COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEES (CAC) OF THE TORONTO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

A Practical Handbook for Committee Members

tdsb
Toronto District School Board

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I Welcome!

As a member of a Community Advisory Committee (CAC), you play an important role in helping to ensure high achievement and success for all of our students. To support you in that role, this handbook describes the Board's decision-making structure and explains the CAC's advisory function and processes within that structure.

II How the Board Makes Decisions

The Toronto District School Board consists of 22 elected Trustees, each representing a specific Toronto area called a Ward. In addition to advocating for the students and families within their own Ward, Trustees act collectively to develop policies, to set budgets and to make decisions to support the educational needs of all students across the Board. To support the Trustees in their work, the Board has established a structure of committees and working groups, responsible for studying, gathering information and making recommendations regarding all aspects of policy and program development. Some Board committees are made up of Trustees only, while others may include TDSB staff, community members or both.

i)   Trustee Committees

Reporting directly to the Board are the following three standing committees and one permanent committee, made up of Trustees only. Each of these committees meets regularly to consider and to make recommendations to the Board regarding matters within their mandate, which are brought before them by staff, Trustees and Community Advisory Committees.

Committee:	Mandate:
Finance Budget and Enrolment Committee (Standing):	The Finance, Budget and Enrolment Committee shall review the impact of enrolment and policy change on the Board's budget, including reviewing the impact of enrolment trends and marketing strategies to bolster enrolment in declining areas of the city, to consider strategies to balance the capital and operating budget over a multi-year period and to make recommendations to the Board to balance the annual capital and operating budget.
Governance and Policy Committee (Standing):	The Governance and Policy Committee shall consider and make recommendations to the Board on governance and policy matters referred to it for consideration".
Program and School Services Committee (Standing):	The Program and School Services Committee shall consider and make recommendations to the Board on education matters referred to it for consideration.

Planning and Priorities Committee (Permanent):	The Planning and Priorities Committee shall make recommendations to the Board on:
	(a) the development and coordination of a strategic plan for the Board, in consultation with the Director and the standing committees;
	(b) the Boards inter-governmental relations;
	(c) the development and management of plans for senior leadership succession;
	(d) professional development for members of the Board;
	(e) other issues referred to it from time to time by the Board or the Chair of the Board; and
	(f) facility and property matters, including property disposition, major capital projects, boundary changes. [Procedure Bylaw 11.3].

At each standing committee meeting, Trustees hear delegations by Community Advisory Committees as well as members of the public. The Board or its standing committees may refer any matter on its agenda to Community Advisory Committees for comment.

After each standing and permanent committee meets, a report of the committee's recommendations is prepared by Board Services and placed on the agenda of a future Regular or Special meeting of the Board. Committee reports substitute for minutes and provide a clear accounting of matters the committee considered and how the committee dealt with each item on the agenda.

ii)   Board Meetings

Regular Board meetings are held according to a predetermined schedule at least nine times over the course of each year and are attended by all Trustees. Special Board meetings may also be called by the Chair from time to time as necessary to consider specific matters before the next regular meeting.

The minutes of the Regular and Special meetings constitute the official record of the Board. They provide information on how the Board dealt with every matter placed before it on the agenda and the information on which the Board made its decisions. There are a number of actions the Board may decide on for each recommendation, including to adopt, not to adopt, to receive, to amend, to refer to staff or to another committee, or to postpone (defer) consideration.

Information regarding matters currently under consideration by the Board and its standing committees, along with the archived minutes of previous Board meetings, can also be found on the TDSB website.

III Context for Community Advisory Committees

i)   Provincial Legislation

Ontario Regulation 612/00 of the Education Act requires every school board to establish a Parent Involvement Advisory Committee. Ontario Regulation 464/97 requires every school board to establish a Special Education Advisory Committee. These statutory committees are formal structures which act

as advisory bodies to a school board, as well as being important vehicle for parents and communities to play an advocacy role and to have input on policy and program issues.

In the TDSB, these two statutory committees are called:
• Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC), and
• Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

ii)   TDSB Policy Framework

With their close ties to the Board's diverse community stakeholders, Community Advisory Committees (CACs) offer Trustees a valuable front-line perspective and can provide them with thoughtful and timely advice on a range of issues that impact the learning and well-being of children and families in our schools every day.

