

Chapter 4

School Community Council Elections

4.1 – General Considerations for Council Elections

1. To ensure consistency and coherence of operation, legislation calls for annual council elections of two-year term positions. This system creates staggered terms of office, with one-half of the representative members being elected one year, and the other half the next year. (legislation)
2. For the first year that elections are held, the half of the representative members receiving the largest number of votes serves for two years and the remaining half, receiving the lesser number of votes, serves for one year. This creates staggered term positions. (legislation)
3. The Board of Education must appoint an employee of the School Division, other than any member of the SCC, as Returning Officer for SCC elections. (legislation) The Board delegates this responsibility to the principal.
4. The employee selected by the principal as Returning Officer may not be a member of the Council (permanent, elected or appointed).
5. If, following the nomination process, there are vacant positions on a council, the Board may allow for a reduction in membership. If there are fewer than five members, the Board may appoint members to fill vacant positions.

4.2 – Initial Election Procedures for School Community Councils

Annual Meeting and Elections

1. Once a council is established, the Annual Meeting shall be held before November 15.
 2. The Annual Meeting of council serves as a focal point for reviewing activities of the past year and preparing for the coming year. As such, the Annual Meeting shall include:
 - a. An Annual Report that addresses council activities and finances for the past year.
 - b. Elections for non-appointed representative members.
 3. Should a representative member position become vacant during the year, that position may be filled by Board appointment in consultation with the council.
 4. The Annual Meeting agenda shall follow an outline closely resembling Appendix 2.1.1 School Community Council Annual Meeting Agenda.
-

5. The council shall post on the SCC page of the school website a list of council members, officers, meeting dates and meeting times by September 30.

Public Notice (legislation)

1. The Returning Officer shall provide public notice of the meeting to elect SCC members at least four weeks in advance.
2. The notice shall set out the attendance area, time, place and purpose of the meeting.
3. The notice must be reasonably expected to reach parents, guardians and community members.

Nominations

1. The Returning Officer shall issue a Public Call for Nominations, at least four weeks ahead of the Annual Meeting. A template for this call is included in Forms and Templates: Form E – Call for Nominations to a School Community Council.
2. The Public Call for Nominations shall be posted:
 - a. In a school bulletin or newsletter.
 - b. On the school website.
 - c. In five prominent locations within the community.
 - d. In the local newspaper. (optional)
3. Nomination forms will be available in the school office and must be submitted during office hours by 3:30 pm, at least two days before the Annual Meeting.
4. Nominations may also be accepted from the floor of the Annual Meeting.
5. Individuals may be nominated by another person or volunteer to stand for election.
6. All nominees must identify if they are standing for election as a parent or community member.
7. If an election is necessary, the Annual Meeting Chair will call upon the Returning Officer to conduct the election.

Eligibility to Vote (legislation)

1. The following persons are eligible to vote:
 - a. Parents of students enrolled in the school.¹¹
 - b. Electors that reside within the school attendance area.¹²

¹¹ This includes parents who do not reside within the school attendance area.

¹² The provisions do not limit or restrict the election or participating in voting of parents of students who may be employed by the School Division and work in a particular school.

2. In order to recognize their right to vote, eligible parents and resident electors must sign a declaration of eligibility to vote *before* the meeting begins. A template for this declaration is included in Forms and Templates: Form D – Declaration of Eligibility to Vote.
3. Parents with students enrolled in more than one school are eligible to vote in elections for each council where their children attend school.
4. Electors residing within a school attendance area are eligible to vote in the election of only one council.

4.3 – Duties of the Returning Officer

1. The Returning Officer shall:
 - a. Announce who is eligible to vote.
 - b. Announce that eligible parents and resident electors must sign a declaration of eligibility before meeting begins in order to exercise their right to vote.
 - c. Announce that parents of students enrolled in more than one school (*including parents who do not reside within the attendance area of the school*) are eligible to vote in each of the elections for each council where their child attends school.
 - d. Announce that electors who reside within the school attendance area are eligible to vote in the election of only one council in their community of residence.
 - e. As individuals are nominated or volunteer, display names so that they are clearly visible to all in attendance. This display must also indicate if nominees are standing as a parent or community members.
 - f. Distribute and collect ballots.
 - g. Arrange for ballots to be counted in the presence of the Council Chair.
 - h. If there is a tie between nominees to fill the last available position, the Returning Officer will break the tie by lot.
 - i. Ensure the majority of members elected are parents of students enrolled in the school.
 - j. Announce election outcomes.
-

