GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

SUCCESS for Every Student

GRAND ERIE SCHOOL COUNCIL GUIDE

2016-17 Edition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Multi-Year Plan 2016-2020 ..... **Page 4**

The School Council in Grand Erie ..... **Page 5**

- Grand Erie's School Council Policy
- Composition if a School Council
- School Council Elections
- Role and Responsibility of the School Council

The School Council Meeting ..... **Page 6**

- At the beginning of the meeting
- During the meeting
- How to Run an Effective Meeting
- At the end of the meeting
- After the meeting
- Guidelines for keeping minutes
- Record suggestions that do not become motions
- Making Decisions
- Consensus
- The following are the basic steps to take to arrive at consensus
- Consensus Building Phrases

Methods for Stimulating Discussion, Hearing All Opinions ..... **Page 10**

Methods for Generating Ideas ..... **Page 10**

Methods for Facilitating Decision Making and Priority Setting ..... **Page 11**

School Improvement Plans ..... **Page 12**

Activities that Support Student Learning ..... **Page 12**

Equity and Inclusiveness ..... **Page 13**

- Sample - Code of Ethics

Insurance and Liability ..... **Page 14**

Community Use of Schools ..... **Page 15**

Parents Reaching out Grants ..... **Page 15**

Community Partnership Incentive Plan ..... **Page 16**

Effective Communication Ideas ..... **Page 17**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Communications ..... **Page 18**
- Access to Chair's Email
- Chair and School Members
- Chair and Principal
- Developing a Communication Plan
- Social Media
- Communication Tips for Elementary Schools
- Visual Identity
- School Council Advertising
- Event Planning and Organization
- Submit and Event
- Communication Tips for Secondary Schools

Board Consultation ..... **Page 22**
- Policies and Procedures
- Board of Trustees Consultation with School Councils
- School-Based Consultation

Retention: Revise, Recognize, and Recruit ..... **Page 23**

Budget and Reporting Procedure ..... **Page 24**
- Examples of how to use the $300 Parent Involvement Fund

School Cash Online ..... **Page 25**

School Council Annual Report ..... **Page 25**

Fundraising Guidelines ..... **Page 26**
- Roles and Responsibilities of the School Council Chair
- Helpful Resources

Contact Us ..... **Page 27**
- Grand Erie Parent Involvement Committee (GEPIC)

Grand Erie District School Board Trustees ..... **Page 27**

Networking ..... **Page 28**
- Grand Erie Parent Engagement Model
- Family of Schools

MULTI-YEAR PLAN 2016-2020

Home, School and Community Partnerships

- The School Council has a meaningful role in supporting learning, well-being and achievement for students.
- Students, parents and community members are engaged and welcomed, as respected and valued partners in student learning.
- The school and community build partnerships to enhance learning opportunities and well-being for students.

- K-12 School Effectiveness Framework, Ministry of Education

Grand Erie Trustees approved a new strategic direction to guide the work we are doing. In the centre of this 2016-2020 Multi-Year Plan is SUCCESS for Every Student. This is our mission, vision and goal statement.

We will achieve this through a focus on students and staff in a culture of high expectations. Indicators that will support our goal include Achievement, Well-Being, Equity, Environment, Technology and Community.

For more resources and to access tip sheets, visit the School Council section under the Parent Tab at www.granderie.ca

SCHOOL COUNCIL IN GRAND ERIE

Grand Erie's School Council Policy

Grand Erie District School Board's policy is to provide direction for School Councils. SO2-School Councils, located on the Bylaws, Policies & Procedure section on the Board's website (www.granderie.ca), outlines the procedures that will guide the work of your Council. One of the key directions in the policy is that every school must have a School Council.

Composition of a School Council

As a committee with a mandate to support parent involvement, the majority of individuals on the committee must be parents or guardians. The principal must also be a standing member of your School Council.

School Council Elections

School elections shall be held within the first 30 days of the school year.

Role and Responsibilities of the School Council Chair

The Chair of the Council is elected by the Council members and must be a parent who is not employed by the school Board.

The Chair is a voting member who, in addition to performing the same duties as other council members, does the following:

- Arranges the meetings
- Prepares the agendas in consultation with the Principal
- Chairs the council meetings
- Ensures that minutes of council meetings are recorded and maintained

Visit www.granderie.ca to view **SO2 – School Councils**. Look in the Policy section under the Board Tab.

Here are the Ground Rules

- All School Council meetings are public and open to anyone who wants to attend.
- A School Council has a right to hold its meetings in the school.
- School Council meetings should be held in an accessible place that is convenient to all members including people with disabilities.
- School Councils must meet at least four times a year.
- School Councils focus on the bigger picture and discuss issues that affect the whole school community.
- School Councils must not discuss individual students or staff members.

THE SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

Helpful Resources

The Parent Involvement Centre
parentinvolvement.ca

Parent Involvement Committees
edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/PIC.html

NOTES

At the beginning of the meeting:

- Arrange chairs and tables to encourage the sense of inclusiveness.
- Call the meeting to order at the designated time; start on time!
- Confirm that the minute taker is present and ready to record.
- Have a process to record attendance; perhaps distribute an attendance sheet.
- Do introductions at every meeting.
- Review and approve the agenda. Have a process to decide whether items can be added to the agenda, or be dealt with at the next meeting.
- Review and approve the minutes of the last meeting.
- Have a process for discussing items, making motions, making decisions.