Accordingly, the Board's policy *P.023, Parent and Community Involvement*, provides that,

> *"CACs shall be established where necessary to provide the Board with ongoing community advice on specified areas of Board policy or program, as well as on educational issues of broad community interest; in addition, ad hoc advisory committees, task forces, or working groups with community representation shall be established where required, on the understanding that the input from all such advisory groups does not preclude the input of other stakeholders across the system."*

Currently, in addition to the two statutory committees mandated by the Province, the Board has the following ten Community Advisory Committees:

• Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee (ASCAC)
• Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee (BSACAC)
• Community Use of Schools Community Advisory Committee (CUSCAC)
• Early Years Community Advisory Committee (EYCAC)
• Environmental Sustainability Community Advisory Committee (ESCAC)
• Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee (EPCAC)
• French-as-a-Second-Language Community Advisory Committee (FSLCAC)
• Inner City Community Advisory Committee (ICCAC)
• Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee (UICAC)

IV Roles and Relationships

TDSB Operational Procedure PR558 (see *Appendix A*: *PR558, Parent and Community Involvement*) defines the CACs' advisory role and relationship to the Board, as well as setting out parameters for CAC structure, operation and reporting mechanism.

i)   The Advisory Role of CACs

A CAC may advise the Board on a matter specifically referred to it by the Board or a standing committee, or it may advise the Board on matters of its own choosing, within its mandate as established by the Board when it was constituted.

A CAC may also choose to exercise an advocacy role (i.e., it may indicate to the Board a preferred position on an educational issue under consideration by the Board) on the understanding that the position has been established through a fair and democratic process of deliberation and decision-making among the CAC membership.

ii)   Communicating Advice to the Board

CACs provide advice to the Board through its standing committees, either by presenting a CAC report with its recommendations to the appropriate standing committee (see *Reporting to the Board*, pg. 5 below), or by making a verbal delegation to that committee. Formal recommendations presented to the Board in a CAC report must be approved by a decision of the CAC and should relate directly to the mandate of the CAC or relevant educational issues.

A CAC may provide feedback to the Board, expressed in a separate document or recorded in the minutes of its meetings. Note: feedback provided to the Board does not necessarily have to reflect a consensus viewpoint or a majority decision and may reflect the diverse range of views of the CAC members.

The Board and/or the appropriate standing committees will provide feedback to the CACs on reports and/or recommendations presented to the Board and/or standing committees for consideration. However, there is no obligation on the part of the Board or its staff to act on a CAC recommendation.

iii)   Other CAC Activities

In addition to gathering community input and meeting to develop advice for the Board, every CAC is expected to carry out the following activities as outlined under PR558:

- Adhere to the Board's Code of Conduct as outlined in *PR585, Board Code of Conduct*:

- Develop Terms of Reference outlining its operating structure (e.g. membership and chair/co-chair elections, meetings) that is consistent with the Board's operational bylaws. In the absence of individual bylaws for a CAC, the Board procedural bylaws will apply.

- Participate in an Annual General Meeting held jointly by all CACs at the beginning of each school year;

- Conduct an annual internal review of its mandate, membership, processes, annual goals and work plans; and

- Report to the Board through the Program and School Services Committee semi-annually on its progress.

CACs may also choose to participate in joint or collective activities relevant to their role.

iv)   Working with the Staff Resource Person

Each CAC is supported by a Staff Resource Person (SRP), a senior staff member who is designated by the Director to manage its operational needs and act as the committee's link to the system. The SRP attends all of the CAC's meetings as a non-voting member, to keep the committee informed on matters relevant to its mandate or of ongoing interest to the members and to respond to members' questions regarding agenda items. Before CAC meetings, the SRP supports the Chair in developing the agenda and submits the CAC's Status of Committee Report to Board Services after the meeting for placement on the agenda of the appropriate standing committee. The SRP also assists the CAC in making delegations to the Board at standing committees.

