

HANDOUT 7.3: The Role of Education Councillors

An education councillor's role is to maintain a focus on student achievement and well-being, and to participate in making decisions that benefit the entire district while representing the interests of their community.

EDUCATION COUNCILLORS ESTABLISH THE DISTRICT'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The district education council (DEC) is responsible for setting the overall direction for the school district. Education councillors work together to establish the DEC's strategic plan, which sets the direction of the district for parents, the public and the superintendent, and lays out the priorities and strategic direction of the school district.

The DEC ensures that the superintendent carries out responsibilities for implementing the DEC's strategic plan. The superintendent holds the responsibility for the day-to-day work in this area or the delegation of the work to various people and groups within the district.

EDUCATION COUNCILLORS ARE FINANCIAL STEWARDS

DECs have important responsibilities for approval and oversight of school district financial decisions. One of the most important aspects of governance for education councillors is to connect district goals, strategic planning and economic realities, through the establishment of the school district's annual budget.

The DEC oversees development of a strategic plan and the allocation of resources to support that plan. The DEC ensures the budget and staff allocations are in alignment with the plan and the identified goals that are intended to improve outcomes for students.

EDUCATION COUNCILLORS ARE A PART OF A TEAM

An education councillor is a member of a team: the DEC. While the DEC has the authority to make decisions or to take action; individual councillors in and of themselves do not have this authority.

While healthy debate is an important aspect of good governance, once the DEC has voted, it is the DEC's decision and an individual councillor's responsibility to act in a manner that promotes and upholds the DEC's decision and to communicate the DEC's decision back to the public.

EDUCATION COUNCILLORS ARE COMMUNITY LEADERS

Education councillors work with their DEC colleagues and with other community partners to ensure that all the students within the DEC's jurisdiction have equal opportunities to reach their maximum potential.

While members of the DEC act as representatives of their community, their primary job is to participate in policy making and strategic planning that are in the interests of all of the district's students, and are grounded in promoting student achievement and well-being. Education councillors balance the governance role with the representative role, participating in decision-making that benefits the whole DEC while representing the interests of their community.

DUTIES OF EDUCATION COUNCILLORS:

1. Support public schools and public education.
2. Regularly engage in professional development.
3. Act with commitment.
4. Come thoroughly prepared for meetings.
5. Understand the difference between DEC and staff roles and responsibilities.
6. Consider all viewpoints before making a decision.
7. Work toward consensus on difficult issues.
8. Respect confidentiality.
9. Strive for open and honest communication with DEC members, staff and the community.
10. Respect the final decisions of the DEC.