



# Superior-Greenstone District School Parent Engagement Committee Terms of Reference January 2024

## 1. NAME

*“Parent Engagement Committee of the Superior-Greenstone District School Board”*

Throughout these Terms of Reference this committee will be referred to as PEC, and this school board will be referred to as “the Board”.

The term “parental involvement” focuses on parents getting involved in the life and work of the school, such as volunteering time and expertise to positively impact the school.

The term “parental engagement” refers to parents’ engagement in their child’s learning at home, at school, and in the wider community. Parental engagement is supported by discussion between parents/practitioners and focuses on how families can build on what they already do to help their children’s learning and provide a supportive home learning environment.

### 1.1. Related Legislation

- a. Ontario Regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees
- b. Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools (2010)
- c. Section 43(b) of Ontario Regulation 612/00 requires parent involvement committees to make by-laws relating to eight areas. These bylaws were originally passed by PIC on September 23, 2014 and are updated regularly.

### 1.2 Related Policies/Bylaws.

- a. Board Policy 528, Parental Engagement Committee
- b. Regulation 612/00 from Bill 177 (The Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act).
- c. Board Policy 202, Control and Release of Information

### 1.3 Alignment with Board Strategic Plan, 2018-2023

The role of PEC aligns with the Board’s Multi-Year Strategic Plan, 2018-2023, in three pillars and the associated objectives identified below:

**Learning:** Develop tools to enhance family/caregiver and community engagement and increase social capital in learning and well-being.

**Relationships:** Develop strategies to enhance communication and transparency with and among staff, students, families and community partners to foster a positive sense of belonging.

**Stewardship:** Establish processes to engage in ongoing outreach activities to establish mutually beneficial partnerships.

## 1.4 Definitions

PEC uses the following definitions and terminology:

The term “parent” will be used inclusively to represent parents, caregivers and guardians of students of SGDSB.

“PEC Co-Chairperson” This is the title for the two chairpersons of PEC.

PEC is a “statutory committee” mandated by Ontario Regulation 612/00 section 29.

## 2. PURPOSE/MANDATE/GOALS

The purpose of PEC is to support, encourage, and enhance the engagement of parents of the Board in their children’s education in order to improve student achievement and well-being.

### 2.1 Focus

PEC will achieve its purpose by:

- a. providing information and advice on parent engagement to the Board,
- b. undertaking activities aimed at helping parents in the Board to support their children’s learning at home and school, and
- c. working closely with the SGDSB schools to communicate with and support the work of school councils.

### 2.2 Powers and Responsibilities

- a. PEC does not exercise any power over decision-making within the Board. The recommendations of PEC will be given full consideration by the Board, and the Board will inform PEC of its response to any advice or recommendations provided to it by the committee. Further, the Director of Education will provide feedback to parents regarding how parents’ ideas have been used by the Director and other staff.

- b. PEC is responsible for:
- i. developing and recommending strategies and initiatives that the Board can use to effectively communicate with, and engage, parents in their children’s education,
  - ii. advising the Board on ways to use strategies and initiatives for communication and engagement,
    - 1) collaborating with Board employees through the Director of Education and collaborating with school councils throughout SGDSB to enhance the skills and knowledge of these groups and individuals with respect to effective parent engagement,
    - 2) to identify and reduce barriers to parent engagement,
    - 3) to focus on the needs of parents who find engagement challenging, and
    - 4) to help ensure that schools of the Board create a welcoming environment for parents.
  - iii. communicating information from the Ministry to parents directly or through school councils, and
  - iv. determining, in consultation with the Director of Education, how funding provided under the Education Act for parent involvement will be used in keeping with PEC’s purpose and responsibilities.
- c. Where necessary, PEC will establish subcommittees to assist in achieving its purpose. Subcommittees will make recommendations to PIC. A subcommittee must include at least one parent member of PEC, appropriate resource members of the Board, and may include members not part of PIC and must be chaired by a PIC member.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

Provisions for Conflict of interest and conflict resolution can be found in Board Policy, including, but not limited to Policy 723, Conflict of Interest, Policy 717 Harassment and Human Rights, and Policy 201 Lines of Communication Regarding Complaints.

#### 3.1 Composition/Stakeholders

- a. Parent members
- i. The majority of the membership of the PEC shall be parents with a total of up to ten (10) parent members. If no more than 10 parent members are available, the committee will ensure that the “other members” (3.1 b) will be reduced in order to ensure that the parent members constitute the majority of the members of the committee. The positions

of community representative, principal/vice-principal and teachers will be reduced at the discretion of the committee, with the goal of ensuring equal representation and voice.

