



Secretary

Roles and Responsibilities

School Representative Body

Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations

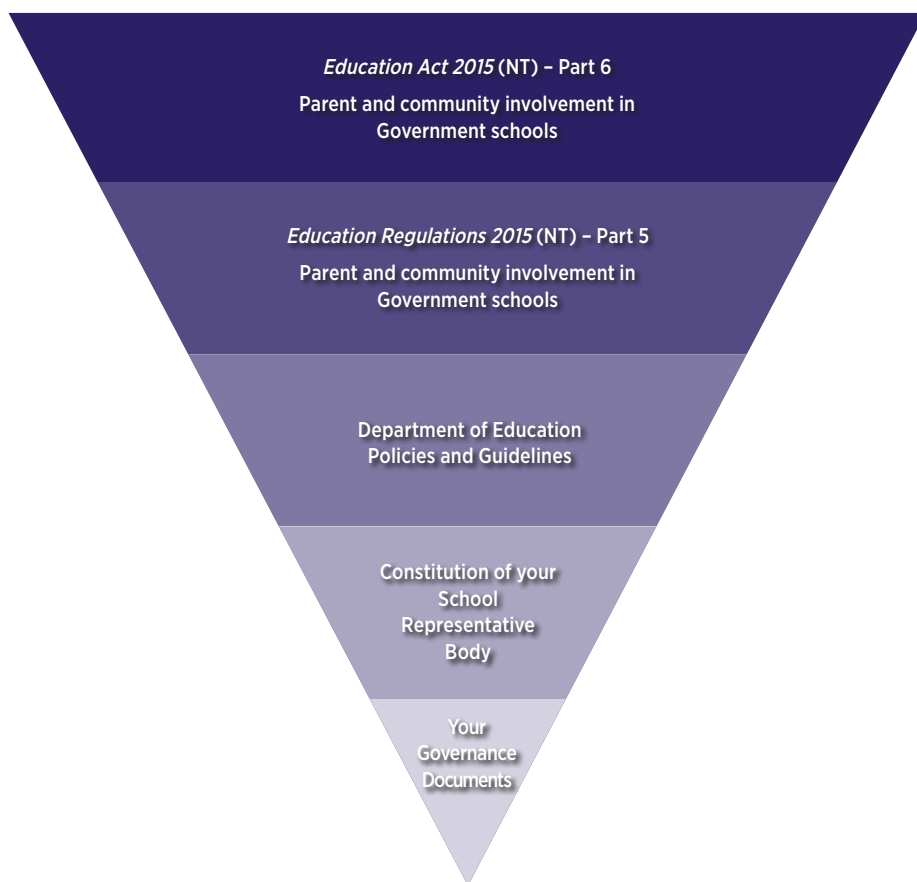
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Legislation

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 Secretary 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	10
		Principal	Principal	11
			Teacher	12
		Plus 5 optional: additional parents or teachers; invited members, up to 2 students	Plus 7 optional: additional parents or teachers; invited members, up to 2 students	13
				14
				15
				16
				17
				18
				19

Who can be Secretary?

The Secretary should be a Parent Member.

Parent Members are encouraged to nominate for the Secretary position.

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.

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

In the absence of a Secretary at any meeting the School Representative Body must elect an existing member to minute the meeting.

The position of Secretary may be held by a Teacher Member or Invited Member.

The School Representative Body may request the Principal to direct the Business Manager to act as the Secretary. This should only be requested when the position is unable to be filled by an **existing member**. A Business Manager appointed as Secretary **cannot vote** on School Representative Body business.

A Secretary must be able to minute meetings clearly and concisely. Most of the work of the School Representative Body is conducted in meetings and the ability to effectively record, distribute and store meeting minutes and agendas is key. This includes assisting the Chair to plan meeting agendas, coordinating all School Representative Body correspondence and giving notice of meetings. The Secretary also maintains the Carried Motions Register and Member Register.

An effective Secretary is task-focused, diligent and conducts all duties with transparency. They respect the views of others and are aware of the vision of the school and the School Representative Body.

