

EDUCATION/EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT--Enhanced Roles for School Advisory Councils New for September

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The important role of School Advisory Councils will be further enhanced, beginning this school year. Along with representing the school community voice, council members will manage a budget that supports student achievement and provides advice on regional and provincial education policy development, starting with a new school extracurricular supervision policy coming later this year.

"The local voice continues to be critically important, especially as we renew our focus on ensuring all our students feel equally supported and welcomed into our education system," said Zach Churchill, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. "We know every community is different and may have needs or concerns specific to their student population. We want to provide council members with more tools and opportunity to ensure that perspective is represented in decision making."

A group of School Advisory Council chairpersons and principals were consulted earlier this year about what they would like to see as part of their enhanced role. The What We Heard document can be viewed at, <http://ednet.ns.ca/SAC> .

The following changes will be new for the School Advisory Council beginning this year:

- a budget (\$5,000 per council plus \$1 per student) that is to be used to support student achievement
- a stronger voice in policy development through two-way communication between the councils, their Regional Centres for Education/Conseil scolaire acadien provincial and the department
- more opportunities to learn and network through professional development opportunities and participation in regional and/or provincial meetings
- more flexibility in the composition of councils to help ensure their membership reflects the diversity of the school community

"These changes are exciting because they will improve communication between the province, the regions and the school communities," said Bill Kaulbach, principal of Cobequid Educational Centre. "Now parents and students will have a voice in determining where and how these new funds can be used to further student achievement and well-being."

Changes to enhance the role of School Advisory Councils are part of how the province is ensuring regional and diverse voices are well represented in decision making. The councils are composed of the school principal, teachers, students, parents and community members. Each school in the province, or family of schools within smaller communities, can have a School Advisory Council.

Anyone interested in joining or forming a School Advisory Council at their community school should contact the principal of that school.

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FOR BROADCAST USE:

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