During the meeting:

- Follow the agenda; discuss one piece of business at a time.
- Keep the group focused on its purpose; cut off discussion if necessary to move the meeting forward, e.g. polite interrupting.
- Keep an eye on the clock; be aware of the timing of discussions; keep to the agenda time limits.
- Work continually to involve all members. Encourage participation by all, even the quietest members. Develop a process that allows all to contribute.
- Keep track of those trying to get your attention and try to be fair in your recognition of speakers; consider keeping a list.
- Try to bring out all sides of an issue.
- Ensure there are no unanswered questions from the group.
- Remind members of behaviour norms as necessary. Make an effort to keep order and maintain appropriate decorum.
- Offer advice or suggestions, if necessary.
- Give the Chair the authority to close off items by summing up.
- Clarify and summarize when appropriate.
- Move the group towards decisions.
- Check for consensus.
- Put aside problems or new issues that are raised in the course of the meeting that sidetrack you from the agenda. Have a process for getting these items on the current agenda or next agenda.
- Be clear about follow-up actions and assign names to responsibilities. Share and delegate responsibilities as much as possible to keep the workload manageable.
- Assist the group in using agreed-on procedures.
- End the meeting on time or get agreement to extend the meeting for a specified period of time.

At the end of the meeting:

- Make sure assignments and agreements are clear.
- Confirm the date, time, and place of the next meeting.
- Identify any items that may be on that agenda.
- Encourage feedback about your meeting leadership style and evaluation of the meeting's effectiveness by all participants.
- Debrief or adjourn the meeting.

After the meeting:

- Check with the recorder to make sure that the minutes are clear before distributing.
- Help others carry out the decisions made during the meeting.
- Follow up with commitments agreed upon for the next meeting.

Guidelines for keeping minutes:

- State whether this is a regular or specially called meeting.
- Give the name of the Council and the time, date and place of the meeting.
- State the name and position of person chairing the meeting and who the minute-taker is.
- Note whether or not minutes of the last meeting were approved.
- List the names of members who are present, those sending regrets and those absent.
- State the names of guests and where they are from.
- State whether committee reports are given; if so, include summaries of the reports in the minutes.
- Record discussion of old business and new business.
- State all motions or recommendations and whether they were accepted or rejected.

Record suggestions that do not become motions.

- Give the names of people who make motions or suggestions and the names of people who second motions, if the Council uses the motion format.
- Summarize the discussion of each recommendation.
- Make note of any announcements.
- Record what went on in the meeting after old and new business such as speakers or presentations.
- State the time when the meeting ended.
- The Chair should review the minutes before sending them out to the members.
- Review the minutes for error or omissions at the next meeting.

School Council Agenda - Sample

School Council Meeting
October 7, 2015 - 7:30 p.m.
Meeting Location

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Confirm minute-taker
3. Review and approve current meeting agenda
4. Review and approve previous meeting minutes
5. Guest speaker
6. Business from previous meetings
7. Chairperson's Report
8. Principal's Report
9. Student Council Report
10. School Generated Funds Report
11. School Improvement Plan (SIP)
12. Sub-Committee Reports
    - Sub-Committee #1
    - Sub-Committee #2
    - Sub-Committee #3
13. Grand Erie District School Board Update
14. Next Meeting Date - Month, day, time
15. Adjournment

THE SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

Ask Yourself: Was it an Effective Meeting?

You will know that a council meeting has been effective when all participants feel that:

- the meeting had a purpose
- creative ideas, alternatives, or solutions were generated
- they have a sense of accomplishment
- they were able to share different points of view
- they contributed to the discussion
- they were valued by others
- they are willing to work together again
- they are committed to the decisions made & the actions taken

Consensus means… Everyone will support the decision 100%

When everyone has had the opportunity to express his or her ideas, and the will of the group is evident to all (even to those who might oppose it), the group has reached consensus and should be prepared to move forward with everyone's support.

Making Decisions

Running a School Council meeting can be as formal or as informal as your Council decides, but even informal meetings require some ground rules to help people work together and reach good decisions. A set of operating bylaws will help your Council work effectively.

Your Council will have to make many decisions. Deciding how decisions will be made is the first order of business for a new School Council. There are two basic ways of making decisions: the less formal way is by reaching consensus; the more formal way is by voting (e.g. by following Robert's Rules of Order).

Consensus

When reaching consensus, members have to put much effort into trying to find alternatives to which everyone can agree. Because everyone helps reach, and must agree to, the final decision, all members have the chance to influence and understand the decision. As a result, the final decision may be reached with less conflict than with a formal vote and should receive everyone's support. Caution: the Chair should ensure that everyone is heard equally and that quieter or less assertive members are not overshadowed by more vocal or assertive members.

Consensus:

- Gives all Council members an effective voice in decisions.
- Makes sure all participants contribute to the decision.
- Builds on differing opinions, perspectives and values.
- Allows for flexibility in arriving at solutions.
- Can result in better-informed, more creative, balanced, and enduring decisions.
- Ensures that final decisions have the support of everyone, thus promoting a sense of commitment to and ownership of the decisions.
- Creates a sense of common purpose.
- Allows all council members to maintain the integrity of their personal values while agreeing to a new solution.

Consensus does not mean:

- A unanimous vote.
- Everyone's first choice.
- That everyone agrees.

The following are the basic steps to take to arrive at consensus:

- Identify the issue or problem.
- Relate the issue to goals.
- List the alternatives or solutions.
- Explore and weigh the solutions in terms of meeting agreed-on goals.
- Choose the solution that best meets the goals.
- Plan to implement the solution.

Arriving at a decision that everyone can support requires time, a clear process, skill, and the full participation of all members.

