

## Every Voice Counts!

### SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

#### Q &A

#### What is the Councils Purpose?

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

#### What is the Role of Councils?

- An **advisory body**, that make recommendations to the principal of the school or the Board on any matter (Reg.612/20)
- Consult with parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the council. (Reg.612/613)
- Develop By-laws that govern election procedures, filling vacancies and a conflict resolution process. (Reg.612/5.2)
- Keep minutes of meetings and keep financial records for a period of four years (Reg.612/16).
- Produce an annual written report of the council activities, including financial activities, to be submitted to the principal and the Board. (Reg. 612/24)
- Focus on improved learning for all students
- Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues
- represent and communicate the views of the school community

#### What is the Membership of Councils?

- **Elected** parents, teachers, support staff, secondary school students (elementary where appropriate), **appointed** community representative(s), a representative from the Ontario Home and School Association, if such a group exists in the school and the principal/vice-principal. (Reg. 612/5.1-4)

#### What is the Responsibility of a Council Member?

- Attend and contribute regularly at all school council meetings
- Act as a link between the school council and the community
- Participate in information and training
- Fulfill their duties

- Follow the operating rules/guidelines as agreed upon by the council including the guidelines for resolving differences of opinion
- Encourage others within the school community to participate in the activities of the council
- Communicate with various communities in the school and work towards removing any barriers to the participation of all members of the school community

### **What is the Term for Council Members?**

- An elected and appointed position on the council is one (1) year. Elected and appointed members can seek additional terms.

### **What are the positions on a Council?**

- A chair **selected by the council from among the parent members** on the council who will chair meetings, establish a schedule, link with the principal and speak on behalf of the council. The council can also choose to elect a co-chair, vice-chair, secretary or treasurer.

### **What is the Council Election Process?**

#### Elections Committee

- Each school **may** form an Elections Planning Committee chaired by the principal and with representation from parents, teaching staff, support staff, and in secondary schools, students. This committee is responsible for planning and holding elections for parents, teachers and support staff representatives. The planning committee's roles include:
  - choosing a time and location for the election
  - preparing election information
  - distributing election notices to the school community
  - developing acceptable campaign procedures

### **Election procedures**

#### *Principal Role*

- The principal shall publicize the Election Day proceedings at least fourteen days prior to the election on the behalf of the council
- Information about candidates shall be made available to the school community at least one week before the election.
- The principal shall conduct a lottery to determine the ballot position for each candidate.
- The principal shall supervise the election day proceedings
- Voting is done by secret ballot

- Ballots shall be counted by the principal in the presence of at least two parents who are not election candidates

#### *Election of Parent/Guardian Representatives*

- Parents/guardians of a student enrolled in the school can vote in a school election and run as a parent representative.
- Parents can nominate themselves by completing the nomination ballot and returning it to the school.
- Candidates should be prepared to summarize their reasons for running to represent the school community
- Parents/Guardians must be present at the school on the election day(s) during the preset hours for voting (to include both daytime and evening hours)
- Parents/Guardians can cast one vote for each candidate.
- If there is a tie for the final position, the winner will be determined by lot.
- If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates will be acclaimed.
- If all elected positions are not filled, the council can appoint additional people or choose to operate with vacancies.
- Appointments are by majority vote.
- The school council chair will be elected within 30 days of the parent representative elections.

#### *Election of Staff Representative*

- The principal will work with the elections committee to make arrangements for both teacher and support staff representatives to be elected. Anyone assigned to the school (full or part-time) can be a candidate.

#### *Elections of Student Representative*

- The principal will work with the elections committee to make arrangements to decide if there will be a student representative on the committee. In secondary schools, any student registered can be a candidate.

#### *Appointment of Community Representative(s)*

- All appointments of community representatives to the school council are to be by majority vote at a meeting of the school council.

**For further information on Councils please contact the Parent and Community Engagement Office at 416 397-3529.**