

PIAC GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES

Title: **Procedures for the Election of TDSB Parent Co-Representatives on the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee**

Original: September 16, 2015

Revised: October 6, 2022

1. RATIONALE

Education is a partnership involving students, parents¹, teachers, principals, staff, trustees, school boards, government and the community. The Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is committed to strengthening this partnership and is committed to assisting parents and school councils.

Included are detailed suggestions and timelines for planning and executing a ward election (in-person or virtual, as determined by the Trustee), as well as information to be collected in the nomination form, voter registration form and ballot.

The following guidelines and best practices do not explicitly distinguish between the role of the Trustee for the relevant Ward and any role that PIAC may have in the processes described. PIAC is available to liaise with and assist any Trustee who requests assistance, to the extent feasible, with carrying out the process outlined below.

These guidelines and best practices are subject to the PIAC Bylaws.

2. DEFINITIONS

- **Ballot** - A list of candidates that voters mark to make choices.
- **Candidate** - A nominee who has been verified as eligible to run in an election.
- **Electee** - Someone who is elected.
- **Electors** - A person who is eligible to vote in an election; a voter.
- **Nominee** - A person seeking to be named an official candidate in the ward.
- **PIAC Ward Co-Representative** - An elected parent member in a ward; votes in general meetings.
- **Trustee** - A locally-elected representative who advocates for public education in the City of Toronto.
- **Ward** - An electoral district, with geographical boundaries used in local politics.

¹ Parents, as defined in the *Education Act, Ontario regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees, Last Amendment O, Reg. 330/10.*

3. PURPOSE

The **mandate** of PIAC is prescribed by the *Education Act, Ontario regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees, Last Amendment O, Reg. 330/10*.

The purpose of PIAC is to support, encourage and enhance parent engagement at the board level in order to improve student achievement and wellbeing.

PIAC Ward Representatives are advocates who:

- Provide information and advice on parent engagement to the TDSB;
- Communicate with and support school councils of schools; and
- Undertake activities to help parents of pupils of the board support their children's learning at home and at school.

3. MEMBERSHIP

PIAC is a parent-led committee. The Co-Chairs are parents, and the majority of members are also parents. To provide a direct link to the director of education and the board, the director and a trustee are also members of PIAC. In summary, PIAC membership is composed of the following:

- Two parent members who are **elected volunteers** from each of the 22 TDSB wards;
- Trustee member(s) as appointed by the Board;
- Director of the Board or his/her designate;
- Members from the Board's recognized Community Liaison Groups (CLGs); and
- Community representation from unions and professional associations within the TDSB.

Parent members **may be employees of the TDSB**, but must inform PIAC of the employment at the first meeting that they attend and may be asked to excuse themselves from a vote if there is deemed to be a conflict of interest.

4. PIAC MEMBER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend monthly PIAC Meetings:
 - Discuss TDSB policies, procedures and initiatives and if needed make recommendations to the Board on parent engagement;
 - Discuss new developments in the Provincial education system;
 - Discuss opportunities for parent engagement;
 - Discuss the activities of Working Groups; and

- Recommend how funding for parent involvement, provided under the *Education Act O. Reg.612/00*, is to be used.
- Participate in at least one PIAC Working Group;
- Support PIAC annual events;
- Attend Ward meetings to provide PIAC updates and to garner community feedback to bring Ward information and recommendations back to PIAC;
- Connect with Ward Trustee & Superintendents of Education;
- Connect with School Council Chairs and parents within their Ward;
- Communicate information from the Ontario Ministry of Education and/or the TDSB to school councils and to parents/guardians of TDSB students;
- Share best practices with school councils and support partnerships between school councils to share effective practices with each other;
- Identify and reduce barriers to parent engagement; and
- Develop strategies and initiatives that effectively communicate and engage parents in improving student achievement and wellbeing.

5. TRUSTEE WARD ELECTIONS

Elections Timeline

- Where there is a vacancy in ward representation, elections can be held immediately, but ideally within 60 days of the vacancy.
- Notwithstanding, elections shall not be held during school or statutory holidays.
- Elections shall be held by Trustees in cooperation with the PCEO and PIAC. If an election cannot be held within the specified time, PIAC may take responsibility for doing so.

Nominees, Electees, and Electors

- All nominees, electees, and electors shall be Toronto District School Board parents/guardians, as defined by *Ontario Regulations 612/00* and *330/10*, and:
 - Reside in the Ward;
 - Have a TDSB-enrolled child who resides in the Ward; **or**
 - Have a child who is enrolled in a TDSB school in the Ward.
- Electees shall be elected for a period of two years.

PHASE I: PLANNING

Trustee/Shared Services

- Choose the **date, time and location/platform** for the ward meeting and election. **PIAC does not recommend hybrid (in-person and online) elections.** Elections shall be held at the Ward level, for example, Ward forum or Ward council meeting, or at a separate or additional meeting, if needed. All subsequent activities would follow as indicated in the timeline ([SEE ATTACHED](#)).
- Review the policy for **nominations from the “floor”**. PIAC recommends that floor nominations only be taken if there are no prior nominees. All nominees will be subject to verification of eligibility.
- Review the policy for **acclaimed candidates**. PIAC recommends that if there is only one nominee per position, then the candidate will be acclaimed, pending verification of eligibility.
- Review the policy where **no nominations** are received, either online or at the meeting. PIAC recommends that a new election be called if there are no candidates.

