

---

**POLICY 18  
SCHOOL COMMUNITY  
COUNCILS**

**Northern Lights School Division #113**

December 2018

# Table of Contents:

**Background** page 1

**Sections:**

1	The School Community Council Model	page 1
2	Building a Constitution	page 1
3.	Election and Appointment of School Community Council Membership	page 4
4.	Roles and Responsibilities	page 8
5.	Learning Improvement Plan (LIP)	page 10
6.	Communication Plan	page 10
7.	School Community Council Development	page 6

## **Background:**

The Division, in keeping with its philosophy of openness, inclusion, responsibility and responsiveness, values the contributions made by School Community Councils, which represent specific schools and their respective communities.

School Community Councils will have the 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.

To accomplish this task the Board has identified the following components to successfully actualize the above mandate:

### **1. The School Community Council Model**

The Division recognizes and values School Community Councils and the contributions these representatives provide to supporting parents and families in becoming directly involved in their children's learning.

The Board will therefore adopt the following procedures in establishing the School Community Councils:

- 1.1 Each school in the Division will have an established School Community Council within the boundaries of the attendance area of the school.
- 1.2 Each School Community Council shall consist of the following members:
  - 1.2.1 Nine (9) elected parent and community members, the majority of whom must be parents.
  - 1.2.2 The Principal or in-school administrative designate.
  - 1.2.3 One (1) teacher selected by the staff of the school.
  - 1.2.4 Members as appointed by the Board from time to time.
  - 1.2.5 One (1) or two (2) students from each high school.
  - 1.2.6 At least one (1) member of the Indian Band (whose name is submitted by their Council) for First Nation students living on reserve enrolled in the school.
- 1.3 The terms of office with eligibility for reappointment or re-election is as follows:
  - 1.3.1 Two (2) years for each elected member and appointed teacher.
  - 1.3.2 One (1) year for each appointment member and student(s).

### **2. Building a Constitution**

- 2.1 Each Council shall develop a Constitution that will set out how they will conduct their day-to-day affairs and provide a structure to allow for direction of their ongoing work and how they relate to others.
- 2.2 The Constitution once completed by each School Community Council will not come into effect until it is approved by the Board.

- 2.3 The Constitution must include at least the following components:
- 2.3.1 Structure and Officers
- 2.3.1.1 The Council's officers are to be elected from among its representative members (parent, community, student and First Nation members).
- 2.3.1.2 Officers will include a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary/Treasurer.
- 2.3.2 Schedule of Meetings
- 2.3.2.1 The Council shall meet at least five (5) times during the school year, have an Annual General Meeting and make provisions for special meetings that may be called by the Chair.
- 2.3.2.2 The Council meeting structure shall apply the following procedures as written down in the Appendix: Decentralized School Governance Handbook.
- 2.3.3 Means of Public Consultation and Communications
- 2.3.3.1 Methods by which the Council will consult with and inform their public may include each of the following elements:
- Written communication.
  - Verbal communication.
  - Media coverage.
  - Information networks.
  - Public meetings (Feasts).
- 2.4 Council Code of Conduct
- School Community Councils in developing their Code of Conduct shall include the following guidelines:
- 2.4.1 The Council at its meetings are not to discuss individual school personnel, students, parents or any other individual member of the school community as outlined in the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act.
- 2.4.2 A parent who accepts a position as a School Community Council member:
- 2.4.2.1 Upholds the constitution, bylaws, policies and procedures of the School Community Council;
- 2.4.2.2 Performs his/her duties with honesty and integrity;
- 2.4.2.3 Works to ensure the well-being of students is the primary focus of all discussions;
- 2.4.2.4 Respects the rights of all individuals; and
- 2.4.2.5 Takes the direction from Council.
- 2.4.3 The Council encourages and supports parents and students with individual concerns; acts on their behalf and provides information on the process for taking forward concerns.
- 2.5 Conflict of Interest Guidelines
- Conflict of interest guidelines must include a provision that when a Council member finds him/herself in a conflict of interest position, the member is to declare that he/she is in a conflict of interest situation and leave the room for the portion of that discussion and not vote on any decision made on the issue. If the member does not self-declare and the Council is aware of the conflict of interest, it is to pass a motion asking the member in conflict to leave the room for that portion of the discussion.
- 2.5.1 The Board prohibits students from placing themselves in a "conflict of interest" situation by serving as a member of a School Community Council.

