



**A Handbook for
Principals and Catholic School
Community Councils**

June 2007

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I. Introduction

This handbook is designed to provide support to administrators, parents and community members as they establish and begin the work of their Catholic school community council. It reviews why this approach to parental and community involvement was created and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all parties. It discusses election procedures. Finally, the handbook outlines the work of the council and includes templates to support that work.

This handbook will likely evolve as our division begins this new endeavor and we discover together what needs to be added or changed to keep this manual useful and supportive.

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Two valuable resources produced by Saskatchewan School Boards Association were used in preparation of this handbook:

- A Handbook for School Community Councils and Principals
- Guidebook to Support School Community Council Implementation

II. Purpose and vision of Catholic school community councils

A. Purpose

Catholic school community councils are intended to strengthen the capacity of schools to improve children's learning. By helping families support their children's learning and by gathering community resources to ensure student well-being, councils will make a valuable contribution to the learning success of Saskatchewan students. School community councils will replace all other entities as defined by provincial legislation. School community councils are established within the authority of a board of education to ensure alignment of accountability, authority and responsibility among the schools in a division. The purpose of the school community council is to:

- develop shared responsibility for the learning success and well-being of all children and youth; and
- encourage and facilitate parent and community engagement in school planning and improvement processes.

B. Vision for Catholic school community councils

Catholic school community councils are an essential feature of educational planning and decision-making. They are part of the school system and are a primary link between the home, community and school. This vision of school community councils guides their formation, initiatives and evaluation.

The Catholic school community council is an integral, purposeful and valued component of school division governance. The school community council is:

- created through an election process;
- integrated into the board of education's decision-making process; and
- is guided by common standards included in legislation. Boards of education address flexibility through policy and procedure.

The Catholic school community council includes the community and represents students in the school. The school community council strives to have:

- membership that represents students in the school; and
- advisory positions to support implementation of SchoolPLUS.

The roles of the Catholic school community council are clear and well understood. The school community council:

- develops shared responsibility for learning success and well-being of children and youth;
- encourages and facilitates parent and community engagement in school planning and improvement processes; and
- provides guidance and direction from a lay perspective to the school, the school board and community organizations and agencies.

The responsibilities of the Catholic school community council address key matters that make a difference in student learning and well-being. The school community council:

- focuses its attention on areas of the Learning Improvement Plan where parent/community perspective and efforts are most appropriate and needed and
- monitors its activities to support continuous improvement of student learning and well-being.

The Catholic school community council aligns its work with goals and initiatives of the province and the school division. The school community council:

- aligns its work with the Department of Learning's overarching accountability framework and focuses on related school division goals and initiatives; and
- aligns its work with provincial and division learning and well-being outcomes for students.

The Catholic school community council is accountable, transparent and responsive in its relationship with parents and the school community. The school community council:

- actively engages parents and community members in matters of public education;
- reflects the nature of its community by collecting and sharing appropriate information with others; and
- regularly reports on its activities to parents, the school and the community.

Note: Each school community council within Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools will include the word “Catholic” as part of its official title.

III. Roles and responsibilities

A. Board of education roles and responsibilities

The board of education shall:

1. provide a board policy for Catholic school community councils (CSCC) and companion policies as needed to guide the work of CSCCs;
2. provide an annual grant to each CSCC for operating expenses;
3. recommend to the Minister of Learning the amalgamation of two or more CSCCs when the affected CSCCs are in agreement with the decision;
4. recommend to the Minister the separation of an amalgamated CSCC and the establishment of two or more CSCCs when the affected CSCCs are in agreement;
5. make all appointments of members to CSCCs as required, or as desirable and permitted, by *The Education Act, 1995* or the regulations;
6. determine the number of elected members;
7. determine the maximum number of members; and
8. assign the director of education the responsibilities outlined by the Education Act and Regulations to establish and maintain CSCCs in all of the division's schools.

B. Director of education roles and responsibilities

The director of education shall:

1. designate a senior administrative employee to be responsible for each CSCC;
2. provide orientation, training, developing and networking opportunities for members of CSCCs;
3. provide companion administrative procedures to form the parameters of the work of CSCCs; and
4. develop policies and procedures for the board's approval regarding appointment of CSCC members and the nomination and election of members.

C. Senior administrator roles and responsibilities

The senior administrator shall:

1. oversee the performance of the board of education employee appointed to act as the returning officer for the election of members to a CSCC. (This employee shall not be a member of the CSCC in question.)
2. ascertain and identify the specific geographic areas applicable for each school in order to define “community member” for election purposes;
3. recommend to the board of education appointment of the school principal, one teacher from the school staff, and in consultation with the specific CSCC, any other individuals;
4. if there is a vacancy in an elected member’s position, recommend an individual for the board of education to appoint to the CSCC;
5. approve each Learning Improvement Plan in accordance with the following criteria. The plan shall:
 - a. align with the school division plan;
 - b. focus on improved student learning;
 - c. indicate the role of the CSCC in supporting the plan;
6. approve each CSCC’s constitution and amendments;
7. receive the annual report from each CSCC by mid-July; and
8. ensure compliance with the financial policies of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

D. Catholic school community council roles and responsibilities

The Catholic school community council encourages and assists parent and community involvement. It is also required to help develop a framework that sees it share responsibility for the learning success and well-being of all children and youth.

The Catholic school community council shall:

1. work within school board policy and administrative procedures;
2. work to uphold the mission of Catholic education “to assist parents and the local church community in the formation of students in heart, mind, body and spirit”;
3. undertake activities to enhance its understanding of the community’s economic, social and health needs, its aspirations for pupils’ learning and

- well-being and the resources and supports needed for the school, parents, guardians, and community;
4. facilitate parent and community participation in school planning by cooperating with the principal and staff of the school to develop a Learning Improvement Plan that aligns with the division's goals and directions; the plan is then presented to the board of education for its approval;
 5. take action to fulfill initiatives assigned within the Learning Improvement Plan;
 6. communicate its plans, initiatives and outcomes annually to parents, guardians and the community;
 7. account publicly for how money was spent, by the CSCC, in accordance with board policy;
 8. meet at least five times per year plus an annual general meeting;
 9. participate in orientation, training, development and networking to enhance the CSCC's ability to fulfill its responsibilities; and
 10. not discuss or be given access to personal, confidential information or complaints about any student, family member, guardian, teacher, administrator, employee or board member of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

The Catholic school community council **may** at its discretion or when applicable:

1. provide advice and recommendations to the board of education, through the assigned representative of senior administration, respecting:
 - a. programs and educational service delivery, including fundraising, school fees, pupil code of conduct, grade discontinuance, school closure, and language of instruction; but not including educational delivery by a specific teacher;
 - b. locally determined course options; and
 - c. innovative projects;
2. provide advice and recommendations to the school by an annual review of school mission, vision and goals, programs and operations; and
3. provide advice and recommendations to other organizations, agencies and governments on the learning needs and well-being of children and youth.

IV. Linkage to the board of education

Catholic school community councils exist as an official arm of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education. As outlined in the *Roles and Responsibilities* section of this handbook, accountability is required of all partners. The following gives some guidance on the linkage of school community councils and school division trustees.

Catholic school community councils are to communicate with the board of education through:

- their respective trustee liaison board member;
- their principal, who will communicate with their senior administrator (unit superintendent);
- regional meetings of Catholic school community councils and the board.

A trustee liaison member may attend school community council meetings held in his/her unit if the board member is invited or gives notice that he or she would like to attend.

V. Composition of Catholic school community councils

A. Elected members

Catholic school community councils are designed to function as advisory bodies at the school level, with a focus on enhancing student learning and well-being. Members of the council may be elected or appointed.

There are to be up to nine and no less than five **elected** parents and or community members.

All parents are eligible to serve on Catholic school community councils.

Community members must be of the Catholic faith to serve as an elected member or to vote in an election. The following outlines community member geographic eligibility:

- Elementary schools: living within transportation attendance area for that school;
- High schools: living within transportation attendance areas of schools recognized as “feeder” schools of that high school;
- French immersion schools: as for all other elementary;
- Ukrainian bilingual: citywide;
- Alternate settings:
 - Bishop Murray – Varsity View Area
 - Sion Catholic Middle School – Holliston Area

The majority of elected members must be **parents**.

B. Appointed members

Councils will also have a number of **appointed members**. The following people must be appointed to a council:

- principal or designate
- teacher
- First Nations representative(s) as applicable (as outlined in Board Policy for Catholic school community councils, Appendix M)
- one or two high school students for secondary schools

Members of a council may choose to appoint additional members, subject to the approval of the board of education (Appendix L). Additional appointed members may include:

- a parish representative;
- community school coordinator;
- home-school liaison worker;
- classroom representatives;
- community association representative;
- community service organization representative; or
- any other member whose participation would be considered an asset to the council's operation.

The maximum number of council members is 50, to allow for a school community to organize its council based on its needs and local traditions.

VI. Election procedures

All Catholic school community councils are called upon to establish a date and location for an annual general meeting. School community council members should be elected at this meeting if an election is required. The chair of the meeting should be predetermined and should be someone who is comfortable with running the election and who would not be seen as having a conflict of interest. The past chairperson or the vice-principal may be suitable for this role.

A. Agenda

The following is a sample agenda for an annual general meeting.

1. Call to order/prayer
2. Approval of agenda
3. A report on and explanation of the process to elect parents and community members to the CSCC
4. Call for nominations and/or nomination report of the returning officer
5. Candidate remarks
6. Election of the parent and community members, if necessary
7. Declaration by the meeting chair of those elected
8. Expression of appreciation
9. Other business, if any
10. Adjournment

All Catholic school community councils are mandated to follow the election procedures as outlined in this handbook. These procedures do allow for flexibility in nomination procedures, size of council and timing of the annual general meeting. The annual grant provided by the division is designed in part to help with the cost of elections.

