



Chair

Roles and Responsibilities

School Representative Body

Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations

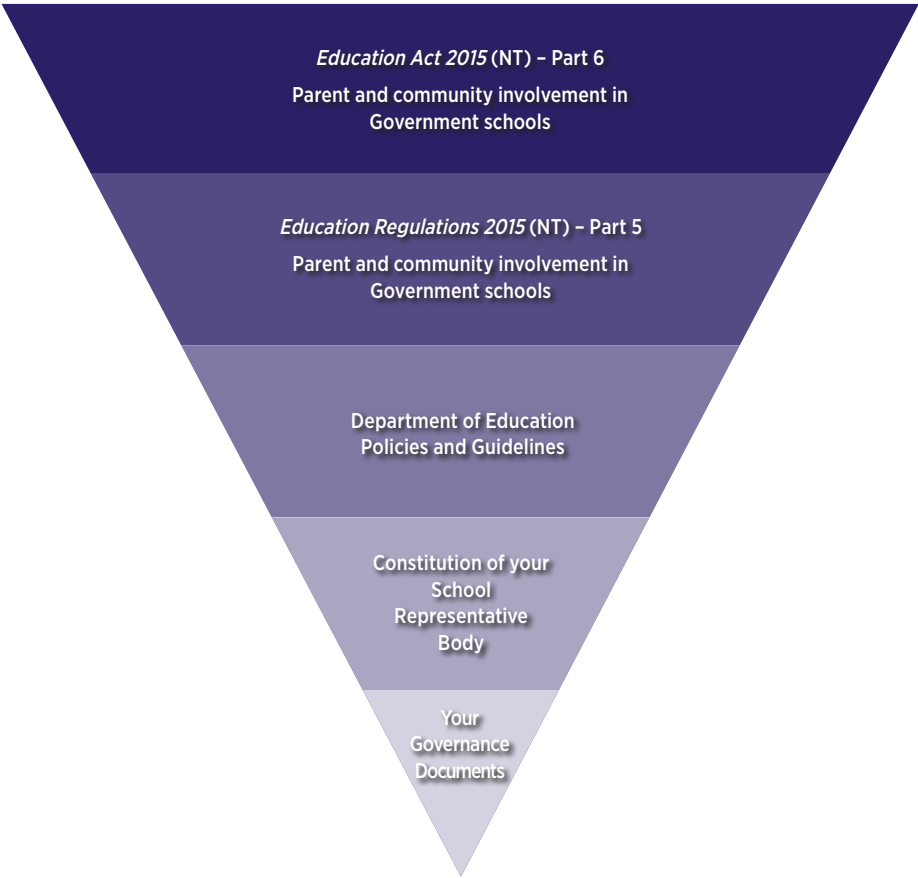
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Legislation

NT COGSO handbooks support members to implement best practice school governance.

Understanding your role as a member ensures decisions are made in the best interests of all students today, tomorrow and into the future.



The information provided is developed in line with relevant legislation, regulations and guidelines.

A School Representative Body (SRB)

The *Education Act 2015 (NT)* Part 6 Parent and community involvement in Government schools, recognises the importance of parents and communities in the governance of schools.

A School Representative Body (School Council or School Board) enables parents to provide relevant input into student outcomes and the long-term strategic vision of the school.

A School Representative Body and the school Principal work in partnership to provide good governance, facilitate communication and ensure effective networking with their school community.

An informed and effective School Representative Body ensures schools establish and maintain genuine engagement and meaningful partnerships through best practice governance and decision making.

Establishing good governance processes achieves a balance between formal meeting procedures and a friendly atmosphere of inclusion, cooperation and participation. To function effectively there must be a good working relationship between the Principal and its members based on mutual respect and a shared vision for the school.

What do members do?

- Develop the broad strategic direction and vision for the school through the school's strategic planning process
- Provide input into the development and implementation of SRB policies
- Lead community conversation about key challenges in education
- Ensure the school is responsive to local community needs
- Provide strategic oversight, approve distribution and monitor the performance of the annual budget
- Assess and advise on the physical needs of the school
- Oversee work on buildings and grounds
- Approve community use of school facilities outside of school hours
- Identify fundraising priorities, activities and spend funds accordingly
- Determine school fees and seek voluntary contributions from parents
- Employ School Representative Body staff in accordance with relevant awards and the Fair Work Act 2009 (cth).

