TVPIC
Thames Valley District School Board
Parent Involvement Committee

School Council Resource Guide

2025-2026

Thames Valley
District School Board

INDEX

Introduction to the Resource Guide for School Council Chairs

Empowering Leadership for Thriving School Communities

Welcome to the Thames Valley Resource Guide for School Council Chairs. Thank you for assuming the School Council Chair role in TVDSB; by taking on this pivotal role, you are stepping into a position of significant influence and responsibility within your school community. We are grateful for your leadership and collaboration. This guide is designed to support you in navigating the various dimensions of your role with confidence and effectiveness.

Thank you to the members of the 2024-2025 Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee for their support in the development of the Guide and resources included.

Purpose of the Guide

This guide aims to equip you with the knowledge, tools, and strategies necessary to lead your School Council successfully. Whether you are a seasoned Chair or new to the position, this resource is tailored to provide insights that will help you foster a vibrant and inclusive school environment.

What You Will Find in This Guide

- **Understanding Policy/ Procedure and Roles:** Detailed descriptions of the responsibilities and expectations associated with roles of Councils are included in Thames Valley's newly revised Policy and Procedure;
- **Practical tips:** to support effective leadership, communication, and decision-making.
- Meeting supports: guidance on planning, conducting, and following up on school council meetings as a year at a glance
- **Resources and Tools:** A compilation of useful templates, checklists, and tipsheets to streamline your tasks and enhance your Council's productivity.

Why Your Role Matters

As the Chair, you play a crucial role in shaping the direction and impact of your School Council. Your leadership can inspire positive change, foster a sense of community, and ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard and valued. By leveraging the resources in this Guide, you will be better prepared to address challenges and embrace opportunities, ultimately contributing to the success and well-being of your school.

We hope this Guide serves as a valuable companion on your journey as a School Council Chair. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to making a difference in the lives of students, staff, and families. Together, we can build stronger, more resilient school communities.

The Thames Valley District School Board

Starting Strong Together

A solid, positive start to the school year allows School Councils to build a foundation of support for student achievement and well-being in Thames Valley.

Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee (TVPIC) wants to help School Principals and School Council Chairs to start the school year out in a strong, positive and collaborative way towards our common goal of supporting students. As such, we have compiled a few Best Practices and Suggested Agenda Items for September and October to get you started. We hope you find this helpful and would love to hear your feedback as we support you.

Resources to get you started:

- Review the TVDSB School Council Policy (3016) and Procedure (3016a) (Principal and Current Chair)
- Review Regulation 612/00 Education Act (as needed) (Principal and Chair)
- Be aware of and often refer to School Councils: A Guide for Members (Principal and Chair)

Best Practices to Remember

Effective School Councils are those that:

- Prioritize student achievement, equity and well-being
- Focus on the needs and interests of all students in the school
- Composed of members who represent the diversity of the board
- Promote effective, ongoing communication among all partners in education
- Establish a positive relationship with the school principal and staff
- Provide feedback to parents/caregivers by letting them know how their advice and ideas have been considered
- Have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- Have a clear and consistent process for decision making and conflict resolution
- Maintain high ethical standards

From the Ontario Guide to School Councils, 2002

Suggested Items for September School Council Agenda

These are suggestions for consideration based on the Best Practices highlighted on previous page:

Prior to your September meeting:

- **Discuss** with past Chair and/or Executive a plan to communicate for the upcoming School Council elections (to be held within the first 30 days of school).
- **Communicate** School Council election plans (date, time, location) with your school community.
- **Actively recruit** staff, parents, and community members to join School Council.
- **Within first two weeks of school**, send home Nomination Forms.

At your September meeting, PRIOR TO elections:

- **Welcome and Introductions** (especially to new participants).
- **Chair's Report** (outgoing Chair).
- **Preparation Discussion for Upcoming Elections** (e.g., Will there be a School Council Elections Committee- optional for Elementary; mandatory in Secondary; review of process to be used; elections must be held within 30 days of start of school year; first meeting of New Council to be within 35 days).

