

COMMUNITY VOICE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

School Councils, Ward Councils, Council of School Councils and Partners

The Board recognizes and embraces opportunities to engage with their communities. Strong schools, with strong community support, are important factors in student success. The board is committed to engagement through a variety of channels to ensure voices are heard.

The Board, in keeping with the knowledge that meaningful parent and community involvement is a key factor in student success, deeply values the role of school councils. School councils need to be part of the foundation upon which student success is built.

“School councils will have the primary task of facilitating the collaboration and cooperation between members of the communities and their schools in developing shared responsibility for the learning success and well-being of all children and youth through community engagement in school planning and improvement processes (Policy 18, Northern Lights School Division, Sask. June 2009).”

Council of School Councils (COSC) and ward councils build upon community voices that are heard at school councils and ensure these voices travel to division staff, superintendent and Board of Trustees. This system of engagement also ensures information travels back to the school councils and the community.

COSC and ward councils also provide the opportunity for communities to share and learn from each other.

The board shall establish a formal engagement process for engaging with key community partners as the board understands students are more likely to succeed with the entire community supporting them. “It takes a community to raise a child.”

Procedures

1. Opportunities will be provided for communities to be involved in the education of their children.
2. Information is to be shared with school councils, students, parents, staff and the community to enable them to offer input into the programs, policies and procedures of the Division and schools.
3. Communities shall be engaged through effective communication and dialogue with the level of consultation made clear.
4. Administrative Procedure 159, Community Engagement and 159 Appendix B Community Engagement Framework provide guidance for processes and procedures to follow when undertaking a community engagement project.

1. School Councils

1.1 Role of School Council (or Principal Advisory Committee)

1.1.1 The school council is advisory to the principal.

1.2 Membership and Meetings:

1.2.1 Any person who is interested in being involved in the education of students is eligible to participate in a town hall model of school council (i.e. parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, caregivers, of child in the school, Elders/Knowledge Keepers, business person; local governance councilor, etc.).

1.2.2 A school council shall be established in each school operated by the Board in accordance with section 22 of the *School Act*, and the Alberta School Council Regulation.

1.2.3 If a school council is not formed then the principal must set up a principal advisory committee (PAC) that shall be open to all community members and have the same rights to involvement as school councils have.

1.2.3.1 A PAC must be established within 30 days of the non-establishment of a school council.

1.2.4 The Alberta School Council Resource Manual shall serve as the handbook for all school councils, outlining:

1.2.4.1 The role of a school council; and

1.2.4.2 Operational procedures of a school council.

1.2.5 The Board shall support the operation of school councils by providing a budget for:

1.2.5.1 Annual membership fee for all school councils for Alberta School Council Association (ASCA).

1.2.5.2 A school council representative from each school to attend the Alberta School Councils Association (ASCA) annual conference.

1.2.5.3 Other professional development opportunities as approved by the Superintendent.

1.2.5.4 Refreshments at school council meetings, through the school budget.

1.3 Honoraria and Expenses:

1.3.1 No honoraria or expenses shall be paid to any person attending a school council or principal advisory meeting.

1.4 Conflict Resolution Procedure:

1.4.1 In the case of a conflict between the school council and principal, they shall refer to and follow the procedures outlined in Policy 21, Appendix A School Council Conflict Resolution.

1.4.2 The principal shall provide the school council chair a copy of Policy 21, Appendix A School Council Conflict Resolution.

