SCHOOL COUNCILS
Resource Guide 2018-19
Welcome to your School Council!

At the Peel District School Board, we value the role and contributions of our School Council members to help achieve parent engagement and student success. Your leadership and participation on council is an important step towards making a positive impact in the lives of Peel students—a difference that you are making not only for your own children, but for each and every student at your school and throughout the board.

To help strengthen this partnership, the Peel board has developed this resource guide with valuable School Council tips and templates to guide and assist you throughout the school year. It is also available on our website at www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact support staff from our Communications and Community Relations team at communications@peelsb.com or 905-890-1010 ext. 2809.

On behalf of the Peel board, thank you for your dedication to promote student success within our school communities. We are grateful for our collaboration and wish you a successful school year.

Peter Joshua
Director of Education

Congratulations on becoming a member of your local School Council! As a School Council member, you play a crucial role in student success at your child’s school.

The Peel District School Board’s Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) is available as a resource to School Councils to help boost parent involvement at your school and beyond. PIC is an important advisory body comprised of volunteer parents, the director of education, trustees and board employees – all members who are dedicated to supporting and enhancing the involvement of parents within schools and across the Peel board.

Where School Councils focus on parent engagement and student success within the local school and community, PIC participates at the board level by providing information and advice to the board on parent engagement, communicating with and supporting school councils, and undertaking activities to help parents support their children’s learning at home and at school.

You can learn more about PIC in the Parent Involvement section of this resource book or by checking out our website at www.peelschools.org/PIC. If you’re interested in getting involved with PIC, please email us at parentinvolvement@peelsb.com or tweet @pic_pdsb.

We look forward to working with you and wish you a successful school year!

Parent Involvement Committee Members
# Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: Roles and Responsibilities ................................................................. 4
   The Role of School Councils ........................................................................... 5
   Prepare an Action Plan .................................................................................. 6
   School Council Yearly Checklist .................................................................. 9
   Governing Rules and Guidelines .................................................................. 10
   School Council Membership ....................................................................... 18
   Member Roles and Responsibilities .............................................................. 19
   Executive Positions ..................................................................................... 21

CHAPTER 2: Elections .......................................................................................... 22
   Plan Your School Council Election ............................................................... 23
   Election Planning Timeline .......................................................................... 24
   Election Planning Templates .......................................................................... 25

CHAPTER 3: Meetings and Minutes ................................................................. 28
   Plan for Effective Meetings ........................................................................... 29
   School Council Meeting Template ................................................................ 30
   School Council Meeting Checklist ................................................................ 32
   Resolving Conflicts ...................................................................................... 33
   Making Decisions ......................................................................................... 34
   Reporting to the Community ....................................................................... 35

CHAPTER 4: Finances and Fundraising ............................................................. 37
   Managing Your School Activity Funds Account ........................................... 38
   Fundraising Guidelines ................................................................................ 40
   Handling Cash Sales .................................................................................... 42
   Fundraising for Capital Projects and Capital-related Items ......................... 43

CHAPTER 5: Parent Involvement and Communication .................................... 44
   Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) .......................................................... 45
   Your School Council Email Address ............................................................ 46
   Using Social Media Accounts ..................................................................... 46
   Other Ways to Stay in Touch ....................................................................... 46
   Boost Parent Involvement at Your School .................................................... 47
   Apply for a Parent Reaching Out Grant ....................................................... 47
   Parent Involvement: A Checklist .................................................................. 48
## Important Contacts

The first point of contact for School Councils should always be your school principal. In addition to your principal, the following contacts and resources may be able to assist you in your role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Information/Links</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peel District School Board</strong></td>
<td>The Peel board’s website offers many resources, tip sheets and important information for your School Council. Here are few key links:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board of Trustees</strong></td>
<td>Public school trustees are the critical link between communities and school boards. They are elected by taxpayers during municipal elections every four years and are directly accountable to the community. The current 12 trustees have been elected to serve from Dec. 1, 2014, to Nov. 30, 2018. Find your trustee by visiting the Trustee section at <a href="http://www.peelschools.org/trustees/meetyourtrustee">http://www.peelschools.org/trustees/meetyourtrustee</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.peelschools.org/trustees">www.peelschools.org/trustees</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communications &amp; Community Relations Support Services</strong></td>
<td>The Peel board’s communications department can assist if you have questions about the mandate of a School Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:communications@peelsb.com">communications@peelsb.com</a>, 905-890-1010 ext. 2809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent Involvement Committee</strong></td>
<td>Looking for ways to boost parent engagement at your school or become more involved yourself? Contact the board’s Parent Involvement Committee—a Ministry-mandated committee consisting mostly of parents, as well as trustees, board staff and the director of education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.peelschools.org/PIC">http://www.peelschools.org/PIC</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:parentinvolvement@peelsb.com">parentinvolvement@peelsb.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontario Ministry of Education</strong></td>
<td>The Ministry of Education provides a variety of resources to guide and assist School Councils in their role, including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/">www.edu.gov.on.ca/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1
Roles and Responsibilities

What is the role of School Council?
How can the council support School Success Planning?
What rules and guidelines govern a council?
Who can join School Council?
The Role of School Councils

Every Peel school has a School Council—a group made up mostly of parents that is focused on helping students succeed. School Councils bring together the parent community and enhance the communication between the school and the school community. This is accomplished by providing feedback and advice to your school principal and board staff on significant education issues, and by planning activities that support the active participation of parents/guardians and your school community.

A School Council’s mandate

1. Promote the best interests of the school
2. Facilitate two-way communication between the school and parents/community
3. Act as an advisory body providing ideas and suggestions to assist the principal, trustee and superintendent in making decisions on educational issues

What are the responsibilities of School Council?

The responsibilities of School Councils are established provincially in the Ontario Education Act under regulations 612/00 and 613/00. At the Peel District School Board, our Policy 61 and Operating Procedure COMM6 outline the responsibilities of School Councils in the board’s jurisdiction. Your School Council bylaws further describe the responsibilities of your School Council specific to your school community.

School Councils have a key advisory role

School Councils are advisory bodies and may make recommendations to their principals or school boards on educational topics and issues, including:

- planning for improvement of student progress
- school activity calendar
- code of behaviour
- school program priorities and curriculum delivery
- budget priorities
- ways to promote communication between parents and the school
- principal selection criteria
- extracurricular activities
- school-based services
- fundraising policies
- conflict resolution policies
- reimbursement of expenses for council members
- community use of school facilities
- school profile

The principal may refer recommendations about broader educational issues to the appropriate board staff member or trustee. The principal and the board must consider council’s recommendations and advise council of any actions that may be taken in response to those recommendations.
Prepare an Action Plan

A great way to start off your school year is to review the Peel board’s Plan for Student Success as well as your school’s School Success Plan (ask your principal for more details). These plans outline goals specific to the board and your school to ensure we inspire success, confidence and hope in each student. Your goals, objectives and projects for the year should align with the goals within the Plan for Student Success and School Success Plan.

The Plan for Student Success focuses the Peel board’s collective efforts to further student success, and aligns with the Ministry of Education’s goals, as well as the board’s Mission, Vision and Values. These goals interconnect to achieve our mission to inspire success, confidence and hope in each student.

For more information, visit www.peelschools.org/planforstudentsuccess

MY SCHOOL’S SUCCESS PLAN (ask your principal for information on your School Success Plan)

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
To help clearly outline your goals for the year, it’s recommended that your council creates an action plan. Developing an action plan involves making decisions about who will do what, where, how, why and at what cost.

**Getting started**
- Set your goals and objectives for the year.
- Start by breaking down each objective into a series of activities or tasks.
- If some of the activities seem large, break them down into smaller sections.
- Go through the list of activities and prioritize each item from one (very important) to five (not important).
- If too many tasks have high priority, try to make some less important.
- Then reorganize the list in priority order and enter it into your action plan.
- Make sure that all activities and tasks still reflect your goals and support the School Success Plan.

**Creating a plan**
Once you have all the activities listed in your plan, you should:
- Assign a person or team of people to each activity or task. These people will be responsible for making sure that the activity is completed on time.
- Set a realistic and achievable deadline for each activity.
- Identify the resources you need to complete the activity (specialized skills, equipment, number of volunteers, etc.).
- Determine how you will measure or evaluate the activity to make sure it is carried out correctly and that it has achieved the results you expected.

