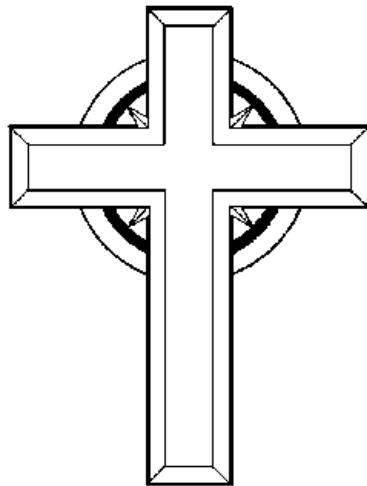


Section 7

Election Procedures



*"The harvest truly is plenteous,
but the labourers are few.
Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest,
That he send forth labourers into his harvest."*

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

Elections



The yearly election of representatives to a Catholic School Council is extremely important to the lifeblood of any Catholic school. Therefore, it is crucial that the election procedures be clear, concise and appropriate for the school community. Catholic School Councils are given options about how they may wish to conduct their elections. For instance, you may wish to hold a secret ballot election on a particular day and evening within the guidelines of Regulation 612 or you may wish to have nominations and a “show of hands” at your first Catholic School Council meeting. Whatever your Catholic School Council decides, the method and procedures should be outlined in your bylaws and in the minutes of your Catholic School Council meeting. If you do not have Catholic School Council Bylaws, at a minimum, you must follow the Schedule of Events in Planning and Conducting Elections, which may be found in this document. If your Catholic School Council has not been formed because you are a new school community, then your principal will take the lead in making sure that the elections operate following the correct procedures. The following section outlines the expectations of Catholic School Councils to follow Regulations 612 and 613 as well as the policies and regulations for Catholic School Councils developed by the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. In this document you will also find templates of formal documents which must be completed by the principal, and your Catholic School Council representatives.

***O Lord,
I do not pray
for tasks equal
to my
strength:
I ask for
strength equal
to my tasks.***

***- Phillips
Brooks-***

Election Procedures

According to Ontario Regulation 612, elections must take place at the same time each year – within the first thirty days of each school year. However, in the case of a new school, the first election must be held during the first thirty days of the school opening, on a date fixed by the principal. Since September is a busy time of the year for parents and educators, Catholic School Councils may want to prepare an election plan in June.





Catholic School Councils must establish in their election bylaws, election and appointment procedures that address parent representatives, students (if appropriate), the parish representative and the OAPCE representative. The method of filling the position(s) of community representative(s) should also be outlined in a Catholic School Council’s bylaws.

The following pages contain a sample schedule for the Catholic School Council election of parent representatives, sample nomination forms for parent candidates, a sample nomination form receipt, a sample Catholic School Council election ballot, and sample election procedures bylaws.

Establishing Election Bylaws

School councils are not required to develop lengthy constitutions, since Ontario Regulation 612 sets out the mandate and roles and responsibilities for school councils. In effect, it serves as the constitution for the school councils. School councils must develop certain bylaws to provide them with direction for the operation of school council business and to help the council work effectively. The development or review of operating bylaws should begin as soon as possible after a council meets for the first time but not later than the second council meeting for the school year. At a minimum, the regulation requires Catholic School Councils to develop bylaws to address the following areas:

- election procedures
- filling vacancies
- conflict of interest
- conflict resolution procedure

Bylaws governing other areas of operation may also be developed.

Once Election Bylaws have been developed, your Catholic School Council may want to review them from time to time, although they do not need to be rewritten each year.

This section of the handbook includes sample bylaws for election procedures and for filling any vacancies that may occur on your Catholic School Council. You may also wish to refer to the section “Writing Your Catholic School Council Bylaws” in this handbook. Other School Councils, either local or ones that you can connect with through the TV Ontario School Council website (see Ministry of Education Handbook, section 9.6) may also be able to help you with the task of developing election bylaws.



Filling Vacancies



Vacancies occur in Catholic School Council membership for various reasons:

- Not all positions on the Catholic School Council were filled after an election.
- A member resigns.
- A member is unable to fulfil the roles and responsibilities (e.g., due to illness).