At your September meeting, AFTER elections:

- **Principal Report** (should always include an update on the School Improvement and Equity Plan Safe and Inclusive School Plan
- **Priorities for the School Year** (Principal to share including any budget updates and/or ways Council can support) and School Council should begin to consider Goals (to be established once Council is elected).
- **By-Law Review** (if applicable); ensuring all are aware of the By-Laws
- **Meeting Dates and Times** Requirement: four meetings a year

Following your September meeting:

- Principal shares name and preferred contact information (i.e. email address) of School Council Chair with school Superintendent.

Considerations prior to your meeting:

A process for establishing minute- taking (i.e., Secretary role) should be in place. In addition to any financial reporting and record keeping should have a process.

Locations of meetings and hybrid options should be considered to allow for reduction of barriers for families. Communication should inform families of the meeting one week in advance.

Meetings should be led in a manner that allows for contribution from all members as per the established agenda.

Agendas with time allocations are encouraged. Be respectful of members' time and adjourn on time.

Contact your TVPIC Representative if you have any questions.

For a list of representatives, please refer to our website or contact the Chair of TVPIC at chair@tvpic.ca

A few reminders...

- Don't forget the School Council Annual Report is due September 30; this should be provided to the school community or posted on the school website.
- School Council meetings are open to the public and are to be hybrid. The Principal must inform the school community of the dates, times and locations of all meetings.
- Four meetings are required in one school year.

TVDSB School Council Policy Comparative Guide

The policy document on school councils has undergone significant changes between the original version from 2018 and the updated version from 2024. Here are the major changes:

2018	2024
Inclusion and Diversity Focus	
The original policy focused on the establishment of school councils and their role in improving pupil achievement and accountability to parents, as per Ontario Regulation 612/00	The updated version places a stronger emphasis on equity and inclusion. It explicitly calls for removing discriminatory barriers and ensuring diverse representation from various cultural, socioeconomic, linguistic, and ability backgrounds, with a focus on underrepresented groups like Indigenous, Black, and racialized individuals, as well as 2SLGBTQIA+ persons
Mandatory Hybrid Meeting Formats	
There was no specific mention of how meetings should be conducted.	The updated version mandates that all school council meetings be conducted in a hybrid format, ensuring that they are accessible to the public both online and in person
Broader Scope of Advisory Role	
School councils primarily focused on providing advice to the principal and the Board to improve student achievement	The advisory role has expanded to include collaboration with various stakeholders (students, staff, parents, and community partners), as well as contributing to broader initiatives such as the TVDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, Student Achievement Plan, and the school's School Improvement and Equity Plan
Accountability and Reporting	
Limited information on reporting requirements.	The updated policy includes specific requirements for councils to submit an annual report by September 30th, and to contribute to the Director of Education's performance appraisal. Additionally, councils are now expected to provide input into the Administrator Leadership Profile and contribute to the development of the School Profile

2018	2024
Mandatory Participation in Orientation	
No mention of mandatory orientation for council members.	The new policy mandates that the School Council Chair (or delegate) participate in a mandatory orientation provided by the Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee. This includes training on the TVDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan and other critical policies
Consultation on Capital Improvements	
No mention of council involvement in school infrastructure or capital improvements.	The updated policy includes provisions for school councils to be informed of capital improvements that impact the school community and to provide input on areas such as school budget priorities
Inclusion and Diversity Focus	
The procedures referenced the need for parent/guardian participation and general engagement in school matters, but there was less focus on diversity and inclusion	The updated version places a stronger emphasis on equity and inclusion, specifying that the composition of school councils must reflect the diversity of the school community. Strategies are included to actively seek out individuals from underrepresented groups, with a focus on breaking down barriers for Indigenous, Black, and other racialized individuals, as well as those who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+
Hybrid Meeting Formats	
There was no specific mention of how meetings should be conducted.	There is a requirement for hybrid meeting formats to ensure that all meetings are accessible both in person and online, to encourage broader participation
Expanded Role of School Councils	
School councils were expected to act in an advisory capacity to the principal and, when necessary, to the board	School councils now play a broader role in supporting the TVDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan, Student Achievement Plan, School Improvement and Equity Plan, and Safe and Inclusive School Plan. Councils are expected to provide input into these plans and work collaboratively with various stakeholders

