



Dear Director Petrazzini,

I am writing you in my capacity as Chair of the Ancaster High School Parent Council.

Today, October 16, 2024, we face a situation where there is a proposed “election of parent members of a school council” scheduled for this evening at 6 pm, but the meeting itself is in violation of several requirements set out in the Education Minister’s Ontario Regulation 612/00.

- a. "An election of parent members of a school council shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year" – we are certainly well past the 30-day mark;
- b. "on a date that is fixed by the chair or co-chairs of the school council after consulting with the principal of the school" – this date was set by the Principal, Jason Monteith. It was not set by me, the chair of the school council, but was set unilaterally by the principal, seemingly at your direction.

On September 19, 2024, out of a concern for a lack of communication from Principal Monteith on the matter of the elections, I approached the principal as part of a process of "consultation" as outlined in Ontario. Regulation 612/00. Principal Monteith did not respond to my email that day, which is regrettable, as that was the final day whereby all the requirements of Ontario Regulation 612/00 could have been met. Instead, the Principal, six days later, on September 24, without consulting me, unilaterally set October 3 as the date for both the election and the next Parent Council meeting, a move which exceeded his authority. After this, I alerted the principal that, while October 3 did, barely, meeting the 30-day requirement, it failed to constitute proper 14 days' notice. I asked Principal Monteith if he had obtained a written legal opinion to back up this violation of regulations. His only reply to me was that he consulted with staff.

Then, again unilaterally, on the day of the proposed meeting (October 3), the principal unilaterally cancelled the meeting, citing his / staff's apparent same day discovery that October 3 fell on a religious holiday. The principal then informed me – I say “informed,” as it was not a consultation, but was yet another unilateral decision on his/ staff's initiative – that he was setting a new date, October 16, for the election and next parent council meeting.

On this occasion, I pointed out that 1) moving the date was in direct contravention of the 30-day requirement of the regulation, to which he replied, essentially, that the optional policy of respecting the religious holiday superseded the requirement of the Minister's regulation.

I further pointed out that, in setting and providing notice for a new date, on October 3 for October 16, a period of only 13 days, was, on his/staff's part, a further violation of the 14-day notice requirement of the regulation. When asked if he had obtained a written legal opinion as to this inappropriate and presumably illegal contravention of the regulation, he demurred and instead only affirmed that he was acting under direction of the highest authority available to him. I interpreted this to mean that he was acting at the behest of you, the Director of Education.

I will further point out that the agenda that Principal Monteith sent out, both for the initial October 3 meeting and the new October 16, was again done unilaterally, and over my objection, even though the Education Act clearly establishes that I am the chair until the elections take place.

As I consider what formal mechanisms exist to protest Principal Monteith's deliberate and repeated violations of the Education Act and the Minister's regulation 612/00, I now recognize, following the principal's assertion that he was acting under your direction, that it is indeed you who seem to be the responsible staff member who is guilty of these repeated violations of Ontario law.

There are, as you see, several issues here and these need to be resolved immediately. I am, as a first step to resolving these issues, formally requesting that you instruct Principal Monteith to cancel tonight's meeting, a meeting which has been improperly organized, with only 13 days' notice. The earliest next date by which a meeting can be properly organized is Wednesday, October 30, that is, 14 days from today, October 30. That is, of course, presuming that notice is sent out today.

I further request that you instruct Principal Monteith that he must recognize my authority as Chair and engage with me in a proper process of consultation with me to set a new agenda, one which acknowledges such basic procedural necessities such as including consideration of the minutes of the previous meeting, an item which he has thus far refused to include on the agenda.

Seeing that Principal Monteith seems to be acting on your direction in this matter, I further point out to you that neither the principal, nor you as Director, nor even the elected trustees of the HWDSB, have the legal discretion to ignore the Education Act, or to violate the Minister's regulations.

I am available to discuss these matters with you in the coming hours and days, but, first, I do expect you 1) to facilitate the cancellation of tonight's illegitimate meeting and, 2) to obtain written legal advice as to the legality of any meeting that will take place beyond the 30 period as required by the Regulation 612/00. You might consider seeking advice from the Minister of Education as to how to proceed to resolve this matter. Finally, I point out that you have a responsibility to abide by the Education Act and the Minister's regulations.

Sincerely,

Catherine Kronas

Chair, Ancaster High School Council