- 2.5.2 The Board prohibits employees from serving on the School Community Councils with the exception of those:
  - 2.5.2.1 Individuals who are working for another organization and using the Division as the accountable partner to provide payroll and terms/conditions parameters (i.e. Kids First, NORTEP, etc.);
  - 2.5.2.2 Employees who seek and gain a leave of absence without pay in order to serve as a School Community Council member.
- 2.5.3 In communities where difficulty in electing School Community Councils is evident the Board may allow employees to serve as council members once the following conditions are satisfied:
  - 2.5.3.1 That during the annual meeting election there are no other community individuals willing and available to sit on the Community School Councils;
  - 2.5.3.2 Upon condition 2.5.3.1 (above) being satisfied, that any employee serving on the School Community Councils understand that he/she must excuse themselves from any discussion/recommendation that may be construed as a conflict of interest situation such as:
    - Recommending program additions and deletions related to their employment;
    - Recommending decentralized budgets for approval related to their employment, etc.

## 2.6 Complaints and Concerns

School Community Councils will only deal with those matters that relate to its mandate as set out in the Education Act and Board policy. The following process shall be forwarded when such concerns are presented:

- 2.6.1 If a parent raises concerns with the School Community Council, the Executive shall decide if it is within their mandate to review.
- 2.6.2 If yes, then the Executive will refer it to the next meeting of the Council who will consider the matter and decide if there is merit in pursuing the issue as a general concern for the Council. Depending on the urgency of the matter the Chair may request a special meeting.
- 2.6.3 If there is merit the Council will pursue the matter and do the necessary research and refer the matter to the appropriate person with whatever advice the Council thinks is appropriate.
- 2.6.4 If at any stage the Council decides it is not something the Council can or should deal with, they will refer the individual with the concern to the appropriate person.

## 3. Election and Appointment of School Community Council Membership

The Board believes that elected and appointed members of the School Community Council have important roles and responsibilities. As such, the following procedures will be adopted for the election process:

- 3.1 The Director or designate is appointed as the Chief Returning Officer for the purposes of School Community Council elections.

- 3.2 The Chief Returning Officer or designate will arrange for the elections of the School Community Council as follows:
  - 3.2.1 The elections shall be held at the Annual Meeting of each School Community Council after the Chair of the School Community Council presents the Annual Report; and
  - 3.2.2 The election process will be presided over by an Election Supervisor appointed by the Chief Returning Officer.
  
- 3.3 The Chief Returning Officer shall ensure that appropriate notice of the Annual Meeting and the elections is given, and such notice shall:
  - 3.3.1 Be given to the public at least four (4) weeks before the Annual Meeting;
  - 3.3.2 Be posted or advertised in a way that it reasonably reaches parents or guardians of students for that school and community members encouraging them to let their names stand for election and may include:
    - 3.3.2.1 Information through parent and school bulletins;
    - 3.3.2.2 Awareness through local radio, cable, newspaper and other forms of advertising; and
  - 3.3.3 Shall contain at least the following information:
    - 3.3.3.1 The purpose of the meeting;
    - 3.3.3.2 Date, time and location of the Annual Meeting;
    - 3.3.3.3 The attendance area for the School Community Council;
    - 3.3.3.4 Who to contact for more information on the policy and procedures respecting the election of the School Community Council.
  
