

YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy and Procedure #672.0, Student Leadership and Student Voice

The Student Leadership and Student Voice policy and procedure recognizes and supports student leadership and student voice as resonant forces in establishing a thriving learning environment for each learner in the Board.

What has changed?

Major Changes to the Document	<i>This policy has subsumed Policy #660.0, Political Clubs in Secondary Schools. It is now referred to as Procedure #672.1 Political Clubs in Secondary Schools.</i>
Who is affected by these changes and what is the impact on current practice?	<i>All persons who have responsibilities outlined below.</i>
Implementation Timelines	<i>Immediate</i>
Lead Superintendents/Subject Matter Expert	<i>Superintendent of Education, Human Resource Services-Operations</i>

Who has responsibilities?

- Board of Trustees
- Student Trustees
- Director of Education
- Coordinating Superintendent, Equity and Community Services
- Elementary and Secondary Principals
- Student Councils or Alternative Student Leadership Group Staff Advisors
- York Region Presidents' Council
- Student Councils and Alternative Student Leadership Group Members/Representatives
- Students
- Board and Trustee Services
- Advisors to the York Region Presidents' Council

How is this policy and/or procedure related to Board priorities?

This policy and procedure supports the Board's commitment to promoting student achievement and well-being, the stewardship of Board resources and the delivery of effective and sustainable education programs by engaging students as partners in their learning and public education and enhancing confidence in public education.

What are the timelines and next steps?

At the March 6, 2018 Board meeting, this policy was adopted as a working document for six school months. Feedback received during this time will be shared with the appropriate staff and committees for appropriate consideration.

How do I find out more or provide feedback?

Questions about this policy and/or procedure should be raised with your principal, manager or supervisor. If additional clarification is required, principals, managers and supervisors may contact the lead superintendent and/or subject matter expert.

In accordance with *Board Policy #285.0, [Board Policies, Procedures and Supporting Documents](#)*, the Board welcomes all comments and suggestions on Board policy.

Input is an important component of the review process. If you feel a policy and/or procedure needs to be revised, feedback may be submitted through the school council or by submitting the on-line form. In your response please;

- outline clearly the specific section(s) of the policy and/or procedure in which you are not comfortable,
- suggest specific alternate wording to reflect your position, and
- identify the reason(s) for your concern(s).

Specific recommendations or questions about the review process should be submitted using the on-line form or sent to the Assistant Manager, Corporate Policy via email at policy.committee@yrdsb.ca, or via telephone at 905-727-0022 extension 2570 or in hard copy at [The Education Centre – Aurora](#).

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property; or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities will respect the policies and procedures of the Board. The term “parents” refers to both biological/adoptive parents and guardians in all Board policies and procedures.



Board Policy #672.0

Student Leadership and Student Voice

Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board recognizes that student leadership and student engagement are resonant forces in establishing a thriving learning environment for each learner in the Board. The Board is committed to ensuring that student voice effectively represents the diverse student body, including the silent voices of marginalized students, and is heard and considered in decision-making at all levels. Students in the York Region District School Board are encouraged to advocate for the needs of their peers and engage in the political process through student led learning opportunities in schools.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- recognizing the importance of promoting the student leadership and voice throughout the Board;
- being aware of and recognizing the work of student councils or alternative elementary student leadership groups in their schools;
- acknowledging and taking into consideration suggestions and concerns made by student councils, alternative elementary student leadership groups and the York Region Presidents' Council;
- taking advantage of opportunities to attend meetings of the York Region Presidents' Council and/or meeting with student councils or alternative elementary student leadership groups;
- reviewing the Student Leadership and Student Voice policy in accordance with the priorities in the [Multi-Year Plan](#) and the approved policy review cycle; and
- understanding and communicating with members of the community about the Student Leadership and Student Voice policy and procedures, as required.

Student Trustees are responsible for:

- giving the student population a meaningful voice in Board deliberations and acting as a conduit for the flow of information and ideas between trustees, staff members and the student body;
- being accessible to student council or alternative elementary student leadership group members from across the region to listen to their concerns and suggestions;
- attending all meetings of the York Region Presidents' Council;
- consulting with students on matters being considered by the Board; and
- maintaining open lines of communication at all times between themselves and students to discuss issues and ideas;
- maintaining the YRPC website, in conjunction with Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services staff; and
- understand and adhere to the responsibilities under the [Student Trustees](#) policy.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- implementing and operationalizing the Student Leadership and Student Voice policy and procedures;
- recognizing and promoting the importance of student voice throughout the Board; and
- supporting the Student Trustees to discuss student matters at a system level.

Definitions

Alternative Elementary Student Leadership Group

A representational body of elementary students that actively represents student voice and is consulted on issues that could benefit from student consultation. This group also works to improve the school community and act as a link between school administration and the students.

Student Councils

Democratically-elected student-run groups that represent student voice, work to improve school spirit and enhance school community through various school and community initiatives and events. Student councils may also be known as a Student Activity/Administrative Council (SAC), Board of Student Senators (BOSS) or a variety of other names.