B. Returning officer

The returning officer should be the school's office coordinator unless there are extenuating circumstances that make this unworkable. In such cases, the principal will designate another staff member. According to the Education Act, the returning officer must be an employee who will not be serving on the school community council. Remuneration will be provided to this person at a set amount

as determined by the board of education and will be based on the hours to perform two areas of responsibility:

1. Preparation for the annual general meeting and the election process
 - a. providing public notice (Appendix A)
 - b. preparation and receiving of nomination documentation (Appendix B)
 - c. preparation of ballots (Appendix D)
 - d. preparation of voter registration sheet (Appendix C)

2. Attendance at the annual general meeting for the election process
 - a. supervision of voter registration sheet
 - b. distribution of ballots
 - c. counting of ballots
 - d. recruitment of two volunteers to witness the counting of ballots at the annual general meeting if an election should occur
 - e. destruction of ballots

C. Providing public notice

The returning officer shall ensure the date of the annual general meeting is posted publicly at least four weeks before the meeting. The notice should be advertised or posted in such a way that it would be reasonably expected to reach the parents or guardians of students of that school and the community members in the area. Possibilities are school newsletters, notices and posters, church bulletins and posters and community association newsletters (Appendix A). The notice of the meeting shall state:

1. the meeting's purpose and the attendance or geographic area for the school community council;
2. where to review policies or procedures developed by the board of education respecting the election of school community councils ;
3. the date and time of the meeting;
4. the nomination procedure that will be used;
5. the number of positions open for election; and
6. voter qualifications.

D. Nomination procedures

All parents are eligible for nomination. Community members must live in the attendance area as defined by this policy and be of the Catholic faith. Nominations shall occur in **one** of three methods listed below. Each CSCC shall determine its method based on its knowledge of the community.

1. Advance nominations can be formally collected prior to the annual meeting with a cut-off date of one week prior to the meeting. (See suggested nomination form, Appendix B). Using this method will allow communities to determine if an election is needed at all.
2. Advance nominations and nominations from the floor at the annual general meeting.
3. Nominations taken from the floor at the annual general meeting.

A nomination form, once it is received, is information that may be available to the public. The list of nominees can be made available if it's requested but there is no legislative expectation that the list be publicly announced or posted before the public meeting. However, the school may decide to post names on the school website prior to the meeting to give voters advance notice. It is advisable not to release any information other than the candidates' names and whether they are a parent/guardian or a community member.

Provision must be made for those situations where no election is required. Where an advance nomination process has been established, upon the close of nominations the returning officer should be empowered to declare that no election is required. And, so long as no provision has been made to take additional nominations from the floor, the meeting may be cancelled. Announcement of election results for the CSCC should include the cancellation notice. However, if other matters are to be considered at the meeting it may certainly proceed.

E. Voting procedures

The following people may cast a vote in a Catholic school community council election:

- a parent or guardian of a student who attends that school;
- a community member who is of the Catholic faith and living within the transportation attendance area as defined by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

Subject to other requirements of the Education Act respecting eligibility, a school community council should establish the number of elected members (nine). In the event that fewer than the established number come forward, then the number of elected representatives shall be that number and no less than five (as per *Education Act 140.2 (a)*).

If five are not elected, the senior administrator shall work with the CSCC to appoint additional member(s) to meet the required minimum of five members. The majority of elected school community council members must be parents of students attending the school. Ballots can be constructed to reflect the parent majority.

If an election is necessary, the CSCC members shall be elected at the annual meeting by secret ballot (Appendix D). All those attending the annual general meeting shall be required to register on a voter registration sheet (Appendix C) and must confirm their eligibility to vote in order to receive a ballot. All parents/guardians are automatically eligible to vote. Community members must live in the geographic area as defined in this policy and be electors as defined by *The Local Government Election Act* (Appendix E).

The risk associated with this process is that the desired council makeup may not be achieved. This can be resolved by appointing individuals that are more reflective of student demographics or the CSCC could be encouraged to consult regularly with the particular demographic group not represented on the council.

Ballots should be counted by the returning officer and witnessed by two volunteers. The results should then be conveyed by the returning officer to the chairperson of the meeting, who should then announce the results. Individual vote counts should not be announced. 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". At the conclusion of the election proceedings, a motion should be passed requesting that the returning officer destroy the ballots.

The procedure for appointing student members can be determined at the school level. The role of students is to provide a student perspective on matters before the CSCC. This can be achieved in a variety of ways and does not necessarily require that the student(s) be a student representative council (SRC) member. Students should be authentic partners in the discussion and decision-making processes of the CSCC (Appendix F – Youth Launch Information).

The student member or members shall be recommended to the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education for its approval, based on the recommendation of the senior administrator, in consultation with the school principal.

F. Terms of office

Each elected member of a Catholic school community council will hold office for two years and is eligible for re-election. However, there will be an exception made for approximately half of the members elected at a council's first election. In the CSCC's first year of operation approximately one-half of the members are to be elected or appointed to one-year terms and the other members are to be elected or appointed to two-year terms. Councils may use a draw from a hat or some other method of determining which members will hold one and two year terms of office. All subsequent elected terms shall be for two years.

Appointed members, with the exception of student appointments, each hold office for two years and are eligible for reappointment. Any student who is appointed holds office for one year and is eligible for reappointment.

Members who cannot fulfill their full term must complete a formal notice of withdrawal to be submitted to the senior administrator. Vacancies that occur shall be filled by appointments made by the board of education. Individuals are recommended by the CSCC and must be approved by the senior administrator.

A member of a CSCC is required to vacate his/her office if:

- the member is convicted of an indictable offence;
- is absent from three or more consecutive meetings without authorization of the council;
- the member ceases to be eligible pursuant to policies of the board of education; or
- the member was elected as a parent and his or her child is no longer a student at the school. The parent then ceases to be eligible pursuant to the regulation or the policies of the board of education.

VII. Establishing the Catholic school community council

A. Determining officers

Each CSCC shall select its officers from among its elected parent and community members, student and Indian band council members, within three weeks of the annual meeting. The principal shall act as chairperson until the council chairperson is selected.

The principal shall provide the senior administrator with a complete list of all CSCC members and its officers once they are selected. A request for approval of appointed members (Appendix L) must also be submitted according to the following procedure:

1. request form is submitted to unit superintendent;
2. unit superintendent obtains board approval; and
3. a signed copy is returned to the council and a copy is kept by the unit superintendent.
4. Any change to appointed members requires a new form.

B. Guide for roles and responsibilities of council officers

The **chairperson** will:

- conduct meetings of the council;
- ensure that all members have input on discussion and decisions;
- prepare meeting agendas in consultation with the principal and other council members;
- oversee council operations;
- establish networks that support the council; and
- act as a spokesperson for the council.

The **vice-chairperson** will:

- support the chairperson in his/her duties, taking over when the chairperson is unable to attend;
- perform responsibilities assigned by the chairperson; and

- normally become the chairperson the following year.

The **secretary** will:

- take minutes at council meetings;
- receive and send correspondence on behalf of the council;
- take charge of any official records of the council;
- maintain a membership list of all council members; and
- ensure that appropriate notice is given for all council meetings.

The **treasurer** will:

- record all expenses and revenue;
- report to the school community council on a monthly basis;
- prepare all monies for deposit;
- maintain a bank account with dual signing authority; and
- prepare an annual report.

A council may also wish to include various committees within its structure. Councils may wish to have longer-term committees (standing committees) such as a fundraising committee, parent volunteering committee or committees that are created to address some aspect of the Learning Improvement Plan. Councils may also wish to create shorter term (ad hoc) committees to address immediate issues.

Committees can be internal and composed exclusively of CSCC members or be external and include other parents, community members or interested and knowledgeable individuals. By using external committees the CSCC can encourage more general parent and community involvement, draw on expertise of those within the school community and lighten the workload for individual council members. If operated effectively, committees can make council more productive and its decisions more representative of the school community. In all cases, committees are advisory to the council. They should never be empowered to make independent decisions that would impact on the work of the council and committee members must know that council may or may not accept their advice.

Councils should develop a committee communication/reporting strategy to ensure the valuable work committees do on behalf of the Catholic school community council is taken into account.

C. Schedule of meetings

A schedule of meetings must be determined by the Catholic school community council. A minimum of five meetings plus the annual general meeting must be held. CSCC meetings are not the forum to discuss or be given access to personal, confidential information or complaints about any student, family member, guardian, teacher, administrator, employee or board member of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

D. Building a constitution

One of the first steps a Catholic school community council will take in order to fulfill its responsibilities is to begin building a constitution. Within six months of its organizational meeting, the CSCC is to prepare a constitution that will govern the council's operations. The constitution and bylaws must conform to all relevant sections of *The Education Act*. The constitution supports the council in conducting its day-to-day affairs and becomes a structure that provides direction for its ongoing work and how it will relate to others. Submitting its constitution to the board of education for approval will provide a council with a valuable opportunity for feedback as well as help it develop an open and transparent relationship with the board, based on mutual understanding.

The provincial policy framework for school community councils suggests what a council's constitution should include. Each Catholic school community council shall establish a constitution that:

- outlines its structure and officers;
- outlines a schedule of meetings;
- outlines a means of public communication;
- outlines a code of conduct;
- outlines a decision-making process; and
- outlines a dispute resolution protocol.

A template for building a Catholic school community council constitution is included in Appendix G. Each council is to forward its completed constitution to the board of education for approval.

E. Creating a council code of conduct

A Catholic school community council must develop a code of conduct that fosters positive, cooperative, student-focused and forward-looking relationships among

parents, the school and community. Ideally, the council's code of conduct should outline the council's expectations of its members and guide behavior. A council may also wish to include reference to a guideline regarding conflict of interest in its code of conduct. An example follows.

Example:

A Catholic school community council member shall:

- conduct business of the council according to the values and teachings of the Catholic faith;
- be guided by the overall vision and purpose of Catholic school community councils;
- practise high standards of honesty and integrity;
- recognize and respect each member of the school community council;
- encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
- contribute to consensus building;
- consider the best interests of all students;
- use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise;
- declare any conflict of interest;
- endeavour to be familiar with school and school division policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them; and
- be respectful of all members of our school community by not discussing information or complaints about a specific student, parent, staff member or any other employee of the board.

A suggested process for establishing a code of conduct:

1. Read examples of other school council codes of conduct.
2. Have members individually write principles that they believe should guide school community council members and that might help guide council members' behaviour. Questions to guide discussion include:
 - a. What is most important to our group?
 - b. What are the basic understandings that will help guide us in our interactions with each other and with others?

3. Record all suggestions on a flip chart.
4. Identify common ideas or themes.
5. Translate these themes/ideas into statements to create a draft of your council's code of conduct.
6. Review your draft, making any changes council members think are necessary.
7. Approve a motion to adopt your code of conduct.

This document is to be submitted to the board of education for approval.

F. Determining a decision-making process

As part of forming its constitution, each CSCC needs to determine the decision-making process it intends to use. Councils may choose to use either model presented or a combination of both.