**Example:**

**Goal:** To raise funds to support school programs.
**Objective:** By April 1, 2019, we will raise $1,000 to buy new books for the school library.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Resources Required</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car wash</td>
<td>Donna Pringle</td>
<td>Oct. 20, 2018</td>
<td>Float - $25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Signs - $25</td>
<td>Car wash site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25 student volunteers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 adult volunteers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fund raised: $150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karaoke night</td>
<td>Jatinder Patel</td>
<td>Dec. 5, 2018</td>
<td>Karaoke machine - $50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jason Khan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Signs - $25</td>
<td>School gym</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tickets - $8</td>
<td>Karaoke machine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50 promotional flyers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100 tickets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community support: 30 cars washed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS**

- Any purchases made by School Council must follow the boards procurement and purchasing procedures and policies. For more information, view the Finance section of this guidebook and speak with your principal.
- If you’re planning an event, consider partnering with another Peel school in your community to expand your reach. When a Family of Schools (elementary, middle and secondary schools in your community) works together, not only do you build community ties, but you also help students transition through middle and secondary school.
**Action Plan Template**

**Goal:** _____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

**Objective:** _________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Resources Required</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Find an online version of this template at [www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils](http://www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils) and click on ‘Templates.’
School Council Yearly Checklist

Throughout the school year, School Councils must meet certain commitments to their school and to the Ministry of Education. The following checklist outlines those commitments and their due dates.

**September**
- Notify your school community of your School Council election date, time and location at least 14 calendar days before the election via your school newsletter, broadcast and/or website.
- Send home parent representative nomination forms by the end of the second week of school.
- Provide a list of parent nominees, including brief biographies, to your parent community. This information must be made available to all parents/guardians at least one week before the election.

**October**
- Hold your School Council elections within the first 30 calendar days of the school year.
- Notify your school community of the election results within 30 calendar days of the election.
- Hold your first School Council meeting with the newly elected or appointed members. This meeting must be held within the first 35 calendar days of the school year on a date chosen by the principal, and should include:
  - An overview of the council’s roles and responsibilities—consider reviewing this guidebook with new and returning members.
  - A brief explanation of the School Success Plan and how the councils supports this work.
  - Selecting executive positions, including your School Council Chair. Executive members are selected by your School Council after you have held your election, within 30 days of the first School Council meeting. Once selected, the Chair should lead the rest of the meetings.
  - Scheduling council meeting dates/times for the school year. School Councils must hold a minimum of four meetings each school year, unless otherwise indicated in the School Council bylaws.
- Provide your council Chair with access to your School Council’s email address (see page 44 for details).

**During the school year**
- Set your council’s goals for the year. Use the Action Plan template on page 8 to help guide you in this work.
- Prepare your meeting agendas and share with members of the school community at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting. The agenda should be developed by the School Council Chair, in consultation with the principal and council members. It can be shared through newsletters, the school’s website, etc.
- Keep clear, concise minutes at each council meeting. Minutes must be approved by the next School Council meeting, and must be made available to anyone who requests them immediately after the meeting at which they were approved. They should be posted on school websites, and copies should be stored for at least four years.
- Review monthly transaction records for School Council funds. The treasurer, if one is elected, should request and review monthly transaction records for School Council funds held by the school in the non-board funds account. If a School Council does not have a treasurer, this would be the role of the Chair.

**January**
- Complete the principal/vice-principal consultation process. The principal/vice-principal consultation process with School Councils must be completed by the end of January each year. Superintendents of education will provide principals with the resources required to fulfil this commitment.

**June**
- Establish an Election Planning Committee to facilitate the election of parent members to School Council.
- Set the date, time and location of your next School Council election, keeping in mind that your election must be held in the first 30 calendar days of the school year. Consider holding the election on the same night as an open house as voting must be done in-person.
- Prepare and submit your annual report. Each School Council must prepare an annual report and submit it to the school’s principal, superintendent of education, trustee(s) and the board’s Communications and Finance departments no later than September 30 of each year. Your annual report should also be posted on your school website for parents to view.
Governing Rules and Guidelines

Constitution and bylaws

All School Councils are governed by a constitution and specific bylaws. Peel District School Board School Councils are not required to develop a lengthy constitution because the Ontario Regulation 612/00 and the board’s policy set out the mandate and roles and responsibilities for School Councils. If a council already has a constitution in place, the council may choose to continue it providing it doesn’t conflict with the regulation or board’s policy.

Creating your bylaws

Each School Council should have a set of bylaws specific to how your council operates. In fact, it is a requirement of the Ministry of Education to have bylaws covering election procedures, conflict of interest, resolving conflict and filling vacancies. School Councils may wish to create additional bylaws, including code of ethics, general expectations for meetings, membership of council, and role of the executive council.

View bylaw samples and templates on pages 11 to 17 of this resource guide or at www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils (click on ‘Policy and Bylaws’)

Policies and procedures

The Peel board has a specific policy and procedure to ensure the effective operation of School Councils in every school within the board. It can be found at the back of this handbook and online at www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils (click on ‘Policy and Bylaws’)

Your council may also find other board policies or procedures of the board helpful to plan and carry out your activities. All board policies and procedures can be found online at http://peelschools.org/trustees/boardpolicies

IMPORTANT NOTE

As you develop your bylaws, keep in mind:

- Bylaws must not conflict with any provisions of Ontario Regulation 612/00 or the Peel board’s School Council Policy 61.
- Your bylaws should remain consistent from year-to-year, but can be reviewed by the council in case adjustments are needed.
Bylaw template: Code of ethics

____________________ School Council bylaw
[insert school name]

Code of ethics

- The School Council shall operate in a non-judgmental manner, employing constructive discussions and reaching decisions through consensus.
- Council members shall become familiar and act in accordance with Board and school policies and operating practices.
- Council members shall focus on school-wide issues and shall consider the best interests of the school and all students.
- Council members shall practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth.
- Council members shall recognize and respect the rights and responsibilities of individual students and board employees.
- Council members shall treat all other members with respect and shall allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- Council meetings are to remain free of discussion about individual parents, students, board employees, trustees or other council members.
- Council members shall respect the confidential nature of some school business, shall accept the limitations this may place on the operation of the council and shall not disclose confidential information.
- Council members shall accept accountability for decisions.
- Council members shall identify all council agenda items and/or issues with which they have a possible conflict of interest.
- Council members shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through involvement in School Council.

Find an online version of this template by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Templates.’
Bylaw template: Election procedures

_________________ School Council bylaw

[insert school name]

Election procedures

School Council membership

Membership in the School Council is governed by the Education Act: School Council Regulation 612/00 Section 3: Composition. Membership shall include:

- ___ parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school
- one community representative, who shall be a public school supporter
- the school principal
- one teacher employed at the school
- one support (non-teaching) staff member

It is expected that membership of council will reflect the diversity of the school community. If council positions are vacant, the council may continue to function while efforts are made to fill the vacancies.

** At the elementary level, councils must have at least 5 parent reps. At the secondary level, they would have at least 6 parent reps. A council may decide to allow for additional parent positions.

Determining council membership

Membership in the School Council shall be determined as follows:

- parent representatives – elected by parents and guardians of students enrolled at the school
- Chair – a parent/guardian member who is elected by council members
- community representative – appointed by council, once it is established
- school principal – a mandated member of council
- teacher representative – elected by members of the teaching staff
- support staff representative – elected by members of the support staff

Limitations to council membership

A person may not be a member of the council if he/she is a trustee of the Peel District School Board or a local Member of Provincial Parliament.

A person may not be a parent member of the council if he/she is:

- employed at the school
- not employed at the school but is employed elsewhere by the board, unless he/she informs parents of his/her employment before the council election by including a description of his/her employment in his/her biography

Find an online version of this template by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Templates.’
Bylaw template: Roles of School Council executive

______________________________ School Council bylaw
[insert school name]

Roles of School Council executive

Chair/co-Chairs
Note: a person employed by the board cannot be a Chair or co-Chair of School Council

The Chair of the School Council shall:
- establish and communicate a School Council meeting schedule for the year, in consultation with the principal
- prepare the agenda for the meetings
- chair all council meetings and have general supervision of the operations of the council
- in consultation with the principal develop rules of order for the meetings, if required
- attend and participate in information and training sessions
- ensure diversity in all School Council committees
- participate, as an ex-officio member, of all committees established by School Council
- facilitate collaborative decision-making
- be responsible for making public statements on behalf of the School Council
- ensure that School Council members are aware of their responsibility to behave ethically and responsibly at all times, to adhere to the council’s code of ethics and to disclose conflicts of interest, where they exist
- ensure regular communication occurs between the council and the school community
- consult with senior Board staff and trustees, as required
- ensure that proper minutes of the meeting are recorded
- review and approve the School Council category reports and any other financial records of School Council
- ensure that minutes and records of all School Council financial transactions are maintained at the school for a period of four years and are made available for examination, without charge, by any member of the school community
- ensure that the treasurer understands his/her responsibilities for managing School Council financial transactions and documentation
- communicate regularly with the school principal and involve him/her in the planning of all School Council activities and/or initiatives that will involve or impact on the school staff or students
- ensure that there is consultation between the school community and the principal regarding the distribution of School Council funds
- work with the principal to ensure that all School Council fundraising activities and uses of School Council funds comply with board policies
- work with the principal to ensure there are processes in place to manage funds raised by School Council and to maintain the security of School Council funds and financial records
- prepare an annual report outlining all School Council activities from September 1 to August 31, inclusive. Review and approve the financial statements of School Council and include them in the annual report. Submit the annual report, including the financial statement, to the principal, superintendent, trustee(s) and the Communications department at the HJA Brown Education Centre by September 30 of each school year. Ensure that the annual report is available for examination, without charge, by any member of the school community.

