

**DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
**BOARD POLICY / REGULATIONS**

**Board Policy Number:** 4.01  
**Subject:** Catholic School Councils  
**Effective Date:** (573) August 20, 1996; Revised (408) August 28, 2001;  
(148) April 26, 2011

Catholic School Councils shall promote the vision and values and the sacramental life and Catholic practices of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, and be faithful to its mission.

It is the policy of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board that each school under its supervision shall have a Catholic School Council, advisory in nature, and governed by the Education Act, the regulations there under, and the policies and regulations of the Board.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of Catholic School Councils is, through the active participation of parents/guardians, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians.

A Catholic School Council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with this policy and regulation to the principal of the school and to the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board.

**REGULATIONS**

4.01 **CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCILS**

In these regulations:

"Board" refers to the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board;

"meeting" does not include a training session or other event where a school council does not discuss or decide matters that it has authority to decide;

"parent" includes a guardian as defined in section 1 of the Act (i.e. a person who has lawful custody of a child, other than the parent of the child);

"parent member" means a member of the Catholic School Council who is elected to the council in accordance with section 1.1 (Membership) and 1.2 (Elections/Appointments) in these Regulations or who fills a vacancy created when a parent member ceases to hold office.

## 1.0 **COMPOSITION**

1. The Catholic School Council of each school shall be composed of the following people:

- Parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school;
- A community representative who is a member of a parish in the region served by the school;
- A student enrolled at the school who is a child of a separate school elector (mandatory in secondary schools; at the discretion of the principal in consultation with members of the school council in elementary schools)
- The school Principal;
- One teacher assigned to the school;
- One non-teaching staff member assigned to the school;
- One person appointed by the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE);

Provided that all members shall be separate school electors, or their spouses or their children.

2. The number of parent/guardian members on a Catholic School Council shall be six (6) except in the case where a student is included as a member of the council, then the number shall be seven (7). The school council may, by by-law, specify a larger number of parent/guardian members (the Board recommends a maximum of ten (10) parent/guardian members on a Catholic School Council).

3. Parent/guardian members shall constitute a majority of the members of the school council.

### 1.1 **Membership**

Membership in the Catholic School Council shall be determined in the following ways:

#### 1. **Designated Member**

The school Principal shall be a designated member, and is not eligible to vote. The Principal of a school may delegate any of his or her powers or duties as a member of the Catholic School Council to a Vice-Principal of the school.

#### 2. **Elected Members**

a) Parent/guardian representatives shall be elected by separate school electors or their spouses who are parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school at a publicly announced meeting chaired by the outgoing council Chair/Co-Chair. A person is not qualified to be a parent/guardian member of a Catholic School Council if,

- i) he/she is employed at the school; or
- ii) he/she is employed elsewhere by the Board and fails to take reasonable steps to inform voters of that employment.

b) The teacher representative shall be elected by members of the teaching staff at the school, other than the Principal or Vice-Principal.

c) The non-teaching staff member shall be elected by members of the non-teaching staff at the school.

d) All Council members should have a criminal reference check or an annual criminal offence declaration.

### 3. **Appointed Members**

a) The community representative from a parish in the region served by the school shall be appointed by the Catholic School Council in consultation with the Pastor(s).

b) Other community representatives may be appointed by the Catholic School Council according to its bylaws.

c) A person employed by the Board can be appointed as a community representative on the council only if:

- i) he/she is not employed at the school; and

- ii) the other members of the school council are informed of the person's employment before the appointment.

d) One person shall be appointed by the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE) in consultation with the Catholic School Council.

e) The student representative in secondary schools shall be appointed by the student council at the school. In elementary schools a pupil may be appointed by the Principal of the school, if the Principal determines, after consulting the other members of the Catholic School Council, that the council should include a pupil.

4. A member of the Board cannot be a member of a Catholic School Council.

### 1.2 **Elections/Appointments**

1. Elections of all members of a Catholic School Council shall be held within the first 30 days of the school year.

- a) Parent/guardian members shall be elected on a date that is fixed by the chair or co-chairs of the school council after consulting with the Principal of the school. The election of parent/guardian members shall be by secret ballot.
- b) The teacher representative shall be elected on a date that is selected by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association members at the school.
- c) The non-teaching staff member shall be elected on a date that is fixed by the Principal of the school in consultation with the non-teaching staff at the school.