Consensus building phrases - Some suggested phrases for the Chair to use as council members try to reach consensus:

- Let's begin by getting a reaction from everyone in the group.
- Let me summarize what I hear you saying.
- Let me repeat what I think I heard you say.
- Let me ask you. . . .
- Has everyone had the opportunity to express an opinion?
- Let me see if I can pull together a recommendation.
- Is anyone uncomfortable with this recommendation?
- Let's take five minutes to re-evaluate our positions and prepare statements to share with others.
- Do you want to table this question and discuss it again at the next meeting?

Once a decision is reached by consensus, your Council may choose to formalize it through a motion. The result of the vote should be unanimous.

Consensus takes time, commitment, patience, and persistence. As a process, it will strengthen your team by building trust, valuing the diversity of opinions, and energizing and involving all members as equal participants.

Helpful Resources

Grand Erie District School Board
www.granderie.ca/parents

Ministry of Education's Parent Section
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents

Roberts Rules of Order Website
www.robertsrules.com

Child-Minding at School Council Meetings and Events

Grand Erie recognizes the importance of removing barriers for parents who wish to be involved. Child-minding reduces barriers and promotes parent attendance at events and/or School Council Meetings.

Ideas to promote child-minding, include:

- Certified babysitters
- An early childhood educator or teacher at the school
- Partner with the nearest before- and after-school program provider or child-care provider

Costs associated with child careare to be paid by the school and/or School Council.

Use the term "child-minding available". Child care is used when an agency with a registered license provides the service.

For a list of before- and after-school program and child care providers, visit the Child Care tab located in the Parent section at www.granderie.ca.

METHODS FOR STIMULATING DISCUSSION, HEARING ALL OPINIONS

NOTES

Chair initiation: The Chair invites a wide range of people to speak, and all who wish to speak are given the opportunity, with time limits given to each speaker.

Pairing: People are randomly paired off to discuss an issue and then report back to the group.

Table-go-round: The Chair invites each person around the table, in order, to speak to an issue (if he or she chooses), with a time limit given for each speaker.

Absolute quiet: School Council members are given a specific amount of time to think, read, or make notes relating to the issue being discussed.

Think, pair and share: Have participants spend time writing their opinion on a topic, discuss it with a partner and then have one person of the pair share with the group.

Parking Lot: A bulletin board is designated the parking lot; Council members use post-its to jot down ideas, questions or concerns and post these on the parking lot.

Questionnaire: Develop a brief questionnaire to get input on an issue.

METHODS FOR GENERATING IDEAS

NOTES

Brainstorming: The following ground rules help brainstorming become an effective problem-solving tool:

- Work with the whole Council
- Ensure that everyone is clear on the issue to be brainstormed
- Invite ideas from Council members, recording them on a chalkboard, computer or flipchart
- Accept all ideas without either positive or negative comment
- Encourage quantity, not quality the more ideas the better
- Modify and combine ideas
- Keep School Council members to rank the ideas they feel are the best

METHODS FOR GENERATING IDEAS

Round table: This process is similar to brainstorming, but with the group subdivided into small groups of four to six people. Give each group a time limit. Record all ideas on flipcharts and report back to the main group after the time limit has been reached.

Brain writing: This is similar to a round table, but with more individual participation. Give index cards to each group and ask each group member to write down one idea on each card. The cards are then exchanged and new ideas or comments are added by other members of the group. A facilitator summarizes and groups the ideas and comments.

Carousel Brainstorming: Post chart paper around the room, each with a different question or topic. Have participants work in groups to add ideas to each chart as they move around the room.

METHODS FOR FACILITATING DECISION MAKING AND PRIORITY SETTING

After ideas have been generated by one of the methods described above, the following strategies can be used to help the Council make decisions and set priorities:

- **Pro/con analysis:** In this process, participants develop possible solutions for an important issue that needs to be resolved, and focus on the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives developed. It is best that members complete this process before a motion is put forward and the issue is voted on or before members try to reach a decision by consensus.

- **Voting:** After all ideas have been listed, each member votes on what he or she considers the three or four best ideas by putting a coloured sticker or a coloured check mark beside the ideas he or she thinks are best. The number of stickers or check marks beside each idea will determine the ranking (i.e., the idea with the most stickers beside it is first, etc.). The recorder then lists the ideas in the order of their ranking.

- **Value voting:** This method is useful for obtaining feedback when time is limited. The Chair/Co-Chairs ask each member to take a position on each idea (e.g., strongly agree, agree, or strongly disagree). Each position category is then tallied to arrive at a direction, rather than a decision.

NOTES

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Each school in Grand Erie District School Board is mandated to have a School Improvement Plan. This plan is a road map that supports changes needed to improve student learning in schools, and shows how and when these changes will be made.

School Improvement Plans are strategic: they help principals, teachers, and parents answer the questions "What is the most urgent student learning need for us to focus on now?" and "What will we leave until later?"

The School Improvement Plan is guided by the Board's Multi-Year Plan.

The plan encourage staff and parents to monitor student achievement levels as well as other factors, such as the school environment or other areas of engagement, which are known to influence student success. With up-to-date and reliable information about how well students are performing, schools are better able to respond to the needs of students, teachers, and parents.

A School Improvement Plan is also a mechanism through which the public can hold schools accountable for student success and through which it can measure improvement. One of the first steps in developing an improvement plan involves teachers, school councils, parents, and other community members working together to gather and analyze information about the school and its students, so that they can determine what needs to be improved in their school.