Secretary
The secretary of the School Council shall:
- ensure that full and accurate minutes of the council meetings are recorded, maintained, reported and available at each meeting
- verify and record all consensus or voted decisions of the council
- ensure that the minutes of the council meetings are available in the school office for parents and guardians of the students enrolled at the school
- maintains list of all attendees at each meeting and includes list of council members present in the minutes
• send minutes to the principal and Chair for review/approval within two weeks of the meeting. Once the minutes have been approved by the principal and Chair, the secretary will distribute them prior to the next meeting/the Chair will distribute them through the School Council email address to council meetings prior to the next meeting. Minutes will be approved by council before being made available to the school community. Minutes will be available in the school office and on the school website.

Principal

Note: the principal may not vote at School Council or School Council committee meetings

The principal of the school shall:
• oversee the organization and management of the school
• oversee the teaching and discipline of students at the school
• help establish School Council
• attend all School Council meetings
• support and promote the operations and activities of council
• consult council on educational issues and other areas where the council has been given advisory responsibilities
• consider recommendations made by council, advise council on any actions taken in response to those recommendations and share council’s recommendations with the board, where appropriate
• if the council’s recommendations are not accepted or its advice is not acted upon, provide the School Council with the reason for the decision
• communicate regularly with School Council Chair
• encourage the participation of parents, school community members and students, where appropriate
• help council communicate information to the school community, including:
  o date, time and location of council elections
  o results of council elections
  o dates, times and locations of regular council meetings
  o annual report
• review and approve all communications that are distributed to the school community through the school
• ensure council records, including minutes of meetings and financial records, are properly maintained and distributed to council members
• include a short summary of the School Council’s annual report in the school newsletter, with a note that copies of the full report are available upon request
• provide information to council and act as a resource on ministry and board regulations, policies, operating procedures and contractual agreements
• promptly distribute to council members any information from the ministry that is identified as being for distribution to School Council
• post all material for distribution to School Council members in a location accessible to parents
• review and approve all fundraising activities conducted on behalf of the school and be responsible for ensuring that fundraising activities and uses of funds comply with board policies
• be responsible for the management and control of all school activity funds, including funds allocated to or raised by School Council
• ensure there are processes in place to manage funds raised by School Council and to maintain the security of School Council funds and financial records
• when necessary, delegate his/her duties as a member of School Council to a vice-principal

Find an online version of this template by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Templates.’
Bylaw template: Filling council vacancies

__________________ School Council bylaw
[insert school name]
Filling council vacancies

Vacancies
Vacancies on School Council occur when:
- positions on School Council have not been filled after an election
- when a member resigns
- when a member is unable to fulfill his/her duties and responsibilities*

*Committee members who are absent from two consecutive committee meetings without the approval of the committee thereby vacate their seat. The Chair/co-Chairs have the ability to approve the extended absence of any committee member.

Filling vacancies
When a vacancy occurs among the parent/guardian representatives, council shall notify the school community of the position and request volunteers. The vacancy can be filled by holding an election or council can choose to appoint an eligible member.

When a vacancy occurs among the non-parent representatives, council shall notify the appropriate group and request that a new representative be selected.

A replacement representative may only serve for the balance of the term of the representative he/she is replacing.

If a vacancy cannot be filled, council can continue to operate until a replacement representative is found, as long as there is a quorum and the majority of council members are parents.

Find an online version of this template by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Templates.’
Bylaw template: Conflict of interest

__________________________ School Council bylaw

[insert school name]

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest for a School Council member involves situations in which the member’s private interests may be incompatible or in conflict with his/her School Council responsibilities.

A conflict of interest may be:

- **actual** – a private interest may directly or indirectly influence the exercise of the member’s duties and responsibilities
- **perceived** – a reasonably well-informed person could believe that a member was in conflict of interest, even if that conflict of interest did not exist
- **potential** – a private interest could influence the exercise of the member’s duties and responsibilities

A council member shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families or their business affiliations could directly or indirectly benefit from the decisions of council.

A council member who identifies a conflict of interest must declare it before any discussion of the matter begins. The member must:

- **publicly state the conflict of interest, explain the general nature of the interest and have the declaration recorded in the minutes**
- **not vote on the matter under discussion**
- **leave the room when council is discussing the matter and have this fact recorded in the minutes**
- **not discuss the matter with members or attempt to influence the vote**

A council member shall not accept favours or economic benefit from any individuals, organizations or entities known to be seeking business contracts from the school.

It is not considered a conflict of interest for a child of a School Council member or a council member to participate in or win a prize as part of an activity supported or run by council. When conducting a raffle, the draw and reading of the number/name will be conducted by a person who is not entered in the raffle. In most cases, this will be the principal or vice-principal, or another staff member from the school.

Find an online version of this template by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Template.’
Bylaw template: Resolving conflict

________________________ School Council bylaw

[insert school name]

Resolving conflict

Occasionally, a dispute may develop among School Council members. It is expected that members and the principal will make every effort to resolve the dispute themselves.

Resolving disputes internally

- Council members will demonstrate respect for other council members at all times.
- Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- The Chair will ensure all members of the council have the opportunity to speak.
- Speakers will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- The Chair will focus the discussion on council issues.
- The Chair will clarify speaker statements, identify common points of view and attempt to achieve a consensus among council members.
- The Chair may request disputing members of council to meet privately to find a mutually acceptable solution to the issue.

Handling disruptive behaviour

- If a council member becomes disruptive during a meeting, the Chair shall call for order.
- If the disruptive behaviour continues, or order cannot be restored, the Chair may ask for the removal of the disruptive individual(s). The reasons for the removal should be documented in the minutes.
- Removing a member from a council meeting does not prevent that member from participating in future council meetings.

Resolving disputes through mediation

- If it is apparent that a dispute cannot be resolved internally, the Chair may ask the Superintendent of Education to help in the role of mediator to help resolve the problem.
- The mediator shall remain neutral and will not make a decision in the dispute. The mediator shall assist the members to find a resolution in the best interests of the school and students.
- The resolution shall be signed and respected by all individuals involved in the dispute.

Find an online version of this template by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Template.’
School Council Membership

Each School Council should include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary and middle schools (minimum of 9 members)</th>
<th>Secondary schools (minimum of 11 members)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 parent reps (minimum)</td>
<td>6 parent reps (minimum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 teacher rep</td>
<td>1 teacher rep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 non-teaching staff rep</td>
<td>1 non-teaching staff rep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or more community rep(s)</td>
<td>1 or more community rep(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 student rep (optional)</td>
<td>1 student rep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal (VP may attend in principal’s place)</td>
<td>Principal (VP may attend in principal’s place)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When are members selected?

Positions are one-year terms, which means members are recruited and elected annually, typically within the first 30 days of the school year. Ideally, the membership of the School Council will reflect the diversity of its school community. Learn more about the elections of School Council members in the Elections section of this resource guide.

Can a School Council have more or fewer members than the required minimum?

If all positions are filled, elementary schools will have a minimum of nine members, and secondary schools will have a minimum of 11 members. It’s recommended that councils develop a bylaw pertaining to membership and the maximum number of parent reps—keeping in mind that less is often more. If your council isn’t able to find members to meet these required minimums, it’s important that the principal and Chair continue to seek members throughout the year to fill these vacancies. To learn tips on filling vacancies and how each type of member is elected or appointed, see the Elections section of this handbook.

Who is a voting member?

Every elected member of the council, with the exception of the principal, has a vote. This includes staff members, the student and the community representative. Keep in mind, decisions by consensus are preferred—see page 34 for more on decision making.

Can members of the public participate?

School Council is not a private club. The meetings are open to the public and we encourage all parents to participate in the activities of council. Even if a parent wasn’t elected as a parent rep, they can attend meetings, participate in discussion and join sub-committees. However, they are not able to vote.

Members of the public who are not parents of students at the school can ask questions during the public question segment of the agenda, unless they’ve been invited by the council to attend to share information about a specific topic on the agenda.

If a member of the public is interested in presenting at a council meeting, they must receive approval by the School Council in order to be placed on the council agenda. To make this request, they can submit the Request to Present at a School Council Meeting form (see page 31) to be reviewed by the Chair, in consultation with the principal and council.
Member Roles and Responsibilities

Parent representatives

Parents/guardians must always make up the majority of a School Council. While other family members are welcome to attend meetings, only parents/guardians of a student at the school can be a parent rep.

Parent reps are voting members who:
- participate on council committees.
- contribute to the discussions of the School Council.
- solicit the views of other parents and community members to share with the council.
- observe the council’s code of ethics and established bylaws.
- encourage parents/guardians and community members to participate in events and programs.

Important note: Employees at the school cannot serve as a parent representative, but may serve as a teaching or support staff rep. School board employees outside the school may be a parent rep, but cannot serve as Chair.