Term of Membership

The term for a Secretary is the same as the term of a Parent Member.

Parent Members, Teacher Members, Student Members and Invited Members hold their position for two 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 Secretary, holds office for the remainder of their term as a Parent Member. A Parent Member can be elected as Secretary for a maximum of 6 consecutive years (three terms).

Secretary Responsibilities

The Secretary 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 Secretary supports members by:

- Recording and distributing meeting minutes
- Receiving and coordinating responses to correspondence
- Maintaining the School Representative Body Member's Register
- Distributing School Representative Body communications and information
- Ensuring effective record keeping
- Handing over all School Representative Body documentation and property to the incoming Secretary, or the Chair if not yet appointed

Before Meetings

Before meetings the Secretary is required to:

Responsibility of the Secretary

Work with the Chair to address any urgent incoming correspondence that requires attention prior to the next meeting.

Assist the Chair to plan the next meeting agenda by:

- Reviewing any correspondence to be addressed
- Reviewing the previous meeting minutes for 'Action Items'. Add these as agenda items under 'Business Arising'
- Requesting the monthly financial reports from the Treasurer

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

Call for any agenda items and related papers from all School Representative Body members.

Circulate the following documents to all members a minimum of 3 days prior to the meeting:

- Agenda
- Draft Minutes of previous meeting
- Principal's Report
- Treasurer's Report and Financial Reports
- Committee Reports
- Any other information as required

It is best practice to promote key agenda items through the school's communication channels to inform the school community of current priorities. Consider the school newsletter, notice boards, website, social media and digital applications.

The Agenda

A well-planned agenda supports the Chair to facilitate meetings, enables members to be prepared and encourages meaningful contributions.

A best practice Agenda will include:

Meeting Open and Welcome
Attendance
Apologies
Conflict of Interest
Minutes of the previous meeting
Business Arising from the previous meeting
Correspondence In
Correspondence Out
Business Arising from Correspondence
Principal's Report
Treasurer's Report
Committee Reports
General Business
Date of Next Meeting
Meeting Closed

Agenda items must align to the Annual School Improvement Plan, School Strategic Plan and/or be reflective of the current vision of the school and the School Representative Body.

The process for adding an agenda item, including timing and prioritisation, should be detailed in your Standing Orders and communicated to all members and the wider school community.

During Meetings

During meetings the Secretary is required to:

Responsibility of the Secretary

Bring the following to all School Representative Body meetings:

- A folder of minutes from previous meetings
- A copy of the Constitution to address membership and voting queries
- All incoming and outgoing correspondence since last meeting
- Copies of the agenda, previous meeting minutes and meeting reports

Record the names of all members and guests in attendance and any apologies.

Table the minutes of the last meeting and move a motion that the minutes are a true and accurate record. If corrections are noted, the motion would read as follows:

- The minutes are confirmed as a true and accurate record with the following amendments noted...

Confirmed minutes are signed by the Chair.

Present all correspondence. Move a motion for incoming correspondence to be accepted and outgoing correspondence to be adopted.

Record the meeting's decisions, outcomes and actions for each agenda item. For formal motions record the mover, seconder and the result. Take short, concise notes of discussions.

Ensure all required items are recorded in the minutes.

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, including the Secretary, 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)	✗

Recording the Minutes

Minutes are a legal and historical record of a meeting.

Meeting minutes are a brief but formal summary of the School Representative Body's business and activities. Meeting minutes are required to confirm all decisions made and can also settle questions of precedent to support the decision-making process.

The Secretary must formally record:

The name of the School Representative Body.

The meeting type; General Meeting, Special General Meeting, Annual General Meeting.

The start time, date and location of the meeting.

The name of members present and apologies.

Any conflict of interest disclosed by a member.

The acceptance of the previous meeting's minutes.

Notes relating to any Business Arising from the previous minutes including progress on action items.

Any official correspondence sent and received including action required.

All reports and related documents tabled at the meeting.

All actions arising and brief notes on follow up and outcomes.