Decision-Making Processes

Advantages

Disadvantages

Majority Vote Model

The issue is discussed and a vote is taken. The majority vote decides the issue.

Some opportunity for modification during discussion.

Can create a “win/lose” situation and some participants may be dissatisfied.

Clear decision is made, can be quick and efficient way to make a clear-cut decision on an issue.

Council members, especially the chairperson, must understand the rules of order for voting.

Can negatively affect team building.

Consensus Building Model

Consensus does not necessarily mean that all parties agree, but that all can live with a decision for the sake of the group’s ability to move forward. It requires that all members listen to each other’s opinions and try to find solutions to problems and differences. Consensus will almost always involve compromise and can release a group to move beyond individual wants to determining and pursuing shared needs.

Ensures all council members have an effective voice.

Requires time, a clear process, skill and the full participation of all members.

Builds on differing perspectives and values.

If council is operating by pure consensus, the status quo will continue whenever there is a stalemate.

Allows for flexibility in arriving at solutions.

Can build respect for differing values and viewpoints.

Can lead to better informed, more creative, balanced and enduring decisions.

Ensures the final decision has the support of the entire council.

VIII. Educational responsibilities of the Catholic school community council

A. Developing the Learning Improvement Plan

The Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools policy for Catholic school community councils states that one role of the CSCC is to:

“Facilitate parent and community participation in school planning by cooperating with the principal and the staff of the school in developing and recommending, for the board of education’s approval, a Learning Improvement Plan that aligns with the division’s goals and directions.”

School communities may vary in how much their parent community has previously been involved in school improvement and in setting goals for their school. The following are suggested steps to guide involvement of parents and community members in “developing and recommending” a Learning Improvement Plan (LIP) for board approval.

1. Begin with mission, vision and goals

- Discuss, study and review school mission and existing school belief statements.
- Belief statements may outline a vision describing what the council and others want the school to look like. What is the ideal learning community?
- Based on the belief statements/vision, what goals need to be set in terms of making the vision a reality?
- How do these goals align with the priority areas and goals set by the division?

2. Review the school profile with staff

- Demographics
- Programs and initiatives presently operating at the school
- Student needs
- Needs and concerns and rationale to support concerns
- Goals, as determined by staff, to address school needs and to align with school division goals

3. Examine with staff the greatest area of need (GAN) that has guided the staff formation of goals (learning outcomes)

Using the jointly developed mission, vision and goals to reassess needs will:

- help indicate how to use resources in the most effective and equitable manner;
- help match services with needs;
- take the guesswork out of planning;
- increase accountability;
- encourage broad-based parent and community member participation; and
- raise community awareness, understanding, acceptance.

Needs assessment involves:

- identifying needs;
- assigning priority to needs; and
- identifying services, resources and strengths to address needs.

4. Developing learning outcomes

Learning outcomes outline the actions that must be taken to work toward the goals. The LIP will set learning outcomes related to the identified needs, keeping in mind the resources the school community already has and those it may wish to draw upon.

The SMART test can be helpful when formulating outcomes. Objectives should be:

- **Specific**
- **Measureable**
- **Attainable**
- **Realistic**
- **Time-limited**

5. Creating an action plan

The action plan turns the objectives into actions or program activities that will work toward achieving the vision. The action plan includes:

- the learning outcomes identified;
- indicators of success;
- actions to achieve outcomes;
- assignment of responsibilities; and
- timeline or schedule for accomplishing work.

Catholic school community councils will need to determine which aspects of the staff-developed action plan fall within its responsibility.

This can be done by examining and considering how the CSCC can be involved in supporting the goals identified by staff:

- for each learning outcome, brainstorm how the CSCC might support the staff in its efforts;
- consider which resources are available and needed; and
- develop an action plan for CSCC involvement in the LIP.

There may be instances where the CSCC feels strongly about assuming responsibility for working on a division goal not chosen by the staff and creates a plan of action and assumes all responsibility for working in the identified area.

6. Identifying program supports

In order to fulfill the responsibilities it has adopted in the LIP, a council will need to consider what services, resources and strengths it needs to support its planned actions. Examples of services and supports include:

- services available in the community;
- volunteer time;
- donations of time or money; and
- programs available in the community.

7. Recommending the plan to the board of education

The CSCC must recommend its plan to the board of education for the board's approval. By working together to develop the plan, the council and staff of the school can improve understanding and relationships and truly share responsibility for student learning and well-being.

8. Monitoring, evaluating and communicating accomplishments

The Learning Improvement Plan is to be reported annually to the senior administrator. The Catholic school community council is responsible for communicating its work and specifically its participation in the LIP to the community.

The Learning Improvement Plan template can be found in Appendix J.

IX. Accountability and budget

As an official arm of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education, each Catholic school community council is accountable to the board and to the school community it represents.

A. The annual report

A council can focus on what it wants to achieve by starting on a working draft of its annual report during the early days of its term. Some broad categories councils could take into account include efforts/initiatives undertaken related to each of the council's responsibilities, including:

- an outline of the Learning Improvement Plan, including initiatives council has undertaken as part of the LIP and intended outcomes of these initiatives;
- an outline of initiatives taken outside of the Learning Improvement Plan and their intended outcomes;
- advice provided by the council related to school fees, fundraising and the student code of conduct;
- a description of the council's participation in consultative processes; and,
- expenditure of funds related to operation of the CSCC.

As the year progresses, a council can amend its "working draft" to reflect the circumstances it encounters. The following provides a guideline of the report and a template is available in Appendix I.

Guideline:

Catholic School Community Council Annual Report Name of School / Date of Submission

1. Begin with a positive opening statement addressed to parents and the school community, including an open invitation to all Catholic school community council meetings.
2. List the names and positions of council members, including their representation (parents, students, First Nations, staff, community) and whether they are officers of the council.
3. Name, identify, and acknowledge the efforts and commitment of outgoing Catholic school community council members from the previous year.

4. List the dates of the previous year's council meetings, as well as any information about upcoming meetings.
5. Attach a copy of the Learning Improvement Plan and describe progress to date. Acknowledge involvement of community members and others related to each of the initiatives falling under the CSCC's responsibility.
6. Describe progress on other CSCC initiatives.
7. Describe any fundraising activities and/or school fees the CSCC has approved. Provide a financial statement related to these activities.
8. Include a copy of the code of conduct and note any changes that council has approved.
9. Include a financial statement describing all monies spent by council.

B. Budget and Finances

Review of Finances (as per Board Policy IAB)

A recent Saskatchewan School Boards Association research report outlines five broad issues related to school fees and fundraising that councils may wish to consider. Briefly, the issues are:

- 1. Monitoring:** Who is keeping track of the monies collected through school fees and fundraising? Who is monitoring how much is collected or raised and how the money is being spent?
- 2. Transparency in Reporting:** Are students and/or parents/guardians consistently made aware of what they are paying for, how much they are paying and the reasons for payment, both in terms of time and money?
- 3. Barriers to Learning:** Are costs and/or practices associated with school fees and fundraising creating a barrier to equitable learning opportunities for some students?
- 4. Educational Benefit:** Are the school programs' learning objectives, beliefs and goals in harmony with fundraising practices or other activities requiring collection of fees?
- 5. Governance:** Do the board of education and the school recognize their responsibilities and their authority regarding accounting for costs associated with school fees and fundraising activities? How are the funds administered?

Fundraising activities as proposed by school administration, the Catholic school community council or the student representative council are to be reviewed and approved. The review of the fundraising plans is to include:

- determination of activities that financially benefit the school and those activities that support charitable causes;

- a determination of how well schools, communities and other organizations are coordinating their fundraising efforts and concerns regarding saturation of activities in the community and school;
- assurance that legal requirements are met, and contracts approved, including vending machines (refer to Administrative Policy JGA - corporate involvement); and,
- assurance that provision is made to report fundraising activities in the monthly statement of accounts in accordance with school division policy and guidelines (Board Policy IAB).

School community councils and implications for other school groups

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Bonnie Ozirny, director of legal services, Saskatchewan School Boards Association, on Feb. 27, 2007, regarding band parent associations and after-grad committees.

“In many schools, other parent groups formed on an ad hoc basis as volunteers to support the school in a variety of ways, and, in some cases, groups of parents incorporated pursuant to *The Non-profit Corporations Act, 1995* for a specific purpose to support a school program or project.

Key points:

- It is important to emphasize that any group of parents who wish to support the school or engage in activities in the name of the school must do so within the parameters of the policies of the board of education. Funds raised by those groups in the name of the school must be accounted for in accordance with board policy. Access to the school or contact with the students or their parents/guardians occurs only in accordance with board policy and with the approval of the appropriate official of the board of education.
- The role of SCCs is legislated and further elaborated by policies and procedures of the board of education. Any other group of parents that wishes to engage in an activity to support the school cannot, of its own choosing, duplicate any part of the SCC’s role or act in a manner contrary to the SCC’s role.
- A board of education is ultimately responsible to account for all monies raised in the name of the schools within its school division, therefore, all fundraising must be in accordance with board policy. Boards of education may, by policy, delegate some responsibility in this regard to the SCCs, so that accountability first occurs at the school level.

- If an individual is a member of a SCC and also is part of a group of parents who engage in activities to support the school, that individual must always remember in what capacity he or she is acting and not confuse his or her role as a SCC member with the other activities.

Generally, these other groups of parents who come together in some manner to support the school fall into the following categories:

(a) Non-profit corporations that support the school/school program:

For the most part, groups of parents incorporated as non-profit corporations to support band/music programs in the school, for example, or for the narrow purpose of becoming a legal entity in order to apply for certain grants. While non-profit corporations must adhere to the provisions of *The Non-profit Corporations Act, 1995*, these groups engaged in activities related to the school must also comply with board policy.

These entities can continue to exist provided:

- the objectives or purposes of the entity do not overlap in any way with the role of the SCC, and are precisely and narrowly described;
- they operate within policies/procedures of the board of education, including liaison with the SCC and accounting for money raised to support the school;
- the name of the entity does not include the words “school community council” or similar words which might cause parents/guardians or the school community to confuse the entity with the SCC;
- a copy of the incorporating documents are filed with the principal of the school or other official of the board of education;
- if the purpose for which the non-profit corporation exists is only for the purpose of applying for a grant for a specific school, administrators should explore options for accessing the grant, such as through a community group or by the board of education with the grant money to be specifically targeted to the specific school.