Principal or designate

The school principal must be a member of the School Council, as they are an important link between the council and the school. In fact, a meeting cannot be considered a meeting of the School Council unless the principal, or delegated vice-principal, is in attendance.

The principal is a non-voting member who:
- ensures that the School Council is in place and facilitates the annual School Council election.
- attends all School Council meetings or appoints a vice-principal delegate when required.
- supports and promotes the council’s activities and acts as a resource on bylaws, regulations, and policies.
- may seek advice from School Council in areas where council has advisory responsibilities, such as school improvement planning, school budgets and community partnerships.
- considers council recommendations, informs council of actions taken based on those recommendations.
- assists and supports approved School Council activities.
- communicates regularly with School Council Chair.
- distributes materials provided by the Ministry of Education and acts as a resource on board and Ministry policies and procedures.
- approves all communication to the school community distributed through the school.

School staff representatives (teacher and non-teaching)

Elected by their peers at the school, teacher and non-teaching staff reps are voting members who:
- contribute to school and School Council discussions.
- solicit views from staff to share with the council.
- participate on council committees.
- observe the council’s code of ethics and constitution.
- communicates with staff on behalf of the council.
**Student representatives (optional in elementary schools)**

Elected by their peers, student reps are **voting** members who:
- contribute to school and School Council discussions.
- solicit views of students to share with the council.
- participate on council committees.
- observe the council’s code of ethics and constitution.
- communicate with students on behalf of the council.

Student reps are an optional position in elementary schools, but a requirement in secondary schools. They can be filled by one or more students.

**Community representative(s)**

Appointed by School Council, community reps are **voting** members who:
- contribute to school and School Council discussions.
- represent the community’s perspective and helps build partnerships and links between the school and the community.
- participate on council committees.
- observe the council’s code of ethics and bylaws.
- encourage parents and community members to participate in events and programs.

Community reps cannot be an employee of the school or elected official, and they must serve in a community role that relates to student success.

---

**SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP for 2018-19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent representatives (elected or acclaimed)</th>
<th>Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five parent reps in elementary, six in secondary —unless your by-laws dictate otherwise.</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ________________________________</td>
<td>Teacher representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ________________________________</td>
<td>Non-teaching representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ________________________________</td>
<td>Student representative(s) (optional in elementary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ________________________________</td>
<td>Community representative(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ________________________________</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ________________________________</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ________________________________</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ________________________________</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ________________________________</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ________________________________</td>
<td>________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Positions

Some members of your School Council will have additional responsibilities. These executive members are determined by the School Council within 30 days of your council being formed (not as part of the full school election process).

Chair/Co-Chair (mandatory)
The Chair/co-Chairs of the council are elected by the council members and must be a parent or parents who are not employed by the school board. The Chair/co-Chairs are voting members who, in addition to performing the same duties as other council members, might:
- supervise council activities and procedures.
- prepare council agenda and Chairs meetings.
- lead meetings, and encourage a democratic and productive meeting environment.
- communicate regularly with school principal on behalf of the council.
- work co-operatively with the community, the School Council, the local trustee(s), school staff, and the principal.
- ensure regular communication between council and school community.
- prepare annual report and financial statements to be submitted to the principal for distribution to the school community and the Peel board.
- encourage the School Council to focus on ways to help support student success within board priorities and school plans.
- monitor the pace and progress of the meeting.
- encourage the sharing of key information within meeting timelines to facilitate decision-making, problem-solving, distribution of work, and planning of events.
- ensure that fundraising activities and uses of funds comply with board policies and guidelines.
- identify problems as they occur and help council members resolve conflict in a positive manner.

Secretary (optional—but recommended)
A School Council member who also:
- records, maintains and reports accurate minutes of council meetings, including all council decisions.
- is responsible for bringing all necessary material for taking minutes (an attendance list, background material, writing material or laptop computer) as well as materials for council members (extra minutes, agendas and background material).
- works closely with the Chair to identify problems, missing information or unclear motions.
- ensures minutes are available in school office or on your school website for review by parents and students.
- listens actively during meetings, always being fair and impartial.

Vice-Chair (optional)
A parent rep who also:
- assumes the role of the Chair when the Chair is absent.
- assists the Chair, as needed.

Treasurer (optional)
A School Council member who also:
- collects and records count sheets for all funds raised by the council.
- prepares bank deposits and fills out deposit slips for funds received.
- signs the School Council Cheque Requisition Form to indicate that School Council expenditures are in accordance with School Council approvals.
- enters the HST on the School Council Cheque Requisition Form to enable the Office Manager to claim the HST rebate.
- agrees the transactions in the category report to School Council deposits and School Council Cheque Requisition Forms.
- reviews, signs and dates School Council category reports to indicate that transactions have been agreed to deposit slips and School Council Cheque Requisition Forms.
- provides the financial reports at School Council meetings, as required.

IMPORTANT NOTE
The Chair/co-Chair is the only executive position that is mandatory, and it must be filled by an elected parent member. Don’t forget, executive members should only be selected after your School Council is formed.
CHAPTER 2
Elections

How are parent members elected?
Who plans the annual election?
What is the election timeline?
What does election day look like?
Plan Your School Council Election

School Councils must hold an election every school year within 30 calendar days of the school year. Members are elected to council by self-nomination and membership vote.

**How are parent representatives elected?**

Parent reps are elected to School Council by nomination and membership vote. Any parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school can vote in a school election and run as parent reps. Elected School Council members hold office from the date that they are appointed until the date of the next School Council elections.

**Self-nominations**

At the start of the school year, your school will send home an invitation for parents/guardians to self-nominate themselves for a parent representative position on council. Interested parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school can nominate themselves by completing a nomination form and indicating their reasons for running in the election.

The principal will collect all self-nominations and share a summary of interested candidates to the parent community via the school’s bulletin board, website, social media accounts and/or newsletter.

Note, candidates are not permitted to give out campaign material at the school or use school resources to campaign.

**Vote by secret ballot**

The election is conducted at the school by secret ballot. Your principal will conduct a lottery to determine each candidate’s position on the ballot sheet. View a template of this ballot on page 26 or by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Templates.’

Your school will communicate when and where the election will take place (it must take place within the first 30 calendar days of school). All parents/guardians of students enrolled at the school are eligible to vote, and are given the opportunity to cast one vote for each vacant parent position on School Council. Voters must be present at the school on the election day(s) during the hours of the election. Voting by proxy is not permitted.

Once voting is complete, the ballots are counted. If there is a tie for a position, the winner is determined by drawing lots.

**Acclaiming parent reps and filling vacancies**

If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates will be acclaimed (no voting necessary). If all elected positions are not filled, the council can appoint additional people or choose to operate with vacancies.

**When are executive positions (Chair, secretary, treasurer) selected?**

The fall election is to select parent representatives, not executive positions like co-chairs, secretary and so on. The executive positions are selected from among elected parents once the council is formed.

**How are student, teacher and non-teaching reps elected?**

Your principal will ensure that the elections of the teacher and non-teaching representatives are carried out each fall by their peer group. At the secondary level, the school principal will also ensure that the election of the student member is carried out each fall by the student body.
## Election Planning Timeline

Each school will form an Election Planning Committee with representation from parents, teaching staff, support staff and students (students participate in secondary schools only). This committee is responsible for planning and holding elections for parent, teacher and non-teaching staff representatives and for ensuring that elections are held within the first 30 calendar days of the school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>What</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May/June</td>
<td>Establish an Election Planning Committee, including current parent members of the School Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early to mid-June</td>
<td>By the last council meeting of the school year, the date, time, and location of the election are determined, as well as how the election will be advertised in the fall (ex. newsletter, letter home, school website, broadcast message etc.). Consider holding the election on the same night as the open house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid/late-August</td>
<td>In welcome-back-to-school information, the principal should include School Council Election details, including parent-candidate nomination forms and information about the date by which nominations must be received at the school, who is eligible to stand for election, and the date of the election. This information must be received by parents at least 14 days prior to the election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early September</td>
<td>The principal posts School Council election information in an area of the school that is easily accessible to parents. Good venues would be the bulletin board and the school website. Parents return nomination forms to the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-September</td>
<td>A list of parent nominees with brief biographies is distributed to all parents/guardians, with a reminder of the election date and information on the election process. If the school doesn’t receive enough nominations to warrant an election, then the nominated parents can be appointed to council. The ballot box is prepared for the election of parent representatives, and arrangements are made for volunteers to help voters at the voting areas. Principals will conduct a lottery to determine each candidate’s position on the ballot sheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early October</td>
<td>The parent representative election is held at the school on the date/time previously publicized in the notice of election—this must within the first 30 calendar days of the school year. Each parent/guardian of a child enrolled at the school will have the opportunity to cast a vote in-person for each available parent representative position on council. Voting by proxy is not allowed. Once voting is complete, the ballots are counted. If there is a tie for a position on council, the winner will be determined by drawing lots. The election of the teacher, non-teacher, and student representatives may take place at the same time or shortly after the election of parent representatives. Staff reps are elected by their staff group, the student rep is appointed by the student council. The community member is appointed by the School Council once it is formed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-October</td>
<td>The names of the new School Council members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election, as are the dates, times, and locations of future meetings. This could be done on a bulletin board at the school, through the newsletter and on the school website.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent School Council Candidate Nomination Form
[insert school name]

Parents and guardians of [insert school name] students are invited to self-nominate for a parent/guardian representative position on School Council. Our council has [5/6 or insert the number of positions based on your bylaws] parent/guardian representative positions.