As the plan is implemented, schools continue to gather this kind of data. By comparing the new data to the initial information on which the plan was based, they—and the public—can measure the progress toward the school improvement plan goals.

Real change takes time. It is important that all partners – including members of School Council – understand this as they enter into the school improvement planning process.

ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING

- Student equity events or cultural events
- Sponsored Read-a-thon program
- Education Week celebrations
- Purchase of elementary program resources such as Levelled Literacy Kit
- Support classroom field trips for experiential learning
- Guest presentations such as Scientists in School
- Subject-themed achievement nights (e.g. Math Night)
- Support the Welcome to Kindergarten Orientation program
- Literacy Night
- Student Transitioning Program with Grade 8 Students
- Student pathway planning events or material/Grade 8 Career Day
- Outside music instruction
- Participation in Strong Start
- Support the implementation of technology and/or educational software in the classroom
- Lending Library

EQUITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

All students, parents and members of the school community are welcomed and respected in Grand Erie District School Board schools and facilities.

Diversity and equity are encouraged and inclusive education is essential. The Board strives to maintain a learning and working environment that supports fairness, justice and equality for its students, staff and community.

The Board recognizes and values the diversity of race, colour, creed, sexual orientation and ethnicity within our communities. Expressions of racial, religious or ethno-cultural intolerance or bias in any form, will not be tolerated.

Visit www.granderie.ca to view **SO14 – Equity and Inclusive Education**. Look in the Policy section under the Board Tab.

NOTES

Code of Ethics - Sample

A member shall:

- Be guided by the mission statement of the _____ School Council
- Endeavour to be familiar with school policies and operating procedures and support them
- Practice the highest standards of honesty, truth, accuracy and integrity
- Encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued
- Limit discussion at the School Council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole
- Not initiate or participate in discussion which focuses on any individual that is normally inappropriate at a School Council meeting except when warranted under specific requirements of this constitution
- Consider the best interests of all students
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations that this may place on the operation of the School Council
- Not disclose confidential information
- Use appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise
- Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community
- Declare any conflict of interest
- Accept no payment for School Council activities

INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

Lottery Licence:
Each school may have only one licence and the applicant is to be the parent entity, XYZ School, not the School Council, a student class or school department. School Councils are not permitted to request a lottery licence on behalf of the school.

Liability Insurance:
Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE) liability policy protects School Council executive and volunteers from liability arising while working within the scope of duties for the Board (school).

The policy does not protect School Council volunteers for liability arising from their involvement in activities that are not under control of the school Principal or designate.

Some examples of School Council activities not covered under the General OSBIE Liability Policy:

- Wine & Cheese Socials
- Day care services, i.e., babysitters
- Home coming class reunions, including functions where alcohol is served
- Fund raising events that ofte n include high-risk activities, as determined by the Board

Inflatable and parade activities are no longer supported by the Grand Erie District School Board as functions of a school approved activity.

School Councils are able to purchase liability insurance from the Ontario School Board Insurance Exchange (OSBIE). Board funds are not available to purchase the policy. For information on the coverage available, please have your principal contact Kathryn Underwood, Assistant to the Superintendent of Business at ext. 281134.

The Premium: OSBIE - $140.00 plus tax. Premiums quoted for the policy represent the annual fee and may be purchased throughout the year.

Accident Insurance
The Board does not provide accident insurance for volunteers or students. Student Accident insurance is available through ***Insure My Kids***, www.insuremykids.com, or by calling
1-800-463-KIDS (5437)

It is important for parents to understand that the Board does not provide insurance for students against any accidental death, disability, dismemberment or medical expenses that might occur as a result of accident during school activities, including sporting events and field trips.

Insure My Kids protection plan is made available to parents, at low cost, to provide benefits for dental injuries and other accidents which may occur through participating in high-risk activities.

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS

School use during the day and up until 6 pm on weekdays is booked through your Principal.

A School Council who would like to use any school spaces after 6pm and anytime on a weekend should have your Principal book the space through Community Use of Schools. Our schools are available to book by the public any time after 6pm and on weekends so it is important that you book the required space through Community Use of Schools to ensure that the space is available.

There is no rental fee for school sanctioned events, however custodial fees may be applied.

For questions relating to school rentals email: schoolrentals@granderie.ca

Community Use of Schools

NOTES

PARENTS REACHING OUT GRANTS

Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants are intended to encourage parents to become involved in their children's education and to help support student learning.

PRO Grants for schools are available to School Councils through an application process. School Councils can apply for the grants to support initiatives that focus on reaching parents who may not be involved in their child's education because of language barriers, unfamiliarity with the Ontario school system or other factors.

Examples of Parents Reaching Out Grants in Grand Erie District School Board.

NOTES

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP INCENTIVE PLAN

Schools interested in receiving upgrades can get a supportive hand with the Community Partnerships Incentive Plan.

CPIP is a program that supports school-based projects by matching the funds raised by the community with a contribution from the Grand Erie District School Board. Funds are used to match the monies raised by a school from outside sources, such as donations and/or school fundraising activities, for qualifying buildings and grounds projects estimated to a maximum of $10,000 per school.

Proposed projects must meet the normal qualifications for work that is undertaken by the Facility Renewal Grant budget process (Policy FT 13). The installation of outside work such as basketball standards, backboards and nets, baseball backstops and field upgrades are only examples of what is eligible.

To qualify, school Principals can submit applications using the appropriate forms to Facility Services Maintenance Supervisor. The application must include a description of the project, the overall project budget, and the amount of the community funds the school is planning to put toward the project.

