YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

P R O C E D U R E P 2 6 2 . 0

Title: **SCHOOL COUNCILS**
Section: **Board**
Date: **August 28, 2002**

1.0 Purpose and Role of School Councils

(i) In accordance with Board Policy 262 and Ministry of Education Regulation 612.0, the purpose of school councils is to support:

I Improved student learning, and

II An increased sense of shared accountability for public education.

(ii) School Councils are advisory bodies which may make recommendations to the school principal or to the Board on matters outlined in Sections 7 and 9 of this Procedure, or on any other matter identified by the council. Notwithstanding the above, confidential personnel matters may not be addressed by school councils.

(iii) As stated in Board Policy 262.0, "the Board believes that school councils play an important role in building school, family and community partnerships by providing input into relevant Board and school level decisions and by encouraging the involvement of all members of the school community in support of student learning."

2.0 Composition of School Councils

MEMBERSHIP

Each school council shall be comprised of the following members:

PARENTS (constituting the majority of members of the school council)
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE (optional at Elementary Level, one at secondary)
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE (at least one position)
PRINCIPAL OF THE SCHOOL
TEACHING STAFF REPRESENTATIVE (one)
SUPPORT STAFF REPRESENTATIVE (one)

a) PARENTS

(i) A majority of the members of the school council shall be parents of students who are enrolled in the school. The number shall be defined by either of the following:

I School council by-law which specifies the number of parent members, OR

II If the school council does not have a by-law specifying the number of parent members; the number shall be six.

(ii) A person is not qualified to be a parent member of a school council if:

I He or she is employed at the school and is a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager.

II He or she is not employed at the school, but is employed elsewhere by the Board, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform parents that he or she is an employee of the Board.

b) STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

(i) In the case of a school with one or more secondary school grades, the student representative shall be:

I One student enrolled in the school who is appointed by the student council, if the school has a student council, OR

II One student enrolled in the school who is elected by the student body.

III Subsection (b) does not apply to a school that is established primarily for adults.

(ii) In the case of an elementary school the principal may appoint one student after consulting with the school council to determine if the school council wants a student representative.

c) COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE(S)

(i) The number of community representatives shall be defined by either of the following:

I One community representative OR

II Up to four community representatives if the council chooses to so specify in a by-law, providing that the majority of members continues to be parents.

(ii) A community representative who is appointed by the members of the school council cannot be employed at the school as a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager and if employed in such a capacity elsewhere in the Board must inform the other members of the council of his or her employment before the appointment.

d) PRINCIPAL

(i) The principal of the school is a member of the school council.

e) TEACHING STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

(i) The teacher representative shall be one teacher who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal, who is elected by the teaching staff employed at the school.

f) SUPPORT STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

(i) The support staff representative shall be one person who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal or any other teacher, who is elected by the support staff employed at the school.

g) TRUSTEES

(i) A member of the Board of Trustees cannot be a member of a school council.

3.0 Election of School Council Members

a) TIME PERIOD

(i) The election of school council members shall be held during the first 30 calendar days of each school year, on a date that is established by the chair or co-chairs of the school council after consulting with the principal of the school.

(ii) If a new school is established, the first election of parent members to the school council shall be held during the first 30 days of the school year, on a date that is fixed by the principal, as agent of the Board.

b) PARENT MEMBERS

(i) Public notice of the annual elections and nomination forms shall be given by the principal at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members on behalf of the school council.

(ii) Notice of the annual elections of parent members shall give the date, time and location of the election in writing to every parent of a student who is enrolled in the school on the date the notice is given.

I Notice may:

a) be given to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parents; AND

b) be posted in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

(iii) Each parent of one or more students enrolled at the school shall have one vote.

(iv) Election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.

(v) Parent elections shall be by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to, or less than the number of parent member positions on the council. If additional vacancies exist, parent members may be appointed by the council according to the bylaws of the council.

c) OTHER MEMBERS

(i) Only teachers employed at the school may vote for the teacher member.

(ii) Only support staff employed at the school may vote for the support staff member.

(iii) For secondary schools where a student council exists, a student member shall be named by the student council. Where a student council does not exist, the student member should be elected by the student body.

d) OFFICERS

(i) Chairs, co-chairs and officers shall be elected by the new school council.

(ii) A chair or co-chair of a school council shall be a parent member of the council.

