

Bowmore School Council Bylaw Review:

1. Bowmore's existing bylaws were adopted between 2010 and 2012 (according to the dates recorded on the copies we have). Bylaws should be read by new council members each year but a formal review every five years is good practice to ensure the documents are accurate, relevant, and up-to-date with council operations.
2. Parent involvement in the BSC has grown since 2010 - 2012 (about double) and the number of subcommittees has increased over that time. The existing BSC bylaws address only the minimum required by the Legislation (election, vacancy, conflict of interest, conflict resolution) but lack material that supports council operations. The Province recommends adopting bylaws that govern the operation of school councils and council committees (e.g. membership, meeting formats, decision making, reporting and record keeping, subcommittee rules, member roles, Principal roles) and help council negotiate its role as an 'advisory committee' to the Principal and Board. A proper set of bylaws would support the transparent and consistent operation of council each year and in turn promote understanding and involvement by the parent community.
3. The existing Bowmore School Council (BSC) bylaws contain clauses that contradict the Legislation governing school councils (O.Reg. 612/00 and O.Reg. 298/01) (see comments in green on "marked up bylaws"). The Legislation is the starting foundation for council operation; bylaws are meant to expand on the Legislation to ease council operations and cannot contradict or contravene the Legislation.
4. The bylaws and code of ethics need updates to reflect electronic record keeping and communication especially with regards to social media. (*Note: The communications committee does have their own procedures but these have not been adopted by the Council as a whole.*)
5. The bylaws should clarify interaction of the Council with the Board. Councils are a provincially mandated entity that makes recommendations to the Board, via the Principal, regarding education and student well being and Boards are mandated to respond to the recommendations of a council. At some point each year Board staff try to insert themselves into council operations or treat councils like board employees (staff are not required to understand the Regs or councils) and those staff do not realize that a council is not beholden to or regulated by the Board.
6. The BSC needs to define the number of elected Parent Members of Council. "Parent Members" are parent/guardians of Bowmore students; Parent Members are elected by the Bowmore parent community to be the representatives of that community. The Legislation states that councils must set out the number of elected Parent Members or default to the Board's recommended number (10). In determining the number of Parent Members we should keep in mind:
 - a. Minimum number for meeting quorum: Ten Parent Members is recommended as the minimum as Parent Members must always be the majority for a meeting to take place (a proper council also has the Principal, a teacher, a staff member, one or more community representatives, and optionally a student rep).
 - b. Number of subcommittees and officer positions. Legislation requires that each subcommittee have a representative from Council as a member of the committee (e.g. executive, fundraising, or event committees). Bowmore has at least 11 committees and 7-10 elected roles each year.
 - c. Number of School Committees. Schools are required to involve parent representatives on committees including the School Improvement Plan, Safe and Caring Schools, and Budget. Parent members are also recommended for the Staffing committee.
 - d. Number of parents submitting nominations each year: The elections committee reports that Council receives 18-25 nominations each fall for the past 5 years. We should define a number that is reasonable and achievable year to year. The elected members must attend council meetings.
 - e. Bowmore: What number of Parent members would best represent the Bowmore Community?