Facilities Services is pleased to assist schools in the pre-application process such as code requirements and estimates of cost. Funds are limited and only a limited number of projects will be approved.

For more information, contact your Principal. Information will also be posted at granderie.ca when the application is available and to download an application. In the meantime, visit the Community Partnerships Incentive Plan secions, under Community at granderie.ca

NOTES

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IDEAS

What are some of the communication strategies you used to engage parents?	*What was the most effective communication used this year to reach your parents?*
• Email, school handbook, school website • Minutes available in office/posted online • Monthly school calendars • Morning announcements • Newsletters (electronic and print) • Information letters/Advertising (flyers) home (with the youngest child) • Newspaper/Radio • Student created flyers in the community • School sign, School Messenger • Council member attends kindergarten information day (successfully recruits new members) • Social Media such as a Facebook page for parents and a Twitter account • Business cards made up with all of our parent council contact info on them, some made into magnets for the Welcome to Kindergarten • One-to-one communication: A key opportunity to connect has been our special events • Bulletin board inside the front door of the school • Visual presence at Meet the Teacher Night/Grade 9 • Night/Education Week Open House • Communicate during events such as family dances and move night • Kindergarten Orientation packages • Remind 101, a texting service	• Surveys (online and print) • Personal telephone contacts/School Messenger • E-mail • Flyers and posters • Agendas • Website • Outdoor school sign • Letters/notices home with children (or with report cards) • Electronic newsletter • Personal invitations (e.g. Grade 9 night, Meet the Teacher night & Family Fun night) • Parents Reaching Out Grant Initiative

COMMUNICATIONS

NOTES

Communication is the key to a successful School Council. It is the main ingredient to how you can engage parents, run an effective School Council meeting, achieve increased parent involvement at your school, and support various strategies to encourage learning at home. School Councils must have sound methods for communicating with the school principal, with the school board, with parents, and with each other.

Access to Chair's Email

Grand Erie District School Board offers School Council Chairs with access to a generic School Council email account in Microsoft Outlook, if you do not wish to use your own personal email account to conduct School Council business.

If you are interested in establishing a generic email account, please notify your school secretary and they will contact ITS Support.

The secretary will receive the account information including a set up password and instructions on how to manage the account.

An example of a School Council email is: chairpj@outlook.com

Once the email is set up, or as soon as you've made the decision to use your own personal email account, please notify Shawn McKillop, Manager of Communications and Community Relations at shawn.mckillop@granderie.ca to update the distribution list.

Chair and School Council Members

Chairs must ensure that council members are accessible to each other. Council members with questions, issues, or simply agenda items to add to the next meeting's agenda will need to know how to contact the Chair. It is a good idea to develop a list of contact numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses for all council members at the beginning of the year and to distribute the list to all members. Be sure to have a mailbox at your school designated for the School Council Chair.

Chair and the Principal

The need to develop a good working relationship between the Chair and the Principal at the beginning of the year cannot be stressed enough.

Trust, respect and open communication are the nucleus for an effective partnership and, ultimately, an effective School Council.

To accomplish this, the Chair and the Principal must establish an effective way to communicate outside of regular meetings. This includes such things as how each would like to receive information (eg. Using e-mail). It may also mean establishing a procedure for what is to happen when an urgent issue arises.

NOTES

DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PLAN

For every initiative that the School Council wishes to communicate, consider these five questions:	*When developing your parent communication plan, ask the following six questions:*
1. What do you want to communicate?	1. Who is my audience?
2. Why do you want to communicate the information?	2. What is my key message?
3. Who needs to receive the information?	3. What strategy/vehicle will be successful?
4. How should the information be communicated	4. Who is responsible?
5. When should the information be communicated?	5. What are the timelines?
	6. How will I measure success?

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication Tips for Elementary Schools

Generally speaking, getting information home to parents in an elementary school community can be achieved fairly easily, as children in these grades are usually quite dutiful about bringing information home.

- Include information in the school's monthly calendar and in the school newsletter that goes home on a regular basis.
- Use space on the school's website to highlight activities and accomplishments of the council and to promote parental involvement.
- Organize a telephone tree.
- If possible, and with permission, collect e-mail addresses from parents and set up distribution lists.
- Host information sessions.
- Always remember to accommodate working parents/ guardians when setting up inschool meetings.
- Advertise in appropriate and effective locations or ways.
- Make use of free public service announcements.

Social Media

Social media is the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

Social media is an encouraged practice for School Councils and schools to promote and share information. Grand Erie District School Board has Social Media Guidelines for schools to use.

Why use Social Media?

- It is the way the world now organizes itself
- The delivery of news has changed; it's no longer coming from traditional media outlets
- You're the news source now!
- Information is going directly to your audience… who's holding a hand-held device receiving instant communication
- Increase in engagement and collaboration

Follow Grand Erie District School Board on Facebook | Twitter @GEDSB

Visual Identity

One of Grand Erie's most valuable assets is our corporate visual identity. When used in combination, Grand Erie District School Board's basic identity elements (logo, banner, colours and typography) define and express our identity in a clear and distinctive way that builds awareness, trust and a reputation for quality.

In order to promote unity, loyalty and trust, it is critical to utilize both a school's individual identity with the visual identity of Grand Erie District School Board. By 'co-branding' an individual school, we can tap into the positive elements associated with the larger brand to build trust and credibility. The more often this is done, the more likely the positive association is going to be reinforced with the various target audiences.

School Councils are obligated to follow the Visual Identity Policy (SO25) and the elements of the visual identity manual. For more information, visit the Visual Identity section located in the Newsroom section within the Community tab.