(b) Non-profit corporations that use school facilities/operate out of the school:

Various non-profit corporations operate out of the school building to provide services beyond the services that boards of education are authorized to provide or which boards may facilitate, cooperate in or participate in. Some examples are: pre-Kindergarten educational

programs; day-care; before and after school programs for school-age children.

The establishment of SCCs has no impact on the continued existence of these non-profit corporations. Boards of education should ensure that they have proper written agreements with these non-profit corporations that use the school facility, and that parents who access the services understand who the service-provider is. It is essential that any group of individuals that provides these kinds of services are, in fact, incorporated entities.

(c) Ad hoc groups for purpose of fundraising:

Often a group of parents organizes informally out of common interest, for example, they organize “family fun nights”, “hot dog day”, etc., for the purpose of raising money to purchase equipment or other items for their school.

These groups can continue to exist provided:

- They operate within the policies/procedures of the board of education, including accounting for money raised. These groups will work with or through CSCCs as board policy may require, and within CSCC guidelines where the board of education has delegated responsibility or approval for fundraising to CSCCs.

Local Budget

The board of education helps offset expenses of Catholic school community councils through the provision of a grant, the amount to be determined annually. This grant money is to be used to cover the operating expenses of councils as outlined below.

Allocation of Funds

- The board of education annually establishes a grant that provides operational funds for CSCCs.
- The grant is in the form of an established dollar level per CSCC per year.
- Funds are allocated for council operations only, not for school projects or to enhance the school’s decentralized budget.
- The CSCC is to establish an annual local budget based on the funds allocated.

Purpose of Funds

- Vehicle expense allowance for out-of-community events and meetings, *Per diem* is not included
- Communication and public relations
- Conference attendance and professional development
- Incidental expenses such as postage and printing

Annual Statement

- By June 30 of each year, the unit superintendent is to be provided with an annual statement outlining the CSCC revenues and expenditures pertaining to the allotted grant.

X. Assessing Your Council's Effectiveness

As part of your annual report process it would be a valuable practice to spend some time as a council assessing your effectiveness. You should consider the following factors:

- Effectiveness of council meetings
 - regularity of meetings;
 - attendance;
 - productivity of meetings;
 - good use of time;

- Follow-through on plans
 - sharing of responsibilities
 - successes
 - what didn't happen as planned and why
 - what do we need to change or how do we need to improve?
 - what would increase our effectiveness?
 - what are our future plans?

See Appendix K for template

XI. The principal's role on the Catholic school community council

A. Building relationships

Within the Catholic school community council framework, the principal of the school is not only an appointed member of the CSCC, she/he also plays an important role in developing a school climate that is open and inviting to parents and community members. While specific responsibilities associated with the principal's role may vary among school divisions or types of schools, in general principals have the central role in promoting and supporting the ongoing development of school community councils.

Principals can promote council development by:

- encouraging parent and community participation in the council election process;
- providing guidance in the creation of the council constitution; and
- assisting councils with development of a communication plan.

Principals can support ongoing development of Catholic school community councils by:

- providing necessary advice and information related to the school community;
- seeking the council's advice on school-level decisions;
- providing information related to council's approval of fundraising activities and school fees and the student code of conduct; and
- taking a leadership role in the development of the Learning Improvement Plan.

How the principal can fulfill these varied roles is further explored in the next sections of the handbook.

B. Promoting Catholic school community council development

Elections

It is the school division's responsibility to name an individual, other than the principal of the school, to act as an election supervisor (returning officer) for the

purpose of nominating and electing the Catholic school community council. However, principals may be given some responsibility for ensuring the election process runs smoothly. Such responsibilities may include arranging the annual meeting as well as ensuring election processes are in place.

- **Arranging for the Annual Meeting**

It is important that all parents and community members are informed ahead of time of the annual meeting, understand the importance of their attendance and feel comfortable attending and participating in council elections. Important details related to the annual meeting that principals may wish to consider include:

- estimating participation and advising the returning officer of suitable venues (a space where participants feel welcome and is large enough to accommodate all participants);
- working with the returning officer to develop a strategy to encourage participation;
- working with the returning officer to determine ways to publicize the meeting date (general communication avenues such as public media, as well as through school communication networks); and
- encouraging participation in the nomination process through “shoulder tapping” and networking.

- **Assisting with the election process**

Principals may be asked to make the following arrangements for the Catholic school community council election:

- supply nomination forms
- arrange for scrutineers or volunteer witnesses;
- arrange for printing and counting of ballots;
- provide a procedure for resolution of disputes; and
- explain school division governing policy or operational procedure on council elections.

Guidance in developing the constitution

A Catholic school community council may require guidance to develop its constitution. While the provincial Policy Framework for School Community Councils provides suggestions regarding what a constitution should include, a principal’s leadership experience can be a valuable asset as a council creates its constitution. By sitting in on initial constitution development meetings, principals

can provide moral support and common sense guidance should councils run into difficulty. Principals may also wish to offer direct support by providing examples of school division policies or operating procedures in areas such as conflict of interest and conflict resolution and by providing descriptions of existing groups within the school community that the council may wish to include as standing committees.

Developing a communication plan

It is crucial that the Catholic school community council and the principal jointly decide upon strategies that allow for open and honest two-way communication. Principals will likely already know of effective communication channels that exist within the school community and may also have “tried and true” communication strategies they have found effective. As councils are forming, a principal’s ideas and experiences will be of great help. It is also vitally important that the principal and council chairperson develop communication channels and strategies. Principals may wish to meet with their council chairpersons early in this persons term to determine how these can be established. Some suggestions include:

- finding a regular, mutually agreeable time during the week when the principal and Catholic school community council chairperson can meet and review issues;
- setting up school “mailboxes” for council and the principal where non-urgent mail can be directed;
- establishing a plan for two-way communication of urgent information; and,
- arranging a link to the school community council on the school website.

C. Supporting ongoing council development

Providing advice and information related to the school community

A principal can help his or her council develop a positive relationship with the school community by providing it with information related to the school’s policies, practices and routines. Providing the council with an up-to-date calendar of school events will help with its planning and ensure that council events and general school events do not interfere with one another. As part of orientation to its role, a new council will also need to develop some understanding of the context of its school. Principals can help the council by sharing current information on topics such as:

- school policies regarding volunteers;
- school policies regarding homework, absenteeism, field trips and other student-related matters;

- the roles and responsibilities of key school personnel, including the principal, vice-principal, janitor, lunch and playground supervisors, other support staff and inter-agency personnel (for example community school coordinators, school resource officers and social workers);
- a profile of the school, including the range of programs offered, learning needs of students, school resources including facilities, number of school staff, demographic and other school community variables. For more information on creating school profiles see: Online Learning for Administrators Planning for More Successful Schools: Creating School Profiles
http://www.saskschools.ca/curr_content/online_admin/successful/profiles/
- current school goals and targets for achievement;
- expectations related to student conduct and behavior;
- school building safety guidelines including emergency plans; and
- guidelines regarding information sharing.

Seeking advice

As a Catholic school community council goes about fulfilling its responsibilities, its understanding of the school and the school community will deepen. A council will then be able to provide the principal with valuable information about the community's needs and aspirations for student learning and well-being, as well as the resources and supports that potentially exist within the community. Principals may wish to encourage information sharing by suggesting that the council provide advice in the following areas:

- extracurricular programs;
- certain aspects of the curriculum such as family life;
- supports and enhancements to the learning program; and
- e-learning.

Principals may also wish to encourage councils to share information and advice with other organizations, agencies and governments about the learning and well-being of children and youth by:

- providing councils with contact information for key individuals in agencies, organizations and government; and
- requesting that council members be included in meetings with key individuals within organizations, agencies and government.

Providing information related to council's approval of fundraising activities, school fees and the student code of conduct

The Local Accountability and Partnerships Panel suggested in its report to the minister that including approval of fundraising activities, school fees and the student code of conduct within the school community council's responsibilities may be a way to enhance transparency and public accountability. It is understood that approval is provided within the context of board of education governing policy and administrative operational procedure. In this regard principals may wish to provide councils with information related to:

- division policy and operational procedure on school fees and fundraising;
- a history of fundraising initiatives and how they relate to school goals and objectives;
- a history of school fees and how they relate to school goals and objectives; and
- a copy of the existing student code of conduct including the reasoning that is behind inclusion of each item of the code.

Taking a leadership role in developing the Learning Improvement Plan

In 2006, the provincial government identified four educational priorities it believes are critical to the province's future. It then created a framework, the Continuous Improvement Framework, to help school divisions achieve positive outcomes in each of these four priority areas, which are:

- higher levels of literacy and student achievement;
- equitable opportunities for all students;
- smooth transitions into and through the system; and
- strong system-wide accountability and governance.

At the schools, it is expected that the school community council will collaborate with the school principal and school staff to develop a local Learning Improvement Plan. The Learning Improvement Plan will align with the division's Continuous Improvement Framework and address the priorities of the province and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools while enabling local flexibility. It is expected that principals will lead development of the Learning Improvement Plan. In order to familiarize councils with the process of developing these plans, a description of processes that help in developing and approving the Learning Improvement Plan is included in this handbook. (Appendix J)

Appendix A:

Public Notice Examples

Catholic School Community Councils

A Word for Parents and Community Members

A parent or community member serving on the Catholic school community council is:

- a dedicated volunteer providing advice for educational planning and decision-making at the school level;
- interested in working with others (including the board of education, school division administrators, parents, community members and other council members) to support student learning success and well-being;
- willing to be guided by principles that support good Catholic school community council practice; and,
- able to provide a two-year commitment to the work of council.

As a council member you might expect to:

- attend monthly meetings from September to June;
- participate in building a constitution;
- engage in the work of the council such as:
 - creating a school and program profile;
 - jointly developing the Learning Improvement Plan with the staff of the school;
 - providing advice to the school, board of education and other community organizations and agencies;
 - approving school fundraising activities, school fees and the student code of conduct;
 - taking action on council initiatives to help families support their children's learning;
 - reporting to parents and community on council progress; and
 - working with other council members to learn more about the role of the council and how to fulfill its responsibilities.

Your role as a council member is to build shared responsibility among parents, the community and school for student learning and well-being and to lead parent and community involvement in school planning and improvement.

Get involved in your school!

Catholic school community councils are being elected at each school in our school division next fall. These councils will replace existing home and school associations or parent associations.

The purpose of the Catholic school community council is to:

- support student learning success and well-being; and
- encourage parent and community involvement in school.