All motions, with names of the mover, seconder, any abstainers and the result (carried or not carried).

It is best practice for Carried Motions to be recorded in a single location (Carried Motions Register) for accessibility, monitoring and review.

The date and time of next meeting.

The time of meeting close.

After Meetings

After meetings the Secretary is required to:

Responsibility of the Secretary

Make any approved amendments required to the previous meeting minutes. Ensure the confirmed minutes of the previous meeting are signed by the Chair and filed in School Central.

Promptly complete the current draft minutes and send to the Chair to check for inaccuracies. The meeting minutes remain a draft until confirmed as a true and accurate record by members at the next meeting.

Circulate the draft minutes no more than 7 days following the meeting to enable members to action agenda items.

Follow up motions with other members who are responsible for actioning.

Update the Carried Motions Register with new motions from the meeting and file in School Central.

Update the Continuous Action List (CAL) with new or resolved actions from the meeting and file in School Central.

Draft any official correspondence to be actioned. Forward to the Chair for approval and signature prior to sending.

If required, update the School Representative Body Member Register.

Ensure all records of the previous meeting are stored in School Central.

Records

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

The Secretary will work with the Principal to 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

Management

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

Meetings

- Agendas
- Minutes
- Meeting notices
- Carried Motions

Policies

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

Reports

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

Committees

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

Templates

Templates to assist record keeping and meeting preparation for School Representative Bodies have been developed by NT COGSO to support best practice governance.

The following templates are available online at www.ntcogso.org.au

Register and login to access a wealth of high quality contextualised governance resources to support you and your members.

Annual General Meeting Agenda	✓
Carried Motions Register	✓
Code of Conduct Agreement	✓
Code of Conduct	✓
Committee Terms of Reference	✓
Confidentiality Agreement	✓
Confidentiality Policy	✓
General Meeting Agenda	✓
General Meeting - After the Annual General Meeting Agenda	✓
Invited Member Letter	✓
Member Register	✓
Special General Meeting Agenda	✓
Special General Meeting Agenda to Ratify Constitution	✓
Standing Orders	✓

Monitoring Performance

It is best practice to perform a Governance Health Check each year.

A School Representative Body should monitor their performance to ensure that members have the knowledge and skills to effectively contribute to achieving the best possible outcomes for all students.

The Secretary may support members by distributing the Health Check and collating responses to identify areas of success and areas for improvement.

Consider the following governance questions:

Are meeting dates set and communicated for the year?

Is your membership diverse and reflective of the student cohort?

Are discussions effective and achieving outcomes aligned to the Annual School Improvement Plan and Strategic Plan?

Do members receive the required induction information?

Is your agenda set and followed?

Do members receive the required monthly financial reports?

Have you adopted best practice governing documents?

Are agendas, minutes and reports circulated as per your Standing Orders?

Do members actively participate and contribute?

Do members understand the difference between governing and managing?

Have members recently attended Governance Training?

Are all records stored in School Central?

Do you conduct an annual Governance Health Check?

The Governance Health Check is available on our website.

Managing Relationships

The Secretary must develop good working relationships to maintain School Representative Body operations, support members and be an effective record keeper.

With the Principal

A key element of the Secretary's role is to develop a constructive working relationship with the Principal. The success of the relationship is critical to the effective operation of School Representative Body meetings, decision making and record keeping. A strong working relationship will also enable appropriate storage and maintenance of all School Representative Body records in the School Central system.

Within the School Representative Body

It is equally important for the Secretary to support the Chair, Treasurer and all members of the School Representative Body. School Representative Bodies are most effective when all members have been provided with the necessary information to be actively involved in the discussion and decision making process.

To ensure input from new and existing members, an effective Secretary ensures members are aware of and have access to all relevant information and governing documents. This includes ensuring relevant training is provided to new or inexperienced members to ensure their needs are supported.

Within the School Community

The Secretary as a Parent Member 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 the Principal must be managed according to the department's Complaints Management (Schools) policy and guidelines. A complaint about a School Representative Body 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.

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.



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Version June 2020