

BRIDGEWATER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
*"providing quality learning opportunities for all
our students"*

130 York Street
Bridgewater, Nova Scotia
B4V2M1
Phone : (902) 541-8240 fax: (902) 541-8250
<http://www.bes.ednet.ns.ca>

**Bridgewater Elementary
School Advisory Council
LETTER OF AGREEMENT**

The purpose of this letter is to establish the terms and conditions of the agreement between the South Shore Regional School Board, the Bridgewater Elementary School Advisory Council, and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to operate an advisory council at the school level.

The parties agree to the following:

1. Duration of the Agreement

This revised agreement begins on January 15, 2013 and will be reviewed annually, at our annual general meeting in September each year. Any mutually agreed upon revisions can be made subsequent to the review.

2. Structure of the Council

2.1 The membership of the advisory council will include:

the principal
3 parents (one of whom is a member of the Home & School Association)
3 teachers
1 support staff
1 community member

2.2 Council members, except the principal, will serve a three year term, and no more than two consecutive terms; the principal is a permanent member. Appendix "A" lists current council members.

2.3 Bridgewater Elementary School Advisory Council will make decisions the following ways:

2.3.1 Achieving consensus will be the guiding principle behind decision making

2.3.2 Voting may be employed for items administrative in nature

2.3.3 Decisions having the full support of the school council will go forward to the principal or the school board

2.3.4 Information on important decisions will be distributed one week prior to the regular monthly meeting

2.3.5 Consultation will be carried out with parents, school staff, students and community members as appropriate. Issues will be discussed in a structured way prior to decision making

2.4 Public meetings will be scheduled at least 6 times per year, and will be held on the third Tuesday of the month

3. **School Council Commitments**

Bridgewater Elementary School Advisory Council will:

3.1 at all times have the best interests of all students in mind

3.2 as individual members, publicly support council decisions

3.3 provide parents, staff, the community and students ("the partners") with the opportunity to contribute toward decisions made regarding their school in order to positively affect students' education

3.4 maintain effective communication among the partners by holding regular, open public meetings and circulating information

3.5 develop in collaboration with school staff and other partners, a school improvement plan to be shared with the SAC and presented to the school board in May of the current year (this is now known as the Continuous School Improvement Process) and a SAC annual report describing the school improvement work for the year and actions to be taken in the next year

3.6 advise the principal and school board on the development of school policies that promote academic excellence and a positive and supportive learning environment

3.7 advise the principal of the school on matters including curriculum, programs, school practices (including extra-curricular activities), fundraising, parent-school communication policies, and effective use of resources

3.8 advise the school board on matters including curriculum, programs, student support services, policy development, funding, and communication strategies

- 3.9 ways and strategies to improve and support the extra-curricular program and special projects in the school
- 3.10 participate in the selection of the principal by representation on the board's hiring selection committee
- 3.11 make by-laws respecting the election of members, the conduct of meetings and the operation of the council
- 3.12 assume the responsibility of student discipline as delegated by the board under the Education Act
- 3.13 participate in the ongoing development of school discipline policies
- 3.14 to assist with the selection of the school Vice-Principal by providing the Principal with a profile of characteristics required for the position
- 3.15 to prepare, in conjunction with the Principal, a list of priorities for the programming/staffing for the next school year

4. **School Board Commitment**

The South Shore Regional School Board will:

- 4.1 provide an annual orientation session, continuing training, and workshops on special topics for members of the school council, as required by the school council
- 4.2 provide a facilitator to assist the school council as required by the council
- 4.3 to provide timely feedback on advice and requests made to the school board by the council
- 4.4 receive and review and give feedback and direction to the school council on the accountability report
- 4.5 provide for consultation on school board policies and procedures, and on responsibilities assigned to the school council
- 4.6 meet periodically with the school council executive
- 4.7 provide funding within the limit of the school budget to allow the school council to carry out its responsibilities (any extraordinary expenses must have prior School Board approval)
- 4.8 provide the school council with a copy of school board policies and new initiatives and minutes of school board meetings

5. **Department of Education and Early Childhood Development**

The Department of Education and Culture will support Bridgewater Elementary School Advisory Council by:

- 5.1 providing a SAC Handbook
- 5.2 providing a provincial model and framework for continuous school improvement
- 5.3 providing guidance, structure and monitoring of annual reports
- 5.4 assisting school boards to organize SAC leadership development opportunities
- 5.5 approving Letters of Agreement and by-laws
- 5.6 maintaining an on line data base for schools to record school improvement plans.

6. **Parties to the Agreement**

We clearly understand and agree to follow through on the commitments made in this Letter of Agreement.

