

Chapter 2

Operating Principles for School Community Councils

2.1 – General Principles and Practices

1. Councils shall meet at least five times a year in addition to the Annual Meeting.¹ (legislation)
2. Councils shall post membership and meeting information on the SCC page of the school website.
3. Councils will keep meeting minutes and post all meeting minutes to the SCC page of the school website within five days of approval.
4. Councils shall convene an Annual Meeting by November 30,² (legislation) where they will:
 - i. Elect new members.
 - ii. Provide an Annual Report on the activities of the most recent year.
 - iii. Conduct other business determined by council.
 - iv. Provide a forum for dialogue with parents and the community.
5. Councils shall administer and publicly account for funds (legislation) using procedures outlined in Chapter 6: Administration of School Community Council Funds and prepare and submit an Annual Financial Report by September 20. Councils shall post the Annual Financial Report on the SCC page of the school website.
6. Councils shall prepare and submit an Annual Activity Report by the end of June. Councils shall post the Annual Activities Report on the SCC page of the school website.
7. A Board/School Community Council Meeting will be convened annually for the purpose of sharing information related to School Division goals and priorities.

¹ Councils usually prefer to meet once a month throughout the school year.

² The Initial Annual Meeting will be scheduled at a time that is most suitable for the school, the community and election officers appointed by the School Division.

SCC Operations Manual Appendix (2.1.1)

School Community Council Annual Meeting Agenda

[Name of School] School Community Council Annual Meeting Agenda
[Date] [Time]
[Location]

1. Call to Order
2. Elections
3. Annual Report for the Previous Year³
 - 3.1 Activity Report
 - 3.2 Financial Report
 - 3.3 Other (as defined by the SCC, such as committee reports)
4. Selection of Officers⁴
 - 4.1 Chair
 - 4.2 Vice-Chair
 - 4.3 Secretary
 - 4.4 Treasurer
 - 4.5 Other
5. Other Business
(as established by the School Community Council, including meeting dates for the year)
6. Open Discussion
7. Adjournment

³ Note that SCCs may use (and are encouraged to use) the Annual Activity Report and Annual Financial Report for this purpose. There is no need to prepare separate or different reports.

⁴ The selection of officers may occur at the next regular council meeting following the Annual Meeting. Officers are selected from parent representatives, elected community members, student representative or appointed First Nation representatives.

2.2 – Expectations for School Community Councils (legislation)

1. Councils shall serve as a forum to promote dialogue on matters of general interest to parents and member of the public.
2. A School Community Council shall not discuss or be given access to personal or confidential information about or complaints about any pupil, family member or guardian of any pupil, teacher, administrator or other employee or member of the Board of Education.
3. Councils shall develop and maintain a constitution that identifies objectives, procedures for conducting business, and relationships with the school.
4. Councils shall be open to all electors residing in the school attendance area.⁵
5. Council programs shall reflect membership interests and school needs.

SCC Operations Manual Appendix (2.2.1)

School Community Council Code of Conduct

The following points provide a sample “Code of Conduct”. Actual codes may vary to reflect local concerns and considerations.

1. The School Community Council is not a forum for the discussion of individual school personnel, students, parents or other individual members of the school community.
2. A council member who is approached by a parent with a concern relating to an individual is in a privileged position and must treat such a discussion with discretion, protecting the confidentiality of the people involved.
3. A person who accepts a position as a member of the School Community Council shall:
 - Honour the role of the School Community Council.
 - Be guided by the overall vision and purpose of the School Community Council.
 - Perform duties with honest and integrity.
 - Endeavour to be familiar with the vision, mission and shared values of the School Division and perform their duties accordingly.
 - Endeavour to become familiar with Administrative Procedures of Prairie Valley School Division.
 - Work to ensure that well-being of students is of primary focus in all decisions.
 - Respect the rights of all individuals.
 - Encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are valued.
 - Contribute to consensus building.
 - Encourage and support parents and students with individual concerns to act on their own behalf and provide information on processes for processing concerns.
 - Work to ensure that issues are resolved through due process.
 - Strive to be informed and only share information that is reliable and correct.
 - Respect all confidential information.
 - Declare any conflict of interest.
 - Support public education.
4. Intervention for an Initial or Minor Infraction of the Code of Conduct – where potential Code of Conduct infractions are raised, the Council Chair shall:
 - a. Seek understanding regarding the nature of the allegation or concern.
 - b. Discuss and resolve the concern with the member in confidence.
5. Intervention of Repeated or Major Infractions of the Code of Conduct – where infractions of this nature are clearly evident, council shall provide a written statement signed by the Council Chair,

addressing the concern and indicating that the actions that brought about a violation of the Code of Conduct on the part of the member must cease.

6. Further Progressive Intervention for Repeated Infractions of the Code of Conduct.
 - a. In continued incidents involving a violation of Code of Conduct, council shall consider imposing sanctions on the member in question.
 - b. In further continued incidents involving a violation of Code of Conduct, council shall consider seeking the resignation of the member in question.

SCC Operations Manual Appendix (2.2.2)

Processes for Conflict Resolution

The following points provide an outline for a conflict resolution process that councils may wish to adopt.

1. Build a Collaborative Climate – the council establishes a collaborative climate so that differences of opinion can be dealt with in an open manner. All members should agree to:
 - Respect the perspective of others.
 - Listen to what others have to say.
 - Prepare to problem solve.

2. Be Prepared – if differences of opinion cannot be worked out, have a procedure in place. Conflict resolution may include the use of the following:
 - The appointment of a mediator to develop a solution that will be satisfactory to both sides.
 - Establishment of a jointly agreed-upon panel to make a recommendation or a binding.
 - Development of a plan to refer a dispute to school administrators or the Board.

