



BOARD POLICY No. GOV 14	
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Board Motion	18-R86

PARENT/GUARDIAN AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

1. RATIONALE

Rainbow District School Board believes that parents/guardians are the most important partners in education. This governance policy confirms the commitment of Rainbow District School Board to be proactive and inclusive in employing diverse strategies to gather input from parents/guardians and to facilitate their support of student achievement and well-being.

The Board welcomes and appreciates the ideas, perspectives, and contributions that come from partnerships with parents/guardians and the wider community. The Board believes that interaction among parents/guardians, community members, and members of the Board will foster mutual understanding and encourage the integration of community services and resources.

In Rainbow District School Board, parents/guardians, families, and community members are engaged in a variety of ways. These include school councils, the Parent Involvement Committee, and many other working groups and community partnerships that are important parts of the Board's operations.

2. DEFINITIONS

Parent Involvement Committee: The Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) is a legislated committee of the Board that acts in an advisory capacity to represent the voice of parents/guardians who have children in Rainbow schools. It supports, encourages, and enhances parent engagement at the district level in order to improve student achievement and well-being.

School Council: A school council is a legislated committee established in each school in Rainbow District School Board to promote the active participation of parents/guardians in improving student achievement and well-being. The council acts in an advisory capacity to the principal and/or Board according to applicable legislation.

Special Education Advisory Committee: The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is a legislated committee of the Board that plays a vital role in ensuring that exceptional pupils receive appropriate educational services. Under Ontario's Education Act, every exceptional pupil is entitled to special education programs and services, which meet his or her needs.

First Nations Advisory Committee: The First Nation Advisory Committee (FNAC) is a committee of the board that includes representatives that have signed education service agreements with the board. The committee considers matters and makes recommendations regarding programs and services for First Nation students of the Board in order to improve student achievement and well-being.

Parent and Community Engagement: This engagement refers to the partnerships established to support student achievement and well-being in alignment with the Ministry of Education's Parent Involvement Policy and Parent Engagement Policy. Parent/guardian and community engagement can occur in homes, in the community, in the classroom, at school, within families of schools, and at the Board level.

Partnership: Partnership refers to a relationship in which the Board, its schools, and/or staff members are involved with parents/guardians, families, business partners, various levels of government, volunteers, community service agencies, and parent/guardian groups. It refers to all those who contribute to and have an interest in supporting student success and well-being in Rainbow schools.

3. POLICY

a) School Councils and the Parent Involvement Committee

- 3.1 The Board is committed to the belief that successful education requires a strong partnership and active involvement between the school, the home, the staff, and members of the community.
- 3.2 The Board believes that relationships between these partners will be strengthened by the formation of school councils in each school and a parent involvement committee at the board level.
- 3.3 Therefore, it is the policy of the Board that each school establish a school council and that the Board establish a parent involvement committee in accordance with provincial requirements.
- 3.4 The school council will serve in an advisory capacity to the school's principal and the Board to promote excellence in education, and will place the overall interest of students first.
- 3.5 The Board may solicit and take into consideration the advice of its parent involvement committee with regard to matters that relate to improving student achievement and well-being, and shall inform the parent involvement committee of its response to advice provided by the committee.

b) Educational Partnerships

- 3.6 Rainbow District School Board promotes and permits mutually beneficial educational partnerships between municipal, provincial, federal ministries and agencies, or any other individuals, corporations/businesses, or associations deemed to have a positive and direct impact on student learning and programming.

- 3.7 The Board supports the sponsorship of all school activities by an organization within a particular school providing that these activities are under the jurisdiction of the principal of the school.
- 3.8 The Board believes that co-instructional activities form an integral part of a student's education and supports community volunteers in the delivery of its co-instructional program.
- 3.9 The Board supports the use of volunteers without remuneration for Rainbow District School Board sanctioned activities.

