

An introduction to Parent Councils

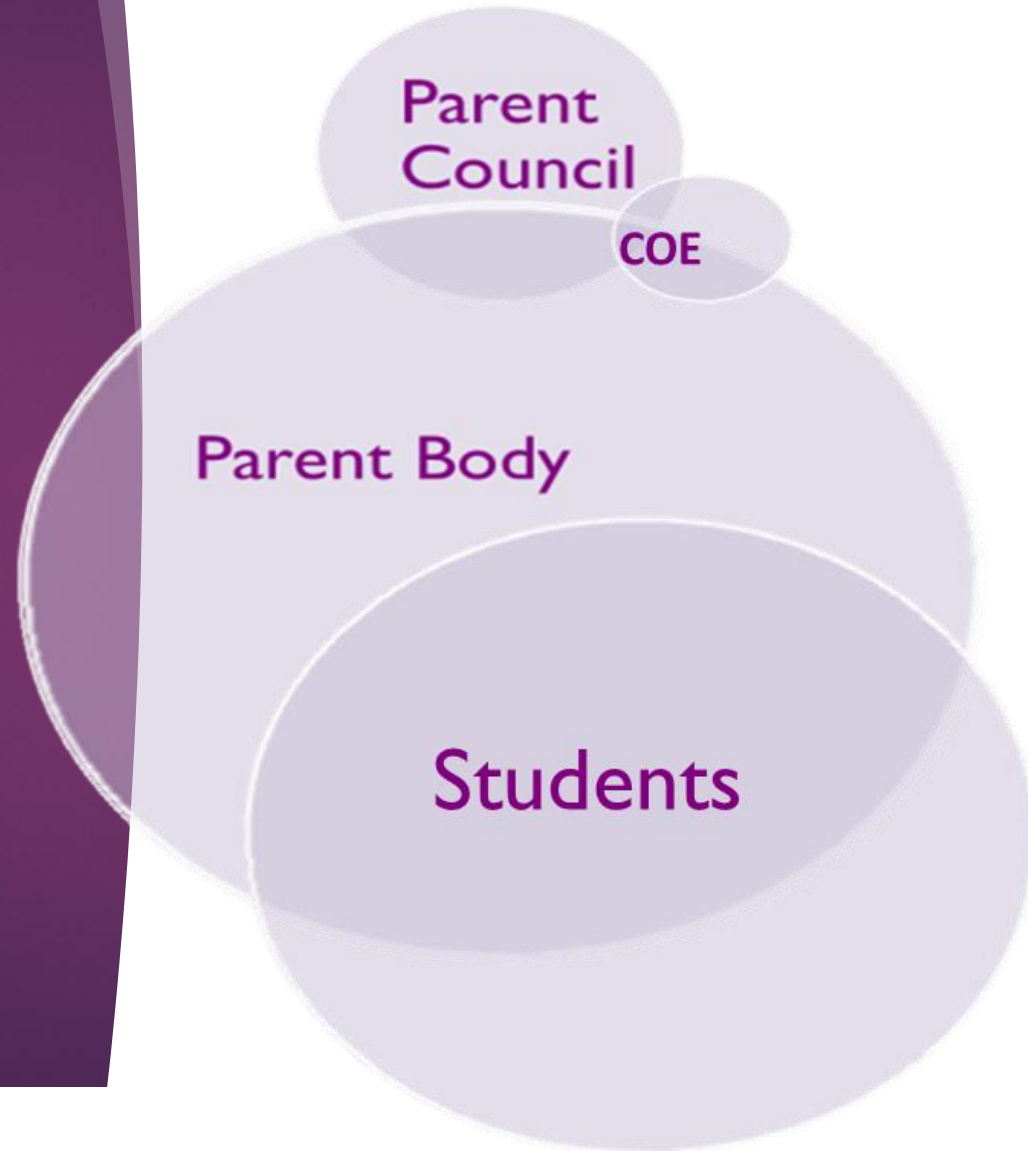
Department of Education
September 2016

Parents Matter!

- Parents matter and have a right to be involved in their children's education
- Active parental involvement improves school leadership, teaching and learning, and student success

Parent Councils

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.



Overview

- Part of a larger framework, resulting from consultation and a balancing of views and interests
- Commitment to improving parental involvement
- Parent-driven
- Supports school leadership and success

Parent



The framework includes:

- Optional parent councils for maintained primary and middle schools
- Parental involvement committee (PIC) will be established to focus on improving parental involvement system-wide
- Parental involvement strategy for the Bermuda Public School System

Why parent councils?

- Provide genuine and meaningful opportunities for parents to participate in the direction and success of schools
- Provide opportunities for direct two-way communication
- Help parents understand what is happening in schools and provide effective support to schools

What are its responsibilities?

Advise the principal on:

- the draft budget of the school
- the draft school improvement plan
- a school's policy for improving student achievement
- a school's parental and community involvement policy

What are its responsibilities?

- Helps monitor implementation of school improvement plan
- Shares with the Commissioner of Education preferences for the qualities and competencies for a new principal
- Reports regularly to the parents on its activities
- Gives parents a yearly report of its activities

How does it work?

- The parent council can call meetings of the parent body to get their input, deliberate and share information before advising the principal
- May choose to focus on some or all advisory responsibilities
- Parent council must meet at least 3 times per year

Who sits on a parent council?

A minimum of:

- the principal (ex-officio)
- three parents (one is a chairperson)
- one teacher or counsellor
- one community member
- Can have additional members, as long as parents are the majority
- Membership is flexible so that parents can decide what is right for their school community

Establishing a parent council

- Working group of at least 3 parents comes together with aim of establishing a parent council
- Notifies the principal and calls a meeting for discussion and vote
- Parents vote yes or no to a parent council and determine the membership by vote
- Parent councils must be established by October 1st

Key Differences

PTA

- ▶ Established by its constitution
- ▶ Promotes parental involvement
- ▶ Carries out responsibilities as per its constitution and custom and practice
- ▶ Is a registered charity; fundraises
- ▶ Is community-oriented

Parent Council

- ▶ Created in legislation
- ▶ Provides a framework for parental involvement
- ▶ Parents are involved in decision-making
- ▶ Has rights conferred by law
- ▶ Is not a registered charity and does not fundraise
- ▶ Community representation

Benefits

- Parental involvement in school decision-making and direction
- Improved communication and information-sharing
- Two-way learning between parents, community members, schools and the Ministry
- Working together for student achievement, school improvement, system improvement

Are there any disadvantages?

- Time requirement
- Must manage expectations
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Appropriate training and support

Support for parent councils

- Orientation session
- Workshops
- Communication sessions
- Parent council handbook
- Understanding and capacity will be grown over time

Thank you!

For More Information

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