3. Identify the Problem – by clearly defining the problem, a group can begin to resolve the underlying issues. Defining the problem involves clearly stating views, listening to others, trying to understand their views, and asking questions to clarify general understandings. At this stage, participants should avoid giving advice or judgments. Disputes usually occur because of disagreements on:
 - Facts
 - Resources
 - Perceptions
 - Values and beliefs
 - Styles

4. Brainstorm and Evaluate Options and Solutions – by working together to find solutions, individuals and groups are more likely to create an optimal situation going forward.

5. Create an Action Plan – the plan should identify timelines and responsibilities for actions.

2.3 – Roles and Responsibilities of School Community Councils (legislation)

1. Councils have several general roles and responsibilities in their capacity as a representative body. As such, councils shall endeavour to:
 - a. Understand school and community economic, social and health conditions in relationship to student learning and well-being.
 - b. Become knowledgeable about resources and supports for the school, parents, and community.
 - c. Stimulate participation by parents and the community.
 - d. Provide consultation and feedback to the Board in developing the School Division Strategic Plan.
 - e. Develop an annual SCC activity plan that aligns SCC activities with the Division’s Strategic Plan and the school’s Learning Improvement Plan.⁶
 - f. Recommend to the Director of Education/CEO proposals that may be considered for the improvement of the educational standards and opportunities in the School Division.
 - g. Communicate annually to the parents and community on its plans, initiatives and outcomes through an Annual Activities Report and an Annual Financial Report.
 - h. Communicate to the parents and community regarding the ongoing expenditure of council funds at each regular meeting and the Annual Meeting.
 - i. Participate in the orientation, training, development and networking opportunities provided by the Board and other provincial organizations.
2. Councils may provide:
 - a. Advice to the Board on policies, programs and educational service delivery.
 - b. Advice to the schools staff respecting school programs.
 - c. Advice to the other organizations, agencies and levels of government on student needs related to learning and well-being.

2.4 – School Community Council Communications

Communication with the Board

⁶For example, if a school focuses on improving student literacy, council will consider ways parents and community can assist in improving student literacy.

1. The Director and Board Chair will develop procedures for two-way communications with councils on an annual basis.
2. In order to facilitate communication with the Board:
 - a. Board member names and Board meeting dates will be made available to every council in the School Division.
 - b. Board members may attend SCC meetings to foster communication.
 - c. The Board shall produce audited financial statements and a community report for the preceding year, to be distributed to School Community Councils not less than 14 days before the Annual Meeting of the Board. (legislation)
3. The delegation process at Board meetings provides opportunities for individuals or groups to address the Board and for the Board to receive items of interest from its constituents. For more information see Board Policy 7.10 Delegations to Board Meetings.

Communication with the School

1. Principals will encourage staff to be receptive to parents who exercise appropriate avenues and opportunities to offer advice at the school level.
2. Principals will initiate activities at the school level designed to promote communication between the school, home and community.
3. Some methods the principal may use to promote communication are:
 - a. Adult volunteers
 - b. Bulletins and newsletters
 - c. Parent-Teacher conferences
 - d. School visits
 - e. School displays
 - f. School handbooks
 - g. School website
4. The principal will present the annual Learning Improvement Plan to council at the first SCC meeting of the year. Principals will seek SCC discussion and involvement in the development of the Learning Improvement Plan. SCC Chairs will be asked to sign the LIP in the space provided to indicate SCC support for the plan.

Communication with Senior Administration

1. The Director of Education/CEO or designate will develop procedures to facilitate the Board/Council meetings.

2. The Director of Education/CEO or designate will establish procedures to implement a systematic plan of in-service and professional development to assist councils as requested.
3. The Director of Education/CEO or designate will provide a means of communication with senior administrative staff and may attend council meetings to share or gather information related to the school, School Division, or progress relating to the School Division Strategic Plan or other initiatives.
4. If an individual council wishes to meet with the Superintendent of Education, the principal will invite that individual to attend a meeting.

Communication with the Community

1. Council will initiate activities to promote communication between the school, home and broader community.
2. Some methods that might be used to promote communication are:
 - a. Adult volunteers
 - b. Bulletins and newsletters
 - c. Parent-Teacher conferences
 - d. School visits
 - e. School displays
 - f. School handbooks
 - g. School website

2.5 – Complaints or Grievances Brought to Council or Council Members

1. As a representative body, councils may receive complains or grievances about their operations or broader operations of the school.
2. Any matter concerning a student or staff member should be immediately directed to the principal.
3. Informal Complaints/Grievances
 - a. Where complaints or grievances about council operations are raised with a council member, that member should immediately refer the individual to the Council Chair and inform the Council Chair of the concern or grievance.
 - b. If the individual is not satisfied with the response from the Council Chair, the concern or grievance should be brought to the attention of the council in a more formal manner.
4. Formal Complaints/Grievance
 - a. Formal concerns or complaints can be brought to the attention of council by:

- i. Addressing the concern in writing to the Council Chair, or
 - ii. Requesting that the Council Chair provide the individual with an opportunity to meet with council to discuss the concern.
 - b. In cases where a formal complaint or grievance has been raised, council will provide a written response regarding how the matter will be addressed.
5. Councils must include procedures for handling complaints or grievances in their constitution. (legislation) See Chapter 5: School Community Council Constitutions.

2.6 – Financial Support

1. The Board will provide an annual operating grant to each council.
2. Funds received through this annual grant must be accounted for in accordance with Chapter 6: Administration of School Community Council Funds and other Board policies and Administrative Procedures.