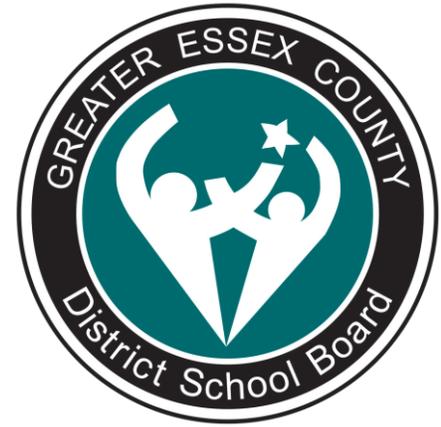


GREATER ESSEX COUNTY PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE



BY-LAWS

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1 Establishment

Under the Education Act (Ontario Regulation 612/00), every school board in Ontario is required to establish a Parent Involvement Committee. At the Greater Essex County District School Board, this committee shall be known as the Greater Essex Country Parent Involvement Committee (GECPIC). GECPIC is a statutory committee of the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB).

2 Purpose

The purpose of the Greater Essex County Parent Involvement Committee (GECPIC) is to support, encourage and enhance parent/guardian engagement at the Board level in order to improve student achievement and well-being.

GECPIC shall achieve its purpose by:

- a) providing information and advice on parent/guardian engagement to the Board;
- b) communicating with and supporting school councils of schools of the Board;
- c) undertaking activities to help parents/guardians of pupils of the Board support their children's learning at home and at school;
- d) developing strategies and initiatives that the Board and the Board's Director of Education could use to effectively communicate with parents/guardians and to effectively engage parents/guardians in improving student achievement and well-being;
- e) advising the Board and the Board's Director of Education on ways to use the strategies and initiatives referred to in clause (d);
- f) communicating information from the Ministry of Education to school councils of schools of the Board and to parents/guardians of pupils of the Board;
- g) working with school councils and through the Board's Director of Education to:
 - I. share effective practices to help engage parents/guardians, especially parents/guardians who may find engagement challenging, in their children's learning;
 - II. identify and reduce barriers to parent/guardian engagement;
 - III. help ensure that schools of the Board create a welcoming environment for parents/guardians of its pupils; and
 - IV. develop skills and acquire knowledge that will assist GECPIC and school councils of the Board with their work.
- h) determining, in consultation with the Director of Education, and in keeping with the Board's policies, how funding, if any, provided under the *Education Act* for parent/guardian involvement as described in section 27 and clauses (a) to (d), is to be used.

3 Composition of GECPIC

GECPIC shall include the following:

- a) The majority shall be parents/guardians with one Parent/Guardian Member selected through the GECPIC Parent/Guardian Application Process from each of the 13 Family of Schools (Belle River, Essex, General Amherst,

Herman, Kennedy, Kingsville, Leamington, Massey, Riverside, Sandwich, Tecumseh, Walkerville, Westview). Where there is not representation from a Family of School, the position may be filled by a parent/guardian “at large”. The Parent/Guardian Member Selection Subcommittee will attempt to ensure that representation comes from all regions of the district, has an elementary/secondary balance and is reflective of the diversity of our community.

- b) The Director of Education (or designate);
- c) One Trustee Member, appointed by the Board;
- d) One Principal/Vice-Principal Member from the elementary panel;
- e) One Principal/Vice-Principal Member from the secondary panel;
- f) One Parent/Guardian Member appointed by the Indigenous Education Advisory Committee; and
- g) Up to three (3) Community Members, determined by the Director of Education (or designate), in consultation with the GECPIC Executive Officers.

4 Parent/Guardian Members

Parent/Guardian Members shall be selected to GECPIC in accordance with the GECPIC Parent/Guardian Application Process.

A person is eligible to be selected as a Parent/Guardian Member if they are a parent/guardian of a child registered as a student in the Greater Essex County District School Board.

A person is eligible to be selected as a Parent/Guardian Member of GECPIC if they are employed by the Board and shall inform GECPIC of their employment with the Board on the application.

5 GECPIC Parent/Guardian Member Application Process

Annually, GECPIC shall review its membership needs and provide direction to the GECPIC Parent/Guardian Member Selection Subcommittee.

The GECPIC Parent/Guardian Member Selection Subcommittee shall annually post a notice inviting applicants for selection to the position of GECPIC Parent/Guardian Member. The posting of notice shall be done through a variety of methods to ensure awareness of the application process throughout the entire school district. The posting will include the Parent/Guardian Membership Application Form (Appendix A, R-AD-41), available in multiple languages and accessible formats. The Parent/Guardian Membership Application Form provides a summary of the role of GECPIC and the deadline for application. All applicants are required to provide personal contact information and written confirmation that they are a parent/guardian of a pupil enrolled in a GECDSD school. Additional information including a summary of their school and community involvement, their skills and interests and a description of why they are interested in joining GECPIC is also required, as well as their interest in serving a one (1) or two (2) year term.

Selection of Parent/Guardian Members will be made by the GECPIC Parent/Guardian Member Selection Subcommittee.