Nomination forms are due [date] in the office.

Name: ______________________________________

Address: ______________________________________

Home phone # ________________ Business phone # ________________

I am the parent/guardian of ________________________________ (student name and date of birth)

who is currently registered in this school.

Please describe why you are interested in a parent representative position on School Council. This information will be shared with other parents/guardians prior to the election.

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected position as a parent representative on the School Council. I understand the role and responsibilities of a member of the School Council as described in the Peel Board’s School Council policy.

Candidate signature ______________________________ Date ________________

Received by ______________________________ Date ________________

Nomination form receipt (will be returned to the parent)

The nomination form for parent representative on the School Council [insert school name] has been received.

________________________________________ Date ________________

(school official)

Find an online version of this template by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Templates.’
Official Parent Ballot
For parent/guardian representatives on [insert school name] School Council

Thank you for your interest in School Council and for taking the time to complete this ballot. Your participation will help us to form a School Council that meets your needs and your child’s needs.

To select candidates of your choice, place an “X” in the box before the name(s) of the candidates(s).

Vote for no more than _______ candidates on this ballot.

☐ ___________________________ ☐ ___________________________

☐ ___________________________ ☐ ___________________________

☐ ___________________________ ☐ ___________________________

☐ ___________________________ ☐ ___________________________

☐ ___________________________ ☐ ___________________________

☐ ___________________________ ☐ ___________________________

Find an online version of this template by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Templates.’

NOTES

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________
Election Webinar

Watch our Election Webinar online at www.peelschools.org/parents/schoolcouncils/webinars
CHAPTER 3
Meetings and Minutes

How are School Council meetings run?
What is the role of public members during council meetings?
How does School Council make decisions?
How does School Council report back to the community?
Plan for Effective Meetings

Volunteering on School Council is a hobby—it should be fun! Planning for effective meetings will help ensure that your council stays on task and accomplishes its goals for the school year.

Choose your meeting dates
School Councils meet a minimum of four times per school year. These meeting dates are determined by the Chair and the principal, in consultation with council members. The first meeting should take place within the first 35 calendar days of the school year. Meetings dates should be selected based on the availability of members, and cannot fall on holy days that are indicated with a red circle on the board’s Holy Days and Holidays calendar. You can find this calendar at http://www.peelschools.org/calendar/schoolyear

Set your agenda
The Chair sets the agenda in consultation with other council members and the principal. The agenda should be shared with your entire school community via email, your school newsletter and/or your school website.

Meeting agendas should include:
- meeting date, time and location.
- list of agenda items.
- "approval of the agenda" at the start of the meeting. An agenda should be thought of as being in draft form until it has been approved at the meeting.
- a section for public questions at the end of your meeting.

To help get started, use the agenda template on page 30 of this resource guide.

Quorum at meetings
A School Council meeting cannot be held unless the school principal (or designate) is present and quorum is met. A meeting has quorum when:
- A majority of the current members are present;
- A majority of members present at the meeting are parent members; and
- Without a quorum, issues may be discussed but council cannot consider or approve motions.

All meetings are open to the public
A School Council is not a private club. The meetings are open to the public and we encourage all parents to participate in the activities of council. Even if a parent wasn’t elected as a parent rep, they can attend meetings, participate in discussion and join sub-committees. However, they are not able to vote.

Members of the public who are not parents of students at the school can ask questions during the public question segment of the agenda, unless they have been invited by the council to attend to share information about a specific topic on the agenda.

If a member of the public is interested in presenting at a council meeting, they must receive approval by the School Council in order to be placed on the council agenda. To make this request, they can submit the Request to Present at a School Council Meeting form (see page 31) in advance of the council meeting to be reviewed by the Chair, in consultation with the principal and council.
School Council Meeting Template

[insert school name] SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING
[Date]
[Location]

Agenda

Welcome and introductions (15 minutes)
Approval of agenda
Approval of minutes from previous meeting
Business arising from the minutes (5 minutes)
Old business/updates (10 minutes)

- For example:
- Farewell plans for international students
- School Council annual report to the board
- Bylaw amendments

New business (45 minutes in total)

- For example:
- Review of the EQAO Grade 3 and Grade 6 test results
- School Council input to principal placement process
- Draft School Council code of ethics
- School Council training workshop

Principal’s report (20 minutes)

Reports (45 minutes in total)

These could be from sub-committees, special guests, etc.

- School image
- Promotions, communication, and marketing
- Curriculum and new provincial/board initiatives
- Community representative
- School Council Assembly

General information updates and inquiries (maximum 5 minutes)

Public questions
Next meeting date, time, and location
Agenda items for next meeting
Adjournment

Find an online version of this template by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Templates.’
Request to Present at a School Council Meeting
For Members of the Public

Members of the public are welcome to attend School Council meetings to observe and ask questions during Public Question period. If you are interested in presenting at a School Council meeting, you must receive approval by the School Council in order to be placed on the council meeting agenda (as per School Council Policy #61).

Please use this form to submit your presentation request to the School Council at least two weeks before the date of the next School Council meeting. Your request will be reviewed by the council Chair/Co-Chairs, in consultation with the school’s principal and council members.

Contact Information

Name: ________________________________________________________________

E-mail: ______________________________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________

City & Postal Code: __________________________________________________

Phone number: _________________________________________________________

Requested School Council Meeting Date: ________________________________

Topic: _______________________________________________________________

Time required to present: ______________________________________________

Please provide a brief summary of the subject of your presentation:

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your submission. You will be contacted regarding the status of your request. If you have questions, please contact the school office and ask to speak with the principal.

Find an online version of this form by visiting www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and clicking on ‘Meetings and Minutes.’
School Council Meeting Checklist

Participants in meetings should feel that the time they spent was worthwhile. This is done by ensuring that certain responsibilities are confirmed before, during, and after the meeting. You may wish to use the following list to see how well your group is doing.

Before the meeting:
- Book a meeting room
- Order refreshments
- Prepare and circulate an agenda
- Put the items on the agenda in order of priority
- Check the room arrangements and audio-visual equipment
- Ensure appropriate materials are on hand
- Review any requests from the public to present at the council meeting, with the Chair, principal and council members

At the beginning of the meeting:
- Call the meeting to order at the designated time
- Welcome attendees and make introductions
- Be certain there is a recorder, ideally the council secretary
- State the purpose of the meeting
- Review and agree on the tentative agenda
- Estimate the amount of time to be spent on each item

During the meeting:
- Keep the group focused on its purpose
- Monitor the discussion so that everyone has a chance to speak
- Clarify and summarize when appropriate
- Assist the group in using agreed on procedures
- Bring out all sides of an issue
- Move the group toward decisions
- Check for consensus

At the end of the meeting:
- Hold a Public Questions Period for members of the public in attendance
- Make sure assignments and agreements are clear
- Announce the date, time and place of the next meeting
- Identify the purpose of the next meeting and any items that will be on the agenda
- Debrief or adjourn the meeting

After the meeting:
- Check with the recorder to be sure that the minutes are clear before distributing
- Help others carry out the decisions made during the meeting

NOTES

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Resolving Conflicts

In any decision-making process, there is potential for conflict to develop. Follow these guidelines to help manage disagreements in your council more effectively and find solutions that work to everyone's benefit.

Guidelines for handling conflict

- Acknowledge that there is a problem – clarify and clearly state the concerns, needs and interests of the people involved in the dispute.
- Emphasize the ground rules – adopt a positive tone and a problem-solving attitude. Set ground rules that will help maintain a courteous, respectful environment for discussion (e.g. speakers may not be interrupted, everyone has an opportunity to speak on the issue, etc.).
- Look for areas of agreement – start by helping members find common ground. Identify the areas where they do agree, before addressing their differences.
- Affirm the value of different opinions – discuss the fact that different opinions are natural in a group. Help members separate the opinion from the person holding the opinion and make sure that the discussion does not descend into personal attacks on individual members. Focus on the problem, not the person.
- Listen to everyone’s point of view – let council members express their opinions and perspectives on the issue. Accept each opinion without making a judgment. People are more willing to compromise if you acknowledge and legitimize their right to hold a particular point of view, even if you don’t agree with it.
- Define the conflict clearly – make sure you understand the issue causing the conflict and are focusing on the right problem. Try to identify any assumptions, expectations, misinformation or lack of information that may be influencing members' opinions or decisions. Many conflicts can be resolved just by improving communication and explaining the issues more carefully.
- Create solutions – identify a range of options for solving the problem. Invite others in the group to help resolve the conflict. List the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- Agree on a solution – choose the best solution and follow-up to make sure that it is carried out.
Making Decisions

A School Council is an advisory group who regularly makes decisions. When making decisions, there are two possible methods: by consensus or by voting. Whenever possible, the Peel board recommends that councils make every attempt to reach a consensus in their decisions.

