

Hopewell Avenue Public School Council Constitution/By-Laws

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1. CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

1. The organization shall be called the Hopewell Avenue Public School Council (HAPSC), hereinafter referred to as the council.

ARTICLE II - INTERPRETATION

2. "Board" means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB).
3. "Chair" includes co-chair, if applicable.
4. "School community" means persons living or working within the attendance boundaries of the school, parents/guardians with children attending the school, school staff, students and guests invited by the council.
5. "School principal" includes vice-principal(s), if applicable.

ARTICLE III – PURPOSE

6. The purpose of council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. Council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations to the principal of the school and the Board.
7. The objectives of the council are:
 - (a) to develop a strong relationship between home, school and the wider community served by the school, and to enhance educational opportunities for all students within the school;
 - (b) to seek the views and opinions of the school community on the operation of the school and the programs and services provided;
 - (c) to provide advice to the principal and, as appropriate, to the Board and/or its senior staff, on the development and implementation of policies, programs and services affecting the school;
 - (d) to be an effective voice for promoting the interests of the school, and to actively support the school in meeting the educational, social and recreational needs of students.

ARTICLE IV – AFFILIATIONS

8. The council may seek affiliation with other organizations. Affiliations with other organizations or any changes in such affiliation shall require a majority of votes at a meeting for which two weeks' notice has been given to the membership.

ARTICLE V – ELECTIONS

9. Council elections shall be conducted pursuant to OCDSB Procedure PR.509.SCO.

ARTICLE VI – MEMBERS

10. The council shall consist of the following voting members who shall have equal privileges and voting rights:
 - (a) a minimum of thirteen (13) parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school;
 - (b) one or more community representative(s) who do(es) not have children attending the school;
 - (c) one teacher employed in the school, other than the principal or vice-principal; and
 - (d) one non-teaching employee of the school.and the following non-voting member:
 - (e) the school principal.
11. To ensure fair representation, best efforts shall be made that each program within the school be represented by a number of members on council in proportion to the proportion of students in the program in the school.
12. A student representative may be appointed by the principal.
13. Membership in the council shall be determined in the following ways:
 - (a) parents/guardians shall be elected by parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school and parent/guardian members must form the majority of school council members;
 - (b) the community representative shall be appointed by the council;
 - (c) the school principal shall be a designated non-voting member of the council;
 - (d) the teacher representative shall be elected/acclaimed by the members of the teaching staff, and;
 - (e) the non-teaching staff member shall be elected/acclaimed by the members of the non-teaching staff.
14. Council members shall be elected/appointed within 30 days of the beginning of the current school year. If fewer individuals stand for election than are spaces available, all those standing for election shall be acclaimed.
15. The term of office for elected and appointed positions shall be one year. Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms of office. The holding of the chair position by an individual shall be limited to two terms.
16. Council shall search actively to fill any vacant mandatory officer's position. At the start of each meeting such vacancies shall be announced. Any vacancy can be filled at an open council meeting, either by election or by acclamation.
17. There shall be no honoraria paid to members of the council.

ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS

18. Officers shall be elected or acclaimed by the members of the council.
19. Officers shall include the chair, treasurer, secretary, one representative for each regular program in each division (i.e. primary, junior, and intermediate English Core French, primary, junior, and intermediate EFI, junior, and intermediate MFI, and intermediate EFI gifted), and one representative for special needs issues at the school.
20. Officers may include vice-chair, past-chair, volunteer coordinator, fundraising coordinator, events coordinator, and external representative (i.e. Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils [OCASC] representative).
21. Two voting members may share any officer's position.

ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS

22. Council may adopt its own rules of procedure for the conduct of meetings which are consistent with Canadian principles of fairness and democracy.
23. There shall be one Annual General Meeting in June of each year, open to all members of the school community. At this meeting, the council may wish to appoint a nominating committee to be responsible for seeking nominations for the following year.
24. Regular meetings of the council shall be held at the school, at least six times in each school year.
25. Special meetings of the council may be called by the chair or other officer at the request of either at least one half of the members or ten members, whichever number is lesser.
26. In the event that the chair is unable to perform his or her duties, the duties of the chair shall be assumed by the vice-chair or another council member.
27. Meetings of the council shall be open to members of the public and guests of council members and no such person may be excluded from the meeting except for disruptive behaviour. Members of the public may be permitted to speak, at the discretion of the chair.
28. Commercial representations shall not be permitted without prior approval of a majority of council.
29. Members of council shall make reasonable efforts to attend all council meetings. For purposes of achieving a quorum and in order to ensure an effective council, any member is deemed to have resigned his or her position if absent without notice for three consecutive council meetings, but may be reinstated by a vote by council.
30. A non-staff council member may be removed from council by a two-thirds vote for behaviour that is inappropriate or detrimental to the school or council, for failure to perform his or her duty, for misrepresentation of or to council, or for ignoring council direction.