York Region Presidents' Council

The official secondary school student senate of the York Region District School Board, with the mission of promoting and enhancing communication and co-operation, inspiring and fostering leadership, and collecting the voice of secondary school students.

Department

Director's Office

History

Approved: 2011

Working Document: February 2015, March 2018

Revised: November 2015



Board Procedure #672.0

Student Leadership and Student Voice

This procedure outlines the collaborative process by which student leadership and student voice will be encouraged, facilitated and recognized at all levels in the Board and explains the roles of staff and students in the York Region District School Board with respect to student leadership, student voice and student involvement.

Definitions

Student Activity Fees

Student activity fees are optional fees, collected from elementary and secondary students, to provide co-curricular activities and supplies for students throughout the upcoming school year.

Responsibilities

The Director of Education shall:

- appoint one senior staff member to act as an advisor for the York Region President's Council and support student matters at a system level.

The senior staff member identified to support the York Region Presidents' Council shall:

- appoint four secondary vice-principals, one from each Community Education Centre, to act as advisors for the York Region Presidents' Council;
- encourage Board-wide involvement in the York Region Presidents' Council through discussions with student trustees, principals, Board staff, and the York Region Presidents' Council;
- bring to the attention of the principals matters that would benefit from student consultation;
- provide guidance to the York Region Presidents' Council on council operations;
- encourage student council or alternative elementary student leadership group activities within all York Region schools; and
- identify policy matters which require, or would benefit from, consultation from student representatives.

Corporate Secretariat and Trustee Services shall:

- provide appropriate guidance and assistance to Student Trustees in their role as student leaders;
- notify York Region Presidents' Council Vice-Principal Advisors of the Student Trustee and York Region Presidents' Council Communications Protocol;
- review and distribute any appropriate communications for the Student Trustees in conjunction with the senior staff member identified to support the York Region Presidents' Council; and
- assist Student Trustees with the review and posting of information on the Student Trustee and York Region Presidents' Council websites.

Secondary vice-principals appointed as advisors to the York Region Presidents' Council shall:

- supervise meetings of the York Region Presidents' Council;
- moderate Student Trustee and York Region Presidents' Council executive elections; and
- support the distribution of materials at York Region Presidents' Council meetings.

Elementary principals shall:

- where there is a desire to have a student council or, alternative student leadership group, ensure it is democratically selected and representative of the student body;
- ensure that there is, at minimum, one staff member who is able to act in an advisory role on the student council or alternative elementary student leadership group;
- make leadership opportunities available for students, whenever possible; and
- take into consideration the perspective of student council or alternative student leadership group representatives on matters affecting the general student body.

Secondary principals shall:

- establish a democratically-elected student council that represents the student body;
- appoint, at minimum, one staff member to act in an advisory role on the student council;
- request input from student council members on matters related to students;
- consider and approve, as appropriate, student council proposals for student events and initiatives;
- notify the York Region Presidents' Council of their schools' president(s), vice-president(s), third student representative, and staff advisor(s) within 30 days of their election;
- share York Region Presidents' Council communications with student council members;
- determine an appropriate student council budget in consultation with student council members; and
- provide student councils with a physical location to meet and plan initiatives, such as a student council office or designated classroom;
- ensure that student council events aim to be inclusive of all students; and
- consult regularly with student council representatives on matters relating to specific issues and policies that affect the general student body within their school.

Student Council or Alternative Student Leadership Group Staff Advisors shall:

- monitor the progress of members of the student council or alternative elementary student leadership group to ensure they continue to succeed academically;
- work collaboratively with student leaders to identify ways to actively engage students toward increased student success; and
- support student council or alternative elementary student leadership group events and endeavours.

The York Region Presidents' Council (YRPC) shall:

- hold monthly general assembly meetings;
- provide organized leadership opportunities, as appropriate;
- schedule and participate in elections for Student Trustees prior to April 30th annually;
- conduct York Region Presidents' Council elections for executive positions annually in May;
- send notices of York Region Presidents' Council meetings and elections to each school in the Board;
- make every effort to provide student councils with the necessary support to thrive and flourish;
- enhance communication and foster cooperation between students, student councils, and Student Trustees in the region;
- be inclusive of all secondary schools in the York Region District School Board;
- provide a forum for secondary students to meet and voice their concerns and share their opinions; and
- give reasonable notice to students of meeting dates, event dates, student trustee elections and YRPC executive elections.

