

## Tips For a Successful SAC

- Ensure student members have opportunities to speak at meetings. Allow them to speak first to be sure their concerns are heard. This also keeps the focus on what is most important - the school and students.
- Coordinate with other groups. Work together with your school's Home and School Association, or Parent Teacher Association, or local volunteer organizations.
- Promote your school. Let the students, staff, and community know about school activities and the positive influence they have on the community as a whole.
- Use your SAC to create a positive atmosphere in your school and community.
- Always act in the best interest of the students:
  - Be open with intentions, opinions, and ideas.
  - Strive to provide accurate information.
  - Uphold a high level of integrity and courtesy at meetings.
  - Stick to democratic principles.
  - Be up-front about any possible conflicts of interest.
  - Demonstrate trust and respect of one another.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the role of the principal?

Principals are a valuable resource, guiding SAC members to appropriate information. SACs can provide advice to support the decision-making role of principals.

### Are school board members part of an SAC?

No, school board members are not official members of an SAC. However, school board members may attend SAC meetings, like any member of the general public.

### Are the decisions of the SAC final?

No, the decisions of the School Advisory Council are not final. The SAC is an advisory body, and its purpose is to give advice to the school principal and to the school board from the point of view of the school community, on behalf of those affected by school decisions.

### Do SACs have disciplinary power over principals, teachers, and support staff?

No, the School Advisory Council does not have directive, supervisory or disciplinary power over the school's principal, teachers, and support staff. These powers rest with the superintendent of the school board. The SAC is not part of the day-to-day operations of the school.

### How does an SAC communicate with the school community?

A School Advisory Council can communicate with its school community in a variety of ways, such as:

- Posting meeting minutes on an SAC school bulletin board, or school website.
- Linking an SAC web page to the school web page.
- Including SAC information in the school newsletter.
- Setting up an information table during parent-teacher meetings.
- Distributing and publicizing the SAC annual report.

*For more information on School Advisory Councils, visit [www.ccrsb.ca](http://www.ccrsb.ca) and click on "Parents".*

# School Advisory Councils

Engaging partnerships in education.



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## What is a School Advisory Council?

The purpose of a School Advisory Council (SAC) is to act as an advisory body to the school principal and to the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board on a wide range of issues, including policies, curriculum and programs, school practices, student-support services, parent-school communication and school improvement. Most importantly, an SAC participates in the ongoing efforts of the school to continuously improve student achievement and school performance.

An SAC is made-up of parents, community members, the school principal, teachers and school support staff. School Advisory Councils are volunteer organizations that were established by the Nova Scotia *Education Act*.

## SAC Guiding Principles

- Education is a shared responsibility.
- Students must be the first consideration for all decisions.
- People at the local school level have important perspectives to advise on and contribute to decisions that will meet the needs of all students.
- Increasing the quality of education means the continuous improvement of schools.
- Change must take into account the unique characteristics of each community.



- Partners need to use teamwork skills and strategies to effectively manage change.
- Involving the community in school improvement will enhance the learning for all students.

## SAC Membership: Who can serve?



- Minimum of five members to a maximum of 18.
- Parents with children currently enrolled at the school; community representatives, as well as the school principal, teachers and support staff.
- At least two students if the school services Grade 7 or higher (elementary students may be included).
- Individuals who reflect the uniqueness and diversity of the community and represent the communities served by the school. SAC's should consult the CCRSB Social Justice Framework and consider the five pillars when considering diversity: class, race, abilities, sexual orientation and gender.

## Membership Guidelines

SAC members – with the exception of the principal – are elected, either by secret ballot or following the guidelines developed during the SAC formation meeting. Elected SAC members may serve for no longer than three years, with the Chair elected annually from within the SAC. The principal is a permanent, non-voting member of the SAC.

No more than one-third of the SAC membership should be drawn from any one group – students, parents, teachers, staff and the community – in order to provide the principal with a balanced view from all partners.

## SAC Responsibilities

- Focus on supporting student learning.
- Provide advice to principals on school programs and policies.
- Provide advice to CCRSB on school board programs and policies.
- Participate in the writing and revision of the Letter of Agreement, by-laws and annual reports.
- Participate in the school improvement planning process.
- Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.
- Communicate openly with the groups you represent.
- Work as a team player.
- Keep an open mind and listen to new ideas and suggestions.
- Make the voice and suggestions of the groups you represent heard.