ARTICLE IX - VOTING

31. Consensus is the preferred decision-making model. However, it is recognized that voting may be required from time to time. When a vote is taken, each member of the council, excluding the principal, is entitled to one vote.
32. Unless otherwise provided, a majority of votes of those voting is required to pass a motion.
33. Voting by proxy is not permitted.
34. Votes may only take place at meetings.
35. Motions may not be passed in the absence of a quorum of council members.

ARTICLE X - QUORUM

36. To form a quorum as required for a meeting of the council:
 - (a) a majority of the current elected and appointed members of the school council must be present at the meeting; and
 - (b) a majority of the members present shall be parent/guardian members.
37. If quorum is not achieved, council may proceed with the meeting at the discretion of the chair, but may not vote on motions until quorum is achieved.

ARTICLE XI - COMMITTEES

38. The council may establish committees as necessary. Committees are established by a motion at a council meeting. The motion shall set out the committee's mandate. Membership on such committees shall not be restricted to members of the council, although each committee shall include at least one parent/guardian member of the council. Each committee shall have a chair or spokesperson, to be elected by the committee or appointed by council, who shall act as the first contact for people outside the committee.
39. Committees may be terminated by council vote, and shall be deemed to expire at the end of each council term.
40. Committees do not represent council but may seek council approval of draft communications or other actions or representations.
41. Committees may receive money from council through procedures set by council.
42. Committees shall report to council at least twice per council term.
43. Committee meetings shall be open to the school community.

ARTICLE XII - CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

44. The Constitution may be amended by approval of a motion by a two-thirds majority of voting members of council present at a meeting called for that purpose, provided that at least two weeks' notice is given for such a motion and details of the proposed amendments are circulated to all members with that notice.

ARTICLE XIII - COUNCIL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

45. The council, while maintaining a school-wide focus:
- (a) shall establish its goals, priorities, and procedures;
 - (b) may organize information and training sessions to enable members of the council to develop their skills as council members; and
 - (c) shall promote the best interests of the school community as a whole.
46. In particular, the council shall:
- (a) ensure that the minutes of council meetings are recorded and maintained (the minutes should include, or have attached to them, any advice provided in writing to the principal, Board and/or senior staff by the council, and the written response or responses in reply);
 - (b) ensure that accurate minutes and records, including records of all financial transactions, are kept available for at least four years at the school for examination without charge by any person, and that an annual school council year-end report including, where applicable, a financial report, is prepared and presented to the council;
 - (c) ensure that the minutes and records of the council during the council's tenure are passed on to the successor council;
 - (d) ensure that a current principal profile is on file with the Board by 31 October of each year;
 - (e) communicate with the school principal;
 - (f) ensure that there is regular communication with the school community;
 - (g) ensure that parents / guardians of all students enrolled in the school are consulted about matters under consideration by the council;
 - (h) ensure that the constitution and by-laws of the council are maintained up to date and are reviewed annually by the council, and;
 - (i) prepare the annual report of the school council, including, if the council engages in fund-raising activities, a report on these activities, for submission to the school principal and the Director of Education.
46. The council may:
- (a) participate or assign an alternate to participate in information and training programs, and;
 - (b) consult with senior Board staff and trustees, as required.
47. Responsibilities of council members are as follows:
- (a) **The Chair** shall:
 - i) call council meetings;
 - ii) prepare the agenda for council meetings;
 - iii) chair council meetings;

- iv) work collaboratively with council members to assign and delegate the roles and responsibilities of the school council as outlined herein.
- v) act as a signing officer for council.

b) **The Principal** shall:

- i) facilitate the establishment of the council and assist in its operation;
- ii) on behalf of the council, provide written notice of the dates, times and locations of annual elections and meetings of the council and of committees of the council to the parents / guardians of all students enrolled in the school, both by giving the notice to the student for delivery to his or her parent / guardian and by posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents / guardians.
- iii) support and promote the council's activities;
- iv) on behalf of the council, provide a copy of the annual council report in the fall of each school year to:
 - A. the parents / guardians of all students enrolled in the school, both by giving the report to the student for delivery to his or her parent / guardian and by posting the report in the school in a location that is accessible to parents / guardians; and
 - B. the Director of Education.
- v) in accordance with *The Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c.E-2 and Ontario regulations, seek input from the council by:
 - A. providing for the prompt distribution to each member of the council, and for the posting in a location accessible to parents / guardians, of Ministry materials identified by the Ministry for such distribution;
 - B. attending all meetings of the council or, when unable to do so, designating a staff member to attend on his or her behalf;
 - C. acting as a resource to the council, and assisting the council in obtaining information relating to relevant legislation, regulations and policies, and the budgets for the school and for school-generated funds, required by the council to enable it to provide informed advice;
 - D. considering each recommendation made by the council to the principal, and advising the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation;
 - E. soliciting the views of the council with respect to:
 - I. the establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines relating to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents / guardians, such as the Board and school code of conduct and dress code;
 - II. the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives relating to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents /

guardians, for example the Board and school code of conduct and dress code;

III. school action plans for improvement based on EQAO reports, and the communication of these plans to the public; and all Board policies on which consultation is required, and any other matter for which the Board has directed that school councils be consulted.