School Governance

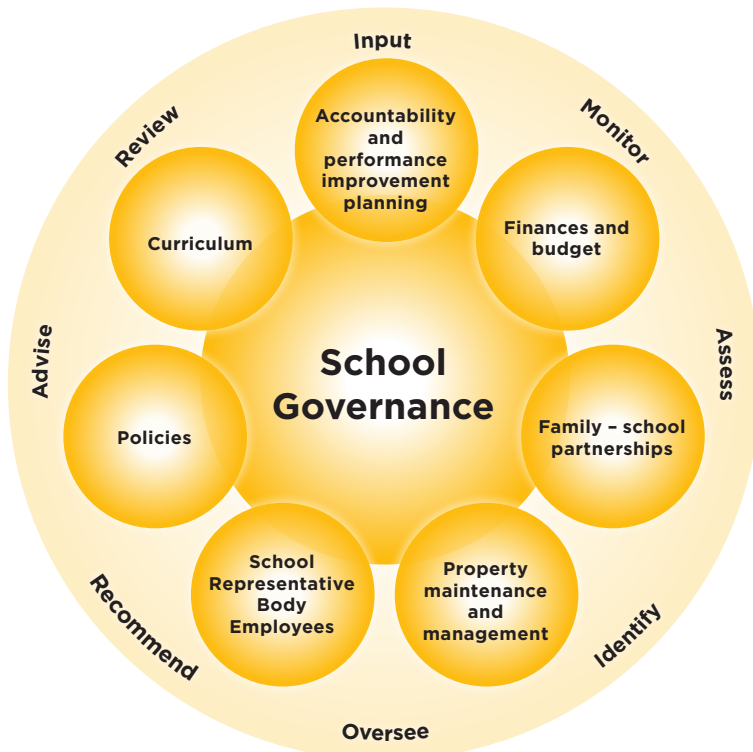
A School Representative Body is actively involved in the governance of the school.

A School Representative Body should meet once per month during the school year and must meet not less than eight times in a calendar year. This number includes the Annual General Meeting.

Although each member brings their own valuable skills and knowledge to the role, members may need to develop skills and acquire knowledge in areas that may be unfamiliar to them.

The role of a School Representative Body **does not** include making decisions about the specifics of Department of Education staffing or operational matters.

As an elected member and Office Bearer of the School Representative Body, the Chair will need to develop a good working relationship with other members to ensure effective and efficient governance.



Who can be a Member?

A School Representative Body must have between 5 and 19 members.

The number and composition for a School Representative Body is defined in the Constitution. Parent Members must make up at least 50% of the total membership and must include the Principal and at least one Teacher Member.

Membership must include:

- Parents
- Teacher/s
- Principal

Membership may include:

- Students (Secondary Education only)
- Invited Members

		← Minimum	→ Maximum			
		5	10	15	19	
	Parent		Parent	Parent	Parent	1
	Parent		Parent	Parent	Parent	2
	Parent		Parent	Parent	Parent	3
	Principal		Parent	Parent	Parent	4
	Teacher		Parent	Parent	Parent	5
			Principal	Parent	Parent	6
			Teacher	Parent	Parent	7
	Plus 3 optional: additional parents or teachers; invited members, up to 2 students			Parent	Parent	8
				Principal	Parent	9
					Teacher	Parent
	Plus 5 optional: additional parents or teachers; invited members, up to 2 students				Principal	11
					Teacher	12
						13
						14
						15
	Plus 7 optional: additional parents or teachers; invited members, up to 2 students					16
						17
						18
						19

Who can be Chair?

The Chair must be a Parent Member.

A Parent is the child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for the child but excludes a person standing in the place of a parent of a child on a temporary basis.

A parent of an Aboriginal child includes a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal customary law or Aboriginal tradition.

The position of Chair **cannot** be held by a Principal or teacher of any government school.

Nomination and election for Chair takes place at the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting.

