

# Frontier School Division



**SUPPORT**

**STAFF**

**LIAISON**

**COMMITTEE**

**(SSLC)**

## HANDBOOK OF ROLES, OPERATIONS AND PROCESSES



October 2010  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Version)

Approved by Frontier School Board of Trustees  
Motion #169-2010 (October 14-15, 2010)

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## **Introduction**

The structure of the Employee Benefits and Liaison Committee was created over ten years ago to provide a model for input from staff across the Division regarding the pension plan and other benefits. A few years after the model was created, the structure and process was modified to include a liaison function for support staff regarding policy, salary, and other related issues and concerns with respect to terms and conditions of employment.

To ensure greater participation and involvement of staff, the Board felt it was time for a further evolutionary step in the structure and process related to the Division pension plan and benefits. To that end, the Board of Trustees at their meeting on February 13, 2007 approved refinements to the structure and process related to the current Employee Benefits and Liaison Committee. These refinements are reflected in this revised handbook.

The intent of the Board for this refined structure is to build upon the good work done in the past and to enhance the effectiveness of the Division in meeting the future needs of non-unionized employees. It ensures greater participation of staff at the local, area and Division level as well as a format for two-way effective communication.

The Board of Trustees expresses its appreciation to staff members, both past and current, who have contributed to the operation of the Employee Benefits and Liaison Committee. Further, the Board looks forward to continued involvement, support, and contribution of employees on behalf of the Division. Thank you.

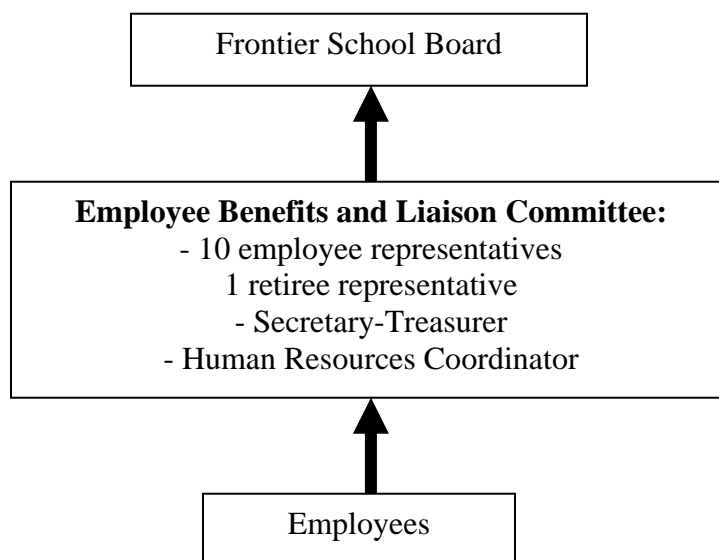
Linda Ballantyne, Chairperson  
Frontier School Board of Trustees  
(May 2008)

## **BACKGROUND**

The Employee Benefits Committee was established in 1994 to act in an advisory capacity to the Board of Trustees on behalf of support staff with respect of the Division's pension and benefits plans. In January of 2004, the role of the committee was expanded to include a liaison function for non-union support staff. This liaison role provides a forum for a voice for non-union support staff to raise issues related to policy, working conditions, salary and benefits with senior administration and the Board.

The original structure of the Employee Benefits Committee included ten elected employees, one elected retiree, and three members appointed by the Board: one Trustee, the Secretary-Treasurer and the Human Resources Coordinator.

### **2004 Model**



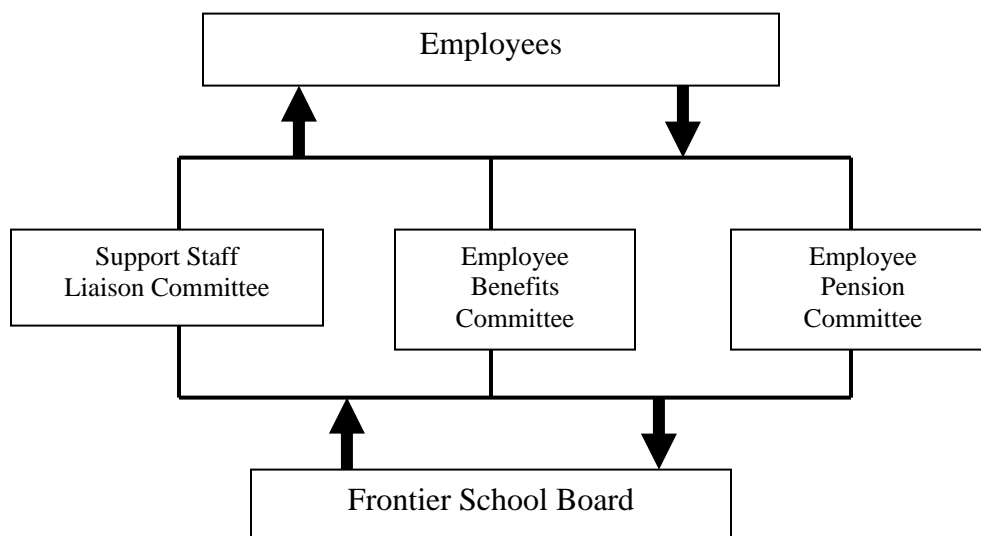
## **EVOLUTION OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND LIAISON COMMITTEE**

