School Community Councils

Engaging Parents and Community in Learning



Welcome!

This presentation is an overview of School Community Councils. This presentation has been made available by the Ministry of Education to help groups understand what School Community Councils are, what their role is in the school and the community, and what supports are available to help with that role.

Background and rationale

- Local Accountability and Partnership Panel established to address:
 - Need for local voice in new larger school divisions
 - Consolidation of array of existing structures
 - Ensuring authentic engagement of youth, parents and community in learning success
 - Supporting accountability
 - Supporting School^{PLUS}

Where did SCCs come from?

In 2005, the Local Accountability and Partnership Panel was appointed by the Minister of Education to develop a provincial framework for local accountability and community involvement.

The panel reviewed the current practices across the province and worked to bring together the different types of local boards and community groups dedicated to working with schools and proposed a structure that could be implemented in all schools in the province. This new structure would help provide the local voice in the larger school divisions, while ensuring that youth, parents and community members were engaged in the success of their schools. The new structures would support local accountability and School^{PLUS}.

What are SCCs?

 School-level councils that involve parents and community members in working together on issues that affect student learning and well-being

An important and integral part of school division governance

So what are SCCs?

SCCs are school-level councils that involve parents and community members in working together on issues that affect student learning and well-being. This has heightened the role that many of the previously existing school level entities had and the types of activities they were involved in.

With SCCs, every school across the province has a group with a clear focus on student learning and well-being AND acts as an integral part of the school division governance system.

What is their purpose?

- To work with families and community members to:
 - Develop shared responsibility in the school and community for the learning success and well-being of children and youth
 - Encourage families, community members and youth to be involved in school planning and improvement

But what is the purpose of the SCC?

SCCs bring together community members and families of students to ensure that everyone shares responsibility for the learning success and well-being of children and youth. Through involvement with SCCs, families and community members can be a part of school planning and improvement.

Literature suggests that the best way to enhance the learning outcomes of children and youth in school is to help parents support the school by productively engaging their children in learning at home.

What is different about SCCs?

- A common provincial framework with an elevated level of engagement and greater accountability
 - in every school
 - established in legislation
 - integral, purposeful and valued component of school division governance

How is this different from before?

Prior to the introduction of SCCs, schools across the province had community engagement in many different ways. When the ministry introduced the legislation regarding SCCs, it ensured that across the province EVERY school would have the same opportunity for community engagement and a local voice in education and school division governance.

Who is on the SCC?

- 5 9 elected parent (guardian) and community members – majority must be parents (guardians)
- 1 2 high school students
- 1 or more First Nations representatives where students living on reserve are attending the school
- Principal
- 1 teacher

Who is on the SCC?

The legislation and regulations require SCCs to be made up of two different groups. Elected members and Appointed members.

Elections for SCCs are held annually. The majority of the members elected to SCCs must be parents or guardians of students, but it is encouraged to engage community members in joining the SCC through the elections process.

Elected members should ideally reflect the student population of the school. Engaging voices not traditionally heard at the school level was a priority for the Local Accountability and Partnership Panel – a theme they heard throughout their research and consultations. It is a benefit to the SCC to have a council that reflects the make-up of your school. As an example, Saskatchewan is experiencing a boom in immigration, if your community has a growing immigrant population, engaging these community members can provide a unique perspective to your SCC.

Appointed members include:

High School Students – In schools that are K-12 or in high schools, it is required that 1-2 students be appointed to the SCC. This can be a real benefit to the council and to the students themselves. Many SCC members have spoken to the high school students being the most creative and productive members of the council.

First Nations representatives - In the case where there is a student or students living on reserve who are attending the school, the board of education will invite a representative from the one or more of the First Nations to be on the Council. Numbers may vary according to board policy, number of First Nations and willingness to serve.

Principal and Teacher – The principal of the school and one teacher are appointed members of the council. This requirement from the regulations gives the SCC the needed perspective of the day-to-day activity in the school.

Who is on the SCC?

Other Appointed members:

- Human Services
- Other CBOs
- Faith-based
- Elders
- Families of:
 - students with intensive/needs
 - First Nations or Métis student
 - students for whom English is an Additional Language
 - students who have recently immigrated to Canada
- Business and Industry
- Geographic Representatives
- Others town council, RCMP, recreation director, dual-stream schools, priests and parish workers, regional college (career education)

Other Appointed members – In consultation with the members of the SCC, the board of education may appoint other members to the council to address particular demographics, organizations, business and industry, or others to reflect the needs and interests of the school community. If your council could benefit from the experience or skills of someone in the community, it may be of benefit to engage them as an appointed member.

This list is just a few examples of "Other Appointed Members" that could be appointed to your SCC. Take a look at this list and think of any individuals in these or other groups that would be of benefit to invite to your council.

Roles and Responsibilities of SCCs

Duties:

- Develop a good understanding of needs and goals for student learning in their school and community
- Develop and carry out school-level Learning Improvement Plans

So what does the SCC do?

The legislation and regulations regarding SCCs set out what SCCs do. The following are the SHALL's, or what is in the legislation and regulations that say what an SCC <u>must</u> do.

Understanding Community – The SCC must undertake activities to enhance their understanding of the community's economic, social and health needs, aspirations for pupils' learning and well-being, and resources and supports for the school, parents, guardians and community.