A School Representative Body **does not** elect a Deputy or Vice Chair.

If the Chair is not present at a meeting, the members present must elect one of their members to preside at the meeting.

A Chair must be able to facilitate meetings. Most of the work of the School Representative Body is conducted in meetings, and the ability to manage those meetings effectively is essential. This includes planning the agenda, ensuring balanced input from all members, ensuring clarity about decisions and actions agreed, then following up to make sure agreed actions are carried out in line with decisions made.

An effective Chair is decisive, fair, open-minded, task-focused, consultative, respects the views of others and is aware of the vision of the school and the School Representative Body.

Term of Membership

The term for a Chair is the same as the term for a Parent Member.

Parent Members, Teacher Members, Student Members and Invited Members hold their position for 2 years, with a maximum of 6 consecutive years (three terms). The term of membership for a Principal is ongoing. The term for an Invited Member who is an MLA is ongoing.

Member Terms:

Member	Term	Total Years
Parent	2 years	6 consecutive years (3 terms)
Teacher	2 years	6 consecutive years (3 terms)
Principal	Ongoing	Ongoing
Student	2 years	6 consecutive years (3 terms)
Invited Member	Up to 2 years	6 consecutive years (3 terms)
Invited MLA	Ongoing	Ongoing

Office Bearer Terms:

When elected to a School Representative Body a Parent Member is elected for a 2-year term.

A Parent Member elected as Chair, holds office for the remainder of their term as a Parent Member. A Parent Member can be elected as Chair for a maximum of 6 consecutive years (three terms).

Chair Responsibilities

The Chair of the School Representative Body is required to:

- Act solely in the interests of the students and the school
- Act with discretion when dealing with issues of a confidential nature
- Attend all meetings where possible (Minimum 8 per year)
- Work within the duties outlined in the Constitution and all relevant documents
- Act in good faith, honesty and for a proper purpose (Liability protection provided under the *Education Act 2015* (NT))
- Exercise appropriate care and diligence
- Not use their position to improperly gain an advantage for themselves or others
- Disclose a financial interest in any contract or arrangement
- Not participate in discussion or voting in regards to any contract or arrangement where there is a financial conflict of interest
- Hold or be eligible to obtain a current Working with Children Clearance (Ochre card).

The Chair supports members by:

- Having a good understanding of the Constitution, roles, responsibilities and rights of members and Office Bearers
- Managing meeting procedures to support best practice governance and decision making
- Ensuring all members receive assistance and support to be actively engaged in School Representative Body business.

Before Meetings

Before meetings the Chair is required to:

Responsibility of the Chair

Work with members to establish the most suitable meeting dates, time and venue.

It is best practice to establish a forward planner of meeting dates for the school year. Dates should be communicated to the whole school community.

Call General Meetings. The dates and times of regular meetings must be advertised at least seven days in advance to reach and inform the school community.

It is best practice to include the length of the meeting as this encourages better participation.

May call a Special General Meeting providing at least three days' notice to the school community.

Check agenda items to ensure only School Representative Body business will be presented. Ensure agenda items reflect key areas of governance aligned to the Annual School Improvement Plan (ASIP) and School Strategic Plan.

Review correspondence, reports and additional information.

Meet with the Secretary before each meeting to set the agenda and discuss correspondence that requires action.

It is best practice to include the Principal to ensure common understanding, build respect and create transparency.

During Meetings

During meetings the Chair is required to:

Responsibility of the Chair

Ensure there is a quorum. Start the meeting on time.

Be a time keeper and ensure the meeting does not run over time.

Ensure that all members have the information they need to contribute.

Ask members present at the last meeting to confirm the minutes. Best practice governance requires all members to review papers prior to meetings.

Include all members in the decision-making process. Ensure all members have the opportunity to contribute and encourage a balance of opinions.

Keep the meeting on task and ensure only relevant business is discussed.

Be impartial and avoid leading meetings and resolutions.

Sum up discussions and make sure members understand a motion before a vote takes place.

Ensure that only members vote on motions.

Introduce guest speakers and extend a vote of thanks after their presentation.

Close the meeting.

Decisions and Voting

Decisions must be made in the best interest of all students.