The evolution and refinements of the Employee Benefits and Liaison Committee reflect a three-part structure involving committees for each of the Division pension plan, all other benefit plans, and the liaison function. There are several main refinements included in this revised structure or model, including:

- enhanced clarification of purposes, roles, and operations,
- separation and profiling of the management of the pension plan,
- increased attention to the assets and liability level of the Division's pension plan,
- improved communications regarding pension, benefits, and liaison matters,
- clarifying and expanding the role of the Chair of the Liaison Committee,
- increased trustee involvement on committees, and
- direct involvement of the Board's sub-committees for finance and policy.

The key to the revised structure is the separation of the pension and benefits plans committee function, enhanced operational focus and effectiveness of each committee, and Board support and direction. There are now three distinct committees: Support Staff Liaison Committee, Employee Benefits Committee, and Employee Pension Committee. The following flow chart outlines the intended working model for these three (3) committees).

### **2007 Model**



Each committee has broad representation from staff, the Board of Trustees and external experts for the Pension and Benefits function. In addition to the broad representation, the three committees are also linked with overlapping membership. For example, the Chairperson of the Support Staff Liaison Committee is also a member of the Employee Benefits Committee and the Employee Pension Committee. This linkage ensures effective communication of issues affecting employees and ensures information regarding these issues are addressed by the Division.

A brief description of the Pension Committee and Benefits Committee follows as information only.

**Employee Benefits Committee**

The role of the Employee Benefits Committee is to oversee employee benefit plans, such as dental and life insurance, and to recommend changes, amendments or termination of benefit plans to the Board of Trustees. Membership consists of **eight** members:

- one non-union staff representative (Chairperson of the Support Staff Liaison Committee),
- one representative from the United Steelworkers (Area 4),
- one representative from the Frontier Teachers' Association,
- one retiree representative, and Division staff:
- Payroll and Benefits Coordinator,
- Secretary-Treasurer,
- Human Resources Director, and
- Chief Superintendent.

Meetings occur twice annually with the chairperson elected from within this committee. A terms of reference and communication plan including minutes of past meetings will be shared with all Division staff and retirees.

**Employee Pension Committee**

The role of the Employee Pension Committee is to oversee the administration and asset management of the Division pension plan, and to recommend changes or amendments of the plan to the Board of Trustees. Membership consists of **nine** members, six with voting privileges and three as resource:

- three Board Trustees including the Finance Committee chairperson
- one non-union staff representative (Chairperson of the Support Staff Liaison Committee),
- one United Steelworkers representative from Area 4, and
- one retiree.

The **three** remaining non-voting members include:

- Secretary-Treasurer,
- Human Resources Director, and
- the Division's Actuary.

Meetings occur three times annually with the chairperson elected from within this committee. As with the Employee Benefits Committee, a terms of reference and communication plan including minutes of past meetings will be shared with all Division staff and retirees.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information on the operation of the **Support Staff Liaison Committee** (SSLC). It also provides information on the makeup of the committee including information on the elections/selection process.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

The Board believes in fair and equitable treatment of all staff. It also believes that appropriate salary, benefits and policies must be applied with consistency and equity. The Board believes that a stronger voice is needed for non-unionized support staff to raise concerns and access the Board of Trustees on significant matters. The Support Staff Liaison Committee provides this voice.

