

JAMES BAY LOWLANDS SECONDARY SCHOOL BOARD
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ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION: NO. 160	
Effective	August 21, 2019
Last Revised	June 30, 2023

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SCHOOL COUNCIL

PURPOSE

The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board envisions a mutually supportive community, shaped by a process of active participation, cooperation, and consensus-building. The Board is committed to supporting partnerships that involve meaningful dialogue and decision-making among the school, parents, and community.

When schools place a priority on the involvement of families, children do better in school. The school actively seeks and encourages parent involvement in the school's activities as a critical necessity for a high quality of education. Family involvement promotes a more responsive school, which in turn improves student attendance, behaviour, and achievement.

System and school administrators of James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board have developed this administrative procedure to ensure that parents and other members of the school community have opportunities to work with the staff of Northern Lights Secondary School to improve student achievement and well-being.

PROCEDURES

1. The School Council

- 1.1. Northern Lights Secondary School shall establish and maintain a school council. The council will act in an advisory capacity to the school's principal and the Board for the continued promotion of excellence throughout the system and will place the overall interests of the school and students first.
- 1.2. The school council will operate within the parameters of the *Education Act*, Ontario Regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees, and other relevant legislation such as the Board's policies, administrative procedures, and collective agreements.
- 1.3. The school council will only be limited by the Board's and the principal's ability to recruit parents and community representatives.

2. Membership

2.1. The membership of the school council shall include but not be limited to:

- up to six (6) parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school
- the principal of the school
- a community representative
- a student
- a teacher assigned to the school
- a non-teaching employee assigned to the school

2.2. Parents/guardians shall form the majority of the council.

2.3. All members on the council are equal partners.

2.4. It is expected that the membership of the council will reflect the diversity of the school community.

2.5. Membership of the school council shall be determined in the following manner:

2.5.1. Parents/guardians shall be chosen by parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school, and up to six (6) where possible, shall be elected. The council shall be comprised of three (3) members from Moosonee and three (3) members from Moose Factory, off the reserve.

2.5.2. The student representative shall be elected by students enrolled in the Northern Lights Secondary School.

2.5.3. The teacher representative shall be elected by members of the teaching staff.

2.5.4. The non-teaching employee shall be elected by non-teaching employees assigned to the school.

2.5.5. The school principal shall be a designated member.

2.5.6. Community representatives shall be appointed by the council. A community representative could also be a parent/guardian of a student enrolled at the school.

2.5.7. The chair of the council shall be a member who is a parent/guardian of a student enrolled at the school, and shall be elected by the council.

2.6. The term of office for elected or appointed positions on the council shall not exceed one year. Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms.

2.7. There will be no honorarium paid to members of the school council.

3. Role of School Councils

3.1. School councils are advisory bodies. The council will provide advice to the school principal and, where appropriate, to the Board on any matters listed below that the council has identified as priorities:

- the school year activity calendar
- school code of conduct
- curriculum and program goals and priorities
- the responses of the school or Board to student achievement in provincial and Board assessment programs
- preparation of the school profile and the school plan
- the selection criteria of the principal
- school budget priorities, including capital improvement plans
- 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 the social, health, recreational, and nutritional programs
- community use of school facilities
- local coordination of services for children and youth
- such other matters as the Board may direct

3.2. Council members are to maintain a school-based focus on all issues. Council meetings are not a forum for discussion about individual parents, students, trustees, or other council members.

3.3. The school council shall also:

- 3.3.1. hold regular meetings, not less than four meetings per year, with all meetings open to the community. All meetings will be announced to the public one month in advance. When possible, meetings should be held when the river is safe to cross either way by boat or vehicle;

- 3.3.2. organize information and training sessions to enable members of the council to develop their skills as council members;
 - 3.3.3. communicate regularly with parents 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;
 - 3.3.4. promote the best interests of the school community; and
 - 3.3.5. supervise the election procedure for school councils.
- 3.4. Each school council, no later than May 15th of each year, shall submit to the Board an annual report which shall include:
- 3.4.1. a financial statement for that year;
 - 3.4.2. a list of members;
 - 3.4.3. a summary of meetings held and attendance at those meetings; and
 - 3.4.4. a summary of the council's activities for the previous year, and may include such other matters that the school council deems appropriate.
- 3.5. The supervisory officer shall include in his/her annual report a report on the establishment and operation of school councils.

4. Roles of School Council Members

- 4.1. The chair of the school council shall:
- call council meetings
 - prepare the agenda for school council meetings
 - chair school council meetings
 - ensure the minutes of the school council meetings are recorded and maintained
 - participate in training and information programs
 - communicate with the school principal
 - ensure that there is regular communication with the school community
 - consult with the supervisory officer, finance and human resources administrator, and trustees as required.

4.2. The members of the school council shall:

- provide informed advice to the school principal on matters related to student learning and school improvement
- maintain a school-wide perspective on issues
- participate in council meetings, contributing positively, and helping the group function as a team
- evaluate success in achieving the shared goals for the school
- participate in information and training programs
- act as a link between the school council and the community
- encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community.

