

School Council

School councils can be established in Queensland state schools to enable greater involvement of the school community and other stakeholders, such as industry, in setting the strategic direction for the school.

The school council plays a role in monitoring and informing the school's strategic direction in a way that achieves the best learning outcomes for the school's students.

The functions of a school council under s.81 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) are to:

- Monitor the school's strategic direction.
- Approve school plans and policies of a strategic nature, or other documents affecting strategic matters including the annual estimate of revenue and expenditure for the school.
- Monitor the implementation of the plans, policies and other documents mentioned above.
- Advise the school's principal about strategic matters.

The range of plans and strategies that a school council must consider when carrying out its functions are listed in Schedule 1 of the Model Constitution.

A school council may not, under the Act:

- interfere with management by the school's principal of day-to-day operations of the school and its curriculum (s.81(3)(a))
- make operational decisions about the use of teaching or learning resources at the school (s.81(3)(b))
- make decisions about the individual teaching style used, or to be used, at the school (s.81(3)(b))
- make a decision that is contrary to law or a written policy of the department (s.81(3)(d))
- have control of funds (s.82(a))
- enter into contracts (s.82(b))
- acquire, hold, dispose of or deal with property (s.82(c))
- sue or be sued (s.82(d))
- establish a committee or subcommittee (s.114).

The size of the school will determine representation of parents, staff and students on the school council. School councils will comprise of at least 6, but not more than 15 members. A school council must include at least one elected parent member (DOC, 250KB) and one elected staff member (DOC, 250KB). The number of elected parent members and elected staff members must be equal.

A school council may include 2 appointed members (DOCX, 209KB) and at least one (but not more than two) elected student members. Elected student members (DOC, 240KB) can only be students from Years 10, 11 or 12 at the school. A school council may appoint a co-opted student from Year 6 in primary schools however these students are unable to vote.

School council members who are not parents, teachers or students under 18 years of age, must hold a Blue Card before they can participate in school council activities (see Frequently Asked Questions at Blue Card Services External link).

The establishment of a school council will not impact on the functions and powers of a P&C. The P&C president will be included on the school council to represent the views of the P&C Association. School councils have responsibility to approve documents that set the strategic direction of the school but are not involved in daily operational aspects.

Council Chair

The school council must elect one of the members as chairperson (s.89(1) of the Act).

The role of the chairperson is to:

- preside at meetings
- manage the business of the council

- provide leadership to the council.

To be eligible for election as the chairperson, a person must:

- be a member of the school council
- not be a coopted student member (s.87(b) of the Act)
- not be the principal (s.89(2) of the Act).

The chairperson holds office for the term decided by the school council, unless the person's term of office as a member of the council ends sooner than the chairperson's term.

Council Secretary

The council must elect one of the members as secretary.

The role of the secretary is to:

- co-ordinate the correspondence of the council
- keep full and correct minutes of the proceedings of school council meetings
- have custody of all books, documents, records and registers of the council, which are accessible to any person within the school community
- perform such other duties as required

Eligibility requirements for the secretary are the same as for the chairperson.

Election process for Chairperson and Secretary:

- Members must self-nominate in person at the relevant meeting.
- If there is only one nomination for a position, the nominee will be elected to the relevant office.
- If there is more than one nomination for a position, the nominee who receives the majority of the votes will be elected to the relevant office.
- Voting is held by a show of hands.

Council Members

Elected Parent and Staff Representatives:

Eligibility

To be eligible for election as an elected parent or elected staff member, a person must:

- not be the principal of the school or the Parents and Citizens' association (P&C) president
- have not been convicted of an indictable offence, unless the Minister gives approval under the Act (s.93)
- attend a meeting called for the purpose of electing parent members or staff members
- be the parent of a student attending the school (for elected parent member) or be a member of staff at the school (for elected staff member, and
- submit a completed nomination on time.

Term of Office

The general term of office for elected parent members or elected staff members is two years, although a different term may be set by the school council to create uniformity in the end dates of members' terms of office.

Election process

Note: If the school has a P&C association whose constitution provides for the election of parent members to a school council, then parent members are to be elected through P&C association processes. If not, parent members are to be elected by secret ballot as outlined below. At this school, the Council Constitution provides for parent members to be elected by secret ballot.

- Official members must appoint a returning officer for the election.
- The returning officer must provide a public notice (e.g. school newsletter) that an election will be held, at least 28 days before the date of the election. The notice must include the:

- election date and the final date for receipt of nominations. The final date for receipt of nominations must be at least 14 days prior to the election date
- meeting venue where the election will be held
- day or days on which the meeting is to be held, and
- start and end times for the meeting.
- After the final date for receipt of nominations, the returning officer must (without unreasonable delay) prepare voting papers by setting out the names of the candidates in an order determined by lot. The returning officer must contact and liaise with United Voice and Together unions for assistance if a non-teaching staff member nomination is not received. If there are the same number or fewer nominations than required, the nominees are automatically elected (s.86(4) of the Act). If this occurs, there is no need for a ballot.

Official Members

The school council's official members are:

- the principal, and
- the president of the P&C association (if one exists).

The P&C president may appoint another P&C member (the "alternative P&C member") to attend school council meetings when the president cannot attend, provided that:

- the president is permitted to appoint an alternative P&C member under the P&C's constitution
- the alternative P&C member is not an elected member of the school council (s.88 of the Act), and
- the president gives notice to the chairperson (s.94(2)(a)(v) of the Act).

The P&C president must give written notice to the chairperson at least two days before the first meeting after the alternative member's appointment starts. This notice must include:

- the alternative member's name and address, and
- the date on which the alternative member's appointment starts and ends.

Despite start and end dates stated in the notice, the president may attend any meeting in the place of and instead of the alternative member.

If the president revokes the appointment of an alternative member, the president must give the chairperson written notice of the date of the revocation at least two days before the next meeting following revocation.

Appointed Members

School councils may appoint no more than two appointed members.

To be eligible for appointment, the appointed member must:

- have knowledge and experience that would assist the council to perform its functions, and
- reflect the local community context.

The official and elected members present at a school council meeting may decide:

- who is asked to become an appointed member, or
- to seek nominations from persons wishing to become an appointed member, before deciding who is to be asked to become an appointed member.

The general term of office for appointed members is two years, although this can be set at a lesser term by the school council to create uniformity in the end dates of members' terms of office.