- 3.4 The nomination and election process at the Annual Meeting are as follows:
  - 3.4.1 The Election Supervisor will call for nominations with respect to the election of School Community Council members.
    - 3.4.1.1 Nominations for elected positions will be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting.
    - 3.4.1.2 Persons eligible to be candidates as a parent include any parent or guardian of students who attend the school;
    - 3.4.1.3 Persons eligible to be candidates as a community member include any electors who reside within the school attendance area who are not the parents or guardian of a student who attends the school.
    - 3.4.1.4 Nomination shall be on the Form designated by the Chief Returning Officer.
    - 3.4.1.5 Persons eligible to nominate include parents/guardians of students who are enrolled in the school and electors that reside within the school attendance area who are present at the meeting.
  - 3.4.2 The following criteria will be used to determine elected representation on each Council:
    - 3.4.2.1 The majority of the elected members shall be parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the school.
    - 3.4.2.2 The Board, the Council and staff of the Division will make their best efforts to encourage participation from diverse groups within the community in order to ensure as much as possible that elected representatives are reflective of the student population.
  - 3.4.3 An election, if required, will be held immediately following the close of nominations provided, however, that if the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions identified, candidates will be declared by acclamation.

- 3.4.4 If an election is required:
- 3.4.4.1 The vote will be conducted by secret ballot and there will be a designated station for voting to allow for privacy and secrecy.
  - 3.4.4.2 Ballots will be in the Form determined by the Chief Returning Officer and:
    - Will indicate the maximum number of elected persons in each category;
    - Will leave room for the voter to mark an "X" on the ballot beside the name of the candidate.
  - 3.4.4.3 Ballots containing more votes than the number to be elected will be rejected.
  - 3.4.4.4 Ballots containing any identifying marks or comments beyond the initials of the poll clerk will be rejected.
  - 3.4.4.5 Acceptable ballots will be tabulated with candidates receiving a point for each vote. Candidates will be ranked based upon the number of points received.
  - 3.4.4.6 The Election Supervisor shall be present at the counting of the ballots and may be accompanied by the candidates or their representatives.
  - 3.4.4.7 The candidates will be declared elected up to the maximum number to be elected.
  - 3.4.4.8 In the event of a tie for the final position the winner will be determined by a draw facilitated by the Election Supervisor.
  - 3.4.4.9 The Election Supervisor will declare the results at the meeting.
- 3.5 In the event that there are not enough people nominated to fill all the elected positions, the following procedure shall be applied:
- 3.5.1 Any person interested in filling a vacant position shall submit his or her name to the Principal within two (2) weeks after the date of the Annual Election. The Principal may extend submission of names for filling the vacant position for another two (2) weeks if there are no initial submissions.
  - 3.5.2 At the next School Community Council meeting following the deadline for submitting names:
    - 3.5.2.1 The existing members of the School Community Council and the Director or designate shall review the list of names and compile a list of acceptable potential candidates; and
    - 3.5.2.2 A name shall be chosen, by draw, from the list of acceptable potential candidates for each vacant position.
  - 3.5.3 The names chosen will be provided to the Board who will appoint the named person(s) to the School Community Council to fill the vacant position(s).
- 3.6 The Board where it has tuition agreements with First Nations will make every effort to extend representation by First Nation parents or community members through:
- 3.6.1 Ensuring First Nation students living on reserve are represented by one (1) member of the Indian Band;
  - 3.6.2 Board consultations with the respective First Nation to assist in developing the necessary procedures for Council membership.
  - 3.6.3 Noting that these representatives are in addition to First Nation Members who are representatives of students who live and go to school off reserve.