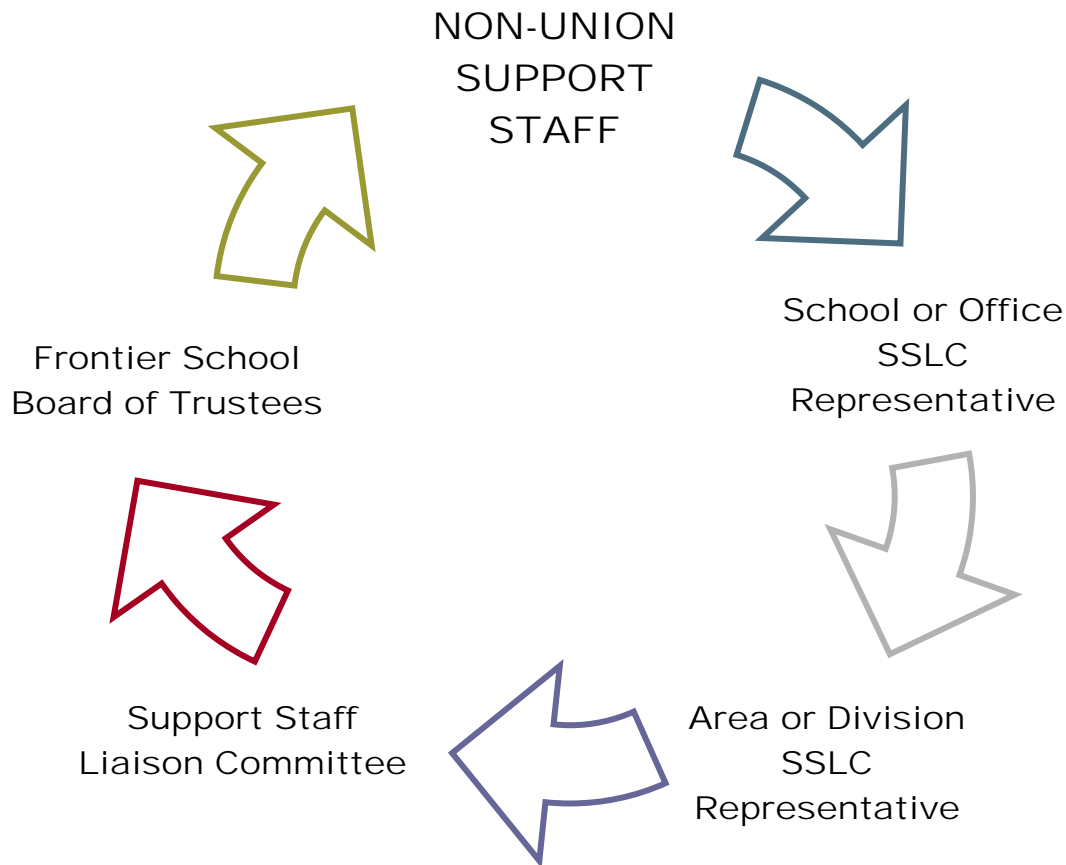
The Board also believes in developing staff effectiveness regarding their roles and responsibilities. As a result, the Board approved the revised structure of the Support Staff Liaison Committee.

## **ROLE OF THE SUPPORT STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEE**

The Support Staff Liaison Committee has three purposes. They are to:

- provide a voice for the non-union support staff in matters relating to terms and conditions of employment, including amendments to or the development of policies,
- provide non-union support staff an opportunity to raise issues and recommend solutions on an ongoing basis to administration and the Board, and
- annually present proposals to the Board regarding amendments to salary, terms and conditions of employment, including amendments to or the development of policies.

The following graphic outlines the manner in which these three (3) purposes are to be achieved.



**MEMBERSHIP**

The SSLC model is based on two levels; the first level is comprised of staff selected through elections or volunteering for the role of site representative. Site members include non-union support staff members from schools and offices in Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and the Division Office for a total of 44 site based staff members. The site level representative form the foundation of this SSLC model and the Division provides support for these positions.

**LEVEL 1 - 44 WORK SITE REPRESENTATIVES**

<b>Area 1 – 12</b>	<b>Area 2 - 14</b>	<b>Area 3 - 10</b>	<b>Area 4 - 1</b>	<b>Area 5 – 6*</b>	<b>Division Office – 1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brochet</li> <li>• D.R. Hamilton</li> <li>• Gillam</li> <li>• Julie Lindal</li> <li>• Leaf Rapids*</li> <li>• Mary Newell</li> <li>• Mel Johnson</li> <li>• Oscar Blackburn</li> <li>• Pikwitonei</li> <li>• Thicket Portage</li> <li>• West Lynn Heights*</li> <li>• Area 1 Office</li> </ul> <p>*Excludes USW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birdtail Sioux</li> <li>• Duck Bay</li> <li>• Grand Rapids</li> <li>• Gypsumville</li> <li>• Lakefront</li> <li>• Minegoziibe Anishinabe</li> <li>• Mountain View</li> <li>• Pelican Rapids</li> <li>• Peonan Point</li> <li>• Philomene Chartrand</li> <li>• Rorketon</li> <li>• Skownan</li> <li>• Waterhen</li> <li>• Area 2 Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Berens River</li> <li>• Disbrowe</li> <li>• Duke of Marlborough</li> <li>• Falcon Beach</li> <li>• Matheson Island</li> <li>• Ministic</li> <li>• San Antonio</li> <li>• Stevenson Island</li> <li>• Wanipigow</li> <li>• Area 3 Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area 4 non-union support staff</li> </ul>	<p>Norway House employee groups as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jack River</li> <li>• HBOIERC employees (2)*</li> <li>• Maintenance Dept.</li> <li>• Transportation Dept.</li> <li>• Area 5 Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division Office support staff</li> </ul>