Communication will be sent out inviting those interested to apply for the position of Parent/Guardian Member of GECPIC. Applications must be submitted to GECPIC at a date determined prior to the last meeting for parents/guardians to be considered for the next school year.

6 GECPIC Parent/Guardian Member Selection Subcommittee

The GECPIC Parent/Guardian Member Selection Subcommittee is a parent majority committee responsible for the selection of GECPIC Parent/Guardian members. The Subcommittee will be facilitated by the Director of Education (or designate) .The subcommittee will consist of five (5) voting members:

- a) GECPIC Chairperson;
- b) GECPIC Vice Chairperson;
- c) GECPIC Elementary Principal/Vice Principal Member;
- d) GECPIC Secondary Principal/Vice Principal Member;
- e) An additional parent/guardian Member of GECPIC elected by GECPIC prior to the selection process.

Following the close of the application period for the Parent/Guardian Member Application Process, the subcommittee shall review the applications for the available positions, and select the successful Parent/Guardian Members based on evidence of the following criteria:

- a) a strong interest in and commitment to public education, student achievement and well-being;
- b) a strong interest in and commitment to parent engagement,
- c) the ability to represent the views of a wide variety of parents, especially parents/guardians who may find engagement challenging, in their children's learning;
- d) strong communication and leadership skills;
- e) the ability to work as a member of a team.

The committee will also note and rank applicants who were not selected to represent their Family of Schools, but who could be appointed as Parent/Guardian Members at large" in the event that there are vacancies in a Family of Schools, or vacancies that emerge over the course of the school year.

7 Terms of Office

The term of office for the Parent/Guardian Members of GECPIC shall be either one (1) or two (2) years. This will be indicated by the member on the GECPIC Application Form.

The term of office for the Trustee Member shall be determined by the Board of

Trustees.

The term of office for the Community Members shall be one (1) year. Community members may be appointed for more than one (1) consecutive term.

A Parent/Guardian Member who has completed their one (1) or two (2) year term may apply through the GECPIC Parent/Guardian Application Process for an additional term(s) and will be considered along with all other parent/guardian applicants.

8 Responsibilities of GECPIC Members

All members of GECPIC shall:

- a) promote, encourage and facilitate parent engagement and the work of GECPIC in the GECDSB;
- b) review all relevant materials prior to the GECPIC meetings, including agenda items and minutes;
- c) declare a conflict of interest where one exists;
- d) attend and participate in the GECPIC meetings;
- e) send "regrets" to the Chairperson as early as possible if not able to attend committee or subcommittee meetings;
- f) participate in GECPIC and GECPIC subcommittee meetings as required;
- g) treat all other GECPIC Members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared;
- h) perform other duties as delegated.

In addition to the above, Community Members shall act as a liaison between GECPIC and their community group, organization, committee or association.

9 GECPIC Executive Officers

GECPIC shall have a Chair and a Vice Chair who must be Parent/Guardian Members of GECPIC and may not be an employee of the GECDSB.

The Chair shall be elected for a one-year term by GECPIC at the first meeting of the school year.

The Vice Chair shall be elected for a one-year term by GECPIC at the first meeting of the school year.

The one (1) year term of the Chair and Vice Chair will commence with the election and continue until August 31 of the school year. The Chair and Vice Chair will then assume the positions of Past Chair and Past Vice Chair, until the election of a new Chair and Vice Chair at the next meeting of GECPIC.

An individual may serve as many consecutive terms as Chair or Vice Chair as elected by GECPIC.

10 Voting Procedure for GECPIC Executive Officers

At the first GECPIC Meeting of each school year, the Director of Education (or designate) will coordinate the election of GECPIC Officers for the current term.

Nominations and self-nominations for the position of GECPIC Chair will be accepted from the eligible Parent/Guardian Members. These candidates will be provided with an opportunity to briefly speak to their nomination. Voting members of GECPIC will submit one paper ballot for each vote. The successful candidate will receive a majority of the votes. In a case where a majority is not reached on the first ballot, a second vote will occur which includes only the top 2 candidates (and ties) from the first vote. Candidates will again have an opportunity to speak to their nomination prior to the second vote. This process will continue until one candidate receives the majority of eligible votes, or two consecutive tied votes occur. At this time, the candidate with the most votes is declared the winner. If two candidates are tied for the most votes, the GECPIC Chair position will be 'selected from a hat'

Following the selection of the GECPIC Chair, the voting process will be repeated for the position of GECPIC Vice Chair.

A mid-term vacancy in the office of Chair or Vice Chair shall be filled by succession. If this is not possible, the voting procedure will be followed at the next GECPIC Meeting. Mid-term vacancies are for the remainder of the one (1) year term.

11 Responsibilities of GECPIC Executive Officers

The duties of the GECPIC Chairperson shall include, but are not limited to:

- a) chairing the GECPIC meetings;
- b) planning the agenda and review the draft minutes in collaboration with the Director of Education (or designate) and Vice Chair;
- c) serving as the official spokesperson;
- d) maintaining ongoing communication with all GECPIC Members;
- e) attending, or delegating a GECPIC member to attend, Regular Board Meetings.
- f) Ensuring that all obligations of GECPIC are met (e.g. PRO Grant submission and follow through).
- g) preparing and submitting the annual written summary of GECPIC activities to the Director of Education for presentation to the Board.

