

School Councils: Overview

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Evolution of Councils in Ontario

Research on parental involvement in a child's education has been shown to have a significant effect on his or her achievement

“Parental involvement is one of the most significant factors contributing to a child's success in school. When parents are involved in their children's education, the level of student achievement increases. Students attend school more regularly, they complete more homework in a consistent manner, and demonstrate more positive attitudes towards school. They are also more likely to complete high school”

Evolution (cont'd)

- **1994** government started to investigate establishment of councils across Ontario
- **1995** Royal Commission on Learning acknowledged importance of parental involvement and recommended a model for Ontario schools
- **1996** Ministry of Education and Training developed policies that required school boards to establish councils
- **1997** Act was passed that mandated that there be school councils in all publically funded schools in Ontario
- **1998** Review undertaken by Minister to examine ways to make councils stronger and more effective
- **2000** Ontario Regulation 612/00 released

Ministry Guidelines

- Were developed in 2000-2001 by the Ontario Government to help ensure that parents through their school councils would have greater influence in their children's education
- Regulations were created that confirm the advisory role of councils and their purpose
- Help provide governance and accountability framework for School Councils
- Make education system more accountable to parents

Mandate

School Councils provide a forum where parents can:

- contribute as partners in their children's education
- help to improve student achievement
- enhance the accountability of the education system to parents
- raise school-wide issues
- make recommendations to their principals and school boards on any matter

Council Role

- Be an advisory body, that makes recommendations to the principal of the school or the Board on any matter (Reg.612/20) [?]
- Consult with parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the council (Reg.612/613)
- Focus on improved learning for all students [?]
- Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues [?]
- Represent and communicate the views of the school community

Council Responsibilities

- Attend and contribute regularly at school council meetings [?]
- Act as a link between the school council and the community [?]
- Encourage others within the school community to participate in the activities of the council [?]
- Communicate with various communities in the school and work towards removing any barriers to the participation of all members of the school community

Benefits of Participation

- ✓ Being a partner in the education system
- ✓ Contribute to shared goal of improving student achievement
- ✓ Access to a vehicle through which to express opinions
- ✓ Ability to be kept informed about what is happening at the school, the board and at the provincial level of education
- ✓ Additional opportunity to make a difference in your children's education

Role of School Boards and Principals

Ministry regulations, released under the Education Act require that:

- A collaborative and supportive approach to working with councils be demonstrated
- Views from school councils be solicited
- Recommendations made by school councils be considered
- There is a report back to the councils on how they plan to act on their advice, or why a recommendation was not acted on
- Principals and council chairs find an effective way of working together outside of regular meetings

Principals as Partners

- Ensure that the school council is in place early in the school year
- Required to attend every council meeting or to send a delegate
- Key source of info for the school council
- Shares knowledge and acts as a resource to help council be effective
- Important role in providing support and continuity for school councils

Questions?

References

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/council02.pdf>

www.ontarioparentcouncil.org

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/>