2018	2024
Accountability and Reporting	
Councils were expected to submit an annual report summarizing activities and fundraising efforts	The updated policy includes specific requirements for councils to submit an annual report by September 30th, and to contribute to the Director of Education's performance appraisal. Additionally, councils are now expected to provide input into the Administrator Leadership Profile for their school
Mandatory Training and Orientation	
No mention of mandatory orientation for council members.	There is now a requirement for the School Council Chair or a delegate to attend mandatory orientation sessions provided by the Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee
Capital Improvements and Consultation	
No mention of council involvement in capital improvements.	The updated policy includes provisions for school councils to be informed of capital improvements that impact the school community and provide input on school budget priorities and other consultation matters
Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest	
Conflict of interest and confidentiality guidelines were present but not as extensively outlined	Conflict of interest provisions are much more detailed. They now define actual, perceived, and potential conflicts of interest and outline a formal process for declaring and handling such conflicts during meetings
Conflict Resolution	
There were basic guidelines for resolving disputes	The updated procedures expand on conflict resolution, offering more detailed steps for internal disputes, including outside facilitation and potential disciplinary actions if necessary

These changes reflect a more inclusive, accountable, and engaged school council structure, with clearer roles, expectations, and supports for both council members and school administrators.

MORE QUESTIONS? Get in touch with your TVPIC Rep!

CONTACT US

SCHOOL COUNCIL MONTH BY MONTH CHECKLIST

The following calendar/checklist may be used as a guide for your School Council throughout the school year. Please use this as a template and customize it for your use, keeping in mind the legislative requirements of Councils. The items listed are examples of tasks for your reference.

September/October:

- ☐ The principal will post nomination information, election meeting date and time (two-week notice).
- ☐ School Council to be established/elections to take place with the 30 days of the first day of school. Ensure the following are represented:
- ☐ Parent members - in accordance with school by-laws
- ☐ Executive - including Chair(s), secretary, treasurer (if required)
- ☐ Teacher representative
- ☐ Non-teaching representative
- ☐ Community representative
- ☐ Student representative
- ☐ Representative from other parent groups within the school
- ☐ Identify committees and their Chairs
- ☐ Hold first meeting of Council (within the first 35 days)
- ☐ Determine School Council goals, aligning with the School Improvement and Equity Plan (SIEP) and Safe and Inclusive School Plan, as shared by the Principal
- ☐ Establish timelines for the following:
- ☐ School Council By-laws - review date
- ☐ Review items outstanding from the previous year.
- ☐ Determine methods of communication to parents/ caregivers, staff, community and protocols.
- ☐ Plan to attend the TVPIC Mandatory Onboarding for School Council Chairs
- ☐ Ensure the Annual Report from the previous year is completed and submitted by September 30th.
- ☐ Determine when Council will complete the Annual Report for this year.
- ☐ Determine if the Administrator Profile needs to be completed.
- ☐ Determine how many meetings Council will wish to have and when (four meetings are required) and all meetings are to be hybrid.
- ☐ Prepare welcome materials for Meet the Family/Open House events
- ☐ Update the School Website with information about Council. See tipsheet on what content is needed.
- ☐ Advise Superintendent of Family Engagement of Chair name and preferred contact information.

November/December:

- ☐ Review EQAO results, as provided by the Principal.
- ☐ Align activities for support student success and achievement. If fundraising, develop a plan to support the entire school.
- ☐ Plan for $500 Parent Involvement Funds (PIF).
- ☐ Consider an application for a Parent Reaching Out Grant (PRO Grant), when the application information is provided by TVDSB.
- ☐ Prepare a Welcome to School Council message or brochure for families of incoming grade nines (secondary).

January- March:

- ☐ Review Administrator Profile and submit to the Superintendent by March
- ☐ Ensure plans are in place to support family engagement for the remainder of the year (e.g., EQAO night for families, welcome events for new families, spring BBQ, Math/ Literacy night with PIF/ PRO funding)
- ☐ Update School Council Annual Report
- ☐ Receive update from Principal on SIEP & SISP work.
- ☐ Focus on priorities set at the beginning of the year
- ☐ Prepare School Council materials for kindergarten and grade 9 families

April/ May/June:

- ☐ Review and set nomination/election procedures for next year.
- ☐ Complete all planned activities.
- ☐ Celebrate accomplishments.
- ☐ Consider draft priorities and fundraising for next year
- ☐ Prepare School Council Annual Report - submit to principal for distribution and TVPIC Superintendent Lead by September 30th.

