It is the policy of the Board that every school will establish and maintain a school council in compliance with Ontario Regulation 612/00.

The purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. O. Reg. 612/00, s. 2 (1).

A school council’s primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with this Regulation to the principal of the school and the Board that established the council. O. Reg. 612/00, s. 2 (2).
Thames Valley District School Board

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It is the policy of the Board to work with School Councils as valuable partners at the school and Board level, to fulfill their role as currently outlined by the provincial government.

Administered By       HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES  Board Resolution No.  69-B Rec.10
Amendment Date(s)     Amendment Resolution No.
### Title
SCHOOL COUNCILS - CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR INTERNAL SCHOOL COUNCIL DISPUTES

**Policy No.** 3007

**Department**
HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES

**Reference(s)**
- Ontario Regulations 612 Sections - 15(2)3
- Procedure - School Councils - Conflict Resolution Process for Internal School Council Disputes

**Effective Date**
2001 Sep. 01

It is the policy of the Board that should an internal school council dispute arise that cannot be resolved by the members of the school council amongst themselves, both the School Council Chair and the Principal will so advise the Executive Superintendent of Human Resource Services and the Superintendent of Education for that school.

The Executive Superintendent of Human Resource Services and the Superintendent of Education will determine which approach will be utilized in an attempt to resolve the conflict.

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**Administered By**
HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES

**Board Resolution No.**
83E - Rec 2

**Amendment Date(s)**
2001 June 26

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**Amendment Resolution No.**
It is the policy of the Board that the number of parent members of a School Council established by the Board shall be a minimum of seven, unless increased by a School Council by-law.
The purpose of this procedure of Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) is to establish and to maintain a School Council in every school of the Board, in order to promote and improve student learning through ongoing valued parental, staff and community input.

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1.0 Role of School Councils

1.1 School Councils:
- place the overall interests of the school and all of its students first;
- focus on student learning, achievement and well-being;
- act in an advisory capacity and as a resource to the school principal and, when appropriate, to the Board;
- are actively involved in setting school priorities for improving student achievement;
- promote meaningful parental and community involvement and actively seek the views of their school communities;
- keep well informed about school and board policies and procedures;
- communicate with the community about their activities; and
- may engage in fundraising to support student achievement and well-being in accordance with applicable Board policies.

1.2 A School Council shall not engage in fundraising activities unless,

(a) the activities are conducted in accordance with any applicable policies established by the board; and

(b) the activities are to raise funds for a purpose approved by the board or authorized by any applicable policies established by the board.

1.3 A School Council shall ensure that any funds raised are used in accordance with all applicable policies established by the board.

1.4 A School Council who engages in fundraising activities or financial transactions must follow the TVDSB School Generated Fund Policy and Procedure.

2.0 Composition

Parents/guardians shall form the majority of the School Council. It is expected that the membership of the council will reflect the diversity of the school community. In defining a school community, considerations may include such aspects as geography, language, cultural, ethnic, economic, business, and demographics.

2.1 Membership of a School Council shall include:
- a minimum of 7 and up to a maximum of 15 parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school (except in the adult day school where parent/guardian positions shall be held by students);
- the principal of the school;
● one teacher who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-
principal;
● one person who is employed at the school, other than the principal, vice-principal
or any other teacher;
● in the case of a school with one or more secondary school grades, one pupil
enrolled in the school;
● in the case of a school with no secondary school grades, one pupil enrolled in the
school who is appointed by the principal of the school, if the principal determines,
after consulting the other members of the School Council, that the council should
include a pupil;
● one community representative appointed by the other members of the School
Council; and
● one person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario
Federation of Home and School Associations, if the association that is a member
of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, is established in
respect of the school.

2.2 Eligibility of Membership

2.2.1 Parents/Guardian Representative

Parent/Guardian Representatives must be the legal parent/guardian of a pupil
attending the school in which the council is formed.