School Council Advertising

All advertisements shall be coordinated through the Board's Manager of Communications and Community Relations. School Council members can request an advertisement by working with their school Principal or contacting the Manager directly.

If you have any questions, please contact the Manager of Communications and Community Relations at
1-888-548-8878 (Toll Free), ext. 281147
or email: shawn.mckillop@granderie.ca

Event Planning and Organization

There are often times when School Councils host events in their school. Grand Erie has a policy (SO26) that guides event planning and the organization of events.

An event is defined as a function or reception held in a school or in the system coordinated by either staff members or representatives from community organizations that require representation from Grand Erie District School Board Trustees, Senior Administration and/or a designate.

The Manager of Communications and Community Relations must be advised of all events when Trustees, Senior Administration and local politicians are invited.

Tip: Inviting other politicians? Be sure to invite your Trustees. If you invite: MPP, MP, Mayor, or City Councillors then you should invite: Trustees and Designate/Local Trustees.

Submit an Event

Got an Event or an Initiative in Your School? Share the Good News. Spread the Word.

Go to granderie.ca
Community Tab | Newsroom | Submit an Event

Once the event is submitted, it will appear in a weekly media advisory that will be sent to your local media every Monday morning before noon. Your event also gets posted on the Board's Calendar of Events and considered as a news item that could be featured by the Communications and Community Relations team.

Communication Tips for Secondary Schools

Many of the strategies mentioned above also work for secondary schools, although high school students may not be as reliable as younger students in bringing information home. However, regular communication with the school community is as important for secondary schools as it is for elementary schools. If your School Council wants to ensure good communication, it should think creatively about ways of distributing information.

For example, if your Council wants to get a newsletter home, find out when the principal is doing a mailing to the school community, such as at report card time, and have a newsletter prepared for inclusion with the mailing. This incurs no extra cost, and it ensures that information is getting home to parents. Secondary School Councils may, however, wish to ensure that they can afford to send information home in the mail throughout the year, including notices of School Council meetings and previous minutes. A school sign is also a great option.

BOARD CONSULTATION

Helpful Resources

People for Education
www.peopleforeducation.com

TVO
www.tvoparents.com

NOTES

Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures are important resources which govern the operations of Grand Erie District School Board schools. They provide policy statements and guidelines for parents and staff regarding the administration of program, property, student, staff and Board matters.

Board policies and procedures deal with all areas of school and Board life. Policies help everyone in the school community understand expectations and rights.

When a policy or a procedure is being developed or reviewed, Grand Erie District School Board is committed to effective, meaningful consultation with its communities. The Board is committed to a culture of consultation with all stakeholders.

At any given time, Grand Erie District School Board Trustees and staff are developing various policies that guide staff in the implementation of Board or Ministry of Education initiatives. Policies requiring public consultation are posted on the Board's website and forwarded to all Chairs' email account for your information and feedback.

Visit the Bylaws, Policies and Procedures section under the Board Tab at granderie.ca

Board of Trustees Consultation with School Councils

The Board of Trustees may solicit School Councils on matters related to various policies, procedures, or any other topic that may require hearing to the parent voice.

School Councils can engage their Trustee(s) at any time to discuss matters with your School Council. Representatives from a School Council may also comment on any matter as a delegate to the Board of Trustees. To learn more about how to become a delegate and present to the Board of Trustees, please refer to Bylaw No. 11 – Delegations.

When the Board of Trustees considers recommendations made to the Board, the Board will advise the Council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.

School-Based Consultation

As a School Council you may decide there are policies that you would like to draft in collaboration with your school Principal. Some examples include surveys, focus groups, assemblies, by telephone, through email, through the school newsletter, or through the school website.

As the years pass, parents have watched their children grow from the early learning days of Kindergarten, into elementary school, secondary school and lastly graduation. And with them, our School Council parents have carried the torch alongside, bringing years of wisdom, experience and support to their School Council teams.

Over a decade's worth of knowledge and lessons have been retained, but before it is time to say goodbye to our veteran Council members, Grand Erie asks to take your journey one step further to Retention: Revise, Recognize and Recruit. This process not only allows you the opportunity to reflect on your successes, but provides your remaining members with some insight moving forward in your absence.

Revise

Look back over your years of success as a School Council member. Consider all of the challenges, obstacles, achievements that have been overcome during your length of time and involvement. Is there anything you should have done differently? Are there any essential lessons that you learned along the way? This is a chance to revisit work done over the years, and make some edits, notes, suggestions for your council members.

Recognize

This is an excellent internal and personal exercise for our graduating parents to practise. Revisit all of your experiences and personal achievements during your time on School Council. Recognition can be time for self-appraisal and reflection, while also acting as another opportunity to share wisdom with members. Were you overwhelmed or burnt out throughout the years on council? Was it difficult to find balance among the other areas of your personal life and school council? What did you enjoy most about being a school Council member?

Recruit

One of the most important steps to retention and School Council members' succession is recruitment. To support the transition before your departure, it may be helpful to redirect your focus towards recruiting new memberships. Even though your journey has come to an end, it is important to continue to support new members coming in while you're still there. Consider what first sparked your interest in School Council and what motivated you to become a member.

NOTES

BUDGET AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

NOTES

Grand Erie District School Board will provide each School Council with **$500**.

$200 – Each School Council is given $200 to use towards any cause that will benefit the school in any way. This could include such causes that include but are not limited to the following: improve the school environment, engage the community, or contribute to the achievement of students.

