

## Membership

- A school council shall meet at least four times during the school year.
- All representatives on the school council are to be elected, except the principal and the community representative.
- The chairperson must be a parent elected by the council.

## The school council consists of:

- Parents/guardians: Parent representatives must represent the majority of members on the council
- School board employees cannot be elected as parent members of school councils if they work in the same school their child attends
- Teacher representative(s)\*, elected by teachers
- Support staff representative(s)\*, elected by nonteaching staff
- Student representative(s) in high schools, to be appointed by the student council, or elected by the other students if there is no student council
- Community representative(s)\*, to be appointed by the school council
- The school principal.

The council is expected to represent the diversity of the school community.

(\* May be more than one as long as parents remain the majority.)

## OSSTF SCHOOL COUNCIL POLICY

- It is the policy of OSSTF that school councils should be optional.
- It is the policy of OSSTF that school councils should be advisory.
- It is the policy of OSSTF that school councils should have no involvement in the evaluation, hiring, firing or promotion of any school personnel.
- It is the policy of OSSTF that school councils should not be obliged to raise funds for schools.
- It is the policy of OSSTF that school councils should avoid activities that would result in commercialization of schools.
- It is the policy of OSSTF that there should be no limitation on eligibility for holding school council positions based on a parent's employment with the school board.
- It is the policy of OSSTF that school councils should advocate for quality and diversity of school programs.
- It is the policy of OSSTF that school councils should advocate for the interests of all students in the school.

# SCHOOL COUNCIL *guide*



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# Welcome

Welcome to the role of elected OSSTF/FEESO school council representative!

Although many parent groups have been active for much longer, the Ontario Ministry of Education has mandated school councils since 1995.

Legally, school councils are required to provide advice to principals on a variety of issues. Politically, they are interest groups with elected spokespeople, communication systems, and large memberships.

Whether your school council has narrowly defined interests or supports broader public education goals, it is important for the federation to work with its members. As political activists have often recognized, when you need a friend, it's too late to make one.

Thank you for acting as the OSSTF/FEESO representative on your school council. This pamphlet is intended as an introduction to assist you in this role. District offices have further resources about school councils and educational issues. Additionally, OSSTF/FEESO's Provincial Office distributes a regular newsletter, *School Council Link*. Contact your Bargaining Unit president for support and assistance.

## ROLE OF THE FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE

The primary role of the elected OSSTF/FEESO school council representative is to speak on behalf of either teaching or support staff colleagues. The views of the staff should be expressed in an informed, professional, and assertive manner.

### Tasks for the OSSTF/FEESO representative on school council:

- Request time on the school council agenda to bring forward issues raised by the staff
- Provide the staff's view as an alternative to that presented by the principal when necessary
- Develop a positive relationship with the school council chair(s) and other members of council
- Seek opinions of staff through branch or staff meetings and represent the staff's views and concerns on issues being discussed by the school council
- Consult federation materials to understand OSSTF/FEESO's position
- Inform the staff of the school council's agenda and the disposition on matters affecting them
- Keep in touch with other OSSTF/FEESO leaders
- Encourage the school council to be active and speak out on educational issues at the board and in the community.

## PURPOSE AND ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNCILS

Reference: (Regulation 612/00)

Legally school councils are advisory bodies of volunteers who work together to provide recommendations to the principal and/or the board. School councils may make recommendations on any matter however, the school board/school principal must solicit their views on the following key area:

- Revision or development of board policies
- Code of Conduct and Dress Code
- Implementation plans for new education initiatives
- Action plans for improvement, in response to EQAO test results
- Fundraising activities and policies for school councils
- Process and criteria for selection and placement of principal and vice-principals.

Note: School councils should not discuss personnel issues or refer to a specific teacher or any other school employee.

### Consultation and reporting

- School councils must consult with parents about matters under consideration and must submit an annual report on its activities, including any fundraising.
- The principal must report back to the school council on any action taken on recommendations. The school board must also report back on any recommendation they receive from school councils.