Catholic School Councils must develop bylaws to address the issue of membership vacancy. A vacancy in the membership of the Catholic School Council may be filled by election or by appointment, in accordance with the bylaws set by the individual School Council (school councils that want the option of filling a vacancy by appointment must ensure that a bylaw is in place to provide for that option, otherwise the vacancy must be filled by election). If an election is to occur to fill a vacancy, then the election rules set out in regulation 612 apply. Should a vacancy occur on the Catholic School Council, the council is not prevented from exercising its authority; and it can continue to operate as long as there is a quorum and the majority of council members are parents.

The council members should be aware that a majority of parents must be present when a vote is taken or if decisions are made. **Should the number of parent members on council fall below a majority, the council will need to take steps to fill those vacancies. If a vacancy occurs in the office of the chair/co-chair or any other officer of the council, it is to be filled in accordance with the school council's bylaws**



Sample Election Procedures Bylaws: Sample 1



ELECTION PROCEDURE BYLAWS

1. Elections shall occur within the first thirty days of the start of each school year.
2. Each parent/guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at the school, and must declare if he or she is employed by the school board.
3. Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent/guardian membership position on the council.
4. An election committee shall be struck by the school council in May to help plan the election process, the gathering of nominations, and the running of the election. No one standing for election, or the spouse of anyone standing for election, shall be a member of the election committee.
5. The election committee shall,
 - provide nomination forms,
 - ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date(s),
 - location and time, at least fourteen days in advance of the election,
 - request a profile from all candidates and make these available to the electorate,
 - conduct the elections by secret ballot,
 - count the ballots,
 - help the principal notify all candidates of the results,
 - keep all results and related information confidential.
6. Only the names of the successful candidates will be made public. A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file by the council for use in the event that a vacancy on the council occurs.
7. All individuals standing for election shall be notified of the results before the results are released to the school community.



8. The School Council shall help the principal ensure that the names of new members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election.
9. At the first meeting of the new Catholic School Council at the beginning of the year, the council shall set dates, times and locations for its meetings throughout the year.

Source: Adapted from Holy Name of Mary School Council, Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, Almonte, Ontario



Sample Election Procedures Bylaws: Sample 2

ELECTION PROCEDURE BYLAWS

1. *School Council election committee.* The current Catholic School Council will establish a School Council election committee. The committee must ensure that a new council is in place within thirty days of the start of the school year in September. The committee should have representation from parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and students.
2. *Considerations for the school council election process.* In any given year, the term of office for all school council positions is one year. Appeals related to the School Council election process or results shall be resolved by the school council election committee. If the situation is not resolved, the school principal and the chair of the outgoing council shall jointly make a ruling.
3. *Election of parent/guardian representatives*
 - a) Parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school are eligible both to vote for and to run as parent candidates. Self-nomination will suffice. No additional qualifiers or quotas may restrict eligibility either to vote for or to run as a parent candidate (e.g., child's program, grade, location of home). Candidates should be prepared to summarize their reasons for running for school council. They must also declare if they are employed by the school board.



Sample Election Procedures Bylaws: Sample 2 (con'd)

- b) Nomination forms shall be filed by all parent-candidates for elected positions on the Catholic School Council. Parents may nominate themselves or other parents.
- c) Information about candidates shall be made available to the school community at least one week before the election.
- d) If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed.
- e) No individual campaign literature for Catholic School Council elections may be distributed or posted in the school.
- f) School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
- g) The election day proceedings shall be publicized by the principal at least fourteen days prior to the election.
- h) The election day proceedings shall be supervised by the principal.
- i) The principal shall conduct a lottery to determine the ballot position for each candidate.
- j) Elections for Catholic School Councils shall be conducted by secret ballot. Voters must be present at the school on the election day(s) during the preset hours for voting (to include both daytime and evening hours).
- k) All eligible voters shall be entitled to cast one vote for each of the candidate positions available. Casting more than the maximum number of votes permitted in the category spoils the ballot.
- l) Ballots shall be counted by the principal in the presence of at least two parents who are not election candidates.
- m) If there is a tie for the final position for a representative on the School Council, the winner shall be determined by lot.