A council is accountable to its community. Its responsibilities are to:

- support parent and community involvement in the school;
- work with the staff of its school to develop and recommend a Learning Improvement Plan to the board of education;
- help parents to support their children's learning; and
- provide advice to the board, school staff and others about the learning program, policies and educational service delivery.

Parents and community members are encouraged to participate in school community council elections and become involved in their school.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCILS ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS

Schools in our area are **now accepting nominations** for positions on the new Catholic school community councils. Most of the Catholic elementary schools and the high school in this area will hold elections for their councils in September.

How are school councils changing?

The new Catholic school community councils are replacing our existing parent councils and parent committees and will have a new and different role in our community. Although the councils will provide advice to the school and participate in school planning, their main responsibility will be to engage the students' community and homes in support of student learning and well-being.

That's why the councils need to reflect our students and the neighbourhood community. While it is important that parents of students enrolled in our schools take a leadership role, it is equally important that there is a place for the community to be represented.

Who can run for council?

All parents or guardians of students enrolled in the schools may run or vote in the elections of the Catholic school community council.

As well, community members who:

-live within the transportation attendance area of the school in question (as determined by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools)

-and are of the Catholic faith

may vote or run in the election of the new Catholic school community council in their area.

For more information about the Catholic school community council at your neighbourhood school or to put your name forward for the council, please contact the school. Annual general meetings and elections have been scheduled for the following dates:

Catholic school community council elections

You have a vote!

Catholic school community councils (CSCCs) provide a new form of parent and community involvement in Catholic schools. Councils replace existing home and school or parent associations and have a new and different role. Most importantly, the main effort of the CSCCs is in the community. Although they provide advice to the school and participate in school planning, their main responsibility is to engage the students' community and homes in support of student learning and well-being.

For this reason, CSCCs need to reflect students and the community. It is important that parents of students enrolled in the school take a prime leadership role but it is also important that there is a place for the community as well.

All **parents or guardians** of students enrolled in the school may run or vote in the election of the CSCC.

Community members who reside within the transportation attendance area of the school as determined by the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education and are of the Catholic faith may run or vote in the election of the CSCC. Potential voters will be asked to sign a registration sheet at the public meeting where the elections will be held. A ballot will then be distributed. Proof of qualification to vote is not required.

Parent/community member election information announcement
--

How to get involved in your school . . .

Our school is electing our new Catholic school community council. A public meeting will be held on **<Monday, Jan. 1, 2045>** at **<6 a.m.>** to conduct the elections.

Parent and guardians of students attending the school may vote or run for a spot on the council.

The **<St. Patrick>** Catholic School Community Council will include parents and community members elected to the council. A community member is someone who lives in the transportation attendance area of **<St. Patrick School>** and is of the Catholic faith. Further information is available at the school. Our board of education encourages our council to reflect our student population.

Nominations of parents and community members interested in standing for election must be submitted on the official forms and be received at the school office by noon on **<Dec. 31, 2008>**. Nomination forms are available at the school.

To learn more about getting involved contact: **<Jane Smith>**, School Returning Officer at **<659-0000>**

Announcement seeking nominations

Does the <St. Patrick> Catholic School Community Council need you?

The <St. Patrick> Catholic School Community Council will include elected parent and community members. The majority of members must be parents or guardians of students attending the school. A significant number of students enrolled at <St. Patrick> School are <First Nations and Metis; from immigrant families> and the board of education encourages that one or more of the parent and community members be reflective of this component of the student population.

Candidate Qualifications:

Any person who is a **parent or guardian** of a pupil enrolled in the school may stand for election of the Catholic school community council.

A **community member** who lives in the school's transportation area and is of the Catholic faith may stand for election to the Catholic school community council.

Nomination Forms:

Nominations open <Dec. 31, 2008> and forms are available at the school. Nomination forms must be returned to the school one week prior to our annual general meeting on <Jan. 1, 2009>.

Or

Nominations will be accepted prior to the annual general meeting by submitting a nomination form that can be picked up at the office. Nominations will also be taken from the floor on <Jan. 1, 2009> at our annual general meeting.

Or

Nominations will be taken from the floor at our annual general meeting on <Jan. 1, 2009>.

To Learn More:

Contact <Jane Smith>, School Returning Officer at <659-7000> or Email: <returningofficer@gscs.sk.ca>

Appendix B:

Nomination Form

The following form can be used to collect nominations prior to the annual general meeting. It can be personalized for your school.

**<St. Patrick> Catholic School Community Council
Nomination Form**

Please return by: <Jan. 1, 2009>

Nominee: _____

Contact Information: _____

I am (check one):

A parent/guardian: _____

A community member: _____

Catholic: _____

Non-Catholic: _____

Supporting Parent or Community Member:

Name: _____

(Signature)

OFFICE USE

Received by: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C:

Voter registration sheet

All who plan to vote in a Catholic school community council election are required to register in order to receive a ballot to vote. You will note that the registration sheet requests that an indication of faith be provided. Community members (non-parents) must be of the Catholic faith to be nominated for election and to cast a vote.

You may type in your school's name or use the graphic for your school. Both versions are shown on the sheets provided here.

Appendix D:

Ballot templates

The ballots may need to be designed for different circumstances. The sample is the simplest that could be used, based on nominations at the annual general meeting and writing in the candidates' names on the ballot.

Returning officers will also have access to an electronic version of the ballot and may type in the names after nominations have closed, then photocopy the ballots. (Rows may be added by clicking on the table, then clicking on the **Table** heading at the top of the page. Next click **Insert**, then **Rows Below**.)

If nominations are accepted in part or in whole prior to the meeting date, names can be filled in. It is important to remember that a majority of elected members are to be parent/guardians of enrolled students

Counting of Ballots

The five parent/guardian candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected. The remaining four members may be parents and/or community members.

*Please mark an X beside the names of at least <00> candidates who are seeking to fill the spots reserved for parents/guardians on the council.

Parent/guardian candidates	

Community member candidates	

Appendix E

The Local Government Election Act

All parents are allowed to vote in Catholic school community council elections. A community member must live in the school's geographical attendance area as identified in division policy and must qualify as an elector according to the following act.

The Local Government Election Act

23 (1) Every person is qualified to be registered as an elector in a municipality or school division:

- (a) who is a Canadian citizen on the day of the election;
- (b) who is of the full age of 18 years on the day of the election; and
- (c) who, on the day of the election:
 - (ii) subject to subsection (2), in the case of a school division, has resided in the school division, or on land now in the school division, for at least three months and has resided in Saskatchewan for at least six months; or

(2) To qualify to be registered as an elector in any election held in a separate school division, the person shall, in addition to the requirement set out in subclause (1) (c) (ii), be of the religious faith of the minority that established that separate school division, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, and, on being registered as an elector in that separate school division, that person does not qualify to be registered as an elector in respect of any other school division.

(3) A person who is registered as an elector in a public school division is not qualified to be registered as an elector in respect of any other school division.

(Note: The above legislation refers to the eligibility of “community members” to Catholic school community councils only. All parents are eligible to be members of the Catholic school community council where their child attends.)

Appendix F:

Youth Launch

One or more students is to be appointed to the Catholic school community council at each school. This involvement is intended to be authentic, with the opinions and ideals shared by the students being valued and used by the council. This appendix was prepared by Youth Launch in order to give guidance to councils in creating effective adult-youth partnerships.



**YOUTH
LAUNCH**

**Youth Facilitation
Leadership Program**



So, you want to know how to work more effectively with young people on your school community council? Here are some practical suggestions to authentically engage the youth representatives at the table.

**Compiled by Youth Launch, a Regional Office of the Students' Commission of Canada, Lead Organization for the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, in partnership with SaskLearning, SaskHealth, Saskatoon Public Schools, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and CRU Youth Wellness Centre
Spring 2007**

As we are well aware, in Saskatchewan, boards of education have been directed through provincial legislation to establish a school community council in every school in the province. These councils will be comprised of the major stakeholders in the school community, such as the principal, a teacher, parents, community members and students themselves. This is the first time on such an organization, at least in the secondary schools, that student representation has been mandated. Youth participation on a school community council is quite a departure from the way things have usually been done in the past on the average 'Home and School' type of group. It is our contention at Youth Launch that some adults who may find themselves at this new type of table may need a few suggestions as to how best to work effectively with the youth representative(s). We have expertise in creating effective adult-youth partnerships and are interested in offering the following ideas to assist school community councils in meeting their mandate of creating positive and effective school communities.

Our Philosophy of Young People

Our experience and research (*Research and Resources about Participation* (www.kids.nsw.gov.au/files/tspresources.pdf)) suggests that many adults and youth hold attitudes towards one another that often serve to alienate and isolate each group from the other. This may be due in part because many adults may not have had opportunities to work collaboratively with youth toward a common goal over an extended period of time. The research also shows that in our society adults do not listen seriously to what children and young people say. Most adult run organizations that work with children and young people generally do not consult them about their views. They usually do not encourage them to take part in decision making, even about things that directly affect them. In fact, most young people would say that adults do not really listen to them. Any organization

committed to working with young people should definitely be concerned about this deficiency. Hopefully, the school community councils in Saskatchewan will become a place where authentic cross-generational partnerships will be established so our youth will feel that their voices are being heard and that their opinions are valued. This is essential to healthy youth development within the culture of all youth-serving organizations and society as a whole.

We have found that in order to work effectively with youth in an authentic partnership, which is what would be consistent with the purpose of this council, adults need to embrace certain ideas and philosophies about youth. The main one is a basic assumption about who young people are. We believe that they are people with many skills, interests, abilities and experiences that are often an untapped resource in our communities. They all have the ability to be leaders; often all they lack is the opportunity. In reality, they are the builders of our communities and each of them has a voice deserving to be heard. Young people are not troublemakers. They are not problems that need to be fixed, they are not empty vessels that need to be filled, nor are they mini-or unfinished adults.

Our Philosophy of the Participation of Young People

Why do we believe that the participation of young people on boards and organization is a good thing? Much research has been done in the area of youth participation in decision making on community boards and councils. In fact, a literature review done by the Government of New South Wales, Australia in their web document entitled, *Research and Resources about Participation*, (www.kids.nsw.gov.au/files/tspresources.pdf) included many interesting points about the participation of children and young people in decision making. They highlight many benefits including the fact that, “participation gives children and young people a say about what is important to them...(and it) allows a child or young person to ‘own’ decisions that are made about their lives.” But, perhaps most importantly, “Participation of children and young people leads to more accurate and relevant decisions for the child or young person and, therefore, improves the quality of decision making for the organization. Organizations can become more efficient in meeting the needs of children and young people if they listen to kids.”