A parent/guardian is not qualified to be a parent/guardian member of a School
Council if,

(a) they are employed at the school; or

(b) they are not employed at the school but are employed elsewhere by the
board that established the council, unless they take reasonable steps to
inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent/guardian members
of that employment.

Only one individual per family unit is eligible to be a parent/guardian member of
the School Council.

2.2.2 Community Representative

The Community Representative shall be appointed by the council, at the first
meeting of the new School Council following elections for Parent/Guardian
Representatives.

A person who is employed by the board that established a School Council cannot
be appointed as a community representative on the council unless,
(a) they are not employed at the school; and
(b) the other members of the School Council are informed of the person’s employment before the appointment.

2.2.3 Secondary Student Representative

The Secondary Student Representative shall be appointed by the Student Council.

2.2.4 Elementary Student Representative

The Elementary Student Representative shall be appointed by the Principal, after consultation with the School Council.

2.2.5 Teacher Representative

The Teacher Representative shall be nominated and elected by members of the teaching staff assigned to the school.

2.2.6 Non-teaching Employee Representative

The Non-teaching Employee Representative shall be nominated and elected by non-teaching employees assigned to the school.

3.0 Elections

3.1 The current School Council may establish a School Council Elections Committee. The committee should have representation from parents, teaching staff, support staff and students (mandatory in secondary schools; in elementary schools, at the discretion of the principal).

3.2 In the case of a new school, the principal may form and chair an Elections Planning Committee. The committee should have representation from parents, teaching staff, support staff and students (mandatory in secondary schools; in elementary schools, at the discretion of the principal).

3.3 Election of Parent/Guardian Representatives

3.3.1 Parents/Guardians of a student enrolled at the school are eligible both to vote for and to run as a parent/guardian representative. Self-nomination is allowed.

3.3.2 Parent Candidate Nomination forms shall be filed by all candidates for parent/guardian positions on the School Council.

3.3.3 No individual campaign literature for School Council elections may be distributed or posted in the school.
3.3.4 School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates, with the exception of the candidate rationale for running which may be shared through the Principal.

3.3.5 If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed.

3.3.6 The Principal shall conduct a lottery to determine the random ballot position for each candidate.

3.3.7 Elections for School Council shall be conducted by secret ballot. Voters must be present at the school on the election day(s), during the preset hours (day and evening).

3.3.8 All eligible voters shall be entitled to cast one vote for each of the candidate positions available at their school.

3.3.9 If there is a tie for the final position for a representative on the School Council, the winner shall be determined by lot.

3.3.10 The election day proceedings shall be supervised by the school Principal.

3.3.11 If all elected positions have not been filled at the end of the election process and vacancies exist, the newly constituted School Council should follow the Vacancies in Membership section of this procedure.

4.0 Vacancies

4.1 A vacancy in the membership of a School Council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the council.

4.2 If an election is held to fill a vacancy in the membership of a School Council, section 3.0 above, as the case may be, applies, with necessary modifications, to the election.

4.3 A vacancy in the membership of a School Council does not prevent the council from exercising its authority.

4.4 If a member does not attend three consecutive regular meetings, without prior approval of the council, the position may be deemed to be vacated by the council.

5.0 Term of Office

5.1 The term of office for elected and appointed positions on the School Council is one year.

A person elected or appointed as a member of a School Council holds office from the
date of the first meeting of the newly elected School Council (after elections of parent members), until the date of the first meeting of the School Council after the elections of parent members are held in the next school year.

5.2 In the event of an election or appointment part-way through the school year, the term of office will run from the date of the election or appointment, to the date of the first meeting of the School Council after elections are held in the next school year.

6.0 Officers

6.1 A School Council shall have a chair or, if the by-laws of the council so provide, two co-chairs.

6.2 A chair or co-chair of a School Council must be a parent/guardian member of the council, and shall be elected by the members of the council at the first meeting of the newly elected School Council.

6.3 An employee of the board that established the council cannot be the chair or co-chair of the council.

6.4 A School Council may have such other officers as are provided for in the by-laws of the council.

6.5 A School Council that engages in fundraising and/or financial transactions shall have a Treasurer. This office may be combined with another office, if the by-laws of the council so provide.