The second level is the Area and Division, comprised of the same people with a differing focus depending on whether the role is addressing Area activities or the Divisional committee role.

**LEVEL 2 - AREA/DIVISION WORK SITES – 6 Representatives**

<b>Area 1 – 1</b>	<b>Area 2 – 1</b>	<b>Area 3 – 1</b>	<b>Area 4 – 1</b>	<b>Area 5 – 1</b>	<b>Division Office - 1</b>

The six Area and Division Office representatives noted in the Level 2 chart above now serve on the Support Staff Liaison Committee. Membership is noted below.

<b>SUPPORT STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEE - 11 Members</b>
Area 1 Representative Area 2 Representative Area 3 Representative Area 4 Representative Area 5 Representative Division Office Representative Board Trustee (Policy Review Committee Member) Board Trustee (Finance Committee Member) Secretary-Treasurer Human Resources Director Chief Superintendent

## **Area 5**

Area 5 (Norway House) has the largest group of non-union employees in the Division. To ensure all the employees in this area have a voice, sub-groups are created as follows:

- 1 representative - Jack River School (all non-union employees working in that school),
- 2 representatives - Helen Betty Osborne Ininiw Education Resource Centre (all non-union employees working in that school),
- 1 representative - Area 5 Office employees,
- 1 representative - Transportation Department,
- 1 representative - Maintenance Department.

Each group will meet and select/elect, from among their group, individual(s) to sit on the Area 5 sub-committee. For example, all non-union employees in HBOIERC will meet and select/elect two individuals to the Area 5 sub-committee.

The six members of the Area 5 sub-committee will then meet and select one person to sit as the Area 5 representative (as noted in the Level 2 chart on page 9).

The individual selected as Area representative speaks on behalf of all non-union employees in Area 5 and serves on the Support Staff Liaison Committee as the Area 5 representative.

## **MEETINGS**

Support Staff Liaison Committee meetings will occur three times yearly and are scheduled at least ten months in advance. As appropriate, other meetings will be scheduled using video conferencing. Normally, meetings will be one day in duration. Committee meetings will take place in the boardroom of the Winnipeg Office. Secretarial support will be provided by the Chief Superintendent's department.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Terms of reference outlines the purpose, objectives, manner of operation and general statements to guide Support Staff Liaison Committee meetings. This document is attached as Appendix A.

## **COMMUNICATION APPROACHES**

Effective two-way communication between the Support Staff Liaison Committee and support staff members throughout the Division is essential. This communication must be clear, frequent, consistent, and thorough in content and the ability to raise issues and provide feedback. A draft paper outlining approaches to communication is attached as Appendix B and will be reviewed and revised by the Support Staff Liaison Committee in the future.

## **LEVEL 1 - WORK SITE REPRESENTATIVE**

The main roles or responsibilities of a work site representative are to:

- be the point of contact between non-union employees in your school or area office,
- annually participate in a meeting at the area level or teleconference,
- raise issues affecting non-union employees in your school or area office,
- promote workplace safety and health,
- forward these issues and concerns to your SSLC representative(s), and to
- report back to the employee group at your school or office including reporting at school/area office staff meetings.

The work site representatives are also required to attend an annual Area meeting for training to increase their effectiveness.

Area 4 sites are excluded, except for non-union support staff members who are represented within the SSLC structure and operational model.