Research and Resources about Participation,
(www.kids.nsw.gov.au/files/tspresources.pdf)

Models of Participation in the Research

There have been several studies done on the level of involvement that people have in decision making. Roger Hart (1997) has been credited for being one of the first researchers to adapt a model for the participation of children and young people. Hart mapped the progression of participation of young people on adult driven organizations and structures on the rungs of a ladder. The first three levels are non-participatory; there is no request for input in any decisions being made. Children and

young people are being told what to do by the adults in charge. Decisions are routinely made that affect the children and young people without their input.

The fourth rung is the most basic level of participation, characterized by the consultation of children and young people and informing them of the decisions made. Youth actually make some recommendations that the adults seriously consider.

The fifth rung of involvement is adult-initiated but the decision making is actually shared with the youth. According to the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child, this is the basic level in which schools should be operating. “Under *Article 12*, Children have the right to express their opinion in all matters that affect them...One way to provide for participation in the school is to develop school councils that allow students to have input into the design of school policies and procedures. A second means of providing for participation is to establish procedures through which students can voice grievances or appeal decisions such as dress codes, suspensions or expulsions. Although such systems do exist in some parts of Canada, it is usually the parent, rather than the child, who has the right to appeal decisions.” (*Rights of the Child: Education and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: A guide for people who work for or with children and youth, Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children 2002*)

The sixth rung on the ladder describes the situation in which adults design and run the project, but decision making is routinely shared with youth. At the seventh rung, youth and adults work together in full partnership. At the eighth rung, youth initiate projects and share decisions with the adults who are working with them. The highest rung on the ladder of youth participation is youth initiated and directed. At this level, adult participation doesn't exist...the young people run their own organization for themselves. We do not view this level as an ideal to strive for, as it precludes the formation and sustaining of strong intergenerational connections that greatly benefit both groups in many ways. Therefore, we believe that ultimate level of participation for young people would occur at the eighth rung.

Ladder of Young People's Participation*

9. Youth Initiated and Directed
8. Youth initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults
7. Youth and Adult Initiated and Directed
6. Adult Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth
5. Consulted and Informed
4. Assigned and Informed
3. Tokenism
2. Decoration
1. Manipulation

Adapted from “Hart's Ladder” from “Youth Participation in Community Planning,” a report of the American Planning Association Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development 7100 Connecticut Avenue* Chevy Chase, MD 20815* (301) 961-2837* www.theinnovationcentre.org

Applying the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement's Framework

Some Questions and Practical Suggestions of *Youth Launch* For Effective Youth Participation on the School Community Council

The Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement created a model to describe what engagement involves. They suggest three areas to examine including initiating factors, sustaining factors and outcomes. (www.engagementcentre.ca)

This model is an effective means to analyze the process of engagement in any type of involvement or participation, including that of the youth representative on the school community council.

The Initiating Factors:

1. To begin, we would like to ask how the young person(s) are going to be selected or recruited for this position. The Council will need to examine their purposes in having a youth representative sit and participate at the table. What are their goals in having youth at the table? What level of participation are they hoping to achieve? Will they simply be a token voice for youth? Will the council allow this young person to truly represent the majority of the youth at the school, or will they select a member of the Student Representative Council (SRC or SRG), who may have won an election based on popularity, as opposed to running on a platform of seriously working to consult with the student body to determine what the students' opinions are on the issues? Or, will this person be a student who perhaps has not had a very good school experience? A student who has found school to be challenging, unwelcoming and burdensome?
2. What exactly will the role of the young person be on the council? How will he/she be prepared for it? Will part of this young person's role be to hold regularly scheduled meetings of students to gather their opinions on the issues, in order to bring them to the school community council meetings? Will he/she be given the supports necessary to do this effectively? (i.e. time and training)?

The Sustaining Factors:

Encouragement, Mentorship, Communication, Validation, Accommodation

1. How will the other member of the school community council help to encourage and sustain the youth representative's involvement at the table? Will a mentor be provided to coach and help prepare the young person for the meetings ahead of time and debrief them after? This adult would definitely need to be someone the young person trusts and who understands their role in helping them to feel safe, valued and welcomed at the table. This adult would need to view their role as one of ally and partner to the young person and who is friendly, caring, respectful and flexible. This adult would work with the youth as a partner, rather than do things for or to him/ her. The adult ally will need to be able to be a good listener, approachable, and a strong supporter of youth voice.
2. Adults need to understand the power differences that exist between youth and adults and work towards a partnership of interdependence.

3. Adults need to remember that the young person is not a mini-adult and might express her/his views in language or jargon that young people use. He/she might express ideas and opinions that are totally different or opposite from the adult perspective. The adults need to be ready to hear things they might rather not hear. They need to create opportunities to hear the opinions of the marginalized as well as the youth for whom the system has been successful. They are usually the top students, but may not be representative of the majority.
4. Language is often a barrier between groups of people. Adults need to make sure that any language they use be it oral or written will be understood by the young person at the table. Often adults use language or jargon that may be far beyond the grasp or experience of the youth. Be sure to check in with the youth representative in order to avoid creating barriers to him/her understanding the concepts. Some thought might be given to surveying the student body via a secured website. Ask your youth representative to find ways to facilitate this as a means of finding out the opinions of the students.
5. Everyone at the school community council meetings should have a clear understanding of the levels of youth participation as outlined earlier in this article. The goal clearly stated here is definitely not tokenism, so then what level of participation is being aspired to? We suggest it be at least level five, the one recommended as the minimum level organizations working with and for young people should operate. At this level the young person brings the views of the student body to the table and then actively participates in the decision making on issues that directly affect the students.
6. Meeting times definitely need to accommodate the special needs of the youth representative for the previously stated reasons. Travel to and from the meetings might be a barrier for a young person and is an issue that should be discussed with him/her. The meetings themselves should be designed to be youth friendly. Also, try to make meetings shorter, smaller and more informal than typical adult meetings. Ask for feedback after meetings and take it seriously, and offer to help him/her with any questions or concerns raised at the meeting.
7. It is important to ask the young person for frequent feedback about how things are going for him/her at the council table. Always make the time to listen to the feedback and take it seriously. Young people participate best when they are having fun, being challenged and that their views are being heard and taken into account. This is a two way street and the benefits for adults and organizations who work in partnership with youth are many and can greatly enhance the connectedness of the entire community.

The Outcomes:

Evaluation and Indicators of Success Checklist

Evaluation is a very necessary process used to determine the level of success that has been achieved. It is the way we measure the effectiveness of our processes and check to see what's working and what isn't. Undoubtedly, the first question the council should ask itself is to define "success". What does a successful school community council look like? Once that is determined, the next step would be to create some indicators in order to ascertain when it is achieved. In the case of how effectively this council is working with the youth representative, each school community council needs to remind itself of the

initial goal it had to begin with, for having a young person participate in this organization. Some sample questions follow:

- Does your youth representative feel welcome and supported at the meetings?
- Has someone volunteered to mentor him/her?
- If so, how has the mentorship been working?
- Have barriers with regard to language/jargon been avoided?
- Does your youth representative feel that his/her voice is being asked for? Listened to? Taken into account when decisions are being made?
- Are some current school practices being challenged? Which ones?
- Through the youth representative, are you hearing from diverse groups of young people?
- Has the quality of the council's decision making improved with the inclusion of authentic youth voice?
- How is conflict dealt with when it happens on the council?
- Are you meeting young people on their turf? (i.e., technology)?
- What have been the benefits of having a youth representative at the table for the council?
- What have been the benefits of having a youth representative at the table, for the young person?

This list is only a start and each council will need to determine the indicators it requires in order to learn from its own self-assessment. In closing, we would like to reiterate that creating authentic intergenerational, youth-adult partnerships is a very effective way to build positive, healthy communities. For too long, the authentic voices of young people have not necessarily been asked for or listened to in our schools and communities. This has perhaps led to many young people looking in from the outside at a system that believes it is looking after their best educational interests. Hopefully, from now on, Saskatchewan's school community councils will provide an opportunity for youth to have a say in the decisions that are made about them. As one of our youth staff at Youth Launch has put it, "Say nothing about us without us". Truly, the benefits to all in the community are huge when we invite each other to the table, to listen, to respect, to communicate with and to understand each other. This is an amazing opportunity to move into the future together to create stronger, healthier school communities.

Works Cited

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[http://www.saskschoolboards.ca/EducationServices/EduationalIssues/SchoolCommunity Councils/PrincipalsHandbook.pdf](http://www.saskschoolboards.ca/EducationServices/EduationalIssues/SchoolCommunityCouncils/PrincipalsHandbook.pdf)) March 15, 2007.

Appendix G

Constitution template

Every school community council is responsible for writing a constitution as one of its first orders of business. The following is a sample that can be adapted for school use. Additional information can be found in *VII. Establishing the Catholic school community council* section of this handbook. A copy of the constitution is to be submitted to the board of education for approval.

Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division Sample Constitution

1. Mission

The _____ Catholic School Community Council holds the following to be its mission:

2. Guiding Principles/Code of Conduct

3. Membership and Officers

3.1 Membership:

3.1.1 Elected Members

The Catholic school community council will have the following elected members:

- _____ parent and community members elected at the annual general meeting. (Parent representatives must be in the majority.)
- _____ secondary student(s)
- Representatives from the following First Nation(s) that have students who live on-reserve and are enrolled in this school. (List the First Nations below if applicable)

3.1.2 Appointed Members

The Catholic school community council will have the following appointed members:

(Required)

- the school principal
- a teacher
- a parish representative

(Choose what is applicable to your school community)

- Community school coordinator/home school liaison worker
- Community association representative
- Room representatives
- Other community service organization

3.2 Officers

3.2.1 Officers to be elected

The following Catholic school community council officers will be elected annually from among the elected members (parent, community, student and First Nations members):

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Other CSCC committee chairs/conveners (if applicable, eg. fundraising chairperson, Schools Win Twice convener, play day convener, social committee chair, etc.)

4. Catholic school community council meetings

4.1 Annual general meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held in _____ of each year. During this meeting Catholic school community council members will be selected. Other orders of business will include the delivery of an annual report, other business as established by the CSCC and open discussion.