Consensus

When you make a decision by consensus, it means that every member of council agrees with the decision. Even people who may not fully support the decision have agreed that it is acceptable and that they will not work against it.

Although arriving at consensus can be time-consuming, it is well worth the effort. Consensus ensures that every member has a voice in the decision-making process and builds respect for differing points of view. It also results in greater commitment and support from all members.

Suggestions for arriving at consensus:
- The Chair presents the situation or issue for decision and explains the consensus process.
- Each member states his/her views and opinions, while the rest of the council listens.
- Members discuss the issue to find common ground and identify areas of disagreement.
- Members offer solutions or options for the council to consider.
- Members discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the options available.
- The Chair helps members determine the best solution or option.
- The Chair asks each member "Can you live with this decision?" If all of the members are not in agreement, members should take a break and start the discussion again.

Majority vote

If you can't achieve consensus, you may choose to put your decision to a vote. Voting is a very familiar decision-making tool for most people. It can speed up the decision-making process because less discussion or effort is needed to arrive at a solution that everyone can accept. However, it can also create divisions among council members because there is always a winning side and a losing side in any vote.

People who have lost a vote may not be as willing to accept the decision or support the action plans that result from the decision.

If you decide to proceed with a vote, you should follow the voting procedures outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Education Handbook School Councils: A guide for members. Section 8.9 Voting (available at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/guide.html). Most importantly, you must determine that you have a quorum (enough people present at the meeting to make the vote valid) and decide what represents a majority for your council (usually 50 per cent plus one of the members present).
Reporting to the Community

Take effective minutes

One way that School Councils report to the community is through meeting minutes. Recorded by the School Council Secretary, minutes are a permanent and accurate record of a group’s decisions and actions, including key background information and the people responsible for following-up. They are a reference for everyone — especially for those not present at the meeting – giving background and rationale for decisions.

Minutes should include:

- School Council name
- Date, time, and place of meeting
- Attendance and absence, including guests
- Approval of agenda
- Approval of previous minutes
- List of agenda items
- Public question period
- Adjournment

Find some examples of meeting minutes at www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and click on ‘Meetings and Minutes.’

Prepare your annual report

School Councils are required to prepare an annual report. The report doesn’t need to be extensive, but should outline the council activities for the year and provide an overview of expenses from Sept. 1 to August 31 inclusive. By Sept. 30 of the next school year, the report should be shared with all parents and submitted to:

- Your school’s superintendent of education
- Your school trustee(s)
- The board’s Communications and Community Relations Department (communications@peelsb.com)

The principal, on behalf of the council, must ensure that a copy of the report is available to every parent who has a child enrolled in the school, typically by posting it on the school website.

What is included in the annual report?

You can find a template of an annual report at www.peelschools.org/schoolcouncils and click on ‘Templates.’ An annual report should include:

- School name and date of submission
- Welcoming statement
  - Usually written by the Chair
  - Addressed to parents and school community
  - Uses warm, welcoming tone
  - Includes an open invitation to attend council meetings
- Activity summary
  - A description of the goal of the report
  - A brief summary of issues, events and activities addressed by council during the year
  - Outline of activities related to the School Success Plan
  - Acknowledgement of the efforts, commitments and achievements during the year
- Names and positions of council members, including the group each one represents (e.g. parent, teacher representative, support staff representative, etc.)
- Dates of council meetings held during the year include any available information on future meetings (tentative dates, etc.)
- Financial statements, if applicable
  - Executive summary of finances (cash on hand + revenue – expenses = balance forward)
  - Opening balance, detailed breakdown of revenues and expenditures, balance forward
  - Copy of year-end bank statement and bank reconciliation

Questions to consider

Here are some questions that may help you to prepare the annual report. This is also a great way to evaluate your success for the school year:

- Were you successful in setting goals and objectives for the year?
- Did you accomplish your goals and objectives?
- Did your efforts contribute to the School Success Plan and benefit students? If so, in what way?
- Do you plan to focus on the same priorities in the upcoming year or will you establish new ones?
Watch our Meetings and Minutes Webinar online at
www.peelschools.org/parents/schoolcouncils/webinars
CHAPTER 4
Finances and Fundraising

How are School Council funds managed?
What are acceptable uses of School Council funds?
What can you fundraise for?
What grants and funds are available to School Councils?
Managing Your School Activity Funds Account

Your School Council may take part in activities that require the council to handle funds or make purchases that directly or indirectly benefit the students. The Peel board requires that all funds raised by School Councils must be administered through the School Activity Funds bank account maintained by the school. This financial information is reported annually to the Ministry of Education. Here’s a breakdown of financial responsibilities for your council and the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>School Council responsibilities:</strong></th>
<th><strong>School/principal responsibilities:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Advise the principal about spending funds raised by School Councils and make decisions on purchases in accordance with the Peel board’s policies and procedures.</td>
<td>• Approve the appropriate use of funds and fundraising activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collects funds from fundraising events, counts the funds and prepares the bank deposit.</td>
<td>• Maintains accounting records for funds raised by school council. These funds are recorded in a separate school council category in the School Activity Funds School Cash Accounting records.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Forward any supporting documents for deposits to the school office.</td>
<td>• Arrange for School Council category reports to be produced for School Council, upon request. These reports provide information about the transactions that have taken place in the School Cash Accounting School Council category during the year. The frequency of the report requests must be agreed upon by the principal and the School Council Chair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Complete a School Council Cheque Requisition Form (SCCR Form) when payments are made from School Activity Funds and submit the form to the school’s office manager.</td>
<td>• Use funds raised by School Council to make purchases and pay expenses as advised by School Council in accordance with Peel board policies and procedures. All payments made from School Activity Funds must be supported by a SCCR Form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May request the School Council category report on a frequency agreed between the School Council and the principal. The School Council executive reviews these reports for errors or omissions.</td>
<td>• Deposits of funds raised by School Council may be made by the school’s office manager into the School Activity Funds account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Record the HST rebate based on the School Council Cheque Requisition Form. Once the HST rebate has been received, the school office manager will credit the appropriate rebate to the School Council’s category in School Cash Accounting upon request.</td>
<td>• Maintain the School Council bank deposit book, which is kept by the school’s office manager when it is not being used.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Making a payment from your School Activity Funds account

When payments are made from School Activity Funds, a School Council member must complete a School Council Cheque Requisition Form (SCCR Form) and submit it to the school’s office manager. The SCCR Form must be accompanied by appropriate documentation (e.g. invoice) and be approved and signed by the School Council Chair or treasurer and the principal.

The office manager will then issue a cheque and mail the cheque to the supplier. No payments can be made from School Activity Funds without the signature of an authorized School Council representative on the SCCR Form. The original SCCR Form and related invoice will be kept at the school as documentation to support the payment and a copy of the SCCR Form should be kept by the treasurer when reviewing the School Cash Accounting School Council Category Report.

Making a deposit into your School Activity Funds account

Deposits must be made using the School Council bank deposit book, available from the school’s office manager. The funds can be deposited directly into the account by a School Council member. Immediately after the deposit is made, the deposit book must be returned to the school’s office manager.
The School Council bank deposit book must be kept in the school office when it’s not in use. It will always be available for the School Council to use. Pages must not be torn out and supporting documents for the amount of the deposit must be forwarded to the office with the deposit book.

**Acceptable uses of funds**

When determining if the use of School Council funds is appropriate, consider the following:

- All purchases made from School Activity Funds raised by School Councils must benefit the student community and comply with board policies and procedures.
- School Council maintains control of all School Council initiated fundraising activities. All funds raised during these activities must be donated to the school and may not leave the school premises. Funds raised are deposited by the school or a School Council member into the School Activity Funds bank account. The School Council advises on all purchases and expenditures made from those funds.
- The principal is responsible for ensuring that funds raised on behalf of the school are used for their intended purpose.
- When fundraising activities are complete, all funds should be distributed and accounted for. Funds should not be accumulated, except in specific situations (e.g. capital projects).

**Unacceptable uses of funds**

- Using funds for something other than their intended purpose. For example, it would be inappropriate to take funds raised to buy books for the library and use them to buy a computer for the science classroom.
- School Activity Funds raised by School Councils may not be used for purchases or expenditures that do not directly benefit the student community.

**HST rebates**

School Councils have the same preferred tax status as the school board and are eligible for an HST rebate on their purchases. The government will refund 100 per cent of the HST paid on book purchases and 68 per cent of the federal portion of HST and 93 per cent of the provincial portion of HST on all other purchases. Note: The HST rebate will only be paid if the HST column is completed by the treasurer when filling out the SCCR Form as part of a request for payment.