- ii. Parent members selected to form the committee shall be representative of the communities within each region of the school board (5 regions).

b. Other members shall include:

- i. the Director of Education or their designate,
- ii. one trustee or their designated alternate,

c. Other members may include:

- i. one community representative who is not employed by the Board,
- ii. one principal/vice-principal of an elementary school of the Board,
- iii. one principal/vice-principal of a secondary school of the Board,
- iv. one teacher presently teaching in a school of the Board, for both the elementary panel and secondary panels, and,
- v. One person employed by the Board, other than principal, vice-principal or teacher.

### 3.2 Term

a. All parent members serve two-year terms unless they request to serve a one-year term.

- i. Members wishing to serve additional terms must go through the process set out for appointment or election of parents.
- ii. Parent members may serve a total of six consecutive years.
- iii. A parent cannot serve more than two consecutive terms (four years) as PEC Co-Chairperson. After f o u r years, they may seek an officer position again.

iv. Parent member terms begin on the date that the parent is appointed to PEC.

v. A parent who is employed by the Board is qualified to be appointed by the Board to the committee. The parent will inform the committee of their employment by the Board at the first committee meeting.

b. The terms of other members of PEC are as follows:

- i. Director of Education: term is ongoing.
- ii. Community representative member(s): one-year term to be renewed annually to a maximum of three consecutive terms.
- iii. Trustee and a Trustee alternate will be designated following the Inaugural Meeting of the Board in December of each year for a two-year term, to a maximum of three

consecutive terms.

- iv. Board employee members: one-year term to be renewed annually to a maximum of three consecutive terms.

### 3.3 Appointment and Election Process

#### Appointments and Election of Officers

- i. Process for appointment or election of PEC Co-Chairperson
  - 1) After all parent members have been appointed, if the PEC Co-Chairperson office is vacant then parent members may nominate any of the PIC parent members to serve as the PEC Co-Chairperson. If there is more than one parent nominated then an election will be held to determine the PEC Co-Chairperson.
- ii. After being acclaimed or elected, the PEC Co-Chairpersons will chair the remainder of the first meeting of the year.
- iii. If there is no PEC Co-Chairperson at the first PIC meeting of the year, the Director of Education, or designate, shall chair the meeting until at least one of the Co-Chairpersons is appointed or elected.

#### Appointment of Parent Members

- iv. Annually, each September, parents will be invited to nominate, through a nomination questionnaire, a parent/community member or to self-identify to be considered to be a member of the PEC Committee.
- v. The selection process will be engaged in by a committee of board representatives (including the Indigenous Education Manager, the Human Rights and Equity Advisor and two Supervisory Officers) and will be guided by the following criteria:
  - 1) Representation by Region
  - 2) Diversity
  - 3) Equity
  - 4) A balance of elementary and secondary parents.

### 3.4 Vacancies

- a. Vacancies will be filled in a timely manner.
- b. Vacancies for PEC parent members and community representative member(s) will be advertised by the committee using a variety of methods.

- c. Vacancies of the trustee or Board employee members will be filled in a timely manner by the Board, as per SGDSB Trustee By-Laws.
- d. When a member joins PEC to fill a vacancy for a member who left in the course of a term, then the new member's term will end when the term of the member he or she is replacing was due to end.
- e. Any officer position that is vacated prior to the end of term will be filled at the next meeting of PEC.

#### **4. AUTHORITY/JURISDICTION/RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. PEC is mandated by the Ministry of Education as per Ontario Regulation 612/00.
- b. No person serving on PEC is entitled to any remuneration for their services.
- c. All expense claims and receipts from PEC members and PEC subcommittee members are submitted to Board staff for reimbursement, in accordance with Board policy, and a copy of the claim and receipt must be provided to the Executive Assistant for reviewing and reporting purposes.
- d. Subcommittee chairs are responsible for scheduling meeting dates and locations and communicating this information to PEC members and the general public. In addition, they must provide regular reports to PEC and an annual report at the end of the year.

##### **4.1 Parent Members and Community Representative Member(s)**

- a. All members of PEC commit to attending all scheduled PEC meetings. If a member misses more than 40% of the scheduled meetings they may be asked to resign.
- b. Individual parent members and community representative members are eligible to vote at PEC meetings. The community representative member(s) may not vote in elections related to the selection of officers.
- c. Parent members may be employed by the Board, but need to declare such at the first meeting of the year.
- d. Should a community representative member foster, adopt or become a parent during their term, they may continue to serve out the rest of their one-year term.
- e. Any member finding themselves in a conflict of interest will excuse themselves from discussions and voting where they relate to the conflict.

##### **4.2 Officers**

- a. Co-Chairpersons:

- i. Working with the Executive Assistant, the PEC Co-Chairpersons will schedule PEC meetings and communicate those dates to PEC members at PIC meetings.
- ii. The Co-Chairpersons are responsible for setting the agenda for PEC meetings in consultation with the Director of Education. In addition, they will chair the meetings.
- iii. The Co-Chairpersons will communicate with the Director of Education regarding media communication, when necessary. The Director will serve as the spokesperson for the PEC committee. No other individuals shall speak on behalf of the Board, as per policy 202 Control and Release of Information.
- iv. If one Co-Chairperson is unavailable for a meeting, the Director may assist the other Co-chairperson with the meeting.

b. Board Personnel

Board employee members of PEC may not vote during PEC meetings or serve as a Co-Chairperson or the treasurer of PEC. They may serve on, or chair, PEC subcommittees.