4. *Election of the teaching staff representative*
 - a) The principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the teaching staff representative to be elected.
 - b) Anyone assigned to the teaching staff of the school (full or part-time) other than the principal or a vice-principal may be a candidate.
5. *Election of the non-teaching staff representative*
 - a) The principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the non-teaching staff representative to be elected.
 - b) Anyone assigned to the non-teaching staff of the school (full or part-time) may be a candidate.
6. *Appointment or election of the student representative*
 - a) For elementary schools. The principal will consult with other members of the School Council to determine if there is to be a student presentative on the council. If a positive decision is reached, the principal appoints a student representative to the council.
 - c) For a secondary school. If the school has a student council, it will appoint a student representative to the council. Otherwise, the principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the election of the student representation.
7. *Selection of Community representatives.* All appointments of community representatives to the School Council are to be by majority vote at a meeting of the School Council.

Source: Adapted from the "Thames Valley District School Board School Council Handbook"



Here are sample vacancy bylaws:



Sample 1

- Should an elected parent/guardian Council position become vacant before the next election, the council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.
- If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming a council member, the council may request that interested parent/guardian from the school community submit their names for consideration. The council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.
- When a vacant spot on council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election.

Source: Adapted from the bylaws of Holy Name of Mary School Council, Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, Almonte, Ontario.

Sample 2



If any Catholic School Council positions become vacant because of resignation, inability of a member to fulfil his or her roles and responsibilities, or other cause, the remaining members shall constitute the Catholic School Council, unless the parent/guardian majority is not maintained. If the majority of parents on the Council is not maintained, the Catholic School Council shall instruct its nominating committee to send home nomination forms for the vacant position(s) for parents on the council and hold an election for the purpose of filling the vacancy. Vacant positions, other than for parent representatives, may filled by appointment of the council for the remaining term among members of the school community who meet the requirements set for the vacant positions.

Source: Adapted from St. Francis Catholic School, "School Council Operating Guidelines", Paris, Ontario.



Schedule of Events in Planning for Elections

May/June A committee is established to plan the school council election of parent representatives.

The Catholic School Council bylaws are reviewed to determine how the Catholic School Council election process will occur. By the last Council meeting of the school year, the date, time, and location of the new elections for the coming fall are determined, as well as how the election will be advertised in the fall. A nomination form is also developed. (See sample)

If there are no bylaws in place because you are in a new school community or there are two schools merging, then the principal will ensure that election procedures are reviewed and followed based upon Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Policies. Consultation with parents by forming an “Election Committee” would ensure that the school community stakeholders feel a part of the election procedures.

Early September In the September newsletter, the principal includes how nominations will be received, the date by which nominations must be received at the school, who is eligible to stand for election, the date of the election, and other information about the election. This package must be in parents’ hands at least fourteen calendar days prior to the election and must follow the school council’s bylaws.

The principal posts the Catholic School Council election information in an area of the school that is easily accessible to parents. Good venues would be a community bulletin board, or a school website or flyer.

Parents return nomination forms to the school office by the set date.



Mid September A list of parent nominees is prepared and presented for election according to the bylaws.

End September The election of the teacher, non-teacher, and student reps (if applicable) should take place.

Elections of parent representatives should be held according to bylaws but no later than 30 days from the commencement of the school year.

Late September to early October The first meeting of the new Catholic School Council takes place within the first 35 days from the start of the school year. Established at this meeting should be the following:

- positions of office
- dates of meetings
- locations of meetings
- appointment of OAPCE , Parish and (if applicable) Community Reps.

The names of the new Catholic School Council members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election as is described in the above information. Publication may be in the school's October newsletter or a Catholic School Council flyer or newsletter, etc.



SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENT/GUARDIAN ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

Re: Catholic School Council Election Information



Date

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Please find enclosed information concerning the election procedures prepared by the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board.