4.2 The Catholic school community council will meet _____ times per year.

4.3 Model of governance

The CSCC will need to choose a model of governance. Two general governance models are offered:

The representative model

In this model, the CSCC represents the wider school community. Meetings are open to the public but only elected and/or appointed members of the CSCC may decide upon matters brought before the CSCC. The CSCC reports to the school community using a communication strategy, an annual report and the annual general meeting.

The town-hall model

In this model members are elected to the Catholic school community council but regular meetings are open to the entire school community. Any member of the school community can participate in the meeting and be involved in the decision making process of matters brought before the CSCC.

4.4 Decision-making process

The CSCC needs to choose a preferred decision-making process. Although some decisions, like adopting a constitution, will require a motion and formal vote, not all CSCC business will require the process.

Two suggested models:

Majority vote model:

The issue is discussed and a vote is taken. The majority vote decides the issue. On matters requiring a formal vote (motion on the floor), only elected and/or appointed members of the CSSC may vote.

Note: It is advisable that the principal and teachers vote only in clearly defined circumstances. They should however, be expected to participate fully in the discussions and provide their advice.

Consensus building model:

Consensus does not necessarily mean that all parties agree, but that all can live with the decision for the sake of the group's ability to move forward. It requires that all members listen to each other's opinions and try to find solutions to problems and differences. Consensus will almost always involve compromise and can release a group beyond individual wants to determining and pursuing shared needs. Consensus does not necessarily mean all parties agree, but that all can live with a decision made for the sake of the group's ability to move forward.

4.5 Voting

On matters requiring a formal vote, only elected members of the CSSC may vote. A formal vote is required if action is put forward to the council by way of a formal motion.

4.6 Quorum

A quorum of the CSCC shall be a majority of the elected and/or appointed members

4.7 Special meeting

A special meeting of a CSCC shall be called by the chair of the CSCC if required to do so by the board of education or a request in writing signed by no fewer than 25 persons who have a child attending that school or who are electors (as defined in the CSCC Handbook). Only business pertaining to the roles and responsibilities of the CSCC can be considered at a special meeting.

5. Public consultation and communication

The CSCC will communicate with the school community through the following strategies:

- school newsletter
- parish bulletin
- community association newsletter
- posters, flyers

The CSCC will communicate with the broader community and the board of education through the following strategies:

- its principal, who will communicate with the senior administrator representative (unit superintendent);
- its respective trustee liaison board member; and
- regional meetings of CSCCs sponsored by the board

Notice regarding the annual general meeting of the Catholic school community council must be publicly given four weeks prior to the meeting date.

6. Conflict of Interest

A CSCC member may occasionally find him/herself in a conflict of interest position in terms of an issue under consideration by the CSCC. When this happens, the member should declare that he/she is in a conflict of interest situation and leave the room for this portion of the meeting, thus refraining from participating in the discussion. The member should not vote on any decision on the issue.

7. Dispute resolution protocol (Complaints/concerns procedure)

7.1 Complaints or concerns about an individual student or staff member

Any matter concerning an individual student or staff member must be directed to the staff member or principal. It is never the responsibility of the CSCC to deal with concerns or complaints about individuals other than to direct the concern to the appropriate individual. (See Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools document: "Parents, Guardians and School Working Together: Conflict Resolution Protocol")

7.2 Complaints or concerns about CSCC initiatives or activities

7.2.1 Informal complaints or concerns

Provided the CSCC members are comfortable in their knowledge and feel at ease expressing it, concerns or questions about CSCC initiatives and activities expressed informally to members of the CSCC may be addressed immediately by the member. If a member is unsure of the appropriate response, he/she should say so but indicate that he/she will check and get back the individual. If such a commitment is made, the member must follow through. After responding to the complaint or concern, the member should always ask if the response has been satisfactory. If the individual is not satisfied with the response, the member should explain how the concern or complaint could be brought to the attention of the CSCC in a more formal manner.

7.2.1 Formal complaints or concerns

Concerns or complaints can be brought to the attention of the CSCC by addressing the concern in writing to the chairperson or by requesting that the chairperson provide the individual with an opportunity to meet with the CSCC at an upcoming

meeting. The CSCC will provide a written response regarding how it has addressed or plans to address the concern or complaint.

8. Evaluating council operations

See the Catholic School Community Council Handbook includes a suggested template for evaluating council effectiveness. (Appendix K)

9. Amending the constitution

The CSCC may amend its constitution by sending suggestions for change in writing to the Board of Education through the senior administrator.

Appendix H

Sample code of conduct

Catholic school community councils are to determine a code of conduct or code of ethics that will guide how members will work together in a way that gives value to the importance of their work and outlines important elements of serving as a council member.

Code of conduct/ethics guidelines

- The **<School Name Here>** Catholic School Community Council is not a forum for the discussion of individual school personnel, students, parents or other individual members of the school community.
- A council member who is approached by a parent with a concern relating to an individual is in a privileged position and must treat such a discussion with discretion, protecting the confidentiality of the people involved.
- A parent who accepts a position as a Catholic school community council member:
 - works to uphold the mission of Catholic education;
 - upholds the constitution and bylaws, policies and procedures of the school community council;
 - performs his/her duties with honesty and integrity;
 - works to ensure that the well-being of students is the primary focus of all decisions;
 - respects the rights of all individuals;
 - takes the direction from council, ensuring that the representation processes are in place; and
 - encourages and supports parents and students with individual concerns to act on their behalf and provides information on the process for taking forward concerns.

Suggested code of ethics for a Catholic school community council

As a member of the Catholic school community council and/or volunteer, I shall:

- be guided by the policy, vision, goals and principles of the school program;
- know and work toward the vision for **<school name here>** School;
- endeavour to be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them;
- practise the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth;
- encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
- recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community;

- apply democratic principles;
- consider the best interests of all students;
- respect and maintain the confidentiality of student information;
- limit discussions at council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole;
- use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise;
- promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community; and
- accept accountability for the decisions of the council.

Appendix I

Catholic school community council annual report

As part of the accountability of Catholic school community councils, an annual report must be completed and submitted to the unit superintendent and communicated to the school community. Guidance on completing this report can be found in the *IX. Accountability and budget* section of this handbook.



CSCC PROGRESS REPORT

Name of School _____ Reporting Date: _____

Members:

Position:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Outgoing Members and Contributions:

Meeting Dates:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Learning Improvement Plan: (copy attached)

The following is an outline of responsibilities assumed by members of our CSCC to fulfill the goals outlined in our school's Learning Improvement Plan.

Goal/Learning Outcome 1:

Responsibility:

Impact on students and/or community:

Goal/Learning Outcome 2:

Responsibility:

Impact on students and/or community:

Other Initiatives of the CSCC this year:

Fundraising Activities:

Activity: _____

Expenses: _____

Revenue: _____

Activity: _____

Expenses: _____

Revenue: _____

Activity: _____

Expenses: _____

Revenue: _____

Activity: _____

Expenses: _____

Revenue: _____

(Attachment of financial statement)

Appendix J

Learning Improvement Plan template

Catholic school community councils are called upon to work with school staff to develop a Learning Improvement Plan. A council is asked to identify on the plan how it is supporting efforts to improve the learning and well-being of students. The LIP is to be attached to the annual report.



**GREATER
SASKATOON
CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS**

LEARNING IMPROVEMENT PLAN SUMMARY

Priority Areas:

- Development of Long Term Student and Staff Faith Formation
- Improved Social and Personal Values and Skills for Well-Being and Citizenship
- Improved Participation and Outcomes for First Nations and Métis Students
- Improved Transitions within the Pre-K-12 system and Beyond
- Improved Student Learning Outcomes in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science

SCHOOL:

YEAR:

Principal:

VP/AP:

SCC chair:

Other:

Identified
Required
Supports:

Objectives	Goals	Performance Indicators	Lead Responsibility & Team	CSCC Support:	Summary of Results

Identified strengths and supporting indicators:

Identified areas requiring growth and supporting indicators:



LEARNING IMPROVEMENT PLAN

COPY AS NEEDED PER PRIORITY AREA

Priority Area:

- Development of Long Term Student and Staff Faith Formation
- Improved Social and Personal Values and Skills for Well Being and Citizenship
- Improved Participation and Outcomes for First Nations and Métis Students
- Improved Transitions within the Pre-K-12 system and Beyond
- Improved Student Learning Outcomes in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science

School: _____

Year: _____

Objective:

SMART Goal(s)	Strategies (Action Plan)	Lead Responsibility/ Team	Time-line	Resources – material and financial	Performance Indicators	Monitoring Plan and Timeline	CSCC Support	Results

Appendix K

Assessing Council Effectiveness

Legislation requires that each Catholic school community council does an annual self-assessment as to how it is operating as a council and how well it is supporting the school.

ASSESSING YOUR COUNCIL'S EFFECTIVENESS

Are council meetings effective?

- Clear agendas, good use of time
- Inclusive – all are made to feel welcome
- Free discussion – all opinions are listened to and valued
- Defined and shared responsibilities

___ Not at all ___ Somewhat ___ Mostly ___ Consistently

How could council meetings be improved?

Are we on track with our purpose and mandate:

___ Not at all ___ Somewhat ___ Mostly ___ Consistently

What is the next step in our council's plan to support our school?

In what areas are we on target?

In what areas are we in advance of target?

In what areas do we need to work harder?

Generally, how do we want to improve as a council?

Appendix L

Request for approval of appointed members

A request for approval of appointed members must be submitted according to the following procedure:

1. A request form is submitted to unit superintendent.
2. The unit superintendent obtains board approval.
3. A signed copy is returned to the council and a copy is kept by the unit superintendent.
4. Any change to appointed members requires a new form.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Request for approval of appointed members

School Name: _____

We request that the following people be appointed as members of our Catholic school community council:

Principal: _____

Teacher: _____

Student(s) (at high school level):

Additional appointed member names and capacity (room parents, parish liaison, community school coordinator, home-school liaison worker, community association representative, etc.)

Name:	Capacity:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Signature: _____
(CSCC Chairperson)

Date: _____

Board Approval: _____

Date: _____

(Original to be returned to the CSCC. Copy to be kept at board office.)

Appendix M

Catholic school community councils

Board policy

Board Policy

Catholic School Community Councils

The mission of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education states that the board has a responsibility “to assist parents and the local church community in the formation of students in heart, mind, body and spirit”. A Catholic school community council is one mechanism where shared responsibility will enhance the learning success and well-being of all children and youth.

The board of education supports the formation and operation of Catholic school community councils in all schools of the school division. Subject to Section 140.1, subsections (2) to (4) of *The Education Act, 1995* the board of education shall establish in accordance with section 140.1 (1) a school community council for each school in its division.