(iii) A person who is employed by the Board and is a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager cannot be the chair or co-chair of a school council.

(iv) A school council may have such other officers as are provided for in the by-laws of the school council.

e) VACANCIES

(i) A vacancy in council membership or in the officers of a school council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the council.

(ii) If an election is held to fill a vacancy in the membership of a school council, the above stated conditions for eligibility apply.

(iii) A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the school council from exercising its authority.

f) TERM OF OFFICE

(i) A person elected or appointed as a member of a school council holds office from the later of:

I the date he or she is elected or appointed; and

II the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections held in the school year.

(ii) Terms of office continue until the date of the first meeting of the school council after elections in the next school year.

(iii) A member of a school council may be re-elected or re-appointed in subsequent years unless otherwise specified in the by-laws of the school council.

4.0 <u>Voting</u>

While decisions of the council are best reached by consensus, when voting is necessary:

(i) Each member of a school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the school council.

(ii) Each member of a committee of a school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee.

(iii) The principal of the school is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the school council or by a committee of the school council.

5.0 Remuneration

(i) A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of a school council.

(ii) Reimbursement for expenses incurred as members or officers of the school council shall be in accordance with relevant procedures established by the Board.

6.0 Incorporation

(i) A school council shall not be incorporated.

7.0 Responsibilities of the Board

(i) The Board shall consult school councils on the following matters:

I The establishment or amendment of Board policies and guidelines that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including:

a) codes of conduct within schools,
b) appropriate dress of students in schools,
c) allocation of funds to school councils,
d) conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes,
e) fundraising,
f) reimbursement of expenses incurred by members and officers of school councils.

II Development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents including implementation plans or policies and guidelines with respect to:

a) conduct of persons in schools,
b) appropriate dress for students in schools.

III Board improvement plans based on provincial test results (EQAO) and other data and the communication of these plans to the public.

IV The process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals.

(ii) The Board shall consider each recommendation made to the Board by school councils and advise school councils of decisions reached or actions taken in response to recommendations made to the Board by councils, along with a rationale for these actions or decisions.

(iii) The Board shall hold school council forums in each Community Education Centre at least twice annually for the purposes of conducting professional development, sharing effective practices, and facilitating communication among council chairs, council members, local trustees, principals and senior administrators.

(iv) The Board shall, in collaboration with school council representatives, offer relevant professional development for council chairs, principals, and council members.

(v) The Board shall appoint school council representatives to various ad hoc advisory committees, as required by the Ministry or deemed appropriate by the Board.

(vi) The Board shall provide legal protection to school councils and members of councils for actions taken in the course of carrying out their responsibilities providing that such actions are consistent with all Board policies and procedures.

(vii) The Board shall rule on internal disputes of school councils that are referred to the Board by the council. Such decisions of the Board shall be final.

8.0 Responsibilities of the School Council

(i) School councils shall carry out the following responsibilities in accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures:

I Hold elections for members of school councils during the first 30 days of each school year.

II Meet at least four times during the school year at meetings that are open to the public and in a location accessible to the public; the first meeting occurring within the first 35 days of the school year.

III Hold meetings where decisions are made only when a majority of the members are present and of those present, a majority is parent members.

IV Record and maintain minutes of all meetings and records of all financial transactions for a four-year period.

V Make the minutes and financial records available at the school for examination without charge by any person.

VI Submit a written annual report on its activities including fundraising to the principal of the school and to the Board.

VII Prepare/Review and submit annually to the school's superintendent of education, an administrator profile outlining the preferred characteristics of the school's principal and/or vice-principal.

VIII Ensure compliance with the Board policy on fundraising when choosing to take part in fundraising activities.

IX Engage in internal conflict resolution activities in accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures and bylaws of the council.

X Consult with parents of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the school council.

XI In accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures, make by-laws regarding the following matters:

a) election procedures and procedures for the filling of vacancies between elections.
b) a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes.

(ii) In accordance with relevant Board Policies and Procedures, school councils may make by-laws regarding the following matters:

I Specifying the number of parent members provided that the number would constitute a majority on the school council. Otherwise the number of parent members is six as specified in Section 2(a) of this Procedure.

II Specifying the number of community representatives as two or more appointed by the other members of the school council. Otherwise there will be one community representative appointed by other members of the school council.