School Council Information on Websites

As per the Revised TVDSB School Council Policy and Procedure, the following information must be on school websites:

The list and contact information for each School Council member (also posted in the school in a location that is accessible to parents/guardians/caregivers)

Meeting minutes, meeting schedule and information to attend the meeting

The Annual Report (which is due each year by September 30; recommended to be completed throughout the year and submitted in June)

Election information, including the nomination process and forms will be widely available to the school community and on the school website, including promotion on the school website photo carousel

In addition, the Procedure speaks to a regularly updated, online presence of the School Council within the school webpage.

Your leadership and assistance to ensure Family Engagement and School Council information is widely shared within school communities and online, is very much appreciated!

TVPIC
Thames Valley District School Board
Parent Involvement Committee

SCHOOL COUNCIL
GRANT TIP SHEET

Thames Valley District School Board offers two distinct grant initiatives designed to help School Councils enhance family engagement. The PRO Grant (Parents Reaching Out Grant) and the PIF (Parent Involvement Fund) are both designed to enhance engagement, but they differ in specific objectives, scope, and application processes.

PRO Grant

(Parents Reaching Out Grant)

- Specifically aimed at funding projects that help identify and remove barriers to parent/caregiver engagement. Focus on enhancing the engagement of families by supporting the diverse needs of families and communities at the local level, with a focus on equity and inclusion.
- School staff, in collaboration with School Councils and/or Home and School Associations can apply for this grant. The applications are reviewed by the Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee (TVPIC).
- The funding provided through the PRO Grant can vary, but it usually supports a wide range of initiatives.

PIF

(Parent Involvement Fund)

- To support, encourage and enhance family engagement.
- Distributed to school boards, through central accounts for the use by school councils in collaboration with the local school community.
- Deposited into a central account and administered through the Thames Valley District School Board. All transactions are processed at the board level.
- Total funding is $500 per year, per school. Funds must be spent by June 30. Unspent funds will carry forward for a maximum of 1 year.

FUNDING USE EXAMPLES

ELIGIBLE USES FOR PRO GRANT

✔ Anti-racism and anti-oppression initiatives
✔ Parent/caregiver engagement supports (e.g., evening conferences, child minding)
✔ Enhanced multilingual and technology support (e.g., virtual presentations, online networking)
✔ Food sovereignty and environmental activities (e.g., hiking, community gardens)
✔ Mental health and well-being (e.g., workshops for student and family mental health)
✔ Physical health and wellness (e.g., Zumba, basic first aid, conflict resolution)
✔ Targeted resources for parent/caregiver resilience (e.g., curriculum workshops, anxiety support, technology use guidance)
✔ 2SLGBTQIA+ awareness (e.g., culturally responsive experiences)
✔ Online learning and safety (e.g., cyber-literacy)
✔ Literacy support for parents/caregivers

PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PROJECTS
✔ Literacy Night / Invest in Children
✔ Mindfulness Event
✔ Multicultural Fair
✔ Kindergarten Open House
✔ Grade 8 Parent Night
✔ Books for Breakfast
✔ STEM Night

INELIGIBLE USES FOR PROGRANT

✓ Activities that took place before the start of the current school year
✓ Payment to school board staff or volunteers, including salaries, honoraria, gifts, etc.
✓ Refreshments exceeding 10% of the approved funding
✓ Debts or financial losses that result from a project
✓ Out-of-province travel
✓ Fundraising events
✓ Student-focused activities (must be family focused)