4.4 – Duties of the Council Chair Elect

1. The Returning Officer will facilitate the selection of Council Chair.
2. Once elected, the Council Chair will review the nominations that have come forward in response to the Public Call for Nominations.
3. The Council Chair will call for further nominations for representative members.
4. If an election is necessary, the Council Chair will call upon the Returning Officer to manage the voting process by secret ballot.
5. If the outcome of the election is not contested, the Council Chair will ask for a motion to have the Returning Officer destroy the ballots.

4.5 – First Nations Representation

1. The Returning Officer, with the principal's assistance, will invite each First Nation with a significant percentage of students living on the reserve and attending the school to select an individual to be appointed as a representative member for a two-year term. Refer to Forms and Templates: Form C – Sample Letter to Invite First Nations Participation in Council.
2. Officials from the First Nation will be asked to advise the Returning Officer or school principal regarding the appointed membership before the date of the Annual Meeting.
3. The Superintendent of Education may fill any vacant positions should a First Nations member not be appointed before the date of the Annual Meeting.

4.6 – Contested Election

1. The outcome of an election may be contested within four school days of the Annual Meeting.
 2. If the outcome of an election is disputed, the ballots will be held in safe keeping by the Returning Officer while the matter is referred to the Superintendent of Education.
 3. Within seven days of the Annual Meeting the Superintendent of Education will investigate the election and recommend a course of action to the Director of Education/CEO.
 4. Following receipt of the report from the Superintendent of Education, the Director of Education/CEO will make a final determination and inform the Board, the council, the principal and the candidates of the decision.
-

Election Procedures for Representative Parent/Guardian and Community Members

Minimum election procedures for School Community Councils are outlined by the provincial government in the legislation and regulations.

Representative Parent/Guardian and Community Members are elected at an **Annual Meeting** convened by the School Community Council.

The **time of year for School Community Council elections** will vary throughout the Good Spirit School Division. Annual General Meetings will be held at each school prior to November 15. While there are advantages and disadvantages to both times of the year, every school will need to make a decision that best suits the needs of their school and community.

1. Public Notice

The Annual Meeting to elect the School Community Council is a formal meeting called under the authority of The Education Act, 1995. The purpose of the Annual General Meeting is to elect members of the School Community Council. A Public Call for nominations shall precede the Annual Meeting.

Public Notice of the Annual Meeting will be given at least 4 weeks before the meeting is held to elect School Community Council members. Notice shall be advertised or posted in such a way that it would be reasonably expected to reach the parents or guardians of students for that school and community members (as defined within the school's attendance or geographic area).

Advertising may be delivered by way of:

- information in the school newsletter
- posters at school entrances
- information on the school website
- information on the school sign
- information in the community association newsletter

The notice will include:

- the purpose of the meeting;
- the date, time and location of the meeting;
- the attendance area or geographic area for the School Community Council;
- the nomination process (i.e. Advanced Only, Advanced and from the Floor, from the Floor Only);
- where policies and procedures respecting the School Community Council can be reviewed;

Optional:

- How this will benefit their children/community
- Why we need their help
- Refreshments
- Child care availability

2. Nomination Procedures

Option A: Advanced Nominations Only

Nominations will be accepted for 4 weeks in advance of the Annual Meeting and close one week in advance of the Annual Meeting.

Where an advanced nomination process is established and the number of candidates is equal to or less than nine (with parents/guardians in the majority), an election is unnecessary. The candidates would be acclaimed and names of the elected members would be posted. At the Annual Meeting the chair would announce the elected members and call for a motion to acclaim the individuals.

If there are more names than elected seats and/or if community members are in the majority, an election would be required at the Annual Meeting. The chair of the Annual Meeting will call upon the Returning Officer.

Option B: Advanced Nominations and Nominations from the Floor

Nominations will be taken in advance of the Annual Meeting as well as from the floor at the Annual Meeting. Changes to the ballots will need to be made that evening and a Returning Officer will need to be present in the event an election is required.