PCEO/Staff

- Identify and/or create the following **election forms and tools** for the ward based on information provided by the trustee:
 - Nomination Form (SECTION 6A)
 - Voter Registration Form (SECTION 6B)
 - Ballot (SECTION 6C)

PHASE II: NOTIFICATION

- Notices of vacancies and of elections shall be **distributed to all PIAC members**.

Trustee/Shared Services

- Inform the ward community (includes parents/guardians, school council chairs, principals and superintendents) of **ward meeting and election** through a variety of methods at least 14 days prior to the meeting date, as specified by *O. Reg. 612/00, s.35 (O. Reg. 330/10,s.6)*. Include the following:
 - Date, time, location (in-person or virtual platform) and number of open positions (ie, 1 or 2).

- Send the ward community a link to the **nomination form**. Include, the following:
 - Whether an individual can self-nominate and/or be nominated;
 - Whether nominations will be taken from the floor on election night;
 - Whether candidates must be present on election night;
 - Deadline for submitting nominations (recommend 1 week prior to election);
 - Date candidates will be notified of eligibility;
 - Date and location of where the candidate list will be posted.

- Send the ward community a link to the **voter registration form**. Include, the following:
 - Deadline for submitting voter registration forms.
 - Date ballots will be sent to verified voters.

PHASE III: NOMINATIONS

PCEO/Staff

- Collect completed nomination information.
- Verify nominees and send a list of eligible candidates to the Trustee.

Trustee/Shared Services

- Notify candidates of eligibility.
- Post list of candidates and bios.

PHASE IV: VOTING

PCEO/Staff

- Collect voter registration information.
- Verify eligible voters and send a list of electors to the Trustee.
 - Voting should be by secret/private ballot ONLY, proxy voting is not recommended.
 - Eligible voters are allowed one vote per election.

Trustee/Shared Services

- Send verified voters a link to the **ballot**. Include, the following:
 - Deadline to submit ballot.
 - Date election results will be posted.

- Organize and run the election, as follows:

- Clear item on agenda for election;
- Identify a chair/lead for the elections process who will introduce the elections, outline the election process for the evening and identify scrutinisers;
- Circulate sign-in sheets to document meeting attendees/votes;
- Allow candidates to introduce themselves for both in-person and online elections.

PHASE V: NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION RESULTS

PCEO/Staff

- Collect votes.
- Tabulate and send results to the Trustee.

Trustee/Shared Services

- Notify the Parent and Community Engagement Office, michelle.munroe@tdsb.on.ca and PIAC, info@torontopiac.com of the successful candidates. *Successful candidates will be subject to verification of eligibility if candidates were an election time nomination.*
- Inform the ward community of election results.

6. FORMS

The forms and tools will be created and used by the PCEO/Staff. The recommended statement for collecting personal information from nominees and electors is as follows:

Notice Regarding Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information by the Toronto District School Board: *Your personal Information is being collected under the authority of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). The information you provide will be used by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) for the purposes of verifying your eligibility for PIAC membership, as outlined in Regulation 612(1b) and processing and approving your nomination application. Your personal information will not be used or disclosed for other purposes, unless permitted by FIPPA. If you have any questions about the collection of your personal information, contact the Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO) at 416 395-4808.*

A. NOMINATION FORM

- Create a unique nomination form for each Trustee's ward election and collect the following information:**

- Nominee's Full Legal Name
- Nominee's Email Address
- Nominee's Phone Number
- Nominee's Current Address
- Declaration of nomination for the Ward Representative position
- Each Child's Legal Name
- Each Child's Address (if different from Nominee's)
- Each Child's School
- Bio: A brief description of the nominee and/or their interest in PIAC.
- Declaration of eligibility: The nominee is a parent or legal guardian of a student enrolled in the TDSB and one of the following:
 - Nominee resides in the ward.
 - Nominee's child(ren) attends school in the ward.
 - Nominee's child(ren) lives in the ward.
- Declaration of perceived or implied conflict of interest (Please note that response does not affect eligibility):
 - Nominee is an employee of the TDSB.
 - Nominee is not an employee of the TDSB.
- Signature: I confirm that the above information is accurate and complete.

- Also, include, the following:**

- Deadline for submitting nominations.
- Date candidates will be notified of eligibility.
- Date and location of where the candidate list and bios will be posted.

B. VOTER REGISTRATION FORM

- Create a unique voter registration form for each Trustee's ward election and collect the following information:**

- Voter's Full Legal Name
- Voter's Email Address
- Voter's Current Address
- Each Child's Legal Name
- Each Child's Address (if different from Voter)
- Each Child's School

- Declaration of eligibility: I am a parent or legal guardian of a student enrolled in the TDSB and one of the following:
 - I reside in the ward.
 - My child(ren) attends school in the ward.
 - My child(ren) lives in the ward.
- Signature: I confirm that the above information is accurate and complete.

Also, include the following:

- Deadline for submitting voter registration forms.
- Date ballots will be sent to verified voters.

C. BALLOT

Create a unique ballot for each Trustee’s ward election.

- List candidates in alphabetical order, by last name.
- If there are no prior nominees and Trustee takes nominations from the floor, create a generic ballot.
- Ensure one vote per elector.
- Voters must cast their ballot during the voting period.

Also, include the following:

- Deadline to submit ballot.
- Date election results will be posted.

7. EVALUATION

These guidelines will be reviewed and updated as required.

8. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- [Procedures for the Election of TDSB Parent/Guardian Representatives and Alternates on the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee](#) (2018)
- [PIAC By-laws](#) (Revised December 1, 2021)
- [A Practical Handbook for Parent Involvement Committee Members](#) (2012)

