

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

## CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL (CSPC) MEETINGS

### CSPC Mission

Through the active participation of parents/guardians, the Catholic School Parent Council of each TCDSB school will endeavor to improve student achievement and well-being, as well as enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

Each CSPC shall function in an advisory role by making recommendations to the principal of the school and, where necessary, to the board, on any matter in accordance with the Education Act, TCDSB policies, guidelines, and operating procedures.

### CSPC Meetings: General Information [\(Policy S.10\)](#)

- There must be a minimum of four (4) CSPC meetings during the school year, which includes AGM.
- The Council shall conduct its business at scheduled meetings held at the school or virtually.
- Meetings shall be accessible and open to all members of the Catholic school community and to the public.
- CSPC meetings may be held virtually where access to school premises is not available or to increase the participation of parents.
- Scheduled CSPC meetings can only occur with quorum. Quorum is established when:
  - a majority of council members are present; and
  - a majority of the members present are parent members.
    - If a quorum is not possible because of parent vacancies, a quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the remaining membership until such times as the vacancies may be filled.
- There will be no voting by proxy at all council meetings.
- CSPCs shall take minutes of all its meetings and keep records of all its financial transactions.
- Approved CSPC meeting minutes and financial statements shall be shared with the school community.
  - The principal will retain these minutes and records for a minimum period of seven (7) years and will make them available at the school for examination without charge to any person.
- All communication from CSPC intended for distribution to all parents of children in the school, will be approved by the principal prior to the communication being sent to the intended recipients.
- Anytime The Council's activity directly or indirectly places the member in a potential conflict of interest, the member shall declare their real or potential conflict of interest and shall not deliberate or vote on any such resolutions where a conflict of interest exists.

### Roles & Responsibilities of the Executive [\(CSPC By-Laws\)](#)

#### The Council

- Maintains ethical standards and set ground rules of respect for all meetings
- Actively and accurately represents the views of the school community

#### The Principal

- Acts as a resource person to The Council, and assist The Council in obtaining information relevant to its function, including information relating to relevant legislation, regulations, and policies
- Encourages and supports the formation and continuous improvement of The Council
- Gives written notice of the dates, times, and locations of all scheduled Council meetings to all parents
- Works in collaboration with the chair/co-chairs to prepare The Council's meeting agendas
- Assists The Council in posting CSPC meeting agendas and approved minutes on the TCDSB school webpage
- Supports the chair/co-chairs in running efficient council meetings
- Provides information and seeks input from The Council, parents and community on major decisions that affect the school
- Provides contextual information, as requested by The Council, on matters relating to the school
- Presents the current balance of all school bank accounts, including the Student Nutrition Program (SNP), where applicable, using TCDSB accounting templates at each Council scheduled meeting
- Interprets and shares results of provincial achievement tests

#### The Chair/Co-Chairs

- Provide leadership and direction to The Council and executive officers to ensure that goals, priorities, and procedures of The Council promote Catholic faith and Gospel values consistent with the mission and vision of TCDSB
- Chair all CSPC meetings in consultation with the principal
- Prepare the agenda CSPC meetings based on input from CSPC members, and in consultation and collaboration with the principal
- Ensure that the minutes of scheduled Council meetings are recorded and properly maintained
- Provide the local trustee with copies of the minutes of CSPC meetings, upon request



## The Secretary

- Keeps a record and take minutes of all meetings of The Council and of the executive officers
- Collaborates with the chair/co-chairs to ensure that all CSPC approved minutes and records are available at the school for examination by any person
- Assumes the duties of the chair, in the absence of the chair/co-chairs
- Resource: [CSPC Meeting Agenda and Minutes - Templates](#)

## The Treasurer

- Provides an account of all transactions of The Council, including the current financial status at scheduled council meetings
- Assumes the duties of the chair, in the absence of the chair/co-chairs
- Resource: [CSPC Meeting Financial Reporting - Templates](#)
- Resource: [Appendix B: TCDSB Guidelines for School Accounts and CSPCs Financial Operational Procedures](#)

## Preparing for CSPC Meetings

### Considerations for Increasing Participation

- Post the yearly CSPC meeting schedule (i.e., dates & time(s) & location(s)) on the school's website, and advertise meetings well in advance of the meeting
- Set, communicate, and stick to a timed agenda so that CSPC members and visitors can depend on a definite start and finish time for each meeting
- Send the meeting agenda and draft meeting minutes to all parents, to ensure that anyone who has an interest in matters before The Council knows that there is an open, sincere invitation for anyone to attend
- Ensure that the meeting space, physical or virtual, is accessible and inclusive of all members of the school community, including those with different abilities
  - Discerning questions for in-person CSPC meetings:
    - Is the space large enough, with enough furniture to welcome Council members, and parents/visitors to participate?
    - Are the tables and chairs arranged in such a way that council members and parents/visitors can see each other when meeting is being conducted?
    - Are the necessary supplies/equipment readily available so that the meeting can proceed with minimal interruption?
  - Discerning questions for virtual CSPC meetings:
    - What is the capacity for the Zoom license to enable all parents to participate?
    - Do we have rules in place for virtual meeting etiquette for council members and participating parents/visitors?

### Considerations for Decision Making

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.

- There are two basic ways of making decisions: the less formal way is by reaching consensus, and the

recommended manner is by voting (e.g., following [Robert's Rules of Order](#)).

- All Council members must be aware in advance of how advisory local decisions are made and recorded at CSPC meetings

## Running CSPC Meetings

Meetings are effective when all participants feel that:

- The meeting had a clearly communicated purpose
- They were valued and included
- There were opportunities for contribution
- The meeting focused on ideas versus people
- They have a sense of accomplishment and commitment to the decisions made
- They are willing to work together again

## Strategies for Maximizing Meeting Effectiveness

As the chair/co-chairs of The Council, consider:

- Publishing all CSPC meeting dates in all monthly school newsletters as a standing item
- Starting and ending each meeting on time
- Keeping opening remarks welcoming but brief
- Introducing any guests, including all those presenting agenda items
- Reviewing the agenda with council members before the meeting
- Reviewing the code of conduct of expected behavior of all members at the start of each meeting
- Outlining what is to be accomplished
- Keeping to the agenda and the timelines
- Recording new business on chart paper and carry them forward as agenda items for the next scheduled meeting
- Maintaining order and focus on priorities
- Ensuring that the approved minutes of each meeting are references to follow up on the completion of any next steps
- Allowing all members time to provide input during any discussion of agenda items
- Remaining neutral and providing alternative ways to solve problems or make decisions
- Checking that all Council members have the same understanding of any advisory decision made
- Summarizing the meeting, and reviewing key actions and decisions before ending each meeting
- Reminding members of established the time, date, and location of the next meeting, and noting any items of new business to be included in that meeting's agenda
- Assessing the effectiveness of the meeting and using the information to improve future council meetings

[School Councils – A Guide for Members](#)

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