

2016 Snapshot of School Council Operations in the TDSB

Report recommendations specifically for PIAC

Membership and Operations (pages 4-5)

- The Parent Involvement Advisory Committee collaborates with Elementary Teachers of Toronto and Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation to develop strategies for enhancing teacher participation on School Council.

Action item: Co-chairs to reach out to the groups above to discuss ways to collaborate.

Funding (pages 5-6)

- The TDSB collaborate with PIAC to explore appropriate model(s) for council sharing of financial and human resources, where feasible.
- The TDSB, in collaboration with PIAC, explore closing the disparity in the amount of money raised by School Councils ~~by sharing the money with School Councils in need of additional financial supports for School Councils activities or by capping the amount of money schools can raise to under \$7,000.~~

Action item: Consultation working group will closely follow the fundraising policy review. PIAC to further discuss and consult with parents/school councils on ways to share funding and close the gap.

Communications and Relationships (pages 7-8)

- School Councils consider... (3) enriching their connections beyond their own school by having representatives regularly attend Ward meetings, PIAC events, and TDSB sponsored training sessions and workshops.
- PIAC enhance communication on the services and supports it provides to council (e.g. annual conferences, School Council appreciation events, etc.)

Action items: Communications and Outreach group to continue to work on improving communication with school councils about PIAC supports and events.

Other recommendations of interest to PIAC

Membership and Operations (page 4-5)

- Learning Networks identify appropriate learning pathways for supporting principals and vice-principals in engaging the School Council and families into the school improvement planning process
- Teaching and Learning work with the Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO) to develop and distribute resources on engaging the School Council and families in the School Improvement Process
- Each School Council consider all potential roles and responsibilities, determine where to channel their energies based on what is most important for their school community, and then plan actions, events and activities that align with those goals and priorities
- Training emphasizes the importance of council supporting families to support learning rather than providing for the needs of the school and fundraising

Comments/Questions:

School councils need more involvement in the SIP process.

Staff need training around engaging parents in the SIP process.

School councils need support around their purpose (beyond fundraising for school needs)

Funding (pages 5-6)

- Comprehensive information about all available internal and external sources of funds and grants for School Councils, along with clear directions on how to access them, be communicated to all School Councils. This is particularly important for small or disadvantaged schools with limited opportunity or ability to raise funds on their own
- Learning Centre Executives work with Business Services to ensure that all Principals/ Vice-Principals are informed of funds available for School Councils and appropriate reporting and tracking of funds by council

Comments/Questions:

Increase awareness among parents and Principals of available funds for school councils.

What portion of the board and Ministry funding goes unused every year?

Communications and Relationships (pages 7-8)

- School Councils consider: (1) expanding their electronic communication strategies to include the use of social media or a dedicated webpage; (2) enhancing their parent outreach efforts to connect with and encourage the involvement of culturally diverse families; (3) enriching their connections beyond their own school by having representatives regularly attend Ward meetings, PIAC events, and TDSB sponsored training sessions and workshops

- The TDSB Communications department work with the Parent and Community Engagement Office to develop training and resources for School Councils on use of social media, communication, and outreach strategies
- Superintendents work with Principals/ Vice-Principals to ensure that the TDSB School Council e-mail account is activated annually

Comments/Questions:

TDSB Communications should also seek advice from PIAC regarding the development of training and resources for school councils.

The TDSB email system needs to be much simpler to use and better meet the needs of the school councils before school councils can be expected to use them.

School councils need training on communication methods, outreach, inclusion/diversity, and engagement.

Building Capacity (pages 7-8)

- Learning Centres and Learning Networks should actively encourage parent engagement (especially at the high school level) to enhance staff's belief in and knowledge of parents' role in student success and achievement
- Learning Networks explore the feasibility of creating a group of local area School Council Chair/ Co-chairs in order to share best practices, establish mentorship opportunities, and leverage great ideas to improve overall council and parent efficacy
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- User-friendly on-line and reference documents and professional learning/ capacity building strategies in areas of support, needs and topic areas identified by School Councils are embedded in Learning Centre professional development strategies. System, Trustee, and LC staff professional development planning includes training on the connection of family engagement to student achievement and strategies for aligning and supporting School Councils
- Learning Networks explore strategies for engaging School Councils/ families in the School Improvement Process
- Schools share family demographic data with School Councils to assist in developing appropriate and culturally responsive activities/ events and strategies for engaging diverse parents

Comments/Questions:

High School councils need more information on specific ways they can engage parents.

School councils need more networking opportunities.

School councils need access to information outside of attending training session and workshops i.e. webinars and online resources that are available whenever school councils need them.

Principals and Superintendents need training and resources around school council functions. An information for principals to give out to school councils each fall should be created.