



Parent and Community Members' Frequently Asked Questions About School Community Councils

1. Why were School Community Councils established?

School Community Councils (SCCs) are part of the governance of schools in Saskatchewan. *The Education Act, 1995* requires every school to have a SCC. SCCs make it possible for parents and community members in all parts of the province to have the same opportunity to participate in school planning and improvement processes.

2. What is the role of the School Community Council?

A School Community Council (SCC) is an advisory group whose primary purposes are:

- to develop shared responsibility for student learning and well-being; and,
- to encourage parent and community involvement in the school.

The SCC works closely with the school administration, providing advice and recommendations, and jointly developing and accomplishing school Learning Improvement Plans.

3. What do School Community Councils do?

School Community Councils (SCCs):

- Develop a good understanding of their school community.
 - What are the goals and interests of the students? The parents and guardians? The community?
 - What are the strengths of the community? How can these community strengths support the school and students?
 - What are the needs of the community and the students?
- Develop a Learning Improvement Plan in co-operation with the school staff. School Learning Improvement plans include goals and actions the school will take to improve student learning. The plan is guided by school division goals but also reflects the uniqueness of the school community.
- Work to achieve the goals of the Learning Improvement Plan. SCCs have a big role to play in helping parents and guardians become involved in their children's learning.

- Communicate with the school community about school plans and achievements.
- Provide parent and community views to the board of education and school staff on policies and plans. As well, the SCC may have views that are helpful to other community organizations that support students' learning.

4. Who is eligible to run for a seat on a school's School Community Council and to vote for members of the Council?

All parents or guardians of students who attend the school are welcome to vote and run for office in the School Community Council (SCC) elections. This includes parents and guardians who do not live within the attendance area of the school. It also includes parents and guardians who may not meet the requirements of an elector (e.g., Canadian citizenship).

In addition to parents and guardians, community members can vote or run for office in the SCC elections. Community members, however, must live within the attendance area or geographic area for that school. They must also meet all of the requirements to be an elector in the school division (see below). Also, community members can vote in an SCC election for only one school each year.

The majority of elected members must be parents or guardians.

5. Who can be registered as an elector in a school division?

An elector must meet **all** of the following requirements:

- is a Canadian citizen on the day of the election;
- is at least 18 years old on the day of the election;
- has lived in the school division for at least three consecutive months immediately before the day of the election;
- has lived in Saskatchewan for at least six consecutive months immediately before the day of the election; and,
- is not registered as an elector in any other school division.

6. What are the rules and responsibilities for School Community Council officers?

Each School Community Council (SCC) must develop a constitution (which includes officers and their duties) for approval by the board of education. At a

minimum, SCC officers must include a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary.

SCCs select their officers from the following members:

- elected members;
- students (in the case of high schools); and,
- First Nations representative(s) (if there are students who live on-reserve and attend that school).

7. What if a School Community Council cannot meet the minimum requirement of five elected members?

The board of education and the School Community Council (SCC) must make reasonable efforts to meet the minimum membership requirement. If there are vacancies in elected members' positions, the board of education can appoint members to the SCC to meet membership requirements.

8. Who are the appointed members on a School Community Council?

All School Community Councils (SCCs) must include the following required appointed members: the principal of the school, one teacher from the school, and one or two secondary students who attend the school. Also, where students who live on a First Nation reserve attend the school, the board of education must work with local First Nations to invite and appoint a representative.

SCCs may also include other appointed members. Appointing other members brings additional strength to the SCC. Appointed members can bring knowledge, skills, community links or views that are important to the school.

Some SCCs have appointed Community School Co-ordinators, Elders and cultural advisors. As well, some SCCs include representatives from local business and industry, community associations, police, regional colleges, human services, faith-based organizations (e.g., church, temple or mosque). Some SCCs have appointed members so that the diversity of the SCC more closely matches the diversity of the student population.

All SCC appointments must be approved by the board of education.

9. Can a member be appointed to represent a particular demographic group in a school?

Every School Community Council (SCC) will want to work to become as diverse as its student population. Diversity helps to create an environment

where all voices are heard and all students and families feel welcome and engaged. Appointments are a good way to strengthen the diversity of the SCC.

10. Which members of a School Community Council have voting rights?

Each School Community Council (SCC) develops a decision-making process as part of its constitution. Not every SCC uses voting to make decisions. The decision-making process may include consensus, voting or other means of making decisions. The constitution also sets out who is involved in making decisions (i.e., all members, elected members, etc.).

All SCC constitutions must be approved by the board of education.

11. What are the terms of office for School Community Council members?

Elected members of a School Community Council (SCC) hold office for two years and can be re-elected at the end of their term. Appointed members of a SCC hold office for two years and can be re-appointed at the end of their term. Student members are appointed for one year, but can be re-appointed.

If a member leaves the SCC before the term is completed, the board of education works with the SCC to appoint a replacement.

12. How often are School Community Councils expected to meet?

School Community Councils (SCCs) must meet at least five times each year and hold an annual general meeting for all electors, parents/guardians, and community members. Many SCCs meet more than five times each year.

13. Do school staffs report to School Community Councils?

School staffs do not report to School Community Councils (SCCs). SCCs are advisory bodies, and their primary purpose is to support student learning and well-being; and to encourage parent and community involvement in the school.

14. What authority or responsibility do School Community Councils have in dealing with complaints that have been brought to their attention about individual students, family members or guardians of individual students, staff members at the school, or any other employee or member of the board of education?

School Community Councils (SCCs) have no authority or responsibility in this area. The legislation states that SCCs must not discuss or have access to personal confidential information or complaints about any pupil, family member or guardian of any pupil, any teacher, administrator or other employee or member of the board of education.

This content is adapted from Saskatoon Public School Division information.