6.6 Vacancies in the office of chair, co-chair or any other office of a School Council shall be filled in accordance with the by-laws of the council.

7.0 Meetings

7.1 A School Council shall meet at least four times during the school year.

7.2 The first meeting of the newly elected School Council shall be held within the first 35 days of the school year.

7.3 All meetings, including committee meetings, of a School Council shall be open to the public.

7.4 All meetings, including committee meetings, of a School Council shall be held at a location that is accessible to the public.

7.5 The principal of a school shall, on behalf of the School Council, give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the council to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.
8.0 Quorum

8.1 A meeting of a School Council cannot be held unless,

(a) a majority of the current members of the council are present at the meeting; and

(b) a majority of the members of the council who are present at the meeting are parent/guardian members. O.Reg. 612/00 s.12(3)

9.0 Committees

9.1 A School Council may, in accordance with its by-laws, establish committees to make recommendations to the council.

9.2 Every committee of a School Council must include at least one parent/guardian member of the council.

9.3 A committee of a School Council may include persons who are not members of the council.

9.4 Minutes of committee meetings are to be maintained and provided to the School Council.

10.0 Voting

10.1 Each member of a School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the council.

10.2 Each member of a committee of a School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee.

10.3 The principal of the school is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the School Council or by a committee of the School Council.

11. By-laws

11.1 Every School Council shall have a set of by-laws.

11.2 The by-laws of a council must include the following:

(a) a by-law that governs election procedures and the filling of vacancies in the membership of the school council;

(b) a by-law that establishes rules respecting participation in school council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest; and

(c) a bylaw that, in accordance with any applicable policies established by the board that established the council, establishes a conflict resolution process for
internal school council disputes.

11.3 The by-laws of a council should also include the following:

- a by-law regarding general expectations regarding meetings (e.g., attendance, promptness);
- a by-law regarding the number and scheduling of meetings;
- a by-law regarding the number of parent members;
- a by-law regarding the number, description, and duties of officers of the School Council;
- a by-law regarding the establishment and roles of committees;
- a by-law regarding the process for seeking input from the community; and
- a by-law containing a code of conduct for School Council members.

11.4 It is important to ensure that by-laws created by the School Council do not conflict with any of the provisions of Ontario Regulation 612/00, nor the TVDSB School Council’s policy and procedure.

12.0 Minutes and Financial Records

12.1 A School Council shall keep minutes of all of its meetings, including committee meetings, and records of all of its financial transactions.

12.2 The minutes and records of the current and past 4 years shall be available at the school for examination without charge by any person.

13.0 Annual Report

13.1 Every School Council shall annually submit a written report on its activities to the Principal of the school and to the board that established the council.

13.2 If the School Council engages in fundraising activities and/or financial transactions, the annual report shall include a report on those activities.

13.3 The annual report shall be prepared and submitted no later than September 30 of the subsequent school year.

13.4 The Principal shall, on behalf of the School Council, give a copy of the report to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the copy is given, is enrolled in the school. This may be accomplished by:

(a) giving the report to the parent’s child for delivery to their Parent/Guardian(s);

(b) posting the report in the school in a location that is accessible to Parent/Guardian(s); and

(c) posting the report on the school website.
14.0 Conflict of Interest

14.1 A conflict of interest for a School Council representative is any situation in which the individual’s private interests may be incompatible or in conflict with their council responsibilities. A conflict of interest may exist whether or not a monetary advantage has been or may be conferred on the School Council member or their family.

A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential:

Actual: When a School Council member has a private interest that is sufficiently connected to their duties and responsibilities as a council member that it influences the exercise of these duties and responsibilities.

Perceived: When reasonably well-informed persons could reasonably believe that a School Council member has a conflict of interest, even where, in fact, there is no real conflict of interest.

Potential: When a School Council member has a private interest that could affect their decision about matters proposed for discussion.

