

# SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 71 (COMOX VALLEY)

## POLICY MANUAL

<b>POLICY:</b>	<b>1030R1</b>
Date:	September 23, 2003
Revision:	0

### BOARD REGULATION

#### School Planning Councils

##### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The school planning council (SPC) provides parents, teachers and the principal with an advisory process as they prepare the draft school growth plan for approval by the board as per this regulation.
- 1.2 The school planning council will annually submit the completed school growth plan to the board for consideration.
- 1.3 After the board has approved the school growth plan, the school planning council will support the implementation of the plan and monitor progress being made to achieve the school's goals.
- 1.4 The aim of these efforts is to improve student achievement.
- 1.5 The school planning council will consult with the parents' advisory council (PAC), as the draft school growth plan is being prepared.
- 1.6 The school planning council will consult with the board by attending meetings called by the board regarding:
  - a) the allocation of staff and resources in the school, within the resources provided;
  - b) matters contained in the board's accountability contract relating to the school, and
  - c) educational services and educational programs in the school.

1.7 The following are not within the mandate of the school planning council:

- a) personnel matters;
- b) personal and confidential information on students, parents, teachers, other employees and members of the school community;
- c) performance or conduct of individual employees, students, parents and members of the school community;
- d) terms and conditions of employment contracts, and
- e) activities beyond the advisory and consultative roles set out in the *School Act* and this policy and regulation.

## 2. **Support**

The superintendent shall act as district liaison for school planning councils or may designate a board officer to act as district liaison for school planning councils. The district liaison officer will have the right to attend any meeting of a school planning council or a school planning council sub-committee, and may designate another board officer or employee to attend in his or her place.

## 3. **Establishment**

- 3.1 If no school planning council is in place in a school that is not a provincial resource program, the principal shall proceed, as in "Membership" below, to obtain named representatives and shall report to the board when all representatives have been named. The board shall then establish a school planning council for that school.
- 3.2 For a school that is a provincial resource program, the board will consider the establishment of a school planning council on receipt of a request from at least three parents of students attending the provincial resource program. If the board decides to establish the school planning council, the principal will proceed to obtain named representatives as in "Membership."

## 4. **Membership**

- 4.1 With the exception of the principal, membership is voluntary.

- 4.2 Membership is restricted to:
- a) the principal of the school;
  - b) one of the teachers at the school, elected annually by secret ballot by the teachers who teach at the school, and
  - c) three representatives of the parents' advisory council (PAC) who are:
    - i) parents of students enrolled in the school. **Note:** a parent is defined in the *School Act* as:
      - the person who is the guardian of the student or child, or
      - the person legally entitled to custody of the student or child, or
      - the person who usually has the care and control of the student or child;
    - ii) elected annually by the parents' advisory council, and
      - one of the PAC representatives elected must be an elected officer of the PAC;
      - of the two remaining PAC representatives, the PAC may wish to actively seek nominations from specific groups in the school, for example:
        - Elementary—Primary (K, Gr. 1-3); Intermediate (Gr. 4-6);
        - Secondary—Junior (Gr. 7-9), Senior (Gr. 10-12);
        - French Immersion, or
        - Aboriginal
    - iii) not an employee of any school board.
- 4.3 By September 10 of each school year, the principal shall consult with the parents' advisory council on its bylaws for the election of representatives to the school planning council to ensure that the bylaws safeguard the rights of parents to participate in this decision.
- 4.4 By September 10 of each school year, the principal of each school shall advise the parents' advisory council (if one exists) and the teachers in the school of the need to elect representatives and the required process.
- 4.5 If there is no parents' advisory council in the school, the principal shall notify parents and shall consider whether he or she is prepared to make any recommendations to the school board for appointments of parent representatives, and shall report to the school board by November 1.

- 4.6 If an insufficient number of parent representatives is elected by the parents' advisory council by October 30, the principal shall notify parents and shall consider whether he or she is prepared to make any recommendations to the school board for appointments, and shall report by November 1.
- 4.7 The principal shall coordinate the holding of the election for the teacher representative, and shall ensure that the election is carried out by secret ballot and in accordance with the *School Act*.
- 4.8 If no teacher representative is named by October 30, the principal shall notify teachers and shall consider whether he or she is prepared to make any recommendations to the school board for appointments, and shall report to the school board by November 1.
- 4.9 Teachers and parents' advisory councils may elect alternate representatives.
- 4.10 The principal may designate a vice-principal to act as his alternate for one or more meetings.
- 4.11 The term of office for elected SPC representatives is not more than twelve months from the date that school planning council members first take office. Representatives may be re-elected.
- 4.12 SPC members may be chosen in May or June of one school year for the next school year.
- 4.13 If, during their term of office, a teacher representative or PAC representative resigns or respectively does not continue to be a teacher or PAC member of the school, or if during their term of office a teacher representative or a PAC representative fails to attend two duly called meetings in a row, then unless the school planning council agrees otherwise the membership of that teacher representative or PAC representative on the school planning council will cease and the alternate will take the previous representative's place on the school planning council. If there is no alternate, then the group that the person represents will elect another representative within one month of that representative's loss of school planning council membership, or the board will consider appointing another representative.
- 4.14 The teacher and PAC representative must maintain the confidence of those who elected them. If the teaching staff or PAC holds a vote of non-confidence in their representative and that vote of non-confidence is supported by a two-thirds majority of those members present at a meeting called for that purpose, with each member being provided with written notification at least one week in advance of the meeting, then the school planning council membership of that representative ends immediately and the alternate will take the previous