## 5. ROLE OF BOARD PERSONNEL/STAFF

### 5.1 Restrictions of Membership

Board staff may join PEC as parent representative or as Board employee representatives. If they join as Board employee representatives they may not vote during PEC meetings or serve in an officer position.

### 5.2 Personnel and Services

- a. A board staff person will take minutes at PEC meetings and will circulate and post the minutes.
- b. Board staff will assist PEC members with administrative services as requested for the functioning of PEC and its subcommittees and following Board budgetary guidelines.
- c. The Board will provide a meeting place for PEC meetings and subcommittee meetings, which will generally be held via electronic means.
- d. Board staff will assist with the distribution and posting of notice of PEC meetings and agendas.
- e. Where applicable, board staff will be responsible for the retention of records of PEC's financial transactions and will provide access to such documents as required by law.

## 6. MEETINGS

- a. PEC shall meet a minimum of four times in each school year.
- b. A meeting cannot be held unless:
  - i. The majority of members present are parent members,
  - ii. The Director of Education or designate is present, and
  - iii. A trustee is present.

### **6.1 Access to Meetings**

All meetings shall be open to the public and be held via electronic means.

Accommodations will be made to ensure that all members have equal opportunity to participate in committee activities and discussions.

### **6.2 Quorum**

A majority of the members who are eligible to vote must be present in order for any vote to count. Members who are present by electronic means are eligible to vote.

### **6.3 Voting**

- a. Where possible, decisions will be made by consensus.
- b. Only parent members and the community representative member are entitled to vote.
- c. For all votes, in relation to parent membership or otherwise, a motion is approved when there is a vote of more than 50% in favour of the motion.

### **6.4 Communications/Distribution of Minutes and Agenda**

- a. PEC meeting dates and subcommittee meeting dates will be provided to all PEC members by email and will be posted on the PEC page of the Board website at the beginning of the school year.
- b. The agenda will be set by the PEC Co-Chairpersons with the Director of Education. The agenda will be distributed by email to members and will be posted on the PEC page of the Board website at least 3 days prior to the meeting.
- c. PEC meeting minutes
  - i. PEC meeting minutes will be taken by a Board staff person.
  - ii. The minutes will be approved at the subsequent PEC meeting and then will be considered for approval by the Board of Trustees at their next monthly Board meeting.

### **6.5 In Camera Meeting**

PEC meetings will remain open to the public at all times.



## 6.6 Attendance by Electronic Means

The board shall make all reasonable efforts to enable members to participate fully in meetings of the committee by electronic means. Members attending via electronic means will be deemed to be in attendance at the meeting.

## 6.7 Subcommittees Meetings

- a. Subcommittee meetings will be open to the public and held at a location that is accessible to the public. (s. 41(4))
- b. The membership subcommittee may hold in camera meetings when applications for membership are considered.
- c. The governance subcommittee may hold in camera meetings as necessary with the approval of the PEC Co-Chairpersons.

## 7. REPORTING/DELIVERABLES/RESULTS

### 7.1 Committee Reporting Relationships

PEC has statutory requirements to report as per Ontario Regulation 612/00 section 50. It also has requirements to report on its activities to parents of the SGDSB and school councils.

### 7.2 Format of Committee Report Back

- a. Annually, PEC will submit a written summary of the committee's activities to the Chair of the Board and to the Director of Education.

### 7.3 Timeframe of Committee Report Back

- a. PEC's annual written summary will be approved at the last PEC meeting of the year and then submitted to the Chair of the Board and the Director of Education. This summary will be shared with school councils.

**Education is a partnership involving students, parents, teachers, principals, trustees, school boards, government, and the community. As a member of a Parent Engagement Committee, you have an opportunity to strengthen this partnership and become part of a dedicated team committed to helping every student achieve. Parents are making a difference!** (Making A Difference: A Practical Handbook for Parent Engagement Committee Members, 2011)

### **Ontario's Vision of Parent Engagement**

In Ontario's education system, all partners acknowledge the positive impact of parent engagement on student achievement. Students are supported and inspired to learn in a culture of high expectations in which parents:

- are welcomed, respected, and valued by the school community as partners in their children's learning and development;
- have opportunities to be involved, and also a full range of choices about how to be involved, in the educational community in order to support student success;
- are engaged through ongoing communication and dialogue with other educational partners to support a positive learning environment at home and at school;
- are supported with the information and tools necessary to participate in school life.