

CHESTER DISTRICT SCHOOL

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, Chester District School Advisory Council and the Department of Education, as stipulated in the Education Act, 1996, section 20, 21 and 22, to operate an advisory council at the school level.

The parties agree to the following:

1. Duration of the Agreement

The agreement begins September 29, 2001. The agreement will be reviewed annually, by the partners, before October 30. Any mutually agreed upon revisions can be made at that time. This agreement was reviewed September 29, 2004, on October 25, 2004, November 19, 2008 and September 18, 2013, October 17, 2016 and October 3, 2017.

2. Structure of the Council

(a) The membership of the advisory council will include:

- The principal
- 3 parents (one required as representing the Home & School)
- 2 teachers
- 1 support staff
- Up to 2 community members

(b) Council members will serve for the duration of:

Chester District School – School Advisory Council

Appendix E – Membership

Partner	Name	Completion of Term
Principal	Bernie Van Doninck	Ongoing Member
Parent	Nancy Green	June 2019
Parent	Dave Duchene	June 2018
Parent	Leslie Taylor	June 2019
Teacher	Joanna Keith	June 2018
Teacher	Glenna Griffith	June 2018
Support Staff	Vacant	
Community Member		
Community Member	Colleen Zinck	June 2018

We ask that Council members make a two-year commitment. Terms may be rotated in one, two or three-year commitments so that the council is not completely new each year. During the last meeting of the SAC each year, there will be a discussion of possible extensions.

Meetings will be held once a month during the school year or approximately 8 times per year. Generally, meetings are not held during the summer months; however, a meeting may be called if needed.

Chester District School Advisory Council will make decisions in the following ways –

- All decisions will be made by consensus
- If a consensus can not be reached, the decision will be delayed until the next meeting
- Only decisions that have the full consent of the school council will go forward to the school principal
- Information on important decisions will be distributed one week prior to the monthly meeting
- A cancelled meeting will be rescheduled with one-week notice
- A minimum of six meetings will be scheduled per year.

Chester District School Advisory Council Commitments

Chester District School Council will be responsible for –

- Meeting commitments as outlined in the Education Act 1996
- Respecting all union/collective agreements within the school system
- Collaborating with all school staff in developing/receiving a student success plan
- Assisting in developing school policies, which promote academic excellence and a positive learning climate such as supporting special projects in the school, etc.
- Advising the school board on program changes, student support services, policy development and funding issues
- Assist in preparing an annual accountability report that describes school improvement activities undertaken during the year, specific results that have been achieved, and factors that influenced the results.
- Holding regular, open public SAC meetings and circulating written information (minutes).
- Participating in the selection of the principal

School Board Commitment

SSRSB will make a commitment to provide the following support to Chester District School –

- Provide an orientation session for new school council members and occasional workshops on special topics when necessary
- Provide a facilitator to assist the school council as required
- Give feedback to the school council as required
- Provide consultation on school board policies and procedures
- Meet periodically with the school council executive
- Provide budget for council operations

Department of Education and Culture Commitments

The Department of Education and Culture will support Chester District School Advisory Council by

- Developing materials to support school councils
- Training regional school council support teams
- Providing ongoing professional development sessions and conferences

Parties to the Agreement

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

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Per _____ Date _____

SOUTH SHORE REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

Per _____ Date _____
Chair

Per _____ Date _____
Principal

Per _____ Date _____
Lunenburg Member

Per _____ Date _____
Minister of Education

APPENDIX A

Consensus

General Definition

Consensus is based on the term “to consent” as in “to grant permission”. To arrive at consensus is to give permission to go along with the total group (majority). The implication of consensus is that an individual can negotiate the terms by which he or she will grant his permission. Each individual has the right and the obligation to make his or her terms know.

Consensus seeking is a system, a process by which a group can come to an agreement or make a decision in such a way, that there are no losers. It is a solution that everyone “can live with”. The goal of consensus is a decision that is consented to by all members. Full consent does not mean that everyone must be completely satisfied with the final outcome. However, the decision must be acceptable enough that all will agree to support it and nobody has such serious reservations as to want to stop the decision.