representative's place on the school planning council. If there is no alternate, then the group the person represents will elect another representative within one month of that representative's loss of school planning council membership or the board will consider appointing another representative.

**5. Elections and Duties of Officers—Chair and Secretary**

- 5.1 The chair and the secretary shall be elected amongst the members of the school planning council, and the chair and the secretary will be the officers of the school planning council.
- 5.2 The officers may conduct the business of the council between regular meetings of the school planning council.
- 5.3 The chair of the school planning council will preside over all meetings.
- 5.4 The secretary shall record the attendance, prepare and distribute all notices and all minutes (to school planning council members, the staff bulletin board, parents' advisory council, principal and superintendent) for all council meetings, and shall have custody of all records and documents of the council.
- 5.5 Officers are in office as long as they maintain school planning council membership. Loss of school planning council membership results in loss of status as an officer of the school planning council.

**6. Committees**

- 6.1 The school planning council may establish committees and appoint members to serve on committees and delegate tasks to those committees.
- 6.2 A school planning council may create sub-committees to investigate matters within the council's jurisdiction and may invite additional participants to join the sub-committees.

**7. Responsibilities of Members**

School planning council members will:

- 7.1 be free of any conflicts of interest;
- 7.2 become knowledgeable about the issues facing the school planning council;
- 7.3 attend school planning council meetings;
- 7.4 be supportive of the school planning council, and

- 7.5 adhere to all other responsibilities including, but not limited to, those identified in this policy and regulation.

## 8. Meetings

- 8.1 When the representatives have been named, but no later than October 1, the principal shall call the inaugural meeting of the school planning council. The inaugural meeting shall decide a schedule of future meetings and may outline future agendas. When school is in session, a minimum of four meetings per school year will be held.
- 8.2 Meetings will be conducted efficiently and with fairness to members present.
- 8.3 If procedural problems should arise, *Robert's Rules of Order* will be used to resolve the situation unless they are in conflict with board-established guidelines.
- 8.4 The agenda shall take precedence over general discussion.
- 8.5 The meetings are not a forum for the discussion of personnel matters, nor for the discussion of individual school personnel, students, parents or other individual members of the school community.
- 8.6 All business or matters coming before the school planning council shall be decided by consensus or, failing that, by a simple vote cast by members who are present at the meeting.
- 8.7 School planning council meetings may run in conjunction with parents' advisory council meetings.
- 8.8 School planning councils may invite others, for example students, parents or other community members, to attend and/or participate in their meetings but no such guest shall have a vote.
- 8.9 Except when dealing with confidential matters, meetings shall be open.
- 8.10 The chair may require anyone to leave, other than a member, if he or she is disrupting the functioning of the council.
- 8.11 Alternates, when they are present but not functioning as the designated representatives, will not have a vote.
- 8.12 The school planning council may meet by telephone or electronically, as long as all members can communicate with each other and other participants can observe or audit proceedings.

- 8.13 Additional meetings may be convened at the call of the chair, upon at least one week's notice. Notice may be waived by unanimous vote. An additional meeting must be called if requested by three members.
- 8.14 Any member may place an item on the proposed agenda of the next meeting by request to the chair. Agendas shall be provided at least one week in advance, but this shall not prevent members from adding matters to the agenda for discussion without prior notice.
- 8.15 The chair shall ensure that a record is kept of school planning council meetings that are held, along with topics discussed (in general terms) and decisions made, and that the record is kept in the custody of the school.

9. **Decision-Making**

- 9.1 School planning councils shall operate on consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, then votes will be taken to reach a decision.
- 9.2 A vote shall be held to approve the proposed school growth plan before presentation to the school board as required by the *School Act*. Each member shall have one vote. The chair shall vote at the same time as other members. Alternates may vote if they are the designated representatives for that meeting.

10. **Financial**

- 10.1 Membership is voluntary. School planning council members will receive no honorarium, payment or reimbursement of expenses for participation in school planning council meetings.
- 10.2 A school planning council has no power to raise or expend money.

11. **District and School Planning**

- 11.1 This planning process is built on the research-based belief that student learning in a school is most likely to improve when the staff in that school:
  - a) jointly determine school needs based on valid data from many sources;
  - b) establish plans to meet those needs (goals);
  - c) implement those plans, and
  - d) assess whether or not the needs (goals) were met.

