

Information Sheet No.31

Responsibilities of parent representatives on school boards

A strong spirit of co-operation should exist between the P&C Association and the Board through its elected parent members.

Board members should consult with parents by presenting the issues, encouraging discussion and reporting back on decisions made. The P&C meeting is the most obvious way for this consultation to occur. Parent members of the school board should attend P&C meetings and put the views of the P&C association to the school board.

As the board is responsible to the whole parent constituency, not just those who attend P&C meetings, other mechanisms such as the school newsletter should be used to report to parents. Board members should invite comment on any issues which are of concern to parents, through questionnaires and parent meetings when appropriate.

Contact numbers for parent representatives should be published in the school newsletter. The members of the P&C association should support and assist parent representatives to perform effectively as board members.

The dates of all board and P&C meetings and their agendas should be widely advertised within the school community.

The Board and P&C should routinely exchange minutes.

There should be a regular place on the board agenda for a P&C report, and vice versa. Board meetings and P&C meetings should be timed to facilitate consultation before decisions are made and prompt reporting afterwards.

It is particularly important that major items on the board agenda, such as changes to the curriculum, financial priorities, new school policies or programs, and annual action plans, are widely discussed by parents so that their input can contribute to board decision making.

Observers from the school community should be made welcome at board meetings unless there are confidential matters being discussed; observers may be invited to participate in discussion but do not have voting rights.

The P&C should be given a copy of the annual board report and should be involved in school development plans.

A parent board representative may also be a member of the P&C executive.

It is in the interests of the school that those who stand for election as parent members of the school board are active within the school community. The P&C, therefore, has the responsibility of encouraging parent representatives who will ensure real participation. ★