A School Council member should try to avoid situations in which:

- a conflict of interest is likely to result;
- the member’s ability to carry out their duties and responsibilities on the council may be jeopardized;
- the council member or their relatives gain or benefit indirectly;
- favours or economic benefits are accepted by the council member from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school;
- any family member, friend, or person, organization, or business entity associated with the council member will be favoured.

14.2 Should an issue or agenda item arise during a council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest situation, they shall declare conflict of interest immediately and not participate in the discussion and resolution.

15.0 Conflict Resolution

15.1 From time to time a dispute may arise amongst the members of a School Council. It is expected that the members of that council will make every effort to resolve the conflict themselves.

15.2 Should an internal dispute require outside intervention to achieve resolution, the Superintendent of Student Achievement for that school will assess the unique needs of the situation and determine an appropriate approach.

Such an approach may include, but is not limited to, the following:
16.0 Responsibilities

16.1 Responsibilities of the School Council

The School Council shall:

- act in an advisory capacity and as a resource to the school principal and, when appropriate, to the Board;
- place the overall interests of the school and all of its students first;
- focus on student learning, achievement and well-being;
- focus on school-wide issues and what is best for the school and its students;
- operate in a non-judgmental manner, respecting confidentiality, employing constructive discussions and reaching decisions ideally through consensus;
- recognize and respect the rights and responsibilities of individual students and Board employees;
- ensure meetings remain free of discussion about individual parents, students, Board employees, trustees or other council members;
- communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by the council;
- promote meaningful parental and community involvement and actively seek the views of their school communities;
- keep well informed about school and board policies and procedures;
- communicate with the community about their activities;
- determine, in consultation with the school based Home and School Association (if applicable), how Parent Involvement Funds will be utilized; and
- submit, no later than September 30 of the subsequent year, a written report to the principal, and to the Board, outlining its goals, activities, and achievements. If the school council engages in fundraising activities and/or financial transactions, the annual report shall include a report on those activities.

The School Council may:

- make recommendations to the Principal of the school or to the board that established the council on any matter; including, but not limited to the following:
  - determination of the local school year calendar;
  - scheduling significant school events;
  - revisions to the school code of student behaviour;
• curriculum and program goals and priorities;
• the school’s achievement in provincial and school board assessments to support and improve programs delivered in the school;
• the school profile and the overall growth plan for the school;
• the principal profile for consideration by the Board in its selection of school Principal;
• the school’s budget priorities including the local capital improvement plan, for consideration during the Board's annual budget review;
• school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational and nutritional programs;
• school-community communication strategies;
• extra-curricular activities in the school;
• the community use of school facilities; and
• Board policy and procedure;

● organize information and training sessions to enable members of the council to develop their skills as council members;
● apply for Parent Reaching Out grants; and
● may engage in fundraising to support student achievement and well-being in accordance with applicable Board policies and procedures.

Each School Council Member shall:
● maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
● participate in council meetings, contributing positively and functioning as a team member;
● identify all agenda items and/or issues with which they have a possible conflict of interest;
● ensure that the rights to privacy of students, staff and parents will be respected and protected;
● observe the council’s code of ethics and established bylaws; and
● evaluate the success in achieving the shared goals for the school.

Each School Council Member may:
● participate in information and training programs; and
● participate on any committees established by the School Council.

16.2 Responsibilities of Chair/Co-Chairs

The Chair of the School Council shall:
● adhere to the responsibilities of School Council Members as noted in 16.1;
● arrange for School Council meetings;
● prepare the agenda for School Council meetings in consultation with the principal;
● chair School Council meetings;
● ensure that the minutes of School Council meetings are recorded;
● communicate with the school Principal;
● ensure that there is regular communication with the school community;
● facilitate the resolution of conflict;
● participate as ex-officio member(s) of all committees established by the School Council;
● consult with senior board staff and trustees, as required;
● adhere to the responsibilities of Parent/Guardian members in section 16.4; and
● perform other roles and responsibilities as indicated in the council by-laws.