District planning and goal-setting should, therefore, be focused on supporting each school in achieving its goals. Parents' advisory councils should, as representatives of parents, provide the school with advice regarding their view of school needs and support the staff in their efforts to implement the school growth plan. The school planning council should serve as a final review of the school growth plan before it is submitted to the board for final approval.

11.2 The school and district planning process will be:

- a) No later than October 15 of each school year, the school planning council for each school will forward a school growth plan to the board through the superintendent for approval by the board no later than November 30.
- b) No later than October 31 of each school year, the board will approve and submit to the minister of education a district accountability contract that is based on the school growth plans.
- c) No later than November 30 of each school year, the board will publish a district plan showing how district resources will be used to support school growth plans.
- d) At each parents' advisory council meeting and school planning council meeting, and in regular newsletters sent to parents, principals will inform parents regarding the school growth plan, the progress made toward achieving the goals set out in the school growth plan, and actions the staff are taking to meet those goals. School planning councils may meet in conjunction with parents' advisory councils.
- e) No later than the end of each school year, the principal will review progress made toward accomplishing the school growth plan (based on data available at the time) with the school staff and a preliminary school growth plan for the next school year will be drafted.
- f) The principal will share the review and draft plan with the parents' advisory council and school planning council. This may be done in writing, through a school newsletter. The review and draft plan will be sent to the superintendent.
- g) During the month of September of each school year, the school staff will finalize a proposed school growth plan using data available at the time. The principal will consult with the superintendent or assistant superintendent during this process. The principal will also prepare a report on the previous year's school growth plan for the school planning council, the parents' advisory council and the superintendent.

- h) No later than October 1 of each school year, the staff will forward the proposed school growth plan to the school planning council for review and recommendations. The school planning council will inform the school staff of any changes they will recommend to the board. The staff and/or the principal alone may send comments regarding changes made by the school planning council to the board through the superintendent.

## **12. Confidentiality and Conduct**

- 12.1 From time to time, the school planning council may be provided with information by or on behalf of the school board that has been designated as confidential. The members of the council are expected not to disclose such information without permission given by or on behalf of the school board and to abide by any restrictions or conditions placed on disclosure of the information.
- 12.2 It is expected that parent representatives will function as representatives of all school families and will represent their community of interest, not the interests of any subgroup.
- 12.3 It is expected that the teacher representatives will function as a representative of all teachers in the school and will represent their community of interest, not the interests of any subgroup.
- 12.4 Members are expected to be collaborative and respectful in the conduct of council business and to abide by the rulings of the chair.
- 12.5 Any member of a school planning council may request the district liaison officer appointed under this policy and regulation to assist the school planning council in resolving internal disputes or problem-solving or improving its processes.
- 12.6 Any complaint about the functioning of the school planning council should be made to the council through its chair. If the complaint is not resolved, then the complainant may address the complaint to the district liaison officer.
- 12.7 If it appears to the school board, following investigation, that a member of a school planning council has been guilty of misconduct, including but not limited to breach of confidentiality, the school board may discharge the member and request that a new member be elected, or may appoint a new member if elections are not feasible. Before making such a decision, the school board shall ensure that the member has had the opportunity to respond to the allegations. The school board will not be required to provide an oral hearing, but shall take into account any written representations.

**13. School Board Consultation and School Planning Council**

13.1 The school board will consult with the school planning council in respect of:

- a) allocation of staff and resources in the school;
- b) matters contained in the school board's accountability contract relating to the school, and
- c) educational services and educational programs in the school.

13.2 A school planning council may provide the school board with input on any of these matters.

13.3 By May 1, the school board shall provide the school planning council with plans for the educational services and educational programs in the school, along with the planned allocation of staff and resources in the school for the upcoming year and the matters contained in the board's accountability contract relating to the school. The school planning council will have until May 30 to respond. The superintendent may adjust these dates if necessary to integrate with the school district planning cycle, and may set different dates for different components of the consultation process.

**14. Acceptance, Rejection, Modification of the School Growth Plan**

14.1 In order for the proposed school growth plan to be adopted by the school board, it must be consistent with the educational objectives, strategic directions and policies of the school board, meet legal requirements, be supportable from available school resources, and be reasonably likely to achieve its goals.

14.2 If the school board rejects or modifies a proposed school growth plan, it shall provide reasons to the school planning council.

**15. School Planning Council Consultant**

The board may appoint a school planning council consultant to assist the school planning council if, in the opinion of the board, such assistance is necessary to improve any function that falls under the responsibility of the school planning council.

**16. Quorum**

Quorum shall be the principal (or a vice-principal) and two other members or their alternates.

**17. Amendments**

- 17.1 The board may make amendments to this policy and regulation, from time to time.
- 17.2 This policy will be reviewed by the Board Policy Committee before October 31, 2004.