

## LETTER OF AGREEMENT

The purpose of this letter is to establish the terms and conditions of the agreement between the Newcombville Elementary School Advisory Council, the South Shore Regional School Board, and the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Childhood Development to operate an advisory council at the school level.

The parties agree to the following:

### Duration of the Agreement

This agreement began September, 2003. The agreement will be reviewed annually, by the partners, before June 30. Any mutually agreed upon revisions to By-laws can be made at that time in consultation with the school board. Amendments were made October 2006 to Structure of the Council Section 1(f) and to Appendix A. Further amendments were made at the June 2013 School Advisory Council meeting and again at the November 2017 meeting to reflect criteria in the new *Nova Scotia Advisory Council Handbook (June 2017)*.

### Structure of the Council

1. The membership of the advisory council will include:
  - a) the principal, a non-voting member
  - b) 2 parents
  - c) 1 teacher
  - d) 1 support staff
  - e) 1 community member
2. Recommendations/decisions will be made as follows:
  - a) whenever possible all decisions will be made by consensus.
  - b) several options are available if a consensus cannot be reached
    - (i) the decision can be delayed until the next meeting
    - (ii) the principal can be requested to provide the council with further information at the next meeting
    - (iii) the decision can be dealt with by a simple majority vote at the original meeting
  - c) agendas and background information pertaining to important issues will be distributed one week prior to the meeting.
3. Meetings will be scheduled a minimum of five times per year.
4. Meetings will be open to the public (except in student discipline matters which will be dealt with in camera) and will be advertised.

### **School Council Commitments**

The School Advisory Council has the following expectations:

1. participating in the ongoing efforts of the school to continuously improve student achievement and school performance
2. recommending a school improvement plan to the school board
3. contributing to the school's annual report on efforts to improve student achievement and school performance
4. advising the school's principal and staff on school policies, curriculum and programs, school practices, student discipline, fundraising, school communication with parents/guardians, and similar matters to promote a positive learning environment
5. reviewing class sizes and rationale for exceeding provincial class cap guidelines when required
6. advising the school board on curriculum and student support services, policy development, funding, communication strategies, and similar matters that promote a positive learning environment
7. participating in selecting the school's principal
8. serving on the School Options Committee (SOC) when a school is identified for review, as described in the School Review Policy referenced in the Education Act
9. selecting one or more representatives to serve on the Site Steering committee if a replacement school is approved for construction
10. reviewing and updating the Letter of Agreement (LoA) and SAC by-laws. Letters of Agreement must be approved by the school board and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development; SAC by-laws must be approved by the school board.
11. promoting communication among SAC partners, school community members, students, and staff.

### **School Board Commitments**

The South Shore Regional School Board will make a commitment to provide the following support to the Newcombsville Elementary School Advisory Council.

1. developing policies and procedures that support effective SACs
2. supporting the ongoing work of SACs
3. reviewing and approving the Letters of Agreement and by-laws
4. recommending Letters of Agreement for approval to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
5. consulting with SACs on educational issues, as set out in the act
6. organizing leadership development opportunities for SACs
7. monitoring and support SAC performance
8. advising on or resolving conflicts related to SACs
9. ensuring that SACs adhere to their Letters of Agreement and by-laws
10. receiving the student success plan and annual report
11. requesting advice from SACs on policy or other matters, in accordance with the act

**Nova Scotia Department of Education and Childhood Development Commitments**

The Nova Scotia Department of Education and Childhood Development (DEECD) will support the Newcombville Elementary School Advisory Council in the following ways:

1. producing an SAC handbook
2. providing a provincial model and framework for school improvement
3. helping school boards organize SAC leadership development opportunities
4. approving the Letters of Agreement

**All Members' Commitments**

Staff, parents/guardians, students, and community members work as a team to

1. provide advice to the principal on school programs and policies
2. communication with the groups they represent in order to articulate the diverse views that exist within their school community
3. represent the best interests of students
4. participate in the writing and review of the Letter of Agreement, by-laws, and annual reports
5. recommend the school improvement plan to the school board

**Parties To The Agreement**

We understand and agree to follow through on the commitments made in this Letter of Agreement.

----- Chairperson, Newcombville Elementary School Advisory Council	----- Date
----- Principal	----- Date
----- South Shore Regional School Board	----- Date
----- Department of Education	----- Date

**NEWCOMBVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
ADVISORY COUNCIL  
BY-LAWS**

**Membership**

General

The advisory council for Newcombville Elementary School will have at least 6 members including: 2 parents; 1 teacher; 1 support staff; 1 community member, and the school principal, who is a non-voting member.