BOARD EXPECTATIONS

4. Communication

- 4.1 The Board believes and advocates that the involvement of parents/guardians enriches the learning environment and directly contributes to successful student achievement. The Board shall provide parents/guardians with the information they need to support their children's education.
- 4.2 A variety of communication procedures shall be developed and maintained at the school and system levels to provide access to information needed by parents/guardians and communities and to ensure that all parents/guardians and members of the diverse communities in the district have opportunities to participate in the school system.
- 4.3 The Board will notify the public, the media, and the staff of agenda items for meetings of the Board that are open to the public, and will communicate the results of these meetings through the distribution of minutes.

5. School Councils

- 5.1 In accordance with Ontario Regulation 612/00, the principal or principal designate of each school shall facilitate the establishment of a school council consisting of student, parent/guardian, staff, and community representatives. The school council shall be recognized as the official school community organization representing the interests of the parents/guardians and students of the school. The school council shall be chaired by a parent/guardian.
- 5.2 The school council shall operate in a way that is consistent with the vision, mission, values, and policies of Rainbow District School Board, and shall have, as its primary guiding principle, the fostering of the educational interests of students.
- 5.3 Opportunities shall be made available to school council chairs and other local parent/guardian leaders to assist them in developing their school community leadership skills and to school administrators to assist them in enhancing their skills in building positive school community relations.

- 5.4 The mandate of the school councils, on behalf of their school community, is to:
- encourage the active participation of parents/guardians to improve student achievement and well-being;
 - enhance parent/guardian awareness of educational issues and the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians;
 - provide advice to the principal and, where appropriate, to the Board on school and education issues; and
 - submit an annual report on its activities, including any fundraising activities, to the principal of the school.

6. Parent Involvement Committee

- 6.1 The Parent Involvement Committee may advise the Board as required by the Ministry or Board, enhance parental engagement, and consider matters referred to the committee by the Board.
- 6.2 The responsibilities of the Parent Involvement Committee are to:
- enhance communications between School Councils and Rainbow District School Board
 - solicit feedback from School Councils as required by the Board
 - provide resources of benefit to School Councils
 - raise awareness of School Councils and their importance within their schools
 - encourage parents/guardians and community representatives to become involved within the schools
 - provide a forum for sharing ideas and recommendations while respecting the management rights and responsibilities of the Rainbow District School Board

7. Special Education Advisory Committee

- 7.1 The Special Education Advisory Committee may make recommendations to the Board in respect of any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the Board.
- 7.2 The responsibilities of the Special Education Advisory Committee are to:
- provide stakeholders a voice in determining relevant educational programs and services for students identified with special needs.
 - participate in the Board's annual review of its special education plan;
 - participate in the Board's annual budget process as it relates to special education;
 - review the financial statements of the Board as they relate to special education.

8. First Nations Advisory Committee

- 8.1 The First Nations Advisory Committee may consider matters and make recommendations to the Board in respect of any matter affecting the establishment, development and delivery of programs and service for First Nations students of the Board.

8.2 The responsibilities of the First Nations Advisory Committee are to:

- provide First Nations people a voice in determining relevant educational programs and services for students of First Nations ancestry.
- review the financial statements and tuition agreements of the Board as they relate to First Nations Tuition agreements.
- monitor progress in incorporating the seven social factors as identified in tuition agreements in Rainbow District School Board plans and programs.
- increase all students' knowledge, awareness, understanding, and appreciation of First Nations people and their history and cultures in accordance with our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Legal:

Education Act S. 170 (1) para. 17.1 School Councils

Ontario Regulation 298 Operation of Schools S 11 Duties of Principals

Ontario Regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees

Ontario Parent Involvement Policy 2005

Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools, 2010

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Board:

Board Policy No. GOV-01 Vision, Mission, and Values

Board Policy No. GOV-03 Role of the Corporate Board

Board Policy No. GOV-06 Role of the Director of Education

Rainbow District School Board: *A Guide for Students and Parents*

Strategic Directions for Rainbow Schools

Administrative Procedures

Rainbow District School Board Truth and Reconciliation Action Plan