2. When a new school is established, the first election of parent/guardian members to the Catholic School Council shall be held during the first 30 days of the school year on a date that is fixed by the Principal of the school in consultation with the Superintendent of the Family of Schools.

3. The Principal of the school shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent/guardian members, on behalf of the Catholic School Council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school at that time.

This notice may be given to students to take home to their parents/guardians, and may be posted in a location in the school that is accessible to parents/guardians.

4. Appointments of members to the Catholic School Council shall follow the election of members to the school council.

### 1.3 **Term of Office**

1. A person is elected or appointed as a member of a Catholic School Council from the later of the date of his/her election or appointment; and the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections in the school year, until the first meeting of the school council after the elections in the next school year.

2. A member of a Catholic School Council may be re-elected or re-appointed.

### 1.4 **Vacancies**

1. A vacancy in the membership of a Catholic School Council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the council.

2. If an election is held to fill a vacancy in the membership on a Catholic School Council, section 1.2, (Elections/Appointments) #1 a, b, or c as the case may be, applies with necessary modifications, to the election.

3. A vacancy in the membership of a Catholic School Council does not prevent the council from exercising its authority.

### 1.5 **Remuneration**

1. There shall be no remuneration paid to members of the Catholic School Council.

2. The reimbursement of member expenses is at the sole discretion of the Board, and each Catholic School Council shall have a provision in its by-laws requiring that the Council and Principal authorize and approve reimbursement of expenses incurred by members as members or officers of the Council.

## 2.0 **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL**

There are two primary functions of the Catholic School Council:

- a) To promote the vision, values, sacramental life and Catholic practices of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and the Catholic community it serves;
- b) To advise the Principal and the Board.

A Catholic School Council shall, within the parameters prescribed by the Education Act, the Regulations thereunder, and the policies and regulations of the Board, provide advice to the school principal and to the school board on any matters. The Board/Principal shall consider any recommendation made and shall advise the council of the action taken by the Board/school in response to the recommendation. These matters may include but are not limited to:

- The faith development of the school community
- The modified Board school-year calendar
- Action plans for improvement based on EQAO reports on the results of tests of students
- Preparation of the school profile
- The process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice principals in a manner prescribed by the board
- School budget priorities, including local capital improvement plans for submission to the board
- School-community communication strategies
- Methods of reporting to parents and the community
- Extra-curricular activities in the school

- School-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational, and nutrition programs
- Local coordination of services for children and youth
- The establishment or amendment of Board policies regarding the conduct of persons in schools, appropriate dress for students, the allocation of funding to school councils, fundraising activities, and conflict resolution processes for internal school council disputes
- The development of implementation plans for policies and guidelines with respect to the conduct of persons in schools, and appropriate dress for students

## 2.1 **Additional Responsibilities**

The Catholic School Council shall:

1. Make by-laws that:
  - a) Govern election procedures and the filling of vacancies in the membership of the school council;
  - b) Establish rules respecting participation in school council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest;
  - c) Establish a process for resolving internal school council disputes in accordance with Board policy.
2. Keep minutes of all of its meetings and records of all of its financial transactions for a period of seven (7) years. The minutes and records shall be available at the school for examination by any person;
3. Submit a written report on its activities to the Principal of the school and to the board prior to the end of its term. The annual report shall include a report on any fundraising activities that the council has engaged in. This report shall be distributed to all parents/guardians and shall be posted in a location accessible to parents/guardians;
4. Establish its goals, priorities, and procedures;
5. Organize information and training sessions to enable members of the council to develop their skills as council members;
6. Hold a minimum of four meetings per school year. The first meeting shall be held within the first 35 days of the school year, and after elections all meetings shall be open to, and in a place that is accessible to members of the public. A school council is entitled to hold its meetings at the school. Note: a meeting of a school council cannot be held unless a majority of current council members are present, and parent/guardian members form the majority;

7. Communicate regularly with parents/guardians and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by the council, and to report on the activities of the council to the school community;
8. Promote the best interests of the Catholic school community;
9. Supervise the election procedures for the Catholic School Council;
10. Consult with parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school about matters under its consideration;
11. Ensure that funds, if any, are raised and used in accordance with Board policies, and for purposes approved by the Board.