## **LEVEL 2 – AREA AND DIVISION SSLC REPRESENTATIVES**

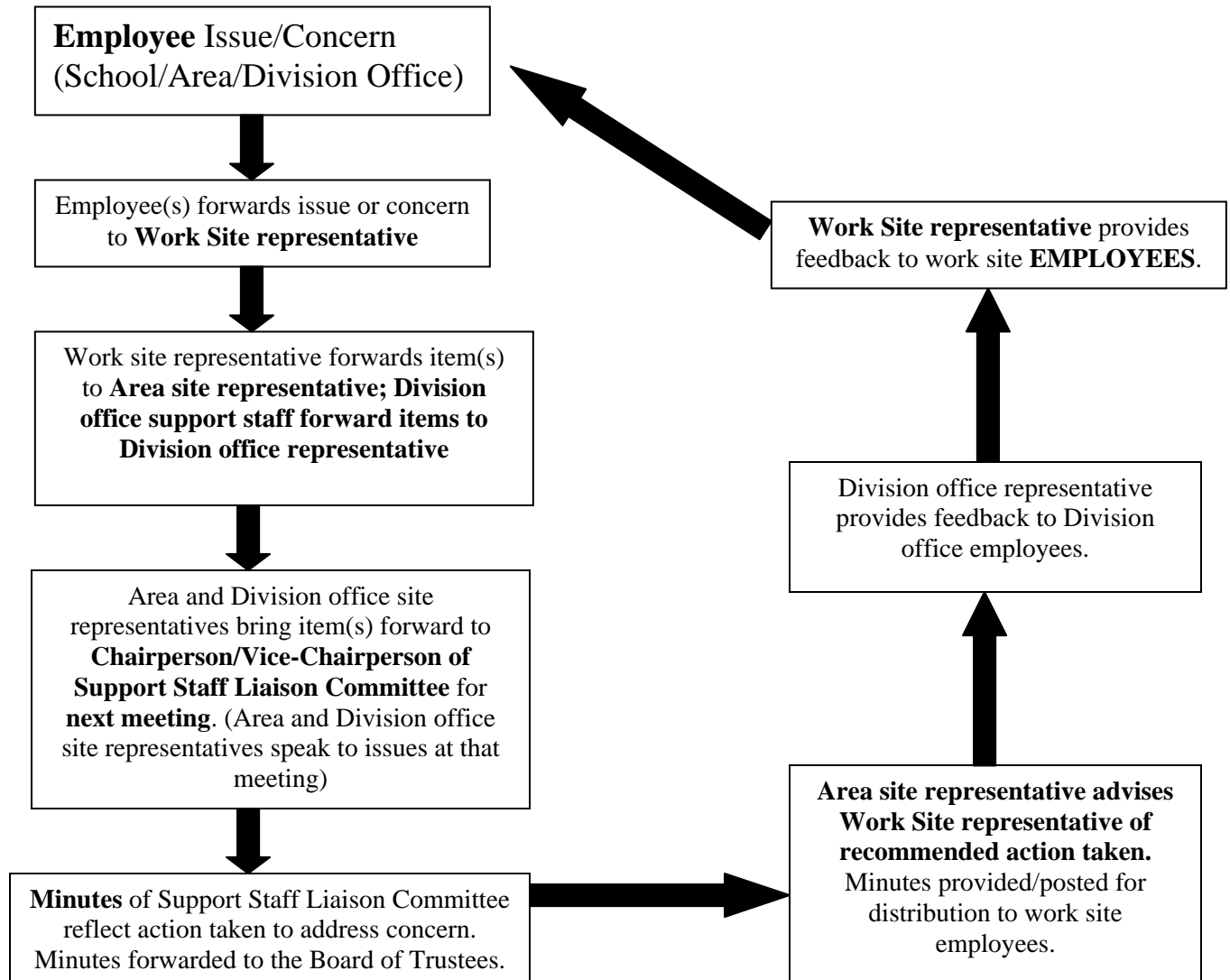
The main roles or responsibilities of Area and Division office representatives include:

- regular communication by the Division and Area representatives with work site representatives to become aware of non-union employees concerns,
- act as a voice for non-union employees at the Support Staff Liaison Committee meetings,
- work with administration and the Board to develop positive working environments across the Division,
- raise topics regarding terms and conditions of employment at the Support Staff Liaison Committee meetings,
- promote the consistent application of policies throughout the Division,
- promote workplace safety and health, and
- provide feedback to work-site representatives to advise of directions recommended.

It is the responsibility of the Area and Division office representatives to bring these items to the attention of the Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson prior to the meeting, and to address these concerns at the Support Staff Liaison Committee meeting.