- vi) act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies, and collective agreements;
- vii) communicate with the chair of the council, as required;
- viii) ensure that copies of the minutes of the council's meetings are kept at the school and are available to the public on request;
- ix) assist the council in communicating with the school community;
- x) encourage the participation of parents / guardians from all groups and of other people within the school community in the life of the school and the activities of the council.

c) **The Vice-Chair** shall:

- i) perform the duties of the chair in the absence or disability of the chair;
- ii) act as a signing officer for the council.

d) **The Secretary** shall:

- i) ensure that adequate notice of meetings, the agenda*, and previous minutes are circulated to all members in a timely manner (*as the agenda is prepared by the chair, it may be circulated by the chair);
- ii) maintain a full and accurate account of all council meetings, and ensure that the minutes are signed by the chair following their adoption by the council;
- iii) prepare correspondence as required;
- vi) ensure that a copy of all minutes for the current school year are maintained at the school in a location accessible to any member of the school community;

e) **The Treasurer** shall:

- i) take charge of any finances of the council, ensure the safe keeping of the council finances as in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Board, and provide an accounting thereof as may be required from time to time;
- ii) provide an annual financial report to the council and the membership at large;
- iii) ensure there is an annual audit performed by a member of the school community on the financial report;
- iv) perform such other related duties as may be assigned by the chair from time to time;
- v) act as signing officer for the council.

- f) **The External Representative (OCASC Rep)** shall:
 - i) Attend OCASC and/or other meetings on behalf of the council and speak for the council at such meetings (when necessary or applicable);
 - ii) provide to council an oral and/or written report of OCASC and/or other meetings;
 - iii) act as the council's link to OCASC and to other organizations with purposes similar to the council's.

- g) **Program representatives** shall:
 - i) fairly and actively solicit parent, student, teacher, and in-class volunteer opinion and to bring this opinion before council;
 - ii) participate in and become informed about council policy and decisions;
 - iii) act as council voice for constituents.

- h) **Council Members** shall:
 - i) participate in council meetings;
 - ii) endeavor to participate in information and training programs;
 - iii) act as a link between the school council and the community;
 - iv) encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community.

ARTICLE XIV - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 48. Members of the council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they have an interest, stand to benefit financially or otherwise either directly or indirectly by decisions of the council.
- 49. Should an issue or agenda item arise during a council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest situation, he or she shall declare the conflict immediately. Once declared, the member may be invited to speak to the issue at the discretion of the chair, but the member shall not vote if the issue is the subject of a motion.
- 50. A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.

ARTICLE XV - SIGNING AUTHORITIES

- 51. Any formal communication from council or its officers, or a council committee, where that communication advances a position on any school or Board or Ministry policy or procedure or action, actual or proposed, must be co-signed by the chair or the chair's designate.

ARTICLE XVI - DATE OF ENTRY INTO FORCE

52. This Constitution and By-laws shall come into effect immediately upon approval by council.

2. BY-LAWS

FUNDRAISING

1. Council is permitted to raise funds consistent with OCDSB Policy P.052.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools and Procedure PR.540.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools.

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

2. Any disbursement of money or money commitment on behalf of council must be formally approved by council vote. In the event that the chair and the treasurer decide, on consultation with others, that an expenditure cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting and is a small amount, the treasurer and the chair, or their designates, may disburse money. All spending must be reported and formally approved at the next available council meeting.
3. Spending authority may be pre-authorized by council-voted budget or float.
4. Cheques shall be signed by the treasurer and one other officer with signing authority.
5. Council shall develop equitable procedures for the disbursement of funds.

3. RESOURCES

The Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E-2.

Constitution and Bylaws for Hopewell Avenue Public School Council (HAPSC), June 2001.

Draft Hopewell Avenue Public School Council Constitution/By-laws, Spring 2003.

Ontario Regulation 612/00, School Council Regulation and Ontario Regulation 613/00.

OCDSB Policy P.014.SCO: School Councils.

OCDSB Procedure PR.509.SCO: School Council Elections, Constitution and By-laws.

OCDSB Policy P.052.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools.

OCDSB Procedure PR.540.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools.

First Avenue Public School Constitution/By-Laws, March 2002.