

Withrow Avenue Junior Public School Council

By-laws

1. Name

The name of the organization is the Withrow Avenue Junior Public School Council (hereinafter the "Council").

2. Purpose & Objective

The purpose of the Council is to improve pupil achievement and enhance accountability of the education system to parents through the active participation of parents.

The objectives of the Council are:

- a. Parent Participation: to encourage parents to be an active voice at the school and to promote consistent and efficient volunteer operations.
- b. School Improvement and Student Achievement: to better understand the needs of our school and our students, identifying areas where we can make improvements; to assist teachers, staff and administration in improving student achievement levels and creating a positive learning environment.
- c. The Education System: to help parents understand and respond to education issues (budgets, board policies, etc.), and to have a voice in the broader community (the neighbourhood, the Toronto District School Board, the province, etc.).

3. Membership

The Council shall operate in a public forum, where the entire school community is encouraged to participate.

The Council will have the following members:

- a) A minimum of ten parent members elected in accordance with the procedure set out below. There is no maximum number of parent members, provided that in each year Council may pass a motion setting a maximum number of parent members for the following year. Parent members must form the majority of members of the Council.
- b) The principal or vice-principal of the school. The principal may delegate responsibilities to the vice-principal.
- c) One teacher employed by the school who is not the principal or vice-principal, elected in accordance with the procedure set out in Ontario Regulation 612/00.
- d) One non-teaching employee of the school, elected in accordance with the procedure set out in Ontario Regulation 612/00.
- e) A minimum of one community representative, who is not employed by the school or the TDSB, appointed by the Council.

All Members of the Council shall:

- ☐ Contribute to the discussion of the Council;
- ☐ Enhance communication between the school, the Council and parents;
- ☐ Seek the views of the members of the school community that they represent and encourage parent involvement;
- ☐ Be aware of and observe Ontario Regulation 612/00, the policies and procedures of the TDSB and these By-laws.

4. Executive

The Council Executive shall consist of two Co-Chairs, a Treasurer and Secretary.

The Co-Chairs shall arrange meetings and prepare agendas, chair meetings, facilitate conflict resolution, participate on all committees of the Council including the fundraising committee, and communicate with the Principal on Council's behalf.

The Secretary shall record minutes of each Council meeting and distribute to Council members; ensure minutes are retained and available on request and assist with any correspondence of Council.

The Treasurer will provide a