There will be a Catholic School Council information meeting at School Name on _____ at _____ p.m. in our school location.

Nomination forms for parent/guardian representatives on the Catholic School Council for the _____ school year will be available in the school office between the hours of _____ and _____.

Completed nomination forms must be received in the school office by 4:00 p.m. on _____.

If needed, the election for parent/guardian representatives to the Catholic School Council will take place at location on date between the hours of _____ and _____ by secret ballot. Eligible voters must vote in person. Proxy voting is not permitted. An appointed steering committee will assist with the implementation of election procedures.

I look forward to seeing you at the Catholic School Council information meeting and thank you for your continued support of your school.

Sincerely,

Principal



Sample Agenda



Information Meeting Regarding Catholic School Councils

Could be used for an inaugural meeting of a Catholic School Council for a new school or an Information Meeting for an existing school.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Catholic School Councils: Mission, Roles, Regulations, Policies
3. Review of Catholic School Council Election Procedures (Bylaws)
4. Nomination Procedure
5. Speeches
6. Election of Chair and other offices
7. Appointments
8. Question Period

Other agenda items might be: Liturgy, Principal's Report, Financial Review and Annual Report.



Catholic School Council Elections

NOMINATION FORM FOR ELECTION OF PARENT MEMBERS

Name of School _____

Please complete the following and return to our school office by _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Child's name _____

1 I am a Catholic School elector or spouse Yes No
(Note: To be eligible, a candidate must be a separate school elector or spouse.)

2 I am an employee** of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and I work at this school. Yes No

3 I am an employee** of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board but I work elsewhere in the Board (i.e. not at this school). Yes No

****Note: "Employee" includes parents/guardians who work as CAP Site Hosts, Lunchroom Supervisors and/or Emergency Supply Instructors.**

This is self-nomination. (name): _____

It is not necessary to receive a nomination from another parent.

This is a nomination made by another parent:

I nominate _____ to be a parent representative on our Catholic School Council.

Signature of Nominee _____ Name (print) _____

Signature of Nominator _____ Name (print) _____

Signature of School Official _____ Date _____

Please attach a brief biography (one or two paragraphs).



Sample Nomination Form Receipt



NOMINATION FORM RECEIPT

The nomination form for parent/guardian representative on the
Catholic School Council for

School Name

School Address

School Phone No.

(parent nominee's name)

(school name)

has been received by:

Name of principal or chair of the nomination committee

Date



Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

Catholic School Council Election Ballot

School: _____

Date: _____

VOTE FOR UP TO _____ CANDIDATES ON THIS BALLOT.

Place an X to the left of the name (s) of the candidates of your choice.

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Note: Voting for more than _____ candidates will spoil the ballot.



THE DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NOMINATION/ELECTION PROCEDURES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCILS

TASK	TIMELINE	DATE COMPLETE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –D.P. Policy & Regulations; –Ministry of Education Regulations 612 & 613 –D.P. Framework for Catholic School Council Elections; –D.P. Catholic School Council Handbook <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review Catholic School Council election bylaws • Send information and letter to parents/guardians announcing Catholic School Council Election Procedures • Communicate to Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff and Students re: upcoming elections • Review Nomination Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> –Nomination forms –Eligibility –Date of elections, time and location • Publish Election Information in Newsletter 14 days Prior to Election • Receive nominations for Parent Representatives • List of Nominees Prepared and Published • Elect Parent Representatives • Election of teacher, non-teacher and student representative if appropriate • Call first meeting of Catholic School Council • At first Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establish positions of office, dates/locations of meetings – Appoint Parish, OAPCE, and Community Reps according to Bylaws. • Submit complete list of elected and appointed members of your Catholic School Council to Family of Schools Superintendent. 	<p style="text-align: center;">May/June</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Early September</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Early September</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Early September</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mid September</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mid September</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mid September</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Within First 30 Days of School Year</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Within First 35 Days of School Year</p> <p style="text-align: center;">At First Meeting</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Late September / Early October</p>	
<p>Publish names of members of Catholic School Council in School Newsletter</p>		

