

# Parent Council Info Sheet

Department of Education  
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## 1. What is a parent council?

A parent council is a parent-led, established and elected body that involves parents in school decision-making to help support quality learning and achievement for students.

## 2. What is the role of the parent council?

The role of the parent council is to give parents voices at the school and to help provide strategic and other direct support to the principal on important matters like the school budget, school improvement plan, and how to improve parental and community engagement at the school.

Parent councils also provide direct feedback to the Department of Education to help improve communication and the public education system.

## 3. What are the benefits of having a parent council?

Parent councils are a way for parents and caring community members to think about school support and engagement in different and more strategic ways. Parent councils:

- i. Involve parents in decision-making processes at the school;
- ii. Improve communication and information-sharing;
- iii. Provide two-way learning between parents, community members, schools and the Ministry;
- iv. Encourage working together for student achievement, school improvement, system improvement; and
- v. Can attract and engage more parents.

## 4. What are the responsibilities of a parent council?

- i. The parent council is responsible for making representations to the principal on:
  - a. The draft budget of the school;
  - b. The draft school improvement plan;
  - c. A school's policy for improving student achievement;
  - d. A school's parental and community involvement policy;
- ii. The parent council helps monitor the school improvement plan;
- iii. Where a principal vacancy exists, the parent council advises the Commissioner of Education on the qualities and competencies it would like for a new principal; and
- iv. The parent council is required to report regularly to parents on its activities and give parents a yearly report of its activities.

## 5. How can a parent council established?

A parent council can be established at a meeting by a majority vote of parents. However, before a vote can take place, at least three parents must work together towards establishing a parent council. One of those parents must act as a temporary chairperson, notify the principal and organise a meeting for a vote.

This effort can also include liaising with parents about their vision for a parent council, the types of skills and interests they would like represented, and the number of members they would like the parent council to have. Ultimately, these decisions are made by parents of the school if they vote to establish a parent council.

**6. Who can sit on a parent council?**

Parent councils must have at least:

- a) A chairperson (who must be a parent from the school)
- b) Two other parents from the school
- c) One teacher or counsellor from the school
- d) One community member, and
- e) The principal of the school.

Parents can decide if they would like the parent council to have additional members, as long as parents are the majority of the members.

**7. Who decides who sits on a parent council?**

Parents determine by vote who they would like to sit on a parent council.

**8. Does a school have to have a parent council?**

No. Parent councils are optional. The decision is left up to the parents of the school.

**9. Can we have a parent council and a PTA?**

Yes. PTAs are established separately from parent councils. However, parents can decide that they want their PTA Executive or some PTA members to also serve on the parent council.

Although each PTA is unique, there are also some key differences between a parent council and a PTA:

<b>PTAs</b>	<b>Parent Councils</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes parental involvement</li> <li>• Established by its constitution</li> <li>• Carries out responsibilities as per its constitution and custom and practice</li> <li>• Is a registered charity; fundraises</li> <li>• Is community-oriented and may have community representation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a framework for parental involvement</li> <li>• Created in legislation</li> <li>• Carries out specific responsibilities by law; involvement in decision-making</li> <li>• Is not a registered charity and does not fundraise</li> <li>• Must have community representation</li> </ul>

**10. Is there a deadline for establishing parent councils?**

Yes, the deadline is October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

**More information can be found on the Department of Education website at [www.moed.bm](http://www.moed.bm).**