4.3. The principal of the school shall:

- facilitate the establishment of the school council and assist in its operation
- support and promote the council's activities
- seek input from the council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility
- act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies, and collective agreements and refer issues to the supervisory officer
- obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make informed decisions
- communicate with the chair of the council, as required
- ensure that copies of the minutes of the council meetings are kept at the school
- assist the council in communicating with the school community
- encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community.

5. Recommendations and Communications of the School Council

- 5.1. Recommendations and decisions of the school council that are specifically related to the school will be referred to the school principal.
- 5.2. Recommendations and decisions which are broader in scope than the school may be referred to either the school principal for direction or to the appropriate Board official or Board Committee.

6. Establishment and Elections

- 6.1. The electoral process will commence with an invitational approach. Principal, staff, and parents will combine to reach out to the whole community.
- 6.2. The school will seek to establish a school council.
- 6.3. Community members will have been actively sought, and after the election the school council will choose and appoint the community members for the council. It is suggested that community members be chosen to further represent the community and to further the school's goals.
- 6.4. A person elected or appointed as a member of a school council holds office from the later of: (a) the date he or she is elected or appointed, and (b) the date of the first meeting of the school council, until the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections held in the next school year. A member may be re-elected or appointed, unless otherwise provided by the by-laws of the council.
- 6.5. Board employees may not be parent members of the school council. Trustees of the Board may not serve as parent or community representatives.
- 6.6. Trustees are invited to attend school council meetings, but not as voting members.

7. Electoral Procedures

- 7.1. The principal will notify all parents, encouraging and inviting them to become active members of the school council.
- 7.2. This notice will be sent home to all parents/guardians. Included in this notice will be the date of an initial meeting set by the school.
- 7.3. The purpose of this initial meeting is to discuss the setting up and role of the school council. The meeting will take place before the end of May.
- 7.4. Those in attendance will be asked if they are interested in serving as a member of the school council. The list of names of those interested in serving as members on the council will be sent to every family. Anyone interested in adding his/her name to the list will be informed that they should contact the school immediately since there will

be a deadline for nominations. A sample agenda for this meeting regarding the establishment of the school council will be available for use.

- 7.5. Elections will take place during the first thirty (30) days of each school year, providing there are more than six (6) parents willing to be school council members.
- 7.6. The school will have completed this process during the first thirty (30) days of the school year in order to meet the Ministry requirement that the school have a school council within the first thirty-five (35) days of the school year.
- 7.7. In May of each election year, parents shall be notified by mail of the date for elections and be invited to submit their names for election.
- 7.8. Ballots shall be printed and provided to each parent with a further notice of election night.
- 7.9. On election night, each attending parent shall present a ballot with a validation marking and shall be entitled to vote.
- 7.10. The principal or his/her non-parental nominee shall chair the election night meeting.
- 7.11. Ballots shall be counted by a non-parental nominee of the principal in the presence of nominees for each candidate, if requested.
- 7.12. The results, including vote tallies, shall be announced on election night.
- 7.13. It shall be determined before balloting how many positions will be filled. Each voting parent may cast as many votes as required to fill all positions but may vote for each candidate only once.
- 7.14. The newly-elected council members shall determine the number of other non-parental members.
- 7.15. The rules for elections may be amended temporarily by the Board, by resolution.
- 7.16. Where insufficient numbers of parents [i.e. less than six (6)] are elected, those council members elected shall have the authority to appoint other parents to bring the number up to the minimum required.
- 7.17. In the event of a tie vote for the last position on the school council, a second and subsequent ballot shall be held.
- 7.18. Elections of non-parental members shall be held subsequent to parental elections. These elections shall take place in a manner similar to these rules.
- 7.19. The student member shall be elected following the rules for the student council.

7.20. The newly elected council members shall meet as soon as practical to appoint a community representative.

8. Administrative Support

8.1. The Board may provide financial support to school councils each year. These grants will be prescribed by the Board each year and are intended solely for the operation of the school council and not for the school itself, events in the school, or other non-organizational spending. All proposed spending in excess of \$500 shall be approved in advance by the finance and human resources administrator. The criterion for approval will be solely the availability of funds left in the grant to the school council.

8.2. The Board may provide material and personnel resources for the establishment and maintenance of the school council.

8.3. The Board may provide for training for all council members in areas such as council management, dispute resolution, meeting procedures, etc.

8.4. The Director of Education may provide for a system of networking among school councils as financial and other resources permit.

8.5. The chair of the school council or the full council may be requested to meet with the Board from time to time to provide community in-put to the Board.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legal:

Education Act, section 170 Duties of Boards—School Councils

Education Act sections 302-303 Boards to Consider Views of School Councils

Ontario Regulation 298—Operation of Schools, subsections 11(12-20) Duties of Principals Regarding School Councils

Ontario Regulation 612/00—School Councils, Parent Involvement Committees

Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 122 School Councils

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Board:

Board Policy GOV-01 Values, Vision, and Mission

Board Policy GOV-05 Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Board Policy GOV-09 Board Communications

Resources:

Ministry of Education: School Councils: A Guide for Members