Elementary student council or alternative elementary student leadership group members/representatives shall:

- conduct democratic elections for student council positions, where applicable;
- coordinate student-led events to ensure they do not conflict with each other in principle or in scheduling;
- schedule regular student council or alternative elementary student leadership group meetings;
- provide input on student related matters, when requested;
- bring student issues to the attention of administrators;
- organize both spirit and educational events that are inclusive of the whole student body with the cooperation of staff supervisors;
- serve as the main contact for consultation on matters related to the student body;
- liaise with Student Trustees, as appropriate, on issues pertaining to the student body;
- actively collaborate with school staff members, students, parents/guardians and trustees;
- work proactively with the school administration, when appropriate, to resolve issues related to the interests of the student body;
- work to improve school spirit in the learning environment;
- create a forum for student-led clubs and councils to meet and share information about student-related matters; and
- represent the student body and actively voice student concerns to the principal on school-related issues.

Secondary student council members/representatives shall:

- conduct democratic elections for student council positions;
- coordinate student-led events to ensure they do not conflict with each other in principle or in scheduling;
- attend and represent their school communities at all York Region Presidents' Council meetings;
- schedule regular student council meetings;
- provide input on student related matters, when requested;
- bring student issues to the attention of administrators;
- organize both spirit and educational events that are inclusive of the whole student body with the cooperation of staff supervisors; and
- appoint one member of the student council to represent their school at the York Region Presidents' Council executive elections and Student Trustee elections;
- serve as the main contact for consultation on matters related to the student body;
- liaise with Student Trustees on issues pertaining to the student body;
- work proactively and collaboratively with the school administration, when appropriate, to discuss issues related to the interests of the student body;
- work to improve school spirit in the learning environment;
- create a forum for student-led clubs and councils to meet and share information about student-related matters;
- represent the student body on the school council and actively voice student concerns on issues;
- keep the students in their schools informed about their role as a representative body and about the activities of the York Region Presidents' Council; and
- inform and engage students in leadership opportunities available to them within the Board with support from Student Trustees and the York Region Presidents' Council.

Students shall:

- have the opportunity to provide input into the selection of student council or alternative elementary student leadership group members;
- be engaged in the process of selecting the York Region District School Board Student Trustees, as appropriate;
- be given the chance to lead and participate in school clubs and activities at their leisure;
- strive to support the health and well-being of the student community;

- be aware of the student council or alternative elementary student leadership group activities within their school;
- bring to the attention of their student leaders any issues or suggestions that affect the student community; and
- make reasonable efforts to participate in applicable student council, alternative elementary student leadership group and other leadership opportunities in a respectful and ethical manner.

Department

Director's Office

History

Approved 2011

Working Document: February 2015, March 2018

Revised November 2015



Board Procedure #672.1 Student Leadership and Student Voice: Political Clubs in Secondary Schools

The York Region District School Board recognizes the educational value of student participation in the Canadian political process through learning opportunities in schools. The procedure outlines the process for operating political clubs in secondary schools.

Application

This procedure is not intended to sanction or approve of any particular political party or any political activity prohibited by law. Student engagement in the Canadian political process might include forming all-party parliamentary or partisan political clubs and/or organizing, for students, presentations by political candidates or elected representatives.

Political clubs may not fundraise in schools.

All-Candidate Meetings

All-candidate meetings provide opportunities for all individuals running for a particular office to present information and answer questions during the election campaign period.

All candidate meetings may be organized by political clubs provided all candidates running for a particular office have equal opportunity to participate. These meetings may be held in schools or other Board facilities during the school day with approval by the principal.

Responsibilities

The Director of Education shall:

- allocate staff and resources to support the implementation of the Political Clubs in Secondary Schools procedure.

Principals shall:

- ensure political clubs operate within the framework of the extra-curricular program;
- ensure a staff advisor oversees the political club;
- approve all-candidate meetings held during the school day; and
- ensure partisan advertising such as, but not limited to, political lawn signs and literature, is not posted or distributed on Board property.

Staff Advisors shall:

- oversee all activities and attend all meetings of political clubs;
- not schedule political club meetings during instructional time;
- ensure all school announcements of meetings, verbally or in print, are restricted to the time and place of meeting;
- ensure the cost of operating a partisan political club is funded by its members;

- oversee the organizing of all-candidate meetings in accordance with all requirements of the Political Clubs in Secondary Schools procedure and ensure;
 - approval by the principal,
 - sufficient notice is given to all candidates,
 - candidates that are unable to attend are aware they may send a designate,
 - candidates provide written confirmation of attendance or regrets at least one week before the meeting,
 - the meeting proceeds if two or more candidates for the same position are able to attend, and
 - the meeting is rescheduled or cancelled if only one candidate for the same position, where more than one is registered for a position, is able to attend;
- ensure partisan political clubs do not receive funds from any outside organization, political or otherwise; and
- not use their position to influence the political views of students.

Students shall:

- promote discussion of issues rather than personalities;
- share meeting agendas in an objective way that is not designed to influence the thinking or political position of students; and
- respect different political views.

Student Councils shall:

- consider requests by all-party parliamentary clubs for student council funds; and
- ensure the process to consider and provide funds to support the activities of political clubs in secondary schools is fair, equitable and non-partisan.

History

Formerly Policy and Procedure #660.0, Political Clubs in Secondary Schools
Working Draft: March 2018