

## Filling Vacancies

School councils must develop bylaws to address the issue of membership vacancy.<sup>4</sup> A vacancy in the membership of the school council may be filled by election or by appointment, in accordance with the bylaws set by the individual school council. (School councils that want the option of filling a vacancy by appointment must ensure that a bylaw is in place to provide for that option. Otherwise, the vacancy must be filled by election.) If an election is to occur to fill a vacancy, then the election rules set out in Regulation 612/00 apply. Should a vacancy occur on the school council, the council is not prevented from exercising its authority; it can continue to operate as long as there is a quorum and the majority of council members are parents.

The council members should be aware that a majority of parents must be present when a vote is taken or if decisions are made. Should the number of parent members on council fall below a majority, the council will need to take steps to fill those vacancies. If a vacancy occurs in the office of the chair/co-chair or any other officer of the council, it is to be filled in accordance with the school council's bylaws.

Vacancies occur in school council membership for various reasons:

- Not all positions on the school council were filled after an election.
- A member resigns.
- A member is unable to fulfil the roles and responsibilities (e.g., due to illness).

Here are some sample vacancy bylaws.

### Sample Vacancy Bylaws

#### Sample 1

1. Should an elected parent/guardian council position become vacant before the next election, the council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.
2. If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming a council member, the council may request that interested parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. The council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.
3. When a vacant spot on council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election.

*Source:* Adapted from the bylaws of Holy Name of Mary School Council, Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, Almonte, Ontario.

#### Sample 2

If any school council positions become vacant because of resignation, inability of a member to fulfil his or her roles and responsibilities, or other cause, the remaining members shall constitute the school council, unless the parent/guardian majority is not maintained. If the majority of parents on the council is not maintained, the school council shall instruct its nominating committee to send home nomination forms for the vacant position(s) for parents on the council and to hold an election for the purpose of filling the vacancy. Vacant positions, other than for parent representatives, may be filled by appointment of the council for the remaining term of office, from among members of the school community who meet the requirements set for the vacant positions.

*Source:* Adapted from St. Francis Catholic School, "School Council Operating Guidelines", Paris, Ontario.