**Flow Chart Outlining Process to Address Issues/Concerns/Topics of Interest**

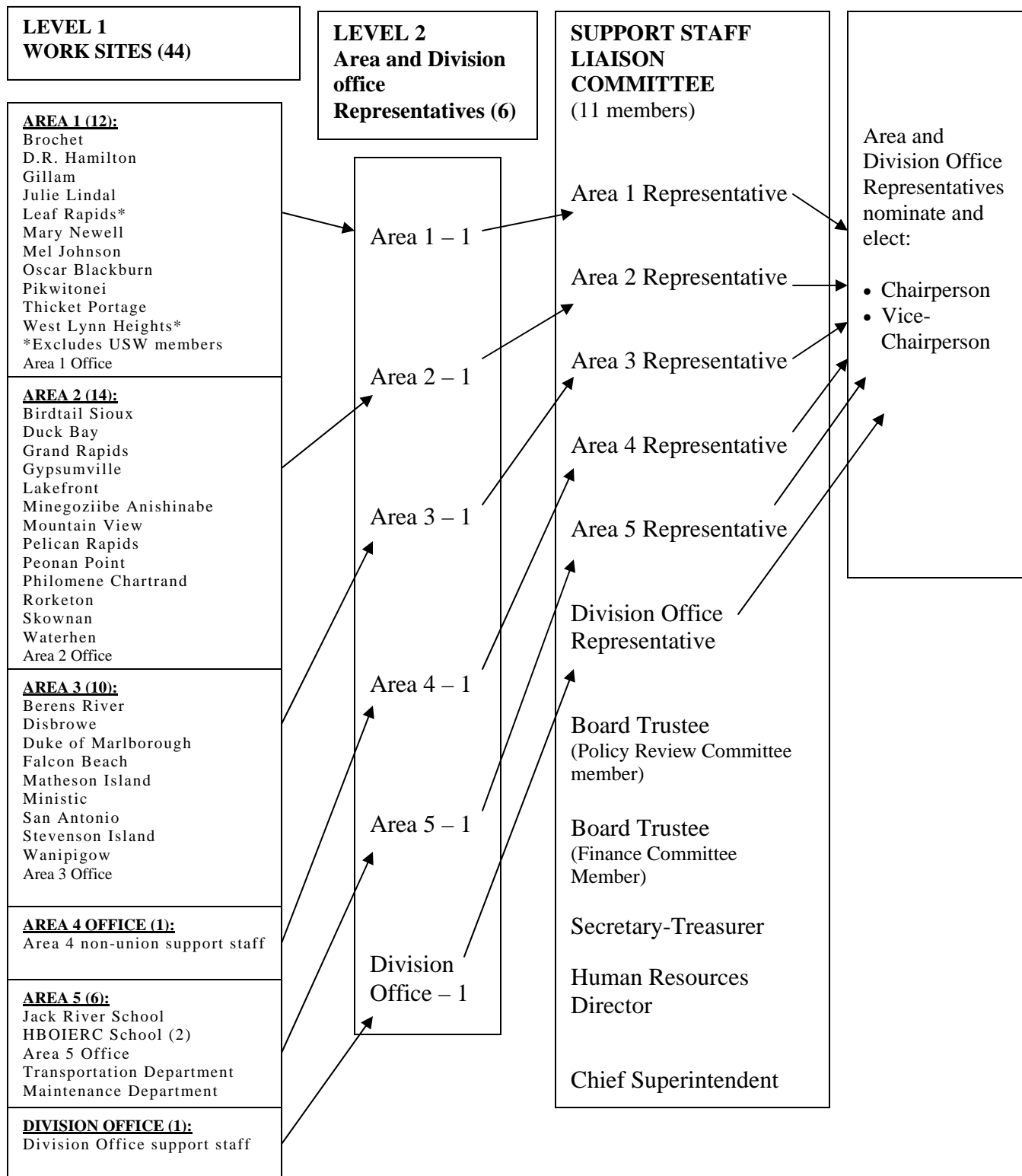
The following flow chart outlines the process for addressing issues or concerns by both Level 1 and Level 2 representatives.



The supervisors, principals, Area Superintendents, and Chief Superintendent should be advised of issues or concerns at the school, Area, or Division office level, as appropriate.

**ELECTIONS / SELECTION PROCESS**

Non-unionized support staff representatives will be nominated and elected by non-union employees in all work-sites. If there are no nominations, then staff members may volunteer for the role. The work-site contacts will be the conduit between the work site and the Area's elected Employee Liaison representative(s).



## **LEVEL 1 REPRESENTATIVE SELECTION PROCESS**

### **General**

- A person must first be selected as a work site representative before being eligible to be elected as an Area/SSLC Representative.
- Elections for the Support Staff Liaison Committee (work-site and Division) will be held every four (4) years.
- SSLC elections will occur every four (4) years to coincide with the Division governance system, following the Board of Trustees elections.
- All non-union support staff will be informed of the roles and responsibilities of work site representatives, and the Area and Division office Support Staff Liaison Committee member's responsibilities before the elections take place.
- Information outlining the roles and responsibilities of work site and SSLC representatives will be sent to each worksite.
- The Chief Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer, Human Resources Director, or designated staff person(s) assigned by the Chief Superintendent are available as resource contact individuals.

