

Community Consultation

Each person has their own ideas about how the school can best achieve its goals. Sharing of these ideas through consultative processes will ensure that our children receive the best possible education. The school's role is to foster participation by the school community in the partnership between the community and the Board of Trustees. The school community includes students, staff, parents and caregivers.

Guidelines and Procedures

At West Park School the Board consults with the school community to ensure that:

- the school reflects the expectations of its community
- the community has a sense of involvement in the school
- the expertise of the community is harnessed for the good of the school.

Definition: The Court of Appeal has defined consultation as follows:

“Consultation must be allowed sufficient time and genuine effort must be made. It is to be a reality, not a charade... To consult is not merely to tell or present.... Consultation involves the statement of a proposal not yet finally decided upon, listening to what others have to say, considering their responses and then deciding what will be done. Implicit in the concept is a requirement that the party consulted will be adequately informed so as to be able to make intelligent and useful responses”.

On important issues the Board will:

- communicate with the school community at an early stage in the decision making process;
- consult with the school community, taking the initiative, stimulating interest and encouraging participation;
- consider the opinions of the school community in making its decisions; and communicate and explain its decisions.

Important issues include:

- major changes in the charter,
- the co-option of persons to the Board,
- the appointment of a school Principal,
- major items of expenditure,
- formulation of policies, and
- changes in policy involving the personal liberties of students such as discipline.

A sub-committee of the Board may be appointed to oversee the process of consultation as a major responsibility.

The effort and resources applied to consultation should reflect the importance of the issue. For example, most consultation will be at a simple level utilising the committee structure of the Board and the Board newsletter. From time to time, when key issues arise, the Board may initiate a more thorough consultation process.

'Community Consultation Surveys' for the parents and caregivers are organised by the Board to facilitate consultation on the overall effectiveness of the School. These surveys are run at least every second year and provide valuable information that contributes to the reviewing or updating of the school's current school charter. A report on the survey results and any subsequent actions, will be made available to the community within a reasonable time frame. All Board members participate in discussing and identifying priorities resulting from the surveys.

The dates of Board meetings, important issues to be discussed and decisions reached are to be publicised.

A school newsletter is to be regularly published.

If the Board proposes to co-opt a new member it will publicise the preferred skills, qualifications or background and invite (by notice in the newsletter) volunteers and suggestions from the school community before making an appointment.

When a new Principal is to be appointed the school community will be consulted as to the criteria the Board should consider in making the appointment.

If a group from the school community are concerned about a particular issue they may request the Board to carry out full consultation.

The process of consultation will be reviewed and evaluated by the Board. The BOT are not bound by the results of any consultation. They will use the information available to them to make the best decision.

Reviewed: November 2020