Role of the council/board
The council/board has distinct functions provided under the legislation. Parents and the community can be involved in school decision making and giving advice through their council/board. The Act prohibits the council/board from being involved in the day-to-day running of the school.

The table below explains different legislated roles of council/boards.

Role	Approval role	Advisory role	Do not participate
What does it mean?	• Council/board contributes to decision making. The Principal consults the council/board on issues and takes on their advice prior to making decisions. • Council/board is directly and deeply involved. • Decisions are documented in council/board meeting minutes.	• Council/board is consulted and helps to brainstorm and resolve issues. • Discussions are documented in the council/board meeting minutes.	• Council/board and their members cannot intervene in the control or management of a school; or intervene in the educational instruction of students; or exercise authority over teaching staff or other persons employed by the school; or intervene in the management or operation of a school fund;
Examples of council/board involvement	Council/board approves: • voluntary school contributions (charges) payable by parents/ guardians for materials, services and facilities; • fees for optional programs such as excursions and incursions; • book list (or equivalent) items that school requests students to have for personal use; • sponsorship and advertising agreements; and • the dress code for students in consultation with students, staff, parents/guardians.	Council/board: • advises principal about the local community context; • reviews allocation of resources to meet school plan targets; • reviews and monitors school objectives, priorities and policy directions; • takes part in the reviewing of the Annual Report; • takes part in developing school code of conduct for students; • advises principal about religious practices in school (for example, use of prayers); • advises on selection but not appointment of principal and other staff(where approval is given); • takes part in development of and monitoring of the school plan; • takes part in review of the DPA; and • takes part in reviewing the financial arrangements of the school.	Council/board does not: • manage day-to-day running of school, for example staff performance and student assessment; • discuss individual cases relating to teachers, staff and parents/guardians; • represent special interest groups or allow special interests to dominate council/board discussions; • intervene in education instruction; • borrow money; • purchase property; • exercise authority over teaching staff or other persons employed at the school; and • manage complaints processes.

All council/board members are obliged to act in the best interests of the school and its students. Council/board members are not on the council/board to represent the interests of any subgroups of the school community. Those wishing to raise issues that are not related to the legislated role/functions of the council/board should do this through the school's complaints management processes.

Understanding, informing and making decisions

The following framework is a useful guide for councils/boards to use when understanding, informing or making decisions.

Understanding decisions
Council/board members have the right to understand decisions made by the principal and others (except where they involve confidential information about people or families).

Informing decisions
Council/board members have the right to inform decisions made by the principal and others (except where they are of a confidential or professional nature.)

Make decisions
Council/board members have the right to make decisions with the principal and others (in accordance with legislated functions and Department policy).

Making decisions

All council/board decisions must be agreed to by an absolute majority of council/board members – that is, more than half of all members must vote in favour of the decision. This includes members who are not present at the meeting and vacant positions.

For example, if there are 12 or 13 members on the council/board, seven members must vote 'yes' for a motion to be passed. If only seven members are at the meeting, then everyone must vote 'yes' for the motion to be passed. If it is difficult for a council/board to achieve the required absolute majority, then the council/board is experiencing a serious governance issue.

All council/board members (including the principal and chair) are entitled to one vote.

It is important that council/board members make themselves available for meetings where important matters are being discussed and decided. A proxy vote is not lawful under the legislation. Council/board members may, however, use out of session processes (for example, an email to the chair) to have their votes recorded.

Making good decisions

Informed, fair, sound and consistent decision making are important to the operation of the council/board. Skills in this area can be improved by taking account of:
- opportunities to be gained or lost as a result of the decision
- reliable and relevant information
- a mindset that balances the above.