record the motion authorizing the expenditure of the funds, and the purpose for the expenditure.
- 7.7 The school council annual report will incorporate a report on the fundraising activities of the school council for the year ending June 30.
- 7.8 Grant money received by school councils from the provincial grant program must be spent on activities that support communication and parent engagement.

8.0 INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Activities under Principal Direction

When taking direction from the principal, and working with the school staff on school sponsored activities, school council members are fully protected by the board's insurance, and do not need to purchase additional coverage.

8.2 Independent Activities

When undertaking independent activities outside of the legislated duties, or duties not assigned or under the direct control of the principal, school councils require their own insurance. The Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE), the primary insurer for the board, can provide additional liability coverage for school councils at a reasonable cost.

8.3 Fundraising by School Councils for Board Sponsored Events

Money raised through board-sponsored fundraising activities, will be deposited and accounted for in accordance with BP 4655-D "Fundraising", and related procedures. Money raised through board-sponsored fundraising activities, and deposited and accounted for, using the board's cash handling procedures is protected by the board's crime insurance.

8.4 Fundraising by School Councils for Non-Board Sponsored Events

If school councils become involved in fundraising for a non-board sponsored event they are not covered by the board's crime insurance.