16.3 Responsibilities of other Officers

Other Officers of the School Council shall:

● adhere to the responsibilities of School Council Members as noted in 16.1; and
● perform other roles and responsibilities as indicated in the council by-laws.

16.4 Responsibilities of Parent/Guardian Members

Parent/Guardian Members shall:

● adhere to the responsibilities of School Council Members as noted in 16.1;
● solicit the views of other parents and members of the community to share with the School Council; and
● encourage the participation of parents/guardians within the school community.

16.5 Responsibilities of the Student Member

The Student Member shall:

● adhere to the responsibilities of School Council Members as noted in 16.1;
● solicit the views of other students to share with the School Council; and
● communicate information back to other students.

16.6 Responsibilities of the Teaching Staff Member

The Teaching Staff Member shall:

● adhere to the responsibilities of School Council Members as noted in 16.1;
● solicit the views of other teaching staff to share with the School Council; and
● communicate information back to other teaching staff.
16.7 Responsibilities of the Non-teaching Staff Member

The Non-teaching Staff Member shall:

● adhere to the responsibilities of School Council Members as noted in 16.1;
● solicit the views of other non-teaching staff to share with the School Council; and
● communicate information back to other non-teaching staff.

16.8 Responsibilities of the Community Member

The Community Member shall:

● adhere to the responsibilities of School Council Members as noted in 16.1;
● represent the community’s perspective, including those of other community groups;
● solicit the views of other community groups to share with the School Council; and
● communicate information back to other community groups.

The Community Member may:

● assist with building partnerships and links between the school and community.

16.9 Responsibilities of the Home and School Association Representative Member

The Home and School Association Representative Member shall:

● adhere to the responsibilities of School Council Members as noted in 16.1;
● represent their Home and School Association;
● solicit the views of their Home and School Association to share with the School Council; and
● communicate information back to their Home and School Association.

16.10 Responsibilities of the Principal

The Principal shall:

● adhere to the responsibilities of School Council Members as noted in 16.1;
● ensure that a School Council is established and maintained as per Ontario Regulation 612/00 and the TVDSB School Council policy and procedure at all times;
● conduct elections for Parent/Guardian Members of the School Council;
● conduct the election of the Chair/Co-Chairs of the School Council from among the newly elected Parent/Guardian Members;
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- forward a list of the elected and appointed School Council members to the Director of Education (or designate) no later than 30 days following each election or change of membership in the School Council;
- ensure that the list and contact information for each School Council member is:
  (a) posted in the school in a location that is accessible to parents, and
  (b) posted on the school website;
- be accountable for all funds raised by the School Council in accordance with the TVDSB School Generated Funds Procedure;
- ensure that copies of the minutes and financial records of the council are maintained and available per section 12 above;
- ensure that annual reports are completed as per section 13 above;
- assist the Council in communicating with the school community;
- attend all School Council meetings, if the Principal is unable to attend a meeting this responsibility may be delegated to the Vice-Principal;
- distribute promptly to each council member material identified by the ministry for distribution to School Council members and post the material in a school location accessible to parents;
- solicit views on matters pertaining to the establishment or amendment of school and/or TVDSB policies and procedures;
- solicit views on matters pertaining to the School Improvement Plan;
- solicit views on matters pertaining to school budgets;
- solicit views on matters pertaining to the accountability of the education system to parents;
- solicit views on matters pertaining to the communication of school plans to the public;
- consider each recommendation made by the School Council and report to the council with the action taken in response to the recommendation;
- act as a resource to the council on laws, regulations, and board policies and procedures;
- engage in internal conflict resolution activities in accordance with section 15 above;
- support and promote the council’s activities and advice;
- obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make informed decisions;
- communicate with the Chair or Co-chairs of the Council;
- maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
- participate in council meetings, contributing positively and functioning as a team member;
- identify all agenda items and/or issues with which they have a possible conflict of interest;
- ensure that the rights to privacy of students, staff and parents will be respected and protected;
- observe the council’s code of ethics and established bylaws; and
● evaluate the success in achieving the shared goals for the school.