### **3.0 ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS**

#### **3.1 Chair/Co-Chair**

1. A Catholic School Council shall have a chair, or if the by-laws of the council so provide, two co-chairs. Vacancies shall be filled in accordance with the bylaws of the council.
2. The chair or co-chair must be a parent member of the council and shall be elected by the members of the council.
3. A person who is employed by the Board cannot be the chair or co-chair of the council.
4. The Chair/Co-Chair of the Catholic School Council shall be responsible for:
  - calling Catholic School Council meetings;
  - preparing the agenda for Catholic School Council meetings in consultation with the Principal and members of the council;
  - chairing Catholic School Council meetings;
  - ensuring that the minutes of the Catholic School Council meetings are recorded and maintained;
  - participating in faith development, information and training programs;

- communicating with the school principal;
- ensuring that there is regular communication with the school community;
- consulting with senior board staff and trustees, as required.

### 3.2 **Other Council Officers**

A Catholic School Council may have such other officers as are provided for in its by-laws.

### 3.3 **Council Members**

Council members shall maintain a school-wide focus on all issues. Council meetings are not a forum for discussion about individual parents, students, staff, trustees or other council members:

Each member shall:

- attend regularly and participate in council meetings;
- participate in faith development, information and training programs;
- Act as a link between the Catholic School Council and the school community;
- encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the community.

### 3.4 **The Principal**

1. The Principal of a school may delegate any of his or her powers or duties as a member of the Catholic School Council to a Vice-Principal at the school.
2. The Principal of the school shall:
  - promote the vision and values and the sacramental life and Catholic practices of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board;
  - facilitate the establishment of the Catholic School Council and assist in its operation. The Principal shall, on behalf of the school council, give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the council to parents of all students enrolled in the school and will post the notice in a location accessible to parents;

- make the names of the members of the school council known to parents of students enrolled in the school within 30 days of the elections of parent members;
- attend every meeting of the school council unless unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond his/her control;
- support and promote council activities which are conducted in accordance with Board policies;
- seek input from the council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory status, or any other areas;
- consider each recommendation made by the school council and advise the council of the action taken in response;
- act as a resource to the Catholic School Council on laws, Board policies and regulations, and collective agreements;
- obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make informed decisions;
- distribute to each member of the council any materials received from the Ministry of Education that have been identified as being for distribution. The Principal shall also post these items in a location that is accessible to parents;
- communicate with the chair of the council, as required;
- assist the council in ensuring that copies of the minutes of council meetings, and records of its financial transactions are kept at the school for a period of seven (7) years;
- assist the council in communicating with the Catholic school community;
- encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community;
- distribute the annual report of the school council to every parent/guardian of a student enrolled at the school. The distribution may be made by sending the report home with students for delivery to their parents and by posting the report in a location at the school that is accessible to parents/guardians.

### 3.5 **Committees**

1. A Catholic School Council may, in accordance with its by-laws, establish committees to make recommendations to the council.
2. Every committee of a Catholic School Council must include at least one parent/guardian member of the council.
3. A committee of a Catholic School Council may include persons who are not members of the council.
4. Meetings of committees of Catholic School Councils may be held at the school and are open to and should be accessible to the public.
5. The Principal of the school shall endeavour to give written notice of dates, time and locations of committee meetings to every parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school. This notice may be sent home with students for delivery to their parents/guardians and shall also be posted in a location at the school that is accessible to parents/guardians.

### 3.6 **Fundraising**

A Catholic School Council may engage in fundraising activities provided that:

- a) The activities are conducted in accordance with Board policies, and
- b) The activities are to raise funds for a purpose approved by the Board or authorized by Board policies.

### 3.7 **Voting**

1. The Principal of the school is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the Catholic School Council or by a committee of the school council.
2. With the exception of the Principal, each member of a Catholic School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the council.
3. With the exception of the Principal, each member of a committee of a Catholic School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee.
4. There should be no e-mail/teleconference/electronic proxy voting on any items that council votes on.

### 3.8 **Incorporation**

A Catholic School Council shall not be incorporated.

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