Eligibility for Membership

Parents: Must have a child enrolled in the school and must not be a school board employee (ex. teachers, playground supervisors, TA, bus drivers, canteen workers, etc.) who is on staff at Newcombville Elementary School.

Teachers: Must be a licensed teacher on the staff of Newcombville Elementary School.

Support Staff: Must work at Newcombville Elementary School. This includes administrative assistants, custodians, program support assistants, bus drivers, canteen manager, and noon supervisors.

Community Member: Must reside in the geographical area served by Newcombville Elementary School. The individual may not be an employee of the school board and may not have children attending the school.

Ideally, each member will complete a three year term.

**Elections**

General

Elections will be held prior to October 31st.

All elections will be by secret ballot.

Election Process

Parents: Nominations will close one week prior to the election. Parent representatives will be elected at a public meeting.

Teachers: Nominations will close one week prior to the election with voting done by teachers.

Support Staff: Nominations will close one week prior to the election with voting done by support staff.

Community Member: This position will be advertised through our school newsletter and by word of mouth. Nominations are to be made one week prior to either the June or the October meeting of council. At either the June or October meeting, or during the first meeting of the school year, council will appoint the community member.

### **Vacated Positions**

The council will fill vacated positions in the following manner:

The school council shall arrange a new election for that position. Alternately, the council may appoint a person for a term not to exceed six months. The person appointed must be selected from the membership group in which the vacancy occurred.

### **Executive**

The executive will be comprised of the chairperson, secretary, and principal. The election for the chairperson and secretary will occur annually at the June or October meeting.

### **Suspension Review and Recommendation Committee**

The Suspension Review and Recommendation Committee of the Advisory Council will assume the responsibility of student discipline as delegated by the board and in accordance with the Education Act, as outlined in section 123 (3), 124 (3), 125 (1) (b).

- 1) The committee will be comprised of the parents and community member of council.
- 2) A quorum will consist of 3 members.
- 3) Decisions will be by majority vote.

### **Meetings**

All council meetings will be open to the public with the exception of those that deal with student discipline. The council will meet at least five times a year with an annual general meeting held as part of the first SAC meeting of the year, usually October. A quorum for council meetings will consist of five members.

### **Agenda/Meeting Minutes**

The executive of the council will develop meeting agendas in consultation with council members. The agenda will be distributed at least one week prior to the meeting.

Meeting minutes will be kept for each regular meeting and will be included in the school's official records. These minutes will also be available to the public and will be posted on our school web page under SAC/PTA news.

### **Decision-Making Process**

It is agreed the following principles and procedures will be used when making decisions:

#### Principles

1. All council members are responsible for making decisions which are based on providing the best education possible to our students.
2. All council members will have the opportunity to participate in decision making.
3. All council members are responsible for participating in decision making.
4. All council members will support school council decisions.

#### Procedures

1. Topics and issues will be discussed in a structured way prior to decision making.
2. Background information on topics and issues will be available to all members prior to decisions being made.
3. Whenever possible, decisions will be made by consensus. **If consensus cannot be reached:**
  - i) the decision can be delayed until the next meeting
  - ii) the principal can be requested to provide the council with further information at the next meeting
  - iii) the decision can be dealt with by a simple majority vote at the original meeting.
4. When a vote is necessary, as may be in the case of student discipline, a majority vote is required.
5. Decisions and recommendations will be recorded in the *Meeting Minutes*.

### **Annual Reports**

An annual one-page report prepared by the chair will highlight events of the current school year and will be presented at the final SAC meeting.

### **Adopting/Amending By-Laws**

By-laws will be adopted or amended by a consensus decision of council members. If consensus cannot be achieved, the council will use a voting procedure. The decision can be delayed until the next meeting. The principal can be requested to provide the council with further information at the next meeting. The decision can be dealt with by a simple majority vote at the original meeting or at the next meeting. Any changes in by-laws will then be sent to the school board for approval.

### **Appendix A: Newcombville SAC Membership**

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Completion of Term</b>
Principal	Allan Turner	On-going
Chairperson/Parent Member	Pam Hebb	June 30, 2019
Parent Member	Dan Hennessey	June 30, 2018
Teacher	Selena Wentzell	June 30, 2019
Parent/Staff Member	Latasha Keddy	June 30, 2020
Community Member	Nancy Greek	June 30, 2020