School Advisory Council

Chairperson

Date

South Shore Regional School Board

Chairperson

Date

Principal

Date

Minister of Education

Date

APPENDIX "A"
Bridgewater Elementary School
School Advisory Council
Current Council Members
As of September, 2016
(Based on 1 term =3 years)

Partner	Name	Completion of Term
Principal	David O'Quinn	Permanent Member
Parent/Chairperson	Siobhan Doyle	September 30, 2017
Support Staff /Secretary	Engelina Crouse	September 30, 2018
Parent/Vice-Chair	Sean MacLeod	September 30, 2019
Teacher	Beth Ann Norwood	September 30, 2017
Teacher	Claudia Robar	September 30, 2018
Teacher	Kelly Sylvester	September 30, 2018
Parent	Heather Dalton	September 30, 2017
Parent	Stephanie Chipman	September 30, 2019
Community Member	Michael Graves	September 30, 2018

APPENDIX "B"
Bridgewater Elementary School
School Advisory Council

BY-LAWS OF
Bridgewater Elementary School Advisory Council

MEMBERSHIP

1. Bridgewater Elementary School Advisory Council ("The Council") will have nine members including three parents of children enrolled in the school (one of these parents will also be a member of the Home & School Association), three teachers, one support staff, and one community member. Not more than one-third of the membership shall be from anyone of the above groups. The principal will serve as a non-voting, permanent member.

ELIGIBILITY

2. Eligible parents are those parents who have children currently enrolled at Bridgewater Elementary School.

3. Eligible teachers are those teachers currently teaching at Bridgewater Elementary School.

4. Eligible support staff are those staff actively working at Bridgewater Elementary School in the following groups; secretarial, PSA's, custodial, playground supervisors, bus drivers and library technicians.

5. Eligible community members are those residents of Bridgewater who are not parents of a child currently enrolled at Bridgewater Elementary School.

ELECTIONS

6. All elections will be conducted by secret ballot. No voting by proxy will be permitted, Elections will take place during the September annual meeting.

7. Teacher representatives are to be elected from and by eligible teachers. Support staff representatives are to be elected from and by eligible support staff. Parent representatives are to be elected at a public meeting from and by eligible parents. Community representatives may be elected from and by eligible community members at a public meeting, or in case that there are no members elected because of a lack of eligible candidates, may be appointed by the council.

8. When a position on council becomes vacant, the council shall arrange a new election for that position; alternatively, the council may appoint a person for a term not to exceed six months.

9. The term for any position will be no longer than three years, and no member shall serve more than two consecutive terms. (6 Years total) Roles for School Council Members are defined in Appendix "C".

10. The chairperson and vice-chairperson will be parent or community members. The positions of chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary shall be for a term no longer than two years.

MEETINGS

11. a) All regular council meetings will be open to the public and duly publicized.

b) Student discipline matters handled under the Education Act will be in-camera sessions.

12. The council shall meet at least six times per year. The council will hold its annual general meeting in September.

13. The executive of the council will develop meeting agendas in consultation with the principal and other council members. The agenda will be distributed to each member and duly publicized at least a week prior to the meeting.

14. Minutes will be kept for each meeting and included in the school's official records. These minutes are available to the public.

DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE

15. All school council members will have an opportunity to participate in decision making, and all members are responsible for participating in decision making.

a) Achieving consensus will be the guiding principle behind decision making. Voting may be employed for matters which are routine ex. Agenda and minutes.

b) If consensus can not be reached on significant issues, the decision will be tabled until the next meeting. When appropriate, consultation with representatives of the partner groups will take place, followed by further discussion and decision making.

c) On issues for which voting is employed, three-quarters will be required for a majority. If there is not three-quarters majority, no advice will be given.

d) The principal, as a non-voting member, participates in the decision making of the council in a consultative role.

16. No business shall take place at any meeting of the council or committees unless a quorum of members is present. Fifty percent of members plus one member shall constitute a quorum for both council and committee meetings.

17. All individual members will publicly support council decisions.

18. Consultation will be carried out with parents, school, staff, students and community members as appropriate. Issues will be discussed in a structured way prior to decision making.

19. Decisions and methods used in making decisions will be recorded in the minutes for each meeting.

SUPPORT

20. The school will provide, within the limits of its resources, support services, communication, and other reasonable assistance associated with the council's activities.

CONTINUOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

21. A school improvement plan and report will be prepared by the school team in consultation with appropriate partners. This report will be continuous and will be shared with the SAC and submitted to the school board for review in May of each year.

ADOPTING / AMENDING BY-LAWS

22. By-laws will be adopted or amended by a consensus decision of council members and upon approval of the School Board.

APPENDIX "C"
Bridgewater Elementary School
School Advisory Council

Role of School Advisory Members

Chairperson

- ~ facilitates/leads school council meetings
- ~ communicates with the principal and the school board
- ~ helps to seek consensus and resolve conflicts
- ~ organizes the agenda for council meetings in consultation with the principal and secretary
- ~ represents the council to other groups

Vice-Chairperson

- ~ assumes the responsibilities of chairperson as required

Secretary

- ~ records and maintains council minutes
- ~ organizes the agenda for council meetings in consultation with the principal and chairperson

Council Members

- ~ participate in the school improvement process with the school staff
- ~ communicate with and for the groups they represent
- ~ work as team members
- ~ review the Letter of Agreement
- ~ revise council by-laws

Principal

- ~ supports the school council
- ~ consults with the council on relevant school issues
- ~ gives updates to council on the school improvement process
- ~ responds to the advice of the council

- ~ communicates with staff, students, council and the school board
- ~ provides educational leadership