The Principal may:

● solicit the views of the School Council on any matter;
● participate in information and training programs; and
● participate on any committees established by the School Council.

16.11 Responsibilities of the Superintendent of Student Achievement

The Superintendent of Student Achievement shall:

● ensure that each Principal has fulfilled their responsibilities regarding School Councils per Ontario Regulation 612/00 and the TVDSB School Council policy and procedure;
● ensure that each school has a School Council established and maintained as per Ontario Regulation 612/00 and the TVDSB School Council policy and procedure at all times;
● ensure that the Principal has forwarded a list of the elected and appointed School Council members to the Director of Education (or designate) no later than 30 days following each election or change of membership in the School Council;
● ensure that copies of the minutes and financial records of the council are maintained and available per section 12;
● ensure that annual reports are completed as per section 13;
● engage in internal conflict resolution activities in accordance with section 15; and
● provide support to Principals in responding to School Councils matters.

16.12 Responsibilities of the Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee

The Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee shall:

● communicate with and support School Councils of schools of the board;
● communicate information from the Ministry to School Councils of schools of the board and to parents of pupils of the board;
● work with School Councils of schools of the board and, through the board’s Director of Education, with employees of the board to,
  ▪ share effective practices to help engage parents, especially parents who may find engagement challenging, in their children’s learning;
  ▪ identify and reduce barriers to parent engagement;
  ▪ help ensure that schools of the board create a welcoming environment for parents of its pupils, and
  ▪ develop skills and acquire knowledge that will assist the Parent Involvement Committee and School Councils of the board with their work.
16.13 Responsibilities of the Director of Education, and Associate Directors of Education

The Director of Education, and Associate Directors of Education shall:

- support and promote the role of School Councils; and
- engage in internal conflict resolution activities in accordance with section 15.

16.14 Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall:

- support and promote the role of School Councils;
- solicit the views of the School Councils established by the board with respect to the following matters:
  - the establishment or amendment of board policies and guidelines that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including:
    (a) policies and guidelines established under subsection 302 (1) of the Education Act with respect to the conduct of persons in schools within the board’s jurisdiction,
    (b) policies and guidelines established under subsection 302 (5) of the Education Act respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the board’s jurisdiction,
    (c) policies and guidelines respecting the allocation of funding by the board to School Councils,
    (d) policies and guidelines respecting the fundraising activities of School Councils,
    (e) policies and guidelines respecting conflict resolution processes for internal School Council disputes, and
    (f) policies and guidelines respecting reimbursement by the board of expenses incurred by members and officers of School Councils;
  - the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including:
    (a) implementation plans for policies and guidelines established under subsection 302 (1) of the Education Act with respect to the conduct of persons in schools within the board’s jurisdiction, and
    (b) implementation plans for policies and guidelines established under subsection 302 (5) of the Education Act respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools within the board’s jurisdiction;
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- Board action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office’s reports on the results of tests of pupils, and the communication of those plans to the public;
- the process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals.

The Board of Trustees may:

- solicit the views of School Councils on any other matter; and
- an individual Trustee may attend a School Council meeting, provided that both the School Council Chair/Co-Chairs and the Principal of the school have issued an invitation.
From time to time a dispute may arise amongst the members of a School Council. It is expected that the members of that Council will make every effort to resolve it themselves. Should an internal dispute require outside intervention to achieve resolution, the Executive Superintendent of Human Resource Services and the Superintendent of Education for that school will assess the unique needs of the situation and determine an appropriate approach. Such an approach may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Assistance by the Superintendent of Education for that school;

- Assistance by a Board facilitator, trained in dispute resolution techniques which support the eight Foundations for a Caring, Learning Community under Our Vision;

- Assistance by an outside trained facilitator;

- Assistance by the Executive Superintendent of Human Resource Services.

TO BE RESCINDED