III Limiting the number of times that a school council member may be re-elected or re-appointed. Otherwise there is no limit to the number of times that an eligible school council member may be re-elected or re-appointed.

IV Specifying that the school council may have two co-chairs. Otherwise the school council shall have one chair.

V Specifying other officers of the school council.

VI Establishing committees to make recommendations to the school council such that membership on the committee includes at least one parent member of the council and may include persons who are not members of the school council.

VII Governing the conduct of the school council's affairs.

(iii) School councils may refer internal disputes to the Board for the Board's consideration and ruling.

(iv) School councils may make recommendations to principals either verbally or in writing. All such recommendations shall be reflected in the minutes of school council meetings.

(v) School councils may make recommendations to the Board by submitting them in writing to the school's superintendent of education. The superintendent of education will, in turn, take responsibility for considering and/forwarding the recommendation to the appropriate person(s) and will subsequently respond to the council. Recommendations to the Board shall be reflected in the minutes of the respective school council's meeting.

9.0 Responsibilities of the Principal

The principal of the school shall:

(i) Attend all school council meetings, unless he or she is unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond his or her control. In such case, where possible, the vice-principal shall attend as a delegate.

(ii) Call the first school council meeting within the first 35 days of the school year.

(iii) Provide:

a) I written notice (at least 14 days before the election date) of dates, times and locations of the election to every parent of a student who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.

II written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the school council to every parent of a student who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.

III a copy of the annual report to every parent of a student who, on the date the copy is given, is enrolled in the school.

b) Written notices and a copy of the annual report may be:

I given to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent; AND

II posted in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

c) One copy per family of written notices and the annual report satisfies the requirements of this procedure providing that the parents reside in the same home.

(iv) Make known the names of members of the school council to parents of students enrolled in the school by 30 days after the determination of the school council by newsletter or other means.

(v) Distribute to each member of the school council any materials received from and identified by the Ministry or Board as being relevant for distribution to school councils.

(vi) Act as a resource person to the school council and assist the council in obtaining information regarding the function of school councils, including information relating to relevant legislation, regulations and policies.

(vii) Consider each recommendation made to the principal by the school council and advise the council of decisions reached or actions taken in response to each recommendation, along with a rationale for these actions or decisions.

(viii) Solicit the views of the school council with respect to the following matters:

a) The establishment, implementation or amendment of school policies and guidelines that relate to a school code of conduct established according to the Board's policies and procedures.

b) The establishment, implementation or amendment of school policies and guidelines regarding appropriate dress for students according to the Board's policies and procedures.
c) The establishment, implementation and review of the school's plan for continuous improvement.
d) The establishment, review and communication of the school profile.

(ix) Support and promote the school council's operations and activities.

(x) Ensure that copies of the minutes of the school council meetings are kept at the school and are accessible to all parents.

(xi) Ensure that the school council constitution and by-laws are readily available to the school community.

(xii) Assist the council in communicating with the school community.

(xiii) Advise school councils when they are not in compliance with Board policies and procedures.

10.0 Responsibility of the Chair/Co-Chairs

The Chair/Co-chairs of the school council shall carry out the following tasks in accordance with Board policies and procedures:

(i) Call school council meetings (minimum 4 per year) in consultation with the principal.

(ii) Ensure that parents are consulted about matters under consideration by the council.

(iii) Ensure that fundraising activities, management of the proceeds of fundraising and all expenditures are in accordance with applicable Board policies and procedures.

(iv) Prepare the agendae for school council meetings in consultation with the school's principal.

(v) Chair school council meetings according to the agendae.

(vi) Ensure that minutes of school council meetings are recorded.

(vii) Communicate with the school principal.

(viii) Communicate with senior Board staff and trustees, as required.

(ix) Ensure that the school council constitution and by-laws are reviewed annually.

11.0 Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair of the school council shall:

(i) Assist the Chair/Co-chairs in carrying out his/her responsibilities.

(ii) Act on behalf of the Chair/Co-chairs in the event of his/her absence.

12.0 Responsibilities of Council Members

Members of the school council are accountable to the members of the school community whom they represent and shall:

(i) Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.

(ii) Regularly attend school council meetings.

(iii) Participate in information sharing and training programs.

(iv) Act as a communication link between the school council and the community.

(v) Encourage the participation of all parents and of other people within the school community.

(viii) Participate on sub-committees and assist with tasks of the school council as appropriate.