The Catholic school community council (CSCC) shall operate under the terms of The Education Act and subsequent regulations and shall be entitled to all the rights and privileges as outlined in The Education Act. Furthermore, the Catholic school community council shall be entitled to conditions for operation as outlined in related board policy.

Roles and responsibilities

Board of Education roles and responsibilities

The board of education shall:

1. provide a board policy for Catholic school community councils (CSCC) and companion policies as needed to guide the work of CSCCs;
2. provide an annual grant to each CSCC for operating expenses;
3. recommend to the Minister of Learning the amalgamation of two or more CSCCs when the affected CSCCs are in agreement with the decision;
4. recommend to the Minister the separation of an amalgamated CSCC and the establishment of two or more CSCCs when the affected CSCCs are in agreement;
5. make all appointments of members to CSCCs as required, or as desirable and permitted, by *The Education Act, 1995* or the regulations;
6. determine the number of elected members;
7. determine the maximum number of members; and
8. assign the director of education the responsibilities outlined by the Education Act and Regulations to establish and maintain CSCCs in all of the division’s schools.

Director roles and responsibilities

The director of education shall:

1. designate a senior administrative employee to be responsible for each CSCC;
2. provide orientation, training, developing and networking opportunities for members of CSCCs;
3. provide companion administrative procedures to form the parameters of the work of CSCCs; and
4. develop policies and procedures for the board's approval regarding appointment of CSCC members and the nomination and election of members.

Senior administrator roles and responsibilities

The senior administrator shall:

1. oversee the performance of the board of education employee appointed to act as the returning officer for the election of members to a CSCC. (This employee shall not be a member of the CSCC in question.)
2. ascertain and identify the specific geographic areas applicable for each school in order to define "community member" for election purposes;
3. recommend to the board of education appointment of the school principal, one teacher from the school staff, and in consultation with the specific CSCC, any other individuals;
4. if there is a vacancy in an elected member's position, recommend an individual for the board of education to appoint to the CSCC;
5. approve each Learning Improvement Plan in accordance with the following criteria. The plan shall:
 - a. align with the school division plan;
 - b. focus on improved student learning;
 - c. indicate the role of the CSCC in supporting the plan;
6. approve each CSCC's constitution and amendments;
7. receive the annual report from each CSCC by mid-July; and
8. ensure compliance with the financial policies of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

Catholic school community council roles and responsibilities

The Catholic school community council encourages and assists parent and community involvement. It is also required to help develop a framework that sees it share responsibility for the learning success and well-being of all children and youth.

The Catholic school community council shall:

1. work within school board policy and administrative procedures;
2. work to uphold the mission of Catholic education “to assist parents and the local church community in the formation of students in heart, mind, body and spirit”;
3. undertake activities to enhance its understanding of the community’s economic, social and health needs, its aspirations for pupils’ learning and well-being and the resources and supports needed for the school, parents, guardians, and community;
4. facilitate parent and community participation in school planning by cooperating with the principal and staff of the school to develop a Learning Improvement Plan that aligns with the division’s goals and directions; the plan is then presented to the board of education for its approval;
5. take action to fulfill initiatives assigned within the Learning Improvement Plan;
6. communicate its plans, initiatives and outcomes annually to parents, guardians and the community;
7. account publicly for how money was spent, by the CSCC, in accordance with board policy;
8. meet at least five times per year plus an annual general meeting;
9. participate in orientation, training, development and networking to enhance the CSCC’s ability to fulfill its responsibilities; and
10. not discuss or be given access to personal, confidential information or complaints about any student, family member, guardian, teacher, administrator, employee or board member of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

The Catholic school community council **may** at its discretion or when applicable:

- provide advice and recommendations to the board of education, through the assigned representative of senior administration, respecting:
 - programs and educational service delivery, including fundraising, school fees, pupil code of conduct, grade discontinuance, school closure, and language of instruction; but not including educational delivery by a specific teacher;
 - locally determined course options; and
 - innovative projects;
- provide advice and recommendations to the school by an annual review of school mission, vision and goals, programs and operations; and
- provide advice and recommendations to other organizations, agencies and governments on the learning needs and well-being of children and youth.

Composition

Catholic school community councils are comprised of two kinds of members: elected members consisting of parent/guardian and community members (that number as established by this policy) and appointed members. The intent is that the CSCC be as **reflective** of the school

community as possible. The maximum number of council members shall be 50 people including both elected and appointed positions.

Community members must live in the geographic or attendance area as defined by the board of education, be of the Catholic faith and may not be a parent or guardian of a student who attends that school (Appendix A). A community member may not be a member of more than one school community council for a school in which he or she is not a parent or guardian of a student attending that school.

Subject to the regulations and policies of the board of education every CSCC shall consist of:

- 1) nine (9) elected members, the majority of which shall be parents of children in attendance at the school and should strive to be **reflective** of the student population. These elected members shall be elected as per *The Education Act, 1995*. (See Appendix B)
- 2) appointed members
 - a) the principal
 - b) one teacher
 - c) one or two students (secondary students)
 - d) any other members appointed by the board of education upon recommendation of the senior administrator in consultation with the CSCC. Nominations might include:
 - i) parish representative
 - ii) community school coordinator
 - iii) home school liaison worker
 - iv) community association representative
 - v) community service organization representatives
 - vi) others as determined by the CSCC
- 3) if a pupil at a school resides on reserve, the board of education shall, for the CSCC for that school:
 - a) request that the Indian band identify individuals willing to represent that Indian band on the CSCC; and
 - b) if practical, appoint at least one of those individuals to the CSCC.

Election procedures

An annual election shall be held to elect members of the CSCC in accordance with the regulations. (Appendix B)

Officers

Each CSCC shall select a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer from among its elected parent and community, student and Indian band council members as a first order of business at its initial meeting. The principal may provide support in this process.

The principal shall provide the senior administrator with a complete list of all members of the CSCC and its officers once they are selected.

Constitution

A CSCC shall develop and submit for approval to the board of education through the senior administrator a constitution that includes the components as outlined in the regulations.

Review of finances

Fundraising activities as proposed by school administration, the CSCC or the student representative council are to be reviewed and approved. The review of the fundraising plans is to include:

1. a determination of the activities that financially benefit the school and those activities which support charitable causes;
2. a determination of the coordination of efforts among schools, communities and other organizations and concerns regarding saturation of activities in the community and school;
3. assurance that legal requirements are met, and contracts approved. Refer to Administrative Policy JGA Corporate Involvement; and,
4. assurance that provision is made to report fundraising activities in the monthly statement of accounts in accordance with School Division Policy IAB.

Self assessment

CSCCs are expected to engage in an ongoing process of self-assessment in order to ensure their effectiveness.

Board policy appendices

Appendix A: Geographic/Attendance Areas

- All parents are eligible to serve on school community councils
- Community members must be of the Catholic faith to serve as an elected member or to vote in an election. The following outlines community member geographic eligibility:
 - Elementary Schools – living within transportation attendance area for that school;
 - High Schools – living within transportation attendance area of schools recognized as “feeder” schools of that high school;
 - French Immersion schools – as for all other elementary
 - Ukrainian Immersion – citywide
 - Alternate settings:
 - Sion Catholic Middle School – Holliston Civic Area
 - Bishop Murray High School – Varsity View Area

Appendix B: Election Procedures

Returning officer:

The returning officer should be the school’s office coordinator unless there are extenuating circumstances that make this unworkable. In such cases, the principal will designate another staff member. According to the Education Act, the returning officer must be an employee who will not be serving on the school community council. Remuneration will be provided to this person at a set amount as determined by the board of education and will be based on the hours to perform two areas of responsibility: preparation for the annual general meeting and the election process, in addition to attendance at the annual general meeting to oversee the election process. The returning officer may recruit two volunteers to witness the counting of ballots at the annual general meeting if an election should occur.

Public Notice:

The returning officer shall ensure the provision of a public notice of the date of an annual general meeting at least four weeks prior to the meeting. The notice should be advertised or posted in such a way that it would be reasonably expected to reach the parents or guardians of students of that school and community members. Possibilities are school newsletters, notices and posters, church bulletins and posters, and community association newsletters.

The notice of the meeting shall state:

1. the meeting purpose, the attendance or geographic area for the school community council;
2. where policies or procedures developed by the board of education respecting the election of school community councils can be reviewed;

3. the date and time of the meeting;
4. the method of nomination procedure that will be used
5. the number of positions open for election; and
6. voter qualifications.

Nomination Procedures:

All parents are eligible for nomination. Community members must live in the attendance area as defined by this policy and be of the Catholic faith. Nominations shall occur in **one** of three methods listed below. Each CSCC shall determine its method based on its knowledge of the community.

- Advance nominations can be formally collected prior to the annual meeting with a cut-off date of one week prior to the meeting. (See suggested nomination form, Appendix B). Using this method will allow communities to determine if an election is needed at all.
- Advance nominations and nominations from the floor at the annual general meeting.
- Nominations taken from the floor at the annual general meeting.

Voting Procedures:

The following people may cast a vote in a Catholic school community council election:

- a parent or guardian of a student who attends that school;
- a community member who is of the Catholic faith and living within the transportation attendance area as defined by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

Subject to other requirements of the Education Act respecting eligibility, a school community council should establish the number of elected members (nine). In the event that fewer than the established number come forward, then the number of elected representatives shall be that number and no less than five (as per *Education Act 140.2 (a)*).

If five are not elected, the senior administrator shall work with the CSCC to appoint additional member(s) to meet the required minimum of five members. The majority of elected school community council members must be parents of students attending the school. Ballots can be constructed to reflect the parent majority.

If an election is necessary, the CSCC members shall be elected at the annual meeting by secret ballot. All those attending the annual general meeting shall be required to register on a voter registration sheet and must confirm their eligibility to vote in order to receive a ballot. All parents/guardians are automatically eligible to vote. Community members must live in the geographic area as defined in this policy and be electors as defined by The Local Government Election Act.

Ballots should be counted by the returning officer and witnessed by two volunteers. The results should then be conveyed by the returning officer to the chairperson of the meeting, who should then announce the results. Individual vote counts should not be announced. 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". At the conclusion of the election proceedings, a motion should be passed requesting that the returning officer destroy the ballots.

The procedure for appointing student members can be determined at the school level. The student member or members shall be recommended to the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education for its approval, based on the recommendation of the senior administrator, in consultation with the school principal.