ELIGIBLE USES FOR PIF FUNDS

✔ Enhanced communication tools (newsletter, website)
✓ Family Literacy/Numeracy Night
✓ Parent/Caregiver Handbook
✓ Translated materials for parents/caregivers
✓ Volunteer Handbooks
✓ Direct communication to parents/caregivers
✓ Multicultural Night
✓ Parent/Caregiver Resource Library
✓ Child minding fees for meetings/events
✔ Guest speakers for parents/caregivers
✔ Funding for parent/caregiver nights/open houses
✔ Computer software for School Council activities
✔ Taxi/bus fare for parent/caregiver attendance
✔ Refreshments for parent/caregiver events
✔ Welcome packages for new parents/caregivers
✔ Monitor for displaying school/parent/caregiver activities
✔ Transitional kits for kindergarten and high school parents/caregivers
✔ School Messenger Fees/Student Planners

INELIGIBLE USES FOR PIF FUNDS

✓ Capital projects, school furniture, landscaping, playground equipment
✗ Ministry of Education or TVDSB funded items (textbooks, salaries, laptops, iPads)
✘ Student-focused activities (must be family focused)
✗ School anniversaries/reunions
✗ Fun fairs and fundraising events

School Council Nomination Forms

Nomination forms for School Council membership are due: _____

What is School Council?

- The School Council is a representative advisory body within the school.
- The purpose of School Councils is, through the active participation of parents and guardians to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

What are examples of this advice?

- Provide support for the School Improvement and Equity Plan and Safe and Inclusive School Plan.
- Support and enhance the communication between school and home
- Create an Administrator Profile

Who can be a member?

- Parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school. This group has to be the majority of the members on a council
- The school principal
- Teacher on staff at the school
- One or more student(s)
- Support staff member at the school (non-teaching)
- Community representative(s)
- All members of the Council shall place the overall interest of the students and the school first.
- They shall maintain a school-wide perspective on issues and participate in Council meetings.
- The members act as a link between the Council and the broader school community.
- The members try to encourage the participation of the broader community.
- The members may from time to time initiate ad hoc or standing sub committees for specific purposes.
- Any recommendations from these committees should be brought to the Council for ratification and implementation.

Please consider participation to help enhance all students' education at _____

School Council Candidate Nomination Form

Parents and guardians are invited to self-nominate for a parent/guardian representative position on School Council.

Nomination forms are due _____ (date) in the office.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ CELL PHONE: _____

☐ I am the parent/guardian of (student's name and date of birth) who is currently registered in this school.

_____ _____
student's name date of birth

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, if required.

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 Thames Valley District School Board's school council policy and procedure.

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 has been received.

Received by: _____ Date: _____

SCHOOL COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FORM

SCHOOL _____ YEAR _____

PRINCIPAL _____

At the end of the School Council term, as mandated by the Ministry of Education Regulation 612, School Councils are required to submit an annual report to the school and the school board, **outlining the Council's goals, and activities, including any fundraising activities and achievements.**

By **September 30th, of each year**, the report must be completed **and;**

- A copy kept on file at school
- Copies made available to all parents/guardians/ caregivers and School Council members
- A copy submitted to TVDSB by email to Superintendent of Student Achievement, Family Engagement Portfolio.

If more space is required, please feel free to attach additional information.

MEETINGS of the School Council: Supporting student achievement

During the school year, our School Council held _____ (number) meetings.

Generally, the School Council met on the _____ (first, second, etc.) _____ (day) of

_____ (every, every other) month.

Thames Valley
District School Board

School Council Input: School Administration

We value the input of our families in the Thames Valley District School Board. In recognition of the knowledge that our School Councils have about the uniqueness of each school community in the board, we are providing an opportunity for input from members into the leadership qualities of a school administrator, if Senior Administration is placing a new Principal or Vice-Principal.

There are many factors that are considered by Senior Administration in the placement of school administrators. The input provided by School Councils will be considered in addition to other factors. Please note all input provided is not intended or should be shared as an evaluation of current or past Administrators. We appreciate your understanding.

Please complete the following sections and send to the attention of the School Superintendent; the Principal can share the email information of the School Superintendent. This is to be submitted by **March 30th every year** (for Fall 2025 assignments).

Unique Characteristics of Our School Community:
Leadership Qualities related to the Unique Characteristics of our School Community:
Input has been provided by the following members of School Council (please provide names):

Thames Valley
District School Board

1250 Dundas St. | London, ON
tvdsb.ca