

**April 2014**  
**Manitoba School Division Guidelines**  
**Understanding of the Role of Parent Councils in Manitoba Schools**

*- Respectfully submitted by Manitoba Association of Parent Councils Board of Directors for approval at the 2014 Annual General Meeting.*

### **Background**

Every year in Manitoba, Parent Advisory Councils choose the responsibility to operate as education partners in their respective school communities. These groups act as advisors, fundraisers, and collaborative partners to further the education opportunities for students while supporting dynamic learning environments in communities throughout Manitoba. The guidelines these groups are provided with by school divisions can vary greatly - from very little to very specific.

### **Introduction Statement**

Parent Advisory Councils and school divisions often rely on the *Advisory Councils for School Leadership Regulation* and *Parent Groups in Schools Regulation (The Education Administration Act)* for guidance regarding the effective operation and management of these groups. It is widely understood that when a group is operating as an Advisory Council for School Leadership (ACSL), it can refer to the regulation for guidance about its operating procedures. However, if a group is operating as anything other than an ACSL it is expected to operate under divisional policy.

With the introduction of *Bill 14 (Parent Groups for Schools)* in 2013, clause 53.1 (a) indicates that administrators will be required to work with and communicate annually with parents about the creation of a parent council where one might not exist. Subsequently, they will need to refer to – and be aware of - existing divisional guidelines and policies of interest to - and possibly impact of – parent groups in schools .

While some school divisions have implemented detailed guidelines for parent groups to refer to, other divisions have very few. In these instances, the operation of a parent group often becomes an area of tension in the community, due to the misunderstanding of current practice and varied experiences. Participants may be left to develop their own best practice which may, or may not, be in the best interest of the group. Individuals may be left feeling overwhelmed or confused due to their personal interpretation of the role of a parent council within a school community.

*While MAPC is available to its membership to assist with the development of best practices for Parent Advisory Councils, we cannot encourage or enforce the use of divisional guidelines which do not exist or are difficult to find.*

### **Action Request**

Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC) strongly requests all school divisions in Manitoba to work in consultation with its parents and Parent Advisory Councils to review, create, and further develop clear and effective divisional guidelines regarding the operation of parent councils, as outlined within the *Advisory Councils for School Leadership Regulation* and *Parent Groups in Schools Regulation*.