

APPENDIX B: SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP SHARED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students

Students have the opportunity to participate in collective decision making when they are

- members on a partnership council
- empowered with the ability to go beyond the planning of social events and extracurricular activities

Students in senior years often participate on school partnership groups as student council members. The attitudes, knowledge, and values a student brings to the council meetings can influence the decisions made by the council or the school.

The role a student plays as an educational partner is important to

- make suggestions that reflect student perspectives
- help design policies and programs
- seek the views of other students and share with the council
- represent students
- seek ongoing consultation with school principal
- provide feedback to student council members

Parents and Families

Parents and families

- provide parental perspectives that complement teacher skills
- monitor homework and school projects
- promote attendance, punctuality, and instill a positive attitude towards education
- volunteer at school activities
- assist school organizations
- provide information about their child's beliefs, values, and preferred learning styles
- provide information about their culture and family beliefs
- teach and learn as true partners in the educational process
- provide suggestions for successful schools

As the first teachers in their children's lives, parents and families pave the way for successful school experiences. Parent and family involvement in a child's life experience has a great effect on school learning and achievement. Beyond the essential bond of parent and child that is so critical for physical and social, and intellectual well-being is the need for co-operative interaction with other people.

Teachers and Student Support Teams

Teachers are often the first contacts that parents and family members have with the school. Teachers play a critical role in creating learning environments that support the students' needs as they become actively involved in their own learning. Teachers and student support teams provide services directly or indirectly to students.

Student support teams may include

- homeroom teachers
- classroom teachers
- subject area teachers
- support teachers such as resource teachers, special education teachers, and school counsellors
- clinicians such as psychologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, mental health workers and social workers
- educational assistants

The role of teachers and members of student support teams includes

- treating students with dignity, kindness, and respect
- informing parents about matters related to educating their children
- serving on the school partnership council
- providing assistance to teacher representatives on the council
- supporting the school partnership council
- promoting a collaborative model of decision making
- communicating information to colleagues
- listening carefully to parents
- providing a learning environment where the challenges of new learning are accepted

School Leaders

Principals have a strong influence on how parents, families, and communities are welcomed to the school system. They have the capacity to create environments that support students, educators, parents, families, and communities.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society envisions a public education system that provides equal accessibility and equal opportunity for all children, that optimizes the potential of all students as individuals and citizens, that fosters lifelong learning, and that ensures a safe learning environment respectful of diversity and human dignity. (MTS)

The role of the Principal is to

- assist in the establishment of a school partnership council to advise the school on matters of policy, procedure, and school priorities
- facilitate communication among all school-related councils and the school
- implement local school policies and those of the school division and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth
- promote co-operation between the school and community through consistent mission and vision
- consider and respond to the parents' views on school issues
- encourage parental involvement in the school planning process
- involve parents, families, and the community in the development of school plans, community reports, and grant submissions

Advisory Councils

ACSLs were established in legislation to support collaborative educational processes, by involving parents and community members in important matters of the local school and school board. Members of the ACSL represent the parents within the school community and may advise on the following matters:

- school policies, activities, and organization
- fundraising activities
- the process of hiring and assigning principals
- the annual school budget
- development of an annual school plan
- a school review as directed by the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth or the school board

Parent Councils

Parents, families, and communities add another dynamic to school partnerships. Operating within an educational partnership, parents, families, and communities have the opportunity to be more involved in the education of children as individuals and as representatives of partnership councils. The Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC) is the provincial voice for parents and parent councils.

The role of the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils is to

- provide resources and services to member parent councils such as: book/video library loans, workshops, conferences, help with writing a constitution, information on the roles and responsibilities of PAC members, and the services of the Advocacy Project to assist in resolving issues

"True commitment and understanding of the need of parental involvement from all partners fosters a positive school community relationship." (MAPC)

- represent parents on Department of Education committees such as: curriculum steering committees and document development
- keep parents updated on current events using a published newsletter several times each year
- participate in consultations for new provincial initiatives

School Superintendents

Superintendents ensure that all families and communities have the opportunity to be meaningfully involved in their children's education.

Superintendents perform the supervisory management duties required to facilitate parent, family, and community involvement in the school system. They have the responsibility to provide leadership in implementing the Public Schools Act and its regulations as well as provincial and ministerial directives.

The role of the Superintendent is to

- communicate with parents and the community to build awareness and understanding of the purposes and value of public education
- provide ways for parents and the community to have a respected voice and opportunity to develop and support educational opportunities for children
- be accountable to parents and the community by providing a clear vision, transparency of operations, and sharing educational outcomes

School Trustees

Trustees, as community members, are elected by their communities to represent parents and families at the school division level. Their role is to establish policy that supports meaningful parent, family, and community involvement, student learning, and school programs and services.

The role of a trustee is to

- establish a welcoming and inclusive environment that values the diverse perspectives of parents and community members
- implement processes to ensure regular and clear communications with parents and communities about priorities and outcomes within the school division
- create opportunities for parent and community input into policy development and decision making at the school and divisional levels
- provide a school division perspective that recognizes educational partnerships

The Manitoba Association of School Superintendents endorses the concept that parent and family involvement in the operation of school divisions is essential if the school division and the community are to maintain mutual confidence and respect, and work together to improve the quality of education for all students. (MASS)

Manitoba school boards believe that educating our children is a shared responsibility. Parents, communities, and schools are critical partners in helping our students to learn and to succeed in life. (MAST)

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth

“Parents and families are critical to students’ educational success. More community groups want to have a role in setting the direction of education and training in Manitoba, creating pressures for inclusive and participatory decision-making processes.” (MECY)

The role of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth is to

- prioritize school, family, and community involvement in school affairs
- strongly encourage schools and school divisions to include parents, families, and communities in all aspects of planning relating to teaching and learning
- consult with educational partners including parents and community members
- support organizations that represent parents and community members at the school level
- provide resources to schools that assist in strengthening school, family, and community involvement