### **Selection/Election Process**

- **Schools** - The principal of each school will schedule a meeting with non-union support staff to confirm the process for selection of the work site representative.
- **Area Offices (Area 1, 2, 3, 4)** - The Area Superintendent (or designate) will schedule meetings with non-union support staff to confirm the process for selection of the work site representative.
- **Area 5** – The Area Superintendent (or designate) will request each group of the sub-groups to meet and confirm the process for selection of representative(s) from each sub-group. (See Page 10).
- **Division Office** - The Chief Superintendent will schedule meetings with non-union support staff to confirm the process for selection of the work site representative.
- Once the process is confirmed, the election/selection will take place. The designated staff person(s) assigned by the Chief Superintendent will request individuals to step forward as a representative.
- If more than one person steps forward, the designated staff person(s) assigned by the Chief Superintendent will outline the steps for election (either informally through a show of hands, or formally through a secret ballot).
- If only one person steps forward, that person is acclaimed as the work/area site representative.
- **By November of the election year, all work site representatives are selected/elected with names forwarded to the Division office (Chief Superintendent's department).**

## **LEVEL 2 REPRESENTATIVE SELECTION PROCESS**

### **General**

- A person must first be selected as a work site representative before being eligible to be elected as an Area or Division office SSLC Representative.
- Elections for the Support Staff Liaison Committee (work-site and Division) will be held every four (4) years.
- All non-union support staff will be informed of the roles and responsibilities of work site representatives and the Area/Division Support Staff Liaison Committee member's responsibilities before the elections take place.
- Information outlining the roles and responsibilities of work site and SSLC representatives will be sent to each worksite.
- The Chief Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer, Human Resources Director, or designated staff person(s) assigned by the Chief Superintendent are available as resource contact individuals.

### **Selection/Election Process**

- Staff person(s) assigned by the Chief Superintendent will run the elections of Level 2 representatives.
- **Areas 1, 2, 3, 4 and Division Office** - Once all Level 1 representatives are announced/named, they will be contacted and attend an area meeting to elect/select one person to represent their area and sit on the Support Staff Liaison Committee. (Details of this meeting to be provided once membership is confirmed.)
- **Area 5** – The Area Superintendent (or designate) will request the six members of the sub-group to meet and confirm the process for selection of one member to represent Area 5 on the Support Staff Liaison Committee.
- An orientation and training session will take place at each area meeting facilitated by the designated staff person(s) assigned by the Chief Superintendent.
- Assistance for elections for Level 2 representatives will be provided by the Division Governance Support Officers who are located in Area Offices 1, 2, and 4.
- Once the elections/selections process is clarified, the election/selection will take place. The designated staff person(s) assigned by the Chief Superintendent will request individuals step forward as a representative.
- If more than one person steps forward, the designated staff person(s) assigned by the Chief Superintendent will outline the steps for election (either informally through a show of hands, or formally through a secret ballot).
- If only one person steps forward, that person is acclaimed as Area member of the Support Staff Liaison Committee.
- **All Area and Division office site representatives are to be selected/elected no later than November of the election year.**

## **VACANCIES**

Generally, the steps noted below would be followed should a vacancy arise.

- When a representative resigns, he/she writes a letter to the Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson of the Support Staff Liaison Committee advising of his/her intention.
- Once a letter of resignation is received, the Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson of the Support Staff Liaison Committee will advise the Chief Superintendent's department and request that a new representative be selected.
- The Chief Superintendent's department will contact that work site to organize a meeting to fill the vacancy. The Area Superintendent for that work site will be advised.
- The name of the successful individual selected will be forwarded to the Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson of the SSLC and the Chief Superintendent's department.
- The successful individual will remain a member for the balance of the term (i.e. until the next SSLC elections take place).
- At the next meeting of the SSLC, the Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson will provide a report on vacancies filled and record in regular minutes.
- If a vacancy occurs at the Area/Division work site level (Level 2), then an election would take place for that area representative from the membership of that area.
- In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall assume the role of the Chairperson.

## **SUPPORT STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEE**

The first official meeting of the Support Staff Liaison Committee will be scheduled following the November election. All members will be elected for a four (4) year term. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will be elected annually by the full membership, or by quorum of the SSLC. However, the Chairperson must be elected first, followed by the election of the Vice-Chairperson, from one of the six Level 2 Division Office and Area representatives.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBER EXPENSES**

These positions are voluntary. However, regular salary and benefits will be paid for the day(s) of the meeting in recognition of the contribution being made by these employees to the overall operation of the Division. Travel expenses, accommodation and meals will be paid as per Division policy.