$300 – Each school also receives $300 to help encourage and gain parent involvement. Parents are an important member of the publicly funded education system and their involvement can be beneficial.

Please forward all receipts to the school secretary for reimbursement.

For more information speak with the secretary or contact Cindy Smith, Manager of Business Services at 1-888-548-8878 (Toll Free), ext. 281123.

Examples of how to use the $300 Parent Involvement Funds:

- Provide a brief information session by the parent group on a topic or issue of current interest to the school community
- Where the school serves a diverse community, multicultural programs and events can serve not only to welcome all parents, but also to share and enjoy a wide range of traditions, cultures, sports and other activities. One example to consider: Hold an international dinner with foods from around the world.
- One to three per year, consider a direct mailing from the parent group to parents using a portion of the parent involvement funds. This will ensure that parents consistently and reliably receive information, understand the role and activities of the parent group, and are provided with ongoing opportunities to become involved.
- Set up a Parent Resource Centre (Room) with information about the school, the School Council/parent group and the education system. Include a parent booking lending library and other parent focused resources.
- Add a social "meet and greet" aspect to School Council/parent group meetings – 15 minutes of refreshments and networking at the beginning of meeting can create a welcoming atmosphere helping parents and community feel connected and included.
- Host an informal "breakfast/coffee with the School Council/parent group".
- Create a welcoming information package for parents. Include information about the school and its programs, the parent group and its meetings, key dates, school events, and opportunities for parental involvement.

SCHOOL CASH ONLINE

School Cash Online is an online payment system which enables parents to pay for their children's day-to-day school expenses quickly and easily. This system will make paying for items more efficient and effective when organizing with school-generated funds.

School Cash Online was piloted in thirty-four schools as of May, 2014. Staff in Business Services will evaluate the progress in the pilot schools and roll out the new system to the balance of schools during the 2014-15 school year.

It's a **quick**, **easy** and **secure** way to pay.

NOTES

SCHOOL COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

The School Council Annual Report is an opportunity for members on School Council to report their successes, accomplishments, and challenges to the Board. It also provides an opportunity for members to provide input on the areas they would like to see more support, either by GEPIC or by the school Board.

The School Council Annual Report is issued in early May to ensure the School Council has time to discuss the report at a meeting and submit it by the deadline.

The 2016-17 School Council Annual Report is to be submitted by **Friday, June 9, 2017**.

Results from the School Council Annual Report are shared with GEPIC.

NOTES

FUNDRAISING GUIDELINES

Did you know?

School Councils planning to show a movie as part of a fundraiser must have the appropriate licence.

Visit www.criterionpic.com to view the list of movie options.
Contact Diana at the Visual Education Centre/Criterion at diana@criterionpic.com or by phone: 1- 800-668-0749 or 416-252-5908 ext. 226.

Helpful Resources

School Council: A Guide for Members, Ontario Ministry of Education
http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/council02.pdf

Planning Parent Engagement: A Guidebook for Parents and Schools and Parent Tool Kit
www.ontariodirectors.ca/Parent_Engagement/Parent_Engagement.html

Roles and Responsibilities of the School Council Chair

- Work with the Principal to ensure that the sources and uses of school-generated funds comply with Board policies and the established guidelines.
- Ensure fundraising activities involving the students and/or the school are in compliance with Board policies and no direct or indirect benefit is derived by a member of a School Council.
- Ensure that all financial transactions flow through the school bank account and recorded in the School Banking Software.
- Ensure that School Council members are aware that where conflicts of interest exist, they are disclosed.
- Review, sign and date the annual School Council financial reports.
- Elect and ensure the Treasurer understands their responsibility for receipts and disbursement and record banking and record keeping. It is recommended that the School Council Treasurer position be for a term not to exceed two years.
- Work with the principal to ensure that processes are in place to adequately control the funds and ensure security over cash and records of the School Council.
- The principal, in consultation with the parent chair, will review, sign and date the monthly financial report.
- Review records of the School Council periodically.
- Ensure that the Treasurer presents the financial report at School Council meetings.
- Ensure that all records and financial reports are available for review at the school as indicated in the section on School Councils.

Visit www.granderie.ca to view **SO1 – Fundraising Policy**. Look in the Policy section under the Board Tab.

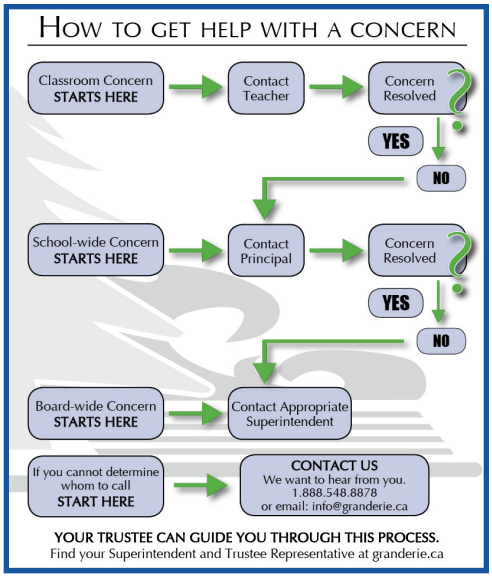
CONTACT US

Grand Erie Parent Involvement Committee (GEPIC)
Grand Erie Parent Involvement Committee (GEPIC) believes that parent involvement is one of the keys to the success of students and communities. The purpose of GEPIC is to support, encourage and enhance meaningful parent involvement at the Board level to improve student achievement and well-being. GEPIC acts as an advisory body to the Grand Erie District School Board and provides an important link between parents and the Board's Trustees and the Director of Education.