The duties of the GECPIC Vice Chairperson shall include, but are not limited to:

- a) assuming the GECPIC Chair's responsibilities in their absence;
- b) assisting the GECPIC Chair in the performance of their duties;
- c) maintaining ongoing communication with the GECPIC Chair.

12 Meetings

GECPIC shall meet at least four (4) times in each school year. All meetings of GECPIC shall be open to the public and shall be held accessible to the public. Meetings are scheduled to begin at 7:00 pm and conclude by 9:00 pm.

A meeting of GECPIC cannot be held and business will be deferred unless:

- a) a majority (50% plus one) of the members present at the meeting are Parent/Guardian Members and Community Members;
- b) the Director of Education, or designate, is present; and
- c) the Trustee Member or designate is present.

A member of GECPIC who participates in a meeting through electronic means shall be deemed to be present at the meeting.

The chair of GECPIC shall ensure that notice of each meeting and the agenda for the meeting is provided to all members of GECPIC at least three (3) days before the meeting by delivering a notice to each member by e-mail or through electronic means and posting a notice on the Board's website.

13 Subcommittees

GECPIC may establish subcommittees to make recommendations to, or focus on specific projects for GECPIC. A subcommittee of GECPIC must include at least one Parent/Guardian Member of GECPIC. A subcommittee of GECPIC may include persons who are not members of GECPIC.

14 Voting

Every effort shall be made by GECPIC to make decisions by consensus. In the event that a vote is required, only parent/guardian members and the community members are entitled to vote. In the event of a tie, the GECPIC Chair shall have the deciding vote.

15 Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest for a GECPIC member is any situation in which the individual's private interests may be incompatible, or in conflict with their GECPIC responsibilities.

Parent Involvement Committees are advisory bodies and would almost never be in a position to make decisions that would be of financial benefit to individual members. However, a conflict of interest may exist whether or not a monetary advantage has been or may be conferred on member or their family.

A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential:

Actual: When a member has a private interest that is sufficiently connected to their duties and responsibilities as a GECPIC member that it influences the exercise of these duties and responsibilities.

Perceived: When reasonably well-informed persons could reasonably believe that a GECPIC member has a conflict of interest, even where, in fact, there is no real conflict of interest.

Potential: When a GECPIC member has a private interest that could affect their decision about matters proposed for discussion.

GECPIC members are expected to declare conflicts of interest as they arise and to excuse themselves from the discussion and decision-making.

16 Conflict Resolution

All GECPIC members shall be respected and have their perspectives welcomed – GECPIC benefits from hearing all points of view. In order to build consensus, members also are expected to pay attention to the needs of GECPIC. Ultimately, personal preferences are less important than a broader commitment of ensuring GECPIC succeeds.

- a) GECPIC members are elected to serve and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on the committee at all times.
- b) If a member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the Chair shall ask for order.
- c) If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behavior continues, the Chair may direct the individual member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.
- d) The removal of a member for one meeting does not prevent the GECPIC member from participating in future meetings of the committee.
- e) The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Director of Education within one week of the meeting.
- f) When the Chair has requested the removal of a member or members from a meeting, the Chair may request that the disputing members of the committee participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting may be a private meeting, and shall not be construed as a meeting of GECPIC.
- g) The Chair may request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.
- h) An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed upon by the parties involved in the dispute.
- i) Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

17 Professional Conduct

Members of GECPIC have a duty to make decisions consistent with Ministry and GECDSB policies and procedures, in the best interest of students and in compliance with the requirements of relevant legislation and regulations. Members shall respect the privacy of individuals in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). When meeting, members shall not discuss personal information relating to parents, students, school boards, trustees, other board personnel or GECPIC members.

18 Remuneration

A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member of GECPIC. The Board has established policies respecting the reimbursement of members of GECPIC for expenses incurred as members of GECPIC. The Board shall reimburse members of GECPIC for expenses incurred as members of GECPIC in accordance with these policies.

19 Minutes and Financial Records

GECPIC shall keep minutes of all of its meetings and records of all of its financial transactions.

GECPIC shall retain the minutes of its meetings and the records of its financial transactions in accordance with the policies of the Board, if any, respecting the retention of documents by committees of the Board.

The minutes of GECPIC shall be posted on the website of the Board and maintained for a period of four (4) years, and sent electronically to the chairs of the school council of each school of the Board.

The minutes of GECPIC meetings and the records of its financial transactions shall be available for examination at the Board's office by any person without charge for four (4) years.

20 Summary of Activities

GECPIC shall annually submit a written summary of its activities to the Chair of the Board and the Director of Education for presentation to the Board. The summary of activities shall include a report on how funding, if any, provided under the *Education Act* for parent involvement was spent. The Director of Education shall provide the summary of activities to the school councils of the schools of the Board and post the summary of activities on the website of the Board.

21 Amendments

The GECPIC Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the GECPIC Members, or by a special meeting called for the purpose of amending, provided that the proposed amendments have been provided to the GECPIC Members seven (7) days prior to the voting date.