The SRP is the CAC's go-to person; responsible for making sure that the committee has the information needed to run effective meetings, to communicate with school councils, to reach out to parents and community stakeholders and to provide thoughtful advice to the Board on matters related to its mandate. The SRP is also responsible for assigning administrative support to the CAC

they work with. This support person/committee assistant will arrange meetings, will distribute agendas, will take minutes and will prepare CAC reports to Board standing committees.

v) Role of the Parent and Community Engagement Office

The Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO) is responsible for, managing CAC websites (posting agenda, minutes etc.), social media and/or other on-line tools, scheduling town halls and supporting the CAC's communication and information sharing with its members, communities, Trustees and the public.

vi) Committee Membership

Each CAC must include a diversity of people, voices and ideas, with representation from relevant parent and community groups and/or agencies. Members are appointed for a two-year term (except SEAC and PIAC; see Regulation 612/00 &464/97 of the Education Act).

Board employee groups who wish to be considered for representation on any Community Advisory Committee must submit a request to the Board for its consideration and approval, including a rationale for the request. The representatives of an approved employee group may participate in CAC meetings and discussion but do not have a vote.

Board staff may be members of Advisory Committees but must inform the committee of their employment with the Board in order to avoid any potential conflict of interest and do not have a vote.

Consistent with the principles of self-governance and sovereignty, as articulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), voting privileges on the Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee be granted by the committee in the following manner:

> Indigenous staff will have the ability to vote after attending three consecutive meetings. Non-Indigenous staff cannot vote. Conflicts of interest will be declared when applicable.

vii) Trustee-Members

Every CAC also has one or more Trustee-members who are appointed by the Board. Trustee-members may attend meetings, participate in discussions and provide information on a matter under discussion. Trustee-members are voting members of CAC's.

viii) Committee Chairs/Co-Chairs

The Chair/Co-Chair is elected by the CAC membership from among its own parent and community members and appointed Trustee(s). It is recommended that the election process for Chair/Co-Chairs is conducted annually to coincide with the annual organizational meeting of the Board.

In consultation with the SRP, the Community Chair/Co-Chair is responsible for setting the CAC meeting agenda and determining the order of agenda items. The SRP will provide items that have been referred by the Board.

V Ensuring Effective Committee Meetings

The following meeting norms are based on the Board's generally accepted committee procedures, the Board's bylaws and the policy and procedure for parent and community involvement.

i)   Convening a Meeting

CAC meetings are scheduled in advance by the committee and the dates are published. The person chairing the meeting and at least one other member, along with the SRP and support person/committee assistant, must be physically present at the meeting.

The meeting chair should convene the meeting as soon as a quorum of the members is present, but not before the scheduled start time. Unless otherwise outlined in the CAC's Terms of Reference, quorum of the members is half the total number of members plus one, rounded down, e.g.,

- **16 members** divided by 2 = 8 plus 1 = **quorum is 9**
- **17 members** divided by 2 = 8.5 plus 1 = 9.5, rounded down = **quorum is 9**

If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time, the meeting is cancelled. At that point, the members present may choose to hold an informal meeting for discussion purposes only. In this case, no votes are held and official minutes are not recorded. However, notes of the discussion should be kept for the benefit of members who were not present.

ii)   Participation

CAC members who are unable to attend may participate in the meeting by conference call, provided that they have made arrangements with the support person/committee assistant ahead of time to do so.

Members of the public are welcome to attend CAC meetings as observers. In addition, each CAC will establish a specific process through which non-members are able to provide input and feedback to the committee.

For example, at the discretion of the Chair and with the approval of a majority of the members present, the committee may decide to invite non-member guests to participate in discussion (but not voting) regarding specific matters on the agenda. Typically, only CAC members, their designated alternates and Trustees who are not members of the committee take part in committee discussions.

iii)   Agenda

During the meeting, the order of items on the agenda may be changed if a majority of the members present agree by vote. New items may be added to the agenda if a majority of the total number of committee members, whether present or not, agree by vote, (there must agreement by a number of votes equal to the committee's quorum).

iv)   Hearing Delegations

Delegations provide an opportunity for parents, community members and others with an interest in issues related to the CAC's mandate to provide input to the CAC and for the committee to gather valuable feedback from its stakeholders. Putting in place a clear delegation process and ensuring that this information is publicly available, will help keep committee meetings manageable and on-task.