GEPIC helps build parent engagement by providing information and advice to the Board on parent engagement and communicating with parents; by developing strategies and initiatives the Board could use to engage more parents to support their children's learning at home and at school; and by sharing information with and supporting the work of School Councils.

For more information:
Brent Howard, Chair of GEPIC
Email: chairgepic@outlook.com

Val Slawich, Secretary of GEPIC and
Executive Assistant to the Director of Education
Tel: 519-756-6301 or Toll-Free: 1-888-548-8878 ext. 281155
Email: valerie.slawich@granderie.ca



GRAND ERIE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD TRUSTEES

Trustees are officials elected to serve parents, students and taxpayers. They are the link between communities and the school Board, ensuring Grand Erie schools meet the diverse needs of students in their respective communities. Amoung other duties, they make policies, approve the budget, and appoint the Director of Education.

A list of Trustees is available on the Board's website with contact information.

Your Trustee is a great resource to support you and your School Council.

Board Meetings are held on two Monday nights a month at 7:15 p.m. at the Education Centre, 349 Erie Avenue, Brantford, Ontario. Visit www.granderie.ca for a complete schedule.

GRAND ERIE PARENT ENGAGEMENT MODEL

Use this model as a way of making connections. How can your School Council support parent engagement at each level?

STUDENT ↔ FAMILY

SCHOOL COUNCIL

Encourage school level participation. Offer opportunities to expand to feeder, family and district involvement.

HIGH SCHOOL FAMILIES

School Councils are encouraged to network and work with other Elementary and Secondary School Councils within the framework of their high school feeder school network.

- Paris District High School
- Brantford Collegiate Institute and Vocational School
- Grand Erie Learning Alternatives (GELA)
- North Park Collegiate & Vocational School
- Pauline Johnson Collegiate & Vocational School
- Tollgate Technology Skills Centre
- Cayuga Secondary School
- Dunnville Secondary School
- Hagersville Secondary School
- McKinnon Park Secondary School
- Delhi District Secondary School
- Simcoe Composite School
- Waterford District High School
- Valley Heights Secondary School

FAMILY OF SCHOOLS

Each Family of Schools creates a family network of schools to increase collaboration, networking and resources.

- BRANT
- BRANTFORD
- HALDIMAND
- NORFOLK

GRAND ERIE PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Grand Erie Parent Involvement Committee (GEPIC) is a direct link to Trustees and Senior Administration by providing advice. GEPIC is made of parents who wish to support School Councils and other parents across the system.

For more information, visit GEPIC in the Parent Tab at www.granderie.ca

Engage, support and inspire all learners to achieve and succeed.

NETWORKING

Networking with other parents from other schools within the Grand Erie District School Board can lead to new perspectives and new inspirations.

The charts below outlines the Family of Schools located in Grand Erie District School Board. Each Family of School is associated with a high school and a municipal region.

Contact Shawn McKillop, Manager of Communications and Community Relations, shawn.mckillop@granderie.ca or 519-756-6301 ext. 281147 for contact information of a School Council Chair belonging to any of the schools in the Family of Schools listed below.

NOTES

Brant County
Paris District High School
• Burford District Elementary School • Cobblestone Elementary School • Glen Morris Public School • North Ward School • Oakland-Scotland Public School • Paris Central Public School • St. George-German Public School

City of Brantford		
Brantford Collegiate Institute and Vocational School	**North Park Collegiate Vocational School**	**Pauline Johnson Collegiate & Vocational School**
• Agnes G. Hodge Public School • Bellview Public School • Dufferin Public School • Fairview School • Grandview Public School • James Hillier Public School • Lansdowne-Constain Public School • Mount Pleasant School • Princess Elizabeth Public School • Ryerson Heights Ele. School • Walter Gretzky Ele. School	• Branlyn Community School • Brier Park Public School • Cedarland Public School • Centennial-Grand Woodlands School • Grandview Public School • Greenbrier Public School • Prince Charles Public School • Russell Reid Ele. School	• Banbury Heights School • Branlyn Community School • Central Public School • Echo Place School • King George School • Major Ballachey Public School • Onondaga-Brant Public School • Woodman-Cainsville School

NETWORKING

Haldimand County			
Cayuga Secondary School	**Dunnville Secondary School**	**Hagersville Secondary School**	**McKinnon Park Secondary School**
• J.L. Mitchener Public School • Oneida Central Public School • Rainham Central School • Seneca Central Public School	• Anna Melick Memorial School • Fairview Avenue Public School • Grandview Central Public School • Thompson Creek School	• Hagersville Elementary School • Jarvis Public School • Walpole North Elementary School	• Caledonia Centennial Public School • Onedia Central Public School • River Heights Elementary School

Norfolk County			
Delhi District Secondary School	**Simcoe Composite School**	**Waterford District High School**	**Valley Heights Secondary School**
• Courtland Public School • Delhi Public School • Teeterville Public School	• Elgin Avenue Public School • Lakewood Elementary School • Lynndale Heights Public School • Walsh Public School • West Lynn Public School	• Bloomsburg Public School • Boston Public School • Oakland-Scotland Public School • Waterford Public School	• Courtland Public School • Houghton Public School • Langton Public School • Port Rowan Public School

NOTES

349 Erie Avenue, Brantford ON N3T 5V3
Telephone: 519.756.6301 • Toll Free: 1.888.548.8878
Fax: 519.756.9181 • Email: info@granderie.ca
www.granderie.ca

Follow and join the conversation @GEDSB on Twitter and Facebook.