

School Councils

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Policy Owner:	Learning Support Services
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Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario Regulations 612/00 s. 2(1) School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees • Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools (2010) • TVDSB Procedure: School Councils • TVDSB Policy: Conflict of Interest and Nepotism • TVDSB Procedure: Conflict of Interest and Nepotism • TVDSB Policy: Public Concerns and Complaints • TVDSB Procedure: Resolving Public Concerns and Complaints • TVDSB Policy: School Generated Funds • TVDSB Procedure: School Generated Funds • TVDSB School Generated Funds – Process Manual for Schools and School Councils • School Councils: A Guide for Members (2002) • Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act (2023)

1. Intent

Given that school boards are mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education to establish and maintain school councils in every school (Ontario Regulation 612), this policy is intended to outline how school councils are established and maintained within the TVDSB.

School councils are valued by the TVDSB for their representative role of the school community. Their collaborative, consultative and advisory role plays a significant part in supporting the operation of our schools. Their purpose is to work in an advisory capacity with school administration to improve student achievement, well-being and belonging, and enhance the accountability of the education system to caregivers/guardians. To this end, school council meetings are open to the public.

2. Objective

As a minimum, School Councils shall fulfill the scope of their duties as stated within Ontario Regulation 612/00 and the Ministry of Education document, "School Councils: A Guide for Members." The Ministry regulation, this policy and the Guide outline the mandate, composition, roles and responsibilities of School Councils. Adhering to these regulations ensures transparency, accountability and effective communication within the school community.

2.1. This Policy and accompanying Procedure establishes the requirements and processes to ensure that School Councils:

- are compliant with the Ontario Regulation 612/00 while embracing inclusive approaches that align with the evolving needs of students and families to ensure barrier free participation and engagement; TVDSB is committed to ensuring all School Council meetings are open to the public and provided in a hybrid format. Meeting schedules and minutes of meetings are to be provided to the public (online);
- actively involved in actions that support the TVDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Student Achievement Plan and the school's School Improvement and Equity Plan, and Safe and Inclusive School Plan;
- serve as an advisory body providing informed advice and recommendations to the school's Principal, the TVDSB and/or the Board of Trustees;
- collaborate with students, educators, staff, parents/ caregivers, Home and School Associations and other interest holders (including community partners) on topics of interest to the school community reflecting the TVDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan or Student Achievement Plan;

- actively promote equity and inclusion by embracing diversity in all its forms;
- adopt strategies that ensure representation from various cultural, socioeconomic, linguistic, and ability backgrounds while actively seeking out individuals from underrepresented groups and provide platforms for their meaningful participation to enhance the decision-making process, resulting in initiatives that better reflect the needs and goals of the entire school community. This would include the removal of discriminatory barriers for Indigenous, Black and racialized individuals, individuals experiencing poverty, individuals who are new to Canada, who are members of marginalized religious and linguistic communities, individuals with disabilities or who have special education needs, and individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, recognizing the intersectionality between and among these identities;
- actively promote the School Council to the school community through barrier-free methods of communication; including an online presence; discussions should occur with the Principal to determine a plan to increase membership and involvement;
- contribute to the Director of Education's performance appraisal;
- provide input into the Administrator Leadership Profile for the school;
- submit a complete annual report by September 30th of each year; and
- contribute to the development of the School profile with the Principal.

2.2. In addition to the above stated requirements and process, School Councils in TVDSB may also:

- be provided with timely communication on any capital improvements that impact the school community;
- actively engage in providing recommendations on additional areas for consultation, as requested by the Principal (e.g., school budget priorities, developing school priorities);
- provide feedback on TVDSB policies, procedures under review, through TVDSB's public input process, and placing the overall interests of the school, school community and all its students first;
- focus on student learning, achievement and well-being through equitable and inclusive initiatives that may benefit all students;

- communicate with the school community about School Council events, and school initiatives;
- support active and safe routes to schools' initiatives, as appropriate for the school community;
- if engaging in fundraising to support student achievement and well-being, doing so in accordance with applicable TVDSB policies and procedures; and
- serve as a resource and support to caregivers/guardians within the school community;

2.3. On a yearly basis, the School Council Chair (or delegate), at a minimum, shall participate in a mandatory orientation as provided by the Thames Valley Parent Involvement Committee which includes topics such as understanding of the TVDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan, the Student Achievement Plan, the TVDSB Resolving Public Concern Procedure (2030a), making recommendations to the Board of Trustees, promoting the School Council for awareness and membership, effective school communications and how to support the school's School Improvement and Equity Plan and Safe and Inclusive School Plan.

3. Application and Scope

This Policy and corresponding Procedure govern the operations of School Councils within the Thames Valley District School Board.

The Policy and Procedure apply to all TVDSB employees, trustees, students, parents/guardians/caregivers, and members of the broader TVDSB community, to the extent that they are engaging in a process or practice referenced in, or fulfilling a responsibility assigned to them under, the Policy and Procedure

4. Responsibility

The Director of Education is authorized to issue operational processes and guidelines to implement this policy and related procedure, consistent with legislation, regulations and other entrusted responsibilities from the Board of Trustees.

All TVDSB Administrators, Senior Administrators, Trustees and members of School Councils are responsible to ensure they adhere to this Policy and related Procedure, according to their role in the operation of School Councils.

5. Accountability

- 5.1. The TVDSB is committed to meaningful engagement with School Councils to create positive outcomes for students and TVDSB families.
- 5.2. The Ministry of Education shall report annually to members of School Councils on education in the province.
- 5.3. The Principal, The Board of Trustees and/or the TVDSB shall consider each recommendation made by the School Council and shall advise the Council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.
- 5.4. The School Council shall consult with caregivers of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the Council.
- 5.5. The TVDSB will notify School Councils of TVDSB policies up for review.

6. Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees will:

- establish Policy regarding School Councils and;
- consult and engage with School Councils.

7. Resources

TVDSB will provide the necessary resources to ensure the School Councils have regularly updated information on the school webpage. This will include, but is not limited to, election information.

8. Monitoring and Review

The monitoring and review of the Policy and corresponding Procedure is based on the objectives outlined in Section 2.0.

School Councils will report annually to the Board of Trustees and the school Principal on the objectives stated in section 2.0. The Board of Trustees will receive the Annual Reports from all schools provided by the Superintendent with responsibilities for School Councils.

A report will also include a year-to-year aggregate report of schools in the TVDSB without School Councils; this report will be provided by the Superintendent with responsibilities for School Councils. Through the Board of Trustee's Policy Working Committee, Senior Administration will revise this Policy and corresponding Procedure based on feedback and input received from students, families, and staff as it relates to the operation of School Councils. Additional revisions may be required based on legislative changes and/or Ministry of Education directives.

This Policy and corresponding Procedure will be reviewed, at minimum, every 5-7 years or as needed.