The following suggestions may be helpful in developing an effective delegation process:

- The CAC may decide to establish the maximum number of delegation requests that will be accepted for any one meeting. Delegation requests should be submitted two days prior to the meeting to the committee assistant, who will record the requests and advise the Chair. After the submission deadline, new requests should only be accepted if the maximum number of speakers has not been reached.

- The committee may establish a time limit for each delegate (usually three to five minutes). The Chair should inform the speaker when 30 seconds of speaking time remain and ask the speaker to conclude when the time allotted has been reached.

- After a speaker has finished, committee members may ask questions for clarification only but not questions that solicit further information from the speaker nor raise issues not touched on by the speaker. If appropriate, these types of questions may be raised during the meeting following the delegations.

- If the committee wishes to discuss a matter raised by a delegate and that matter is not on the agenda, a member may request that the matter be included on the agenda of the next meeting.

After the committee has heard all delegations, the delegates may remain as observers but may not participate in the discussion.

v)   Discussion

The usual sequence for consideration of each item on the agenda is:

1. introduction by SRP (providing status and background regarding the matter);

2. general discussion by committee members;

3. presentation of motions and amendments;

4. voting on motions and amendments (first on amendments of motions and, if carried, then on the motion "as amended").

Trustees who are not members of the CAC may participate in discussion but do not have voting privileges.

vi)   Voting

There is no discussion during the taking of a vote. Conducting a vote involves three basic steps:

1. The chair signals that a vote will be taken by saying, "We will now vote on …" and repeats the substance of the motion;

2. The chair asks for a show of hands by saying, "Those in favour?" and counts the votes; then says, "Those against?" and counts the votes; and

3. The chair announces the outcome of the vote, i.e., "The motion (or amendment) is carried", or, "The motion is defeated."

The declaration of the Chair is accepted (votes should not be retaken).

vii)   Meeting Minutes

CAC meeting minutes are recorded by the support person/committee assistant. For each item addressed by the CAC, the minutes will indicate the source on the agenda (e.g., placed on the agenda at the request of a committee member or referred by the Board), the process by which the final decision was reached and the final decision of the committee. The decision of the CAC would normally be to receive information, to make a recommendation to the Board, or to provide information to the Board.

Minutes should not include comments made by committee members during discussion and debate; this type of information is normally included in informal meeting notes only.

The minute taker should consult with the chair and SRP after the meeting to ensure that the information in the minutes is accurate and includes:

- name of the CAC
- date, time and location of the meeting
- name of the person who actually chaired the meeting (not necessarily a Co-chair of the CAC)
- names of the committee members who were present and not present
- motions/amendments made and the outcomes of voting
- recommendations of the CAC to the Board

The meeting minutes are posted on the CAC website within two weeks of the meeting.

VI Reporting to the Board

i) CAC Report

The CAC report is prepared by staff using a committee report form and is separate and apart from the *minutes* of the meeting, although it will contain the same essential information. This will confirm that the meeting was properly constituted and conducted and helps the Board evaluate the effectiveness of the CAC.

The SRP forwards the committee report to Board Services as soon as possible after the meeting, including include any commentary, background, contextual information and/or advice from staff which the SRP deems appropriate.

Board Services will ensure that the report is presented to the Trustees at a meeting of the appropriate standing committee. Board Services staff may separate recommendations for consideration by various standing committees and will attach "related commentary, background, contextual information and/or advice from staff," if deemed appropriate.

VII Annual Reporting From Community Advisory Committees

All Community Advisory Committees will present a report to the Program and
School Services Committee in the spring cycle of meetings, annually. The report will include:
- the mandate of the advisory committee
- the accomplishments for the school year
- a list of members
- the number of meetings held during the year
- motions passed by the advisory committee.

APPENDIX A: Operational Procedure PR.558, Parent and Community Involvement

APPENDIX B: CAC Self-Evaluation Tool

Self Evaluation Tool
Final.pdf

APPENDIX C: Terms of Reference Template

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Template.docx