- 3.7 The Board believes that the principals and teachers play a pivotal role in the establishment and ongoing success of School Community Councils, therefore:
- 3.7.1 Each Principal or designate at every school within the Division is appointed as a permanent member of the Council;
  - 3.7.2 The decision and process to name a teacher to bring the classroom perspective to the Council for two (2) years with eligibility for reappointment is delegated to the Principal and teaching staff;
  - 3.7.3 Communications between the Council and school staff will be through the Principal, requests for information or guidance from the staff will be made through the Principal as well; and
  - 3.7.4 Councils shall respect the unique status and responsibilities of each member and the formal communication procedures and protocols that are established within the school and Division.
- 3.8 The Board believes that involving the students in membership on the Council will enable them to become more responsible for their education thus becoming more committed to their educational futures, therefore:
- 3.8.1 One (1) or two (2) students from every school with students enrolled in schools offering 10, 20 or 30 level credits shall be appointed for a one (1) year term to the Council;
  - 3.8.2 The decision and process to select the student representative(s) for one (1) year with eligibility for reappointment is delegated to the students assisted by the Principal and teaching staff;
  - 3.8.3 Councils may convene student forums from time to time to hear from larger numbers of students or from particular groups; and
  - 3.8.4 Councils shall make their best efforts to ensure students understand the roles and responsibilities of School Community Councils and the expectations for student involvement.
- 3.9 The Board believes that Councils balance demographic representation, extend process support such as planning, enhance School<sup>Plus</sup> initiatives and enable membership of representatives of special programs located in the school, therefore:
- 3.9.1 The Council may make recommendations to the Board for additional appointed members where the Council perceives a need for representation from specific groups.
  - 3.9.2 The recommendation must be in writing supported by a Council motion and a strong written rationale for the additional appointment.
  - 3.9.3 The Principal shall review the request and documentation with the Director or designate who will then present it to the Board at its next meeting.
  - 3.9.4 The appointments will be made for the time period for which the participation is required and will be reviewed when the Board annually reviews Council composition.
- 3.10 In the event that sufficient persons are not elected, recommended or appointed through other processes to fill the representative positions require by policy the Board may appoint persons to fill the requirements for a period of time no longer than the next election.

#### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board believes that understanding one another's roles and responsibilities is vital in developing positive and supportive working relationships. It also believes that the Division and Councils must encourage and develop shared responsibility for the learning success and well-being of all children. The roles and responsibilities of School Community Councils are as follows:

- 4.1 Understanding the school and its community's economic, social and health conditions and needs and their aspirations for child and youth learning and well-being and becoming knowledgeable about resources and supports for the school, parents and community.
- 4.2 Jointly and in cooperation with the Principal and staff of the school, develop and recommend to the Board for approval of a Learning Improvement Plan that is aligned with the Division strategic plan.
- 4.3 Taking action to fulfil initiatives assigned it within the Learning Improvement Plan.
- 4.4 Communicating annually to the parents and community on its plans, initiatives and outcomes and on the expenditure of funds related to the operation of the School Community Council.
- 4.5 Participating in opportunities to develop the capacity of the School Community Council to fulfill its responsibilities.
- 4.6 Informing all parents, guardians and community members of dates of meetings.
- 4.7 Convening a meeting at least five (5) times during the school year and an annual meeting each year to provide a channel of communications between the community and the School Community Council.
- 4.8 Advising the Board on any matter considered to be in the interest of education in the Division.
- 4.9 Recommending any improvements regarding building and facilities maintenance, and school equipment.
- 4.10 Making recommendations concerning language of instruction, religious instruction and educational service delivery decision including grade discontinuance.
- 4.11 Making recommendations to the Board, principals, teachers and other employees about the care of school property in the Division.
- 4.12 Providing advice and approval on certain matters that may be lawfully delegated by the Board, including:
  - 4.12.1 Administration – School Policy  
The Principal and staff are responsible for drafting school policies in the following areas, then reviewing them with the School Community Council who will then pass a motion recommending them for approval by the Board.

- 4.12.1.1 Fundraising
  - Fundraising plans shall be discussed with and approved by the School Community Council for recommendation to the Board.
  - Council shall provide advice to the Principal subject to the following administrative procedures:
    - Administrative Procedure 550 – School Fundraising
    - Administrative Procedure 511 – Transfer and Deposit of Funds
- 4.12.1.2 School and facilities usage
  - Review school-based policies for the use of school facilities of a short-term nature. Longer term requests will be referred to the Director.
- 4.12.1.3 Student Discipline
  - Council must approve the student Code of Conduct for recommendation to the Board.
  - Council shall provide advice to the Principal subject to the following administrative procedures:
    - Administrative Procedure 350 – Student Conduct
- 4.12.1.4 Transportation (sports, educational tours, etc.)
 