Voting at meetings of a School Representative Body shall be by simple majority.

The presiding person does not have a casting vote.

Each member of a School Representative Body, including the Chair, shall have one vote.

There are no proxy votes.

Membership Type	Voting Rights
Parent (elected)	✓
Teacher (elected)	✓
Principal	✓
Invited Member (appointed)	✓
Student Member (appointed)	✓
Invited Guest	✗
Parent/Visitor	✗
Business Manager (Treasurer/Secretary)	✗

After Meetings

After meetings the Chair is required to:

Responsibility of the Chair

Action official motions passed at the meeting where appropriate. Follow up any official motions passed with other members who are responsible for actioning.

Ensure the Secretary and Treasurer have fulfilled their Office Bearer duties.

Records

School Representative Body records must be appropriately managed in accordance with the NT Government Record Management Standards.

The Principal should ensure official records of the meetings are maintained. School Representative Body documents should be stored in School Central.

Communication

- Letters
- Emails
- Correspondence in
- Correspondence out

Constitution

- Prior versions
- Current signed Constitution
- Amendments
- Gazette Notice
- Record of Incorporation

Contacts

- Member details
- Committee details
- Elections
- Member Register

Meetings

- Agendas
- Minutes
- Meeting notices
- Carried Motions

Policies

- Approved policies
- Code of Conduct
- Standing Orders
- Conflict of Interest
- Confidentiality

Management

- Member duty statements
- Governance procedures
- Operational guidelines
- Annual work plans

Reports

- Principal Reports
- Monthly Financials
- Treasurer Reports
- Audited Financials

Committees

- Meeting minutes
- Committee recommendations
- Terms of Reference
- Committee Reports

The Public Face

Public statements made on behalf of the School Representative Body may only be made by the Chair or Principal; or another person specifically chosen by the School Representative Body.

Any statements made must reflect the agreed policy or true intent of the School Representative Body, as per the Constitution.

Department employees, including the school Principal, must comply with the Department's Media Liaison Policy and Public Comment for Public Servants Guidelines.

The Chair keeps the school community informed of School Representative Body decisions and activities through the schools' usual methods of communication. Common mediums include school newsletters, social media, website, noticeboard or digital applications.

It is the Chair who signs documents that require official endorsement on behalf of the School Representative Body. Examples of these include amendments to the Constitution, Audited Financial Statements, Annual School Improvement Plan and grant applications.

At the Annual General Meeting the Chair reports on the activities and decisions of the School Representative Body in the prior year.

The Chair may also make appearances at school assemblies, welcome guests and speak at the end of year Assembly/Concert.

Managing Relationships

The Chair provides leadership to the School Representative Body and must develop good working relationships to be an effective leader.

With the Principal

A key element of the Chair's role is to develop a positive working relationship with the Principal. The success of the relationship is critical to establishing and maintaining effective parent engagement and participation in the School Representative Body and the school.

Within the School Representative Body

It is equally important for the Chair to manage relationships within the School Representative Body. School Representative Bodies are most effective when all members feel free to contribute and are satisfied that they have been provided with the opportunity to be actively involved in the discussion and decision-making process.

An effective Chair is both a facilitator and a mentor for members. This includes ensuring relevant training is provided to new or inexperienced members to ensure their needs are supported.

Within the School Community

The Chair should be available to the wider school community. It is important however to avoid engaging in school management issues. A complaint about a teacher, staff and/or Principal must be managed according to the department's Complaints Management (Schools) policy and guidelines. A complaint about a member that is not a department staff member must be directed to the Chair.

A School Representative Body must have an established process to manage complaints about members.

Where a School Representative Body or a member has a complaint about the Chair this should be directed to NT COGSO.

Support and Advice

Our Community Engagement and Governance team is the central point of contact for all School Representative Body members.

Contact us to seek advice, support and resources or to book culturally appropriate training.



Produced by:



YOUR VOICE FOR NT PUBLIC EDUCATION

Street address: Ethos House, 270 Trower Rd, Casuarina NT 0810
Postal address: PO Box 40520, Casuarina NT 0811
(08) 8999 3255 | www.ntcogso.org.au

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