2. Ward Councils

- 2.1 Structure:
- 2.1.1 Ward Councils meetings may be held by ward, by area or in conjunction with a Council of School Councils meeting:
- 2.1.1.1 Ward Council meeting: held within a ward and includes only the schools and communities within the ward.
- 2.1.1.2 Area Ward Council meeting: held within an area as defined by the areas of the associate superintendents and includes representation from all the ward councils within that area.
- 2.2 Membership:
- 2.2.1 Each ward shall have a ward council that consist of the trustee from the ward, a member of each school council in the ward and other person(s) that may become members (*Northland School Act*).
- 2.2.1.1 Each school council shall choose their representative.
- 2.2.1.2 If a school does not have a school council then a representative shall be selected from the principal's advisory committee by the committee.
- 2.2.2 Other person(s) may become members of a ward council and shall be chosen as follows:
- 2.2.2.1 Ward Council: Selected by the trustee of the ward in consultation with the associate superintendent of the area.
- 2.2.2.2 Area Ward Council: Selected by the trustees of the wards within the area and the associate superintendent of the area.
- 2.2.3 The number of other persons selected for ward council meetings shall be guided by budget, logistics and the purpose of the particular meeting.
- 2.2.4 The term of each person selected/appointed shall be outlined at the time of selection/appointment and may be for:
- 2.2.4.1 One meeting or;
- 2.2.4.2 Until the end of the school year in which the person is selected/appointed or;
- 2.2.4.3 Until the board disqualifies them as a member of the ward council by motion.
- 2.2.5 A person can be selected/reappointed to a ward council in the next, or any school year.
- 2.3 Meetings:
- 2.3.1 There shall be a meeting of each ward council at least once each school year either by ward council meetings, area ward council meetings or a COSC meeting.
- 2.3.2 The board shall ensure ward councils have the opportunity to provide input into the board's strategic direction within the 12-month period immediately following each general election.

- 2.3.3 Division administration, as designated by the Superintendent, will provide support for ward council meetings and facilitate setting the agenda in consultation with the Trustee(s), school council reps and principal(s).
- 2.3.4 The ward council shall determine the process for selecting a chair for each meeting. At the choice of the Trustee(s), Division administration or a Trustee shall chair the meeting until a chair is chosen.
- 2.3.5 The general purpose of the ward council meeting is to:
 - 2.3.5.1 Hear from communities through their school council representatives.
 - 2.3.5.2 Enable the ward council to advise the board respecting any matter relating to the board's strategic direction and policy in the ward.
 - 2.3.5.3 Discuss and share ideas on strategic direction of NSD and increasing student success.
 - 2.3.5.4 Share information between communities.
 - 2.3.5.5 Discuss general operational bouquets and concerns.
- 2.4 Honoraria and Expenses:
 - 2.4.1 Travel and other expenses will be paid as per Board Policy 7 Appendix A, Schedule of Rates for Area Ward Council meetings.
 - 2.4.2 No member of a ward council shall receive any remuneration/honoraria, other than an appointed Elder(s), for acting as a member of a ward council (*Northland School Act*).
- 3. The Board shall be responsible for appointing Elder(s), if any, by motion to a ward council meeting. A Board appointed Elder(s) shall receive honoraria and travel expenses in accordance with Board Policy 7 Appendix A Schedule of Rates.
- 4. Council of School Councils (COSC)
 - 4.1 Membership:
 - 4.1.1 Each school council may select one representative to attend the meeting.
 - 4.1.2 If a school does not have a school council then a representative shall be selected from the principal's advisory committee, by that committee.
 - 4.2 Meetings:
 - 4.2.1 At a minimum, shall meet at least once a term with the Board within the 12-month period immediately following each general election.
 - 4.2.2 The general purpose of the COSC meeting shall be to:
 - 4.2.2.1 Ensure the opportunity is provided for input into the Board's strategic direction is provided within the 12-month period immediately following each general election.

4.2.2.2 Enable all communities to hear from each other and share information and ideas with the Board.

4.2.2.3 Discuss and share ideas on strategic direction of NSD and increasing student success.

4.2.2.4 Discuss general operational bouquets and concerns.

4.3 Honoraria and Expenses:

4.3.1 Travel and other expenses, if required, shall be paid as per Board Policy 7 Appendix A, Schedule of Rates, to each representative attending a COSC meeting.

4.3.2 No representative at the COSC shall receive any remuneration for acting as a representative to the COSC meeting.

4.3.3 Division administration will facilitate setting the agenda in consultation with the Board Chair.

Legal Reference: Section 20, 43.1 60, 62 School Act
Northland School Division Act
Freedom Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Policy 21, Appendix A School Council Conflict Resolution
AP 159 – Community Engagement