Councils shall:

  - Provide advice to the Principal in establishing bus routes.
  - Review the annual educational tour plan well in advance of any tours then submit and recommend to the Board for approval.
- 4.12.1.5 Attendance
 

Councils shall:

  - Provide advice to the Principal subject to the following administrative procedures:
    - Administrative Procedure 340 – Student Attendance
    - Administrative Procedure 341 – Student Attendance – Non-Compliance.
- 4.12.2 Program
 

Councils shall:

  - 4.12.2.1 Work with the Principal and staff to become familiar with the existing school program and provide advice on such programs and operation.
  - 4.12.2.2 Be involved in the planning of locally developed courses and innovative projects.
- 4.12.3 Annual Decentralized School Budget
  - 4.12.3.1 Councils shall be advised of the allocation of the instructional budget as set forth by the Principal and school staff.
  - 4.12.3.2 School Community Councils shall receive periodic budget updates and review any needed allocation adjustments as set forth by the Principal and school staff.
- 4.12.4 Plant Operation and Maintenance
 

Councils shall:

  - 4.12.4.1 Provide advice in maintenance concerns for local school facilities in collaboration with the Principal and advise the Board.
  - 4.12.4.2 Participate with Division personnel in the provincial capital planning process for school additions, renovations or new school buildings.
- 4.12.5 Advice to Third Parties When Delegated
 

When provided for through specific Board policy the School Community Council shall advise other organizations, agencies and governments on the learning and well-being needs of children and youth.

## **5. Learning Improvement Plan (LIP)**

School plans and results reports are a Division requirement. Learning Improvement Plans are completed annually to incorporate Board direction and local input, and to address areas for improvement identified from the results.

Division schools will develop, update and implement Learning Improvement Plans utilizing the following guidelines:

- 5.1 The Principal and School Community Council will actively seek collaborative involvement of stakeholders (students, parents, community members, etc.), as appropriate, in development of Learning Improvement Plans.
- 5.2 Learning Improvement Plans will utilize a format that identifies:
  - 5.2.1 Goals: general statements of purposes to be accomplished in order to achieve the Division mission.
  - 5.2.2 Strategies: broad statements on actions that will be used to accomplish goals and achieve desired results.
  - 5.2.3 Outcomes to be achieved and objectives to be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-limited (SMART).
  - 5.2.4 Measures: means by which results will be quantified or qualified.
- 5.3 School goals will reflect:
  - 5.3.1 The Division's mission, vision and guiding values.
  - 5.3.2 The Division's Continuous Improvement Plan.
  - 5.3.3 School and community goals and priorities.
- 5.4 The Learning Improvement Plan will direct the development of the school budget.
- 5.5 Learning Improvement Plans will be developed and updated each school year and submitted to the Director or designate for Board approval at the September meeting.
- 5.6 Copies of the Learning Improvement Plan shall be provided to stakeholders upon request.
- 5.7 Schools will report annually on progress towards the goals of their Learning Improvement Plans. This monitoring report will be submitted October 1 annually to the Director or designate and communicated to communities through a communication plan.
- 5.8 Schools are encouraged to develop handbooks or other documents and distribute them to appropriate stakeholders as a means of communicating the schools' philosophy, procedures and expectations for daily operation. Handbooks and local policies must be consistent with Division requirements and expectations.

## **6. Communication Plan**

The Board believes that effective communication among the school, the home and the community assists in the promotion of the system's goals of education. Principals, Community School Coordinators and School Community Councils will be required to establish in their communities an organization of teachers, parents and others interested in Learning Improvement Plans, and to develop and maintain appropriate communication channels.

- 6.1 The following are the expectations for the functioning of School Community Councils:
  - 6.1.1 Each school is to have a forum to promote dialogue on matters of general interest to parents and other members of the general public.
  - 6.1.2 School Community Councils are to have a constitution that identifies objectives, procedures for conducting business and relationships with the school.
  - 6.1.3 School Community Council meetings shall be open to all electors residing in the school attendance area.
  - 6.1.4 The School Community Council programs are to reflect the interests of the membership and the needs of the school and community.
  