Consensus means

- All group members contribute
- Everyone’s opinions are heard and encouraged
- Differences are viewed as helpful
- Everyone can paraphrase the issue
- Those who disagree, state their terms of acceptance
- All members share the final decision
- All members agree to take responsibility for implementing the final decision

Consensus does not mean

- A unanimous vote
- The result is everyone’s first choice
- Everyone agrees

Appendix B

Guidelines for School Council Elections

All elections will be conducted by secret ballot.

Nominations will be accepted for vacant position up to 1 week prior to the election date

Teachers and/or support staff representatives are to be elected by teachers and support staff.

The principal or designate will be responsible for conducting the elections.

Scheduled elections will be held during Meet the Teacher in any school year. Notice of vacancies shall be publicized through school newsletters and the website prior to June 30 of that year. Nominations will be accepted up until Meet the Teacher Night. If an election is required, it will take place during Meet the Teacher.

Parent representatives are to be elected by parents who have children enrolled in the school.

Community representatives may be appointed by elected members for a specific term or they may be elected at a public meeting. The community representative may not be parents or have paid positions in the school.

When a position on a school council becomes vacant the school council shall arrange a new election for that position. Alternatively, the council may appoint a person for a term not to exceed six months. The person appointed must be selected from the membership group in which the vacancy occurred.

All elected or appointed members will have terms so that approximately 50% of the representatives are retained from one year to the next to facilitate continuity. The Term for any position will be no longer than three years.

The chair is elected annually by the council from among the school council membership.

Appendix C

Procedures for Decision Making

We agree to use the following principles and procedures when making school advisory council decisions.

Principles

- We will employ democratic processes and strategies in our decision making
- All school advisory council members will have an opportunity to participate in decision making
- Council members are responsible for participating in decision making
- Consultation will be carried out with parents, school staff, students and community members as appropriate.

Procedures

- We will gather information and consult with partners when appropriate
- Topics and issues will be discussed in a structured way prior to decision making
- We will utilize the consensus method of decision making. (See Appendix A)
- We will attempt to reach a consensus on all school council decisions.
- If we cannot reach a consensus, the decision will be tabled until the next meeting.
- When appropriate, we will consult with other representatives of the respective partners and return for a second discussion and decision-making session.
- We will record decisions and methods used in making specific decisions.
- We will inform school and community partners through a school advisory newsletters memos, and minutes, written and verbal reports and through related organizations (i.e. Home & School)

Appendix D

School Advisory Council By-laws

School council by-laws are intended to guide the structure and operations of the council. The following items will serve as a beginning point in helping councils develop their unique by-laws. This is a sample and is not meant to limit councils developing their own frameworks. All by-laws, however, must comply with legislation.

Membership	The council for Chester District School and will have 8 members including: 3 parents of the children enrolled in the school; 0 students; 3 teachers and support staff; and 1 community member. Not more than 1/3 of the membership should be from any one of the above groups. The principal will serve as a permanent member.
Elections	See Appendix B
Conflicts	Membership disputes which cannot be resolved at the local level will be referred to the school board. The Department of Education and Culture will resolve any disputes which the board cannot resolve.
Executive	The executive of the council (chairperson), and additional members as required, shall be annually elected from among the members.
Meetings	All council meetings will be open to the public. The council must meet at least six times a year. The council will hold an annual general meeting in September or October.
Agenda/Meeting	Executive of the council will develop meeting an agenda in consultation with the principal and other school council members. The agenda will be distributed at least a week prior to the meeting.
School Improvement Plan	The Council will, after consultation with the school staff, develop and recommend a School Improvement Plan to the Board.
Accountability Report	An annual school accountability report will be produced by the Advisory Council describing the school improvement goals, significant results achieved influential factors and recommendations for future action.
Adopting Amending	By-laws will be adopted or amended by a consensus decision of the Advisory Council members.
Decision Making Structure	The council will agree on a decision-making process that outlines procedures and and strategies to ensure the involvement of all the partners. <i>Appendix C.</i>