Using School Cash Accounting software, the school’s office manager will keep track of the HST paid on eligible purchases made by the School Council. The board will submit the School Council rebate claims as part of the HST rebate claim made by the school. Once the HST rebate has been issued by the government and received by the Peel board, the appropriate rebate will be credited to the School Council category by the office manager upon request.
Fundraising Guidelines

School Councils often raise funds to enhance educational programs and support initiatives that are part of the School Success Plan. These funds are usually gathered through fundraising and donations.

Fundraising activities undertaken on behalf of the school should adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Your council must have a clear fundraising purpose in mind and stick to this goal.** School Councils should not be fundraising to create a pot of money to be used in the future. Furthermore, your parent community should be aware of this purpose before they make their donation. For example, parents and students should know that money collected during a fundraising carwash will be used to buy books for the library and that the funds will not be used for any other purpose.

- **All fundraising plans must have approval of the school principal.** They will determine if the fundraiser aligns with school goals and doesn't interfere with the delivery of the regular school program. Activities extending beyond the school community or raising funds for outside organizations requires approval of the school’s superintendent of education.

- **Fundraising must adhere to the board’s fundraising policies and procedures.** Speak with your principal to learn more.

- **Any funds or goods acquired through fundraising activities must be used within a specific time period and for the intended purpose.** The appropriate time period should be determined before the activity takes place (e.g. money collected through a fundraising carwash will be used to buy library books in January of that school year). This ensures that the funds or goods are used to benefit the students at the school at the time of the fundraising event.

- **Be sure to consider if your school community is comfortable and interested participating in a fundraiser.** Fundraising activities should not become a burden on students, parents or staff. This means the fundraising activities cannot interfere with the delivery of a school program or occur too frequently.

**What can you fundraise for?**

Fundraising efforts must be aligned with your school’s goals and cannot replace public funding for education. School Councils may only fundraise for enhancement or extras – things that the school does not receive ministry funding for (your principal can help provide guidance on what receives ministry funding). For example, fundraising to support items such as textbooks and learning materials that are already funded through the school budget will not be approved.

**Approvals for fundraising activities**

All school funding, no matter what the source, is under the direction and responsibility of the school principal. Consequently, all fundraising activities must have the principal’s approval. Charitable organizations must be approved by the board before they can be affiliated with the school. Activities extending beyond the school community or raising funds for outside organizations require approval of the superintendent of education.

The board has the right to place restrictions on fundraising activities to protect student safety, to prevent student exploitation and to ensure accountability for public funds.

---

**TIP**

As an extension of the school, School Councils must abide by the Peel board’s Policy 5: Partnerships and Fundraising. Speak with your principal to learn more.

---

**NOTES**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
**Raffles, draws and games of chance**
Lotteries, raffles, bingo and other games of chance require a license from the relevant municipality. In order to get a license, specific documentation has to be submitted, a separate bank account has to be established and the funds raised need to be accounted for separately. When considering applying for a license, schools should contact their finance support officer for assistance.

**Door-to-door canvassing**
The safety of students and volunteers is always top of mind, particularly when it comes to door-to-door canvassing. Door-to-door canvassing is discouraged for elementary and junior students. Written informed consent is required for all students involved in door-to-door canvassing. Secondary students should canvass for funds only during daylight hours and in groups of at least three students.

**Quality of products and services**
Products and services used for fundraising should be of good quality and should be provided by reputable companies. Products and services should be suitable for student use and should reflect the values held by the board.

**Commercial agreements**
Fundraising activities must not require students to listen to or read commercial advertising. Fundraising activities must not require direct endorsement of products or services. For more information, view the Peel board’s Partnership policy (available through your principal).

**Donations**
Donations from businesses or other organizations must be approved by the principal, and comply with ministry and board policies and guidelines. When the donation is made, the donor must advise the school about the purpose and intended use of the donated funds or goods. All donations must support the board’s mission and comply with ministry and board policies and guidelines.

Examples of appropriate donations include:
- graduation awards or scholarships
- contributions to the school to help with purchasing specific items, such as computers, library books or musical instruments

Donations can be made online on the school website using the ‘Make a Donation’ button. Any donation made online will automatically be issued a charitable donation receipt. To qualify for tax receipts, the donations must benefit the school or students and the donors must get no other benefit from the donations and must not use the donations to promote their business. All donation receipts will be issued by the Peel District School Board.

Donations of goods that are eligible for a receipt will require an appraisal and special certification by the donor. Donations of this type must follow Canada Customs regulations. More information is provided in the board’s Donations Policy #13 (available through your principal) and the government website at: [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/charities](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/charities)

**TIP**
Fundraising activities are a great way to contribute to student success. However, keep in mind that fundraising isn’t the primary role of School Council, and many schools do not fundraise or only fundraise for charitable causes separate from the school.
Handling Cash Sales

Many School Councils have fundraising or other activities that generate cash sales. To ensure that all cash is handled safely and securely, please follow these specific procedures:

**Minimizing risk**
Keep all money in a lockable cash box. For greater security and control, two people should handle cash sales from a cash box—one person should make the sale, while the other person observes the transaction. All cash collected must be counted in the presence of at least one other person, recorded and deposited using the School Council deposit book. All cash must remain at the school until deposited. Immediately after the deposit is made, the deposit book should be returned to the office manager. The deposit book must always be kept by the office manager when it is not in use.

**Cash float**
The cash box should always have a cash float for sales. Determine the amount of the float at the beginning of the event or activity (e.g. $25). The float should not be included in the final sales totals.

**Reconciling sales**
When you have a fundraising event, it is important to know whether your efforts have produced a profit or loss. You will find more information on reconciling your sales in the tip sheet: How to calculate a profit or loss in this section of the resource guide.

Never accept IOUs for cash sales or set up a cash sale “honour system.” For example, you should not leave the cash box unsupervised, with a note asking people to “leave a payment” for items taken. By ensuring that all payments are made at the time of the sale, you will eliminate the risk of cash shortages and problems collecting money owed.

**Paying expenses**
For an accurate record of all financial activities associated with the event or activity, all expenses should be paid as follows:
- Do not pay expenses or suppliers from the cash collected during an event or activity.
- All expenses or supplies should be paid by cheque. To issue a cheque from School Activity Funds, a School Council member must first complete a School Council Cheque Requisition Form ("SCCR Form") and submit it to the office manager. The SCCR Form must be accompanied by appropriate documentation (e.g. invoice) and must be approved and signed by the School Council Chair or Treasurer and the principal. The office manager will then issue a cheque for the required amount and mail the cheque to the supplier.

**Calculating sales total**
At the end of the event or day, finalize your sales totals as follows:
- To minimize risk of loss, two people should count all the money collected in the cash box.
- Subtract the sales cash float amount from the cash total.
- Record the sales total on a sheet of paper (this is known as a cash box log) and ask each person who counted the cash to sign and date the log.
- Complete the School Council deposit book and deposit the money into the School Activity Funds account. The amount recorded in the log plus the float amount should equal the deposit book entry. The office manager will record the deposit in the School Council category of the School Activity Fund’s School Cash Accounting records.
Fundraising for capital projects and capital-related items

School Council may also be interested in or be called upon to help raise funds for capital projects or capital-related items. Fundraising activities for these initiatives must be conducted in consultation with the principal. Projects that involve a partnership with an outside organization must comply with the board’s fundraising guidelines and viability review and be coordinated by the director of communications and community relations.

**Capital projects**

Capital projects involve large scale fundraising for construction of items such as an auditorium, theatre or portable.

- Capital project proposals should be presented to the superintendent of education, school principal, School Council and local trustee(s) for discussion and consultation. Consultation with the parent community beyond School Council may also be necessary.

- If approved by your principal, the proposal is referred by the superintendent of education for a viability review. The review is conducted by Planning and Accommodation, in consultation with other service areas in the board. The review will take into consideration a variety of factors, including alignment with curriculum priorities, long-term costs and maintenance, enrollment projections etc.

- If approved, the superintendent of education will bring the proposal to the Leadership Council for review. Additional review or consultation with the Ministry of Education and the broader community may also be necessary.

- For a project to proceed, all funds must be in place. A written agreement is required to address key issues, such as managing funds, tax receipts and long-term maintenance. All capital construction projects remain the property of the Peel board.

**Capital-related items**

In addition to the general fundraising guidelines, additional guidelines apply to capital-related items. This involves small-scale fundraising for items, such as computers, furniture, playgrounds and street signage.

- **Computers:** Equipment donated or purchased with School Council funds must meet the board’s current technical standard for information technology

- **Creative playgrounds:** The process must comply with the board’s Operating Procedures for Environmental Health and Safety in Board Facilities, Section 2, Subsection 2.22.1 (contact your principal for more information)

- **School signage:** The Facilities Manager must be consulted to ensure that the signage meets construction requirements, signage standards and municipal bylaw requirements
CHAPTER 5
Parent Involvement and Communication

Who is the Parent Involvement Committee?
How does the Peel board communicate with School Councils?
What communication tools are available to School Councils?
How can your council help boost parent involvement at your school?
**Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)**

Under the Ministry of Education’s Parent Engagement Policy, all school boards are required to have a parent involvement committee (PIC). The Peel board’s PIC was established in 2008 and includes volunteer parent members, the director education, trustees and board employees.