- 6.2 Some functions of School Community Councils will be:
  - 6.2.1 To stimulate interest and participation by parents and the community generally in the improvement of educational services in the school.
  - 6.2.2 To participate in planning and monitoring processes related to the Learning Improvement Plan.
  - 6.2.3 To make recommendations to the Principal to ensure the best possible education for the students in the school.
  - 6.2.4 To recommend to the Director or designate proposals that may be considered for the improvement of the educational standards and opportunities in the Division.
  
- 6.3 Some basic assumptions regarding effective School Community Councils are:
  - 6.3.1 The Principal is the key person in facilitating the work of School Community Councils.
  - 6.3.2 Council programs may vary in format to encourage the participation of its membership.
  - 6.3.3 Most parents are primarily concerned with issues and decisions that relate directly to students' programs at the school level.
  - 6.3.4 Leadership in-service activities are to be made available to members of the School Community Councils.
  - 6.3.5 The membership of Councils requires feedback on what has happened to the recommendations and proposals.
  - 6.3.6 Principals are to encourage staff to be aware of the need to be receptive to parents who wish to influence decision-making at the school.
  
- 6.4 Principals and Community School Coordinators shall initiate activities at the school level designed to promote communication between the school and the home and between school and the community.
  
- 6.5 The delegation process at regular or special Board meetings provides opportunities for individuals or groups to address the Board and for the Board to receive items of interest from its constituents.

## **7. School Community Council Development**

The Board values lifelong learning and recognizes that continuous growth, learning and development are essential to the effective functioning of all School Community Councils. In meeting its responsibility to guide, assist and support Councils, the Board has developed a School Community Liaison Training Program. The following is a list of possible training areas:

- Effective meetings;
- Roles/Responsibilities of School Community Councils;
- The Education Act/The Education Regulations;
- Bookkeeping;
- Budget planning;
- Classroom volunteerism;
- Resolutions;
- School policies and procedures; and
- Other areas Council and staff may identify.

Recognizing these in-service costs and other operational costs Councils incur in performing their duties the Board has provided a conditional grant for each School Community Council.

Following are the regulations/procedures and terms/conditions of the grant:

## 7.1 Regulations and Procedures

7.1.1 The grant shall be used for the purpose of development and involvement of the School Community Council in the educational affairs of the community. The following are recognized areas of expenditure:

7.1.1.1 Secretary will be compensated directly by the Division Office upon receipt of monthly minutes at twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) a month to a maximum of two-hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00) per year.

7.1.1.2 The School Community Council operational expenses in the area of duplicating materials, postage, telephone, subscriptions, meals and mileage.

7.1.1.3 Council members' expenses including travel expenses to attend educational related functions when approved in advance by motion of the School Community Council.

7.1.1.4 Donations to Special School Projects or school related education tours.

7.1.2 The grant will be comprised of a base rate plus a schedule determined on the prior year PSSR:

7.1.2.1	1 - 150 Students Base Rate =	\$2,000.00
	Total Grant =	\$2,000.00

7.1.2.2	151 Students and over	
	First 150 Base Rate =	\$2,000.00
	\$8.00 per student over	<u>+8.00 per student</u>
	to a maximum of \$4,800.00	Total Grant

7.1.2.3	Bus committees	\$450.00
---------	----------------	----------

## 7.2 Terms and Conditions

7.2.1 An application, in duplicate, for the Grant must be submitted to the Division Office, using the prescribed form. The application must be signed by both the Secretary and the Chair of the School Community Council.

7.2.2 Grants shall be provided to the School Community Council on the understanding that documented records are maintained with respect to expenditure of the Grant funds.

7.2.3 The Director and/or designate shall be permitted access to the financial records of the School Community Council and shall request a documented record of the previous year's expenditures each year.

7.2.4 Cheques for the Grant shall be made payable to the School Community Council and must be endorsed by both the Secretary and the Chair.

7.2.5 The Grant shall be based on a period of November 1 to October 31 in each year.

Reference: Sections 140.1, 140.2, 140.3, 140.4, 140.5 Education Act  
Regulations Part II.2  
School Community Councils Handbook. – for councils and principals.