**SUPPORT STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEE****TERMS OF REFERENCE****Purpose**

The Support Staff Liaison Committee is a joint committee of the non-union support staff and the Division. In terms of purpose, the Committee provides:

- a voice for non-union support staff members in all matters relating to terms and conditions of employment including amendments to or the development of policies,
- regular and open line of two-way communication to be conducted in a positive and proactive atmosphere,
- an opportunity for non-union support staff to raise issues and recommend solutions on an ongoing basis to administration and the Board on items relating to terms and conditions of employment,
- an opportunity to present written proposals to the Board regarding amendments to salary, terms and conditions of employment including amendment to or the development of policies.

**General Objectives**

There are several objectives related to this committee. They are to:

- a. Improve communication amongst non-union support staff, administrative staff, and the Board.
- b. Build a higher level of morale within the Division.
- c. Improve the general effectiveness of the Division in realizing its Mission Statement.
- d. Promote effective communication, mutual respect and understanding amongst non-union support staff, administrative staff, and the Board.
- e. Discuss educational needs, trends and innovations with respect to their implications.
- f. Make recommendations to appropriate parties concerning matters dealt with by the committee.

**Manner of Operation**

- a. The Committee will be composed of representatives of the Division including trustees and administrative staff and elected area and Division office representatives. Other people, as appropriate and mutually agreed upon, may attend these meetings.
- b. The committee will meet three times a year.

- c. The Division shall bear the cost of all meetings.
- d. Minutes shall be produced by a secretary assigned by the Division office, and once mutually agreed upon, the minutes shall be sent to all the members of the committee and to the Board of Trustees.
- e. The committee Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall annually be elected by the non-union support staff members of the committee.
- f. SSLC members shall forward agenda items to the Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson at least 14 days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- g. The work site representatives forward items to the Area or Division office site representatives 21 days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- h. The agenda for each meeting shall be prepared by the Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson and the Chief Superintendent, and forwarded to committee members at least seven (7) days before the scheduled meeting.

### **General**

- a. Effective operation of the committee shall be based on trust, respect and a mutual desire to work together.
- b. A working consensus model shall be used and is defined as a method of arriving at a general group agreement.
- c. Meetings shall be conducted in a business-like manner.
- d. Non-union support staff representatives shall be guaranteed “parliamentary immunity” or freedom to perform their committee functions in good faith without fear of jeopardizing their work relations.

Approved by the Frontier School Board of Trustees, Motion # 169-2010, October 14-15, 2010

## COMMUNICATION APPROACHES

February 2008

### Introduction

This communication must be clear, frequent, consistent, and thorough in content and ability to raise issues and give feedback.

### Information to Staff

- ✓ All three committees will provide minutes within one week of the meeting; minutes will be taken by Division office secretarial staff.
- ✓ All three committees will provide a newsletter (similar to Board's) within one week of the meeting; the newsletter will be developed by the committee chair and either Chief Superintendent or Secretary-Treasurer with support by Division office secretarial staff.
- ✓ Dates for all meetings will be set early in the school year and communicated to all non-union support staff.
- ✓ Agenda will be set and provided, and forwarded to the Division Support Staff Liaison Committee at least one week prior to the meeting.
- ✓ Division web site will contain links and materials for all three committees.
- ✓ School and office contacts will provide reports/ensure information is posted.
- ✓ *Frontier Northerner* will include articles in all issues except the Annual Report.

### Information from Staff

- ✓ Surveys for input from support staff for liaison committee use will be conducted annually.
- ✓ School and office contacts will be available for input.

### Roles and Responsibilities for School and Area Office Contacts

- ✓ School and office contacts will be provided with written role and responsibility documents.
- ✓ A handbook will be developed and distributed outlining roles and responsibilities for school and office contacts, Areas Superintendents, and Principals.
- ✓ School and office contacts will be provided with Area level role and responsibility orientation and training sessions conducted by Area Superintendents.
- ✓ School and office meetings will include a standing item related to the three committees.
- ✓ School and office representatives attend Area level meetings annually, which will be scheduled no later than November of each year.
- ✓ In an election year, work site representative annual meetings will be held following the election.
- ✓ Area level meetings will follow a common agenda which will include Division-wide topics and Area-level topics.

### Responsibility for Communication

- ✓ Secretary-Treasurer, plus secretarial help, for pension and benefit committees.
- ✓ Chief Superintendent, plus secretarial help, for liaison committee.