The chair will announce the nominations that were received in advance of the Annual Meeting. The chair will call for nominations from the floor. Individuals nominated from the floor must be present that evening to qualify.

Nominations will be received by the Returning Officer until a motion is passed that nominations cease. Nominees may withdraw their nomination until a motion is passed that nominations cease and the chair calls for a vote by secret ballot.

If there are more names than elected seats and/or if community members are in the majority, an election would be required at the Annual Meeting as parents/guardians must be in the majority of the elected parent/guardian and community members. The chair of the Annual Meeting will call upon the Returning Officer.

Option C: Nominations from the Floor Only

Nominations will be taken from the floor at the Annual Meeting. Nominations will not be accepted in advance. Those individuals wishing to have their name stand for an elected position must be present on the evening of the Annual Meeting.

3. Nomination Forms

Nomination forms will be available from the school office and may be submitted during office hours. Nominees who have submitted the Nomination Form in advance of the Annual Meeting are not required to be in attendance at the Annual Meeting to appear on the ballot. Nominees who are nominated from the floor must be in attendance at the Annual Meeting to appear on the ballot.

4. Receipt and Safe-Keeping of Nominations

The Principal or Administrative Assistant (s) of the school will date and sign the nomination forms as they arrive at the front office. A **photocopy** of the signed and dated nomination form shall be given to the nominee. This signed photocopy would confirm that the form was appropriately completed, contains the required information and was received prior to the due date.

The Principal of the school should make provisions for security and safe storage of the nomination forms.

5. Public Information

The names of all nominees will become public and posted upon submission to the school office. The list will be updated as nominations are received. The list will simply define the name of each nominee and whether they are running as a parent/guardian or community member.

The names of nominees should be posted and updated in an area of the school that is visible to the parents/guardians and community members (i.e. on wall outside the front office, bulletin board in the school). The nomination forms should be held in the principal's safe-keeping and given to the Returning Officer at the Annual Meeting if an election is required.

6. Withdrawal of Nominations

Nominations submitted to the school office may be withdrawn at any time up to the closing date for nominations. At the Annual Meeting, nominees may withdraw their nomination until a motion is passed that nominations cease and the chair calls for a vote by secret ballot.

7. Voting

Persons Eligible to Vote in the School Community Council Election include:

- a **parent/guardian** of a student who attends the school for that School Community Council (including parents/guardians who do not reside within the attendance/geographic area of the school);
- a **community member** who is an elector and resides within the attendance or geographic area for that School Community Council's school, and is not a parent or guardian of a student who attends that school.

8. Voter Registration

School Community Councils shall have eligible parents/guardians and community members sign in on the voter registration form or sign a declaration stating their eligibility to vote before the meeting begins.

9. Breaking Election Ties

In the event of a tie vote, and if it is necessary to break the tie to determine the membership of the School Community Council, provision should be made for a candidate's name to be "picked from a hat".

10. Contested Election

If any parent/guardian or community member, who is eligible to vote in an election of a School Community Council, has reasonable basis to believe that an individual was not eligible to be elected to or vote in an election of that School Community Council, he or she may challenge that individual's eligibility by contacting the Principal of the school. The challenge must be made within 48 hours of the election.

The individual who makes the challenge shall provide his or her name and the basis of the challenge. The Principal of the school shall refer the matter to the Returning Officer who shall promptly investigate and make a ruling. The decision of the Returning Officer is final.

If the Returning Officer finds that an individual who was elected to or who voted in the School Community Council election was not eligible, the Returning Officer shall revise the final results of the election if they are impacted by that finding.

The Returning Officer shall destroy the ballots cast in an election of a School Community Council:

- if there is no challenge, once the time for making the challenge has expired; or
- if a challenge has been made, and once the Returning Officer has made a decision with respect to the challenge.

11. Destruction of Ballots

Immediately following the Annual Meeting, the ballots, voter registration, and election results shall be placed in a sealed envelope by the Returning Officer and given to the school Principal. The Principal shall store the sealed envelope in the school safe for 48 hours. Once the 48 hours has passed and the election has not been contested, the Returning Officer shall destroy the ballots.