

UNLOCK YOUR SCHOOL'S FUTURE

Roles and Responsibilities of School Boards

The role of School Council (Board) is outlined in the *Education Act 1999*. In essence, the role of School Board is one of setting the long-term future for the school and maintaining oversight (not management) of the implementation of the school Business Plan. It is not about running the school – that is the job of the principal, but rather, about providing additional expertise to help the school achieve the best outcomes for students. Independent Public School (IPS) Board functions are consistent with the legislative role of a School Council.

The responsibilities of an IPS School Board are to:

- work within the Department of Education's relevant legislation and regulations;
- contribute to the school's Delivery and Performance Agreement (DPA). This document summarises what the school wants to achieve in the future and how it plans to get there. The agreement is signed off by the Chair of the Board, the Principal and the Director General of Education;
- monitor the progress of the school's Business Plan;
- endorse and review the annual budget (this summarises the income received annually from the Department of Education and other sources, and also lists planned expenditure, including salaries);
- assist with the formulation of Codes of Conduct (guiding principles that influence the decisions and actions that the school takes);
- participate in a review of the performance of the school;
- create interest, within and across the community, about the school;
- assist with the selection of a principal when a vacancy arises (usually the Chair of the School Board will be a member of the selection panel);
- approve fees, charges, contributions and items of personal use (booklists);
- approve extra cost optional components of programs;
- approve arrangements for sponsorship or advertising;
- liaise with other committees within the school e.g. the P&C;
- hold one open meeting each year to report to the school community; and
- provide advice to the principal on religious education and related activities.

The School Board does not:

- manage the day to day running of the school. For example, it does not employ staff, decide which classes students will be assigned to, or resolve issues relating to individual teachers and students and/or parents;
- discuss individual issues relating to teachers, staff or parents – these are management roles, and therefore the responsibility of the principal;
- represent specific interest groups, or permit special interests to dominate the agenda of the Board;
- intervene in the educational instruction of students;
- purchase land, buildings or motor cars, and cannot enter into hire purchase agreements or obtain credit or loans, unless permission is given by the Minister; and
- performance manage the principal or any other staff member.

Role of School Board members:

- parent members of School Boards bring their experience as parents at the school and the views and context of the wider school community to School Board meetings;
- community members bring wider perspectives, particular skills and expertise to the School Board. They may have business, accounting, building, or other skills that the school is looking for at that time; and
- Department of Education employees bring their educational expertise to School Board meetings.

References:

School Education Act (1999), School Education Regulations (2000,)

Department of Education (2004) *School Councils Policy*

Department of Education (2010) *Unlock your school's future. Independent Public Schools. Information for Principals and School Councils.*

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