Learning Improvement Plans – The SCC is to work in cooperation with the school staff to develop and recommend a Learning Improvement Plan to the board of education for approval. The Learning Improvement Plan must be in accordance with the school division's strategic plan. In addition, the SCC will perform activities to carry out and meet the targets set out in the Learning Improvement Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities of SCCs

Duties (continued):

- Communicate about its work and accomplishments
- Account for funds it spends

Participate in training, orientation and development

Communicate - It is required that the SCCs communicate annually to parents, guardians and community members about its plans, initiative and accomplishments. This has been accomplished in many ways with SCCs including through newsletters, community meetings, and websites.

Accountability – SCCs have expenses: from putting on events to paying for coffee and printing for meetings. To ensure accountability, SCCs must account publicly for the expenditure of funds related to the operation of the SCC.

Professional Development – To better understand and grow at what they do, SCCs should participate in orientation, training, development and networking opportunities. This will allow the SCC to enhance its capacity to fulfil its responsibilities.

Roles and Responsibilities of SCCs

Duties (continued):

 The SCC <u>may not</u> discuss or be given access to personal confidential information regarding students, families or staff. So what CAN'T the SCC do?

SCC are not to discuss or be given access to personal confidential information. The regulation is quoted verbatim below:

Verbatim from regulation 3.92(g)

The SCC shall not discuss, or be given access to personal confidential information about or complaints regarding any pupil, family member or guardian of any pupil, teacher, administrator or other employee of or member of the board of education.

This change helps the SCCs to focus on activities like school planning through Learning Improvement Plans and student learning and well-being, as opposed to the day-to-day business of running the school, such as the hiring and evaluation of teachers. This also protects the SCC, as privacy concerns increase the SCC is removed from the responsibility of having access to personal confidential information.

Roles and Responsibilities of SCCs

Powers:

 Advice and recommendations to the board of education

- Advice to the school staff regarding school programs
- Advice to other organizations

The legislation and regulations also include what the SCCs MAY do. These are different from the SHALLs as these are activities that the SCC can become involved in if it chooses to.

The SCCs MAY provide advice to:

Boards of Education – SCCs can provide advice and recommendations to boards of education respecting policies, programs and educational service delivery, including fundraising, school fees, pupil code of conduct, grade discontinuance, school closure, religious instruction and language of instruction but not including educational service delivery by a specific teacher.

School Staff – SCC may provide advice respecting school programs.

Other organizations, agencies and governments (e.g. municipal governments) – SCCs may provide advice regarding the learning needs and well-being of pupils. Providing this advice should, of course, be done in a manner that is within board of education policy.

SCCs and School-Level Planning

Learning Improvement Plan (LIP)

- SCCs collaborate with the principal and school staff in development of the LIP
- LIP will align with division Continuous Improvement Plan – addressing division priorities with enabling local flexibility
- Involve local stakeholders
- LIP and accomplishments communicated on annual basis

What is an Learning Improvement Plan (LIP)?

Each school creates a Learning Improvement Plan that includes actions the school will take to support the school division's Continuous Improvement Plan. The Learning Improvement Plan includes activities that the school is doing to improve literacy and achievement, provide equitable opportunities for all students, support students in transitions from the time they enter school and progress to post-secondary education or work and accomplish other priorities of the SCC.

In cooperation with the school staff, each SCC is required to develop and recommend a LIP to its board of education that is in line with the school division's Continuous Improvement Plan.

By working with the school to create the Learning Improvement Plan, the SCC ensures that local stakeholders are a part of the school planning process and can assist in achieving the goals for the outcomes of students.

The accomplishments from the Learning Improvement Plan can be communicated on an annual basis to show the progress of the SCC in enhancing the learning and well-being of children and youth.

Continuous Improvement Framework (CIF)

Four Priorities:

- Higher levels of literacy and student achievement
- Equitable opportunities for all students
- Smooth transitions into and through the system
- Strong system-wide accountability and governance

What is the Continuous Improvement Plan?

Each school division develops a Continuous Improvement Plan as part of the province's Continuous Improvement Framework. The Continuous Improvement Framework is a planning and monitoring system that reports progress to the public on government's priorities of literacy and achievement, equity, student transitions, accountability and governance. School divisions are encouraged to engage SCCs in the development of their Continuous Improvement Plans. Contact your school division for more information about its Continuous Improvement Plan.

Support

- School divisions each have a senior administrative contact to be responsible for school community councils and to support them in:
 - Orientation
 - Training
 - Development
 - Networking opportunities

What support does the School Division provide to SCCs?

Boards of education have responsibility for the SCCs in their school division. The board is required to ensure that the proper election procedures are followed and that the appropriate membership is a part of the SCC. Boards of education are also responsible for approving SCC constitutions, codes of conduct, Learning Improvement Plans and providing support, training and orientation to their SCCs.

To provide for this, the board of education has an assigned staff member in each school division to be responsible for SCCs. These staff members support SCCs by providing orientation, training, development and networking opportunities, and by engaging SCCs in school division strategic planning.

For More Information:

Ministry of Education – http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/

Saskatchewan School Boards Association, School Community Councils Information -

http://www.saskschoolboards.ca/index.php?id=links-scc

For more information:

Please visit the links on this page as they contain a lot of valuable information on SCCs. Also, feel free to contact your local school principal if you have questions. You can also get in touch with your school division and ask to speak to the contact for SCCs.

Thank you for viewing this presentation and for your interest in SCCs!