PICs are an important advisory body that operate as a direct link between parents and a board’s director of education and its trustees. Where School Councils focus on the local school and community, PICs participate at the board level and focus on things that affect more than one school.

The purpose of PIC is to:
- support, encourage, and enhance meaningful parental involvement within schools and across the district
- seek advice and ideas of School Councils and other parents and partners as they plan and implement strategies to involve more parents at the regional level
- work collaboratively with the school board
- develop strategies for increasing parental engagement and outreach, including parents who find involvement more challenging
- support student success

**How can you get involved with PIC?**

Apply to be a PIC member: Each year in April, PIC puts out a call for new parent members to serve two-year terms on the committee. Keep an eye out for this application through your principal, school website or www.peelschools.org. Terms are staggered so parent positions become available each year. Unless otherwise specified, terms will begin in September and end in August.

Join a Subcommittee: Participation on subcommittees is open to both PIC members and members of the public. Interested in joining? Email parentinvolvement@peelsb.com or follow @pdsb_PIC for more details.

Attend a meeting as a member of the public: The PIC meets a minimum of four times a year at the HJA Brown Education Centre, and all meetings are open to the public. Agendas are posted online at www.peelschools.org/PIC one week before the scheduled meeting date.

Reach out to one of the PIC co-Chairs: Questions or comments? Send an email to parentinvolvement@peelsb.com to reach one of the PIC co-Chairs, or contact the Communications Department at 905-890-1010 ext. 2809.

**Where can I learn more?**

Visit www.peelschools.org/PIC to learn more or contact the committee directly via email at parentinvolvement@peelsb.com.

Visit www.ontario.ca/EDUparents to learn more about:
- Parent Involvement Committees and parent engagement in Ontario schools and school boards
- Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools
- Ontario Regulation 612/00: School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees
Your School Council Email Address

Each School Council has a @peelsb.com email account to be used by the council’s Chair or Co-Chairs. This account will receive communication regarding board-wide initiatives and events, and should be the main email account used by your Chair to communicate with other council members. Your principal will provide the School Council Chair with the username and password each school year.

Keep in mind that all communication to parents from council members must be approved by the principal. It is permissible for School Council to collect parent email addresses, with the approval of the principal. Keep in mind, parents must consent to providing their email to the School Council, and the School Council should only communicate to parents on topics related to council (ex. to provide meeting minutes or meeting agenda).

How to log in:
1. Your principal will provide the School Council Chair with the username and password each school year. If you require the password to be reset, please ask your principal to submit a "heat call" through the board’s Learning Technology Support Services department.
2. Go to www.peelschools.org
3. Select Staff login from the top menu of the screen
4. Provide your username and password in the boxes provided and select login.
5. Click Mail or the mail icon in the top right corner

Using Social Media Accounts

School Councils are permitted to create and maintain a Twitter or Facebook account, as long as you receive permission from your principal. However, councils are encouraged to work with their school to use the existing school social media channels, as this is where parents are already used to receiving information.

If you do decide to create a separate social media account, keep the following in mind:
- You must receive approval from your principal to create a social media account. In addition, all communication, including tweets or posts, must be approved by your principal before they are shared.
- You want to make sure that this account is used for years to come. Create a plan to pass on the username and password to the next Chair and your principal.

Other Ways to Stay in Touch

The Peel board also uses several other methods of communication when interacting with School Councils. These include:

**Peel board website: www.peelschools.org**
The Peel board website offers key information on all board initiatives, programs, on-going consultations, as well as board and committee meeting agendas and minutes. Stay in the loop by subscribing for email updates at www.peelschools.org/aboutus/subscribe http://www.peelschools.org/aboutus/subscribe/

**Your school's website**
Every Peel school has a website along with a section dedicated specifically to School Councils. This section should be used to communicate School Council meetings and activities to your parents and community. Your school website in general can be used to find out information pertaining to important school and board events and initiatives.

**Social media accounts**
Follow the board’s Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts to stay up-to-date on important events and information for parents and School Councils.
Boost Parent Involvement at Your School

Parents/guardians play a critical role in the child’s school success. When parents and school staff work together to support learning, students:

- earn higher grades and test scores
- enrol in higher level programs
- adapt better to school and attend more regularly
- have better social skills and behaviour
- graduate and go on to post-secondary education

Parent involvement will look different for each parent. In most cases, a parent’s involvement in their child’s education takes place at home—not in the school. It’s important that School Council recognize the different forms of parent involvement and assist in helping parents get involved in their child’s education in a way that works best for that family.

Ideas to help boost parent involvement

- **Parenting:** Assist families with parenting skills and setting home conditions to support children as students.
- **Communicating:** Work with your principal to establish effective communications from school-to-home and from home-to-school about school programs and student progress.
- **Volunteering:** Organize parent volunteer opportunities to support the school and students.
- **Learning at Home:** Provide tools or workshops to help equip parents with the resources they need to assist their child with homework and learning at home.
- **Collaborating with the Community:** Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school.

Barriers to parent involvement

Parents will face different barriers or challenges to getting involved. It’s important to keep these barriers in mind when planning your School Council meetings, fundraisers, events and resources.

- **Transportation:** Some families may rely on public transportation or may only have one car between two parents. Consider providing bussing for school-wide events.
- **Child-minding services:** Some parents don’t have access to or can’t afford a babysitter, and therefore, can’t make it to school events or meetings. Consider recruiting volunteers to run a child-minding room during your council meeting.
- **Language:** It is difficult for parents to get involved if they don’t understand what’s happening. Consider having important communication translated or hiring an interpreter for important school events.
- **Technology access:** Some families do not have access to the Internet or a working computer. Try to always communicate in a variety of methods to ensure you reach these parents.

Apply for a Parent Reaching Out Grant

School Councils in Ontario may apply for Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grants from the Ministry of Education for up to $1,000. These funds are awarded annually, and are designed to support parents in identifying barriers to parent engagement in their own community and to find local solutions to involve more parents in support of student achievement, human rights and equity, and well-being.

School Councils are encouraged to work with your principal, the board’s Parent Involvement Committee and other School Councils to identify potential project opportunities. Your council may submit a project proposal on your own (with the approval of your principal), or in partnership with other School Councils, parent or community groups.

Grant applications are typically accepted between April and June for the following school year. Learn more at [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/schools.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/schools.html)
Parent Involvement: A Checklist

Use this handy checklist, developed by the Ministry of Education, to review your current parent engagement activities, and to stimulate discussion and ideas for future activities and events.

- Have we used surveys and other information-gathering tools to assess what parents need and want, and to ask for their opinions and suggestions?
- Have we determined the barriers which may prevent some parents from participating?
- Have we considered applying for a Parents Reaching Out (PRO) grant?
- Do we understand the needs of parents whose first language is other than English?
- Have we explicitly invited parents to volunteer in a variety of school activities?
- Do we know how parents are getting our information, and how they would like to receive it?
- Do we routinely gather parent contact information and use it effectively to keep parents informed?
- Do we have an organized plan for parent engagement activities this year?
- Do we know who has assumed responsibility for each activity within the plan?
- Do we respond immediately when parents indicate a willingness to volunteer or participate in other ways?
- Do we have a school information package for newcomers?
- Do we have an organized method for meeting and welcoming new families?
- Do we actively encourage parents to attend School Council meetings?
- Do we acknowledge and involve parents who attend Council meetings for the first time?
- Do we provide information or an information event specifically geared to the needs of newcomers?
- Have we successfully addressed barriers to parent participation such as childcare, transportation, language services and off-site / off-hours events and programs for those who cannot attend regular events?
- Do we regularly provide school events that showcase student work and activities, address issues of concern, and provide information of interest to parents?
- Do we involve the community in the life of the school through such events as career and community fairs?
- Do we offer training for volunteers to help ensure that they feel confident and equipped for their roles?
- Do we provide parents with the information they need to work effectively with school staff, and to support their children’s education at home?
- Do we celebrate our multicultural community by offering events that feature varied traditions, customs and sports?
- Do we prominently display information about School Council in a high visibility area of the school?
- Does School Council have a presence at school events?
- Do we have a School Council newsletter and/or is the School Council represented in the school newsletter?
- Does the School Council have a presence on the school website?
- Do we send frequent reminders to parents?
- Do we participate as guest speakers wherever possible in the community, outside of school?
- Do we recognize the efforts of parents and School Council members, to encourage greater involvement and participation?

Source: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/checklist.html
Have feedback?

We’re here to support you. If there are any resources or information that you’d like to see in this resource guide, please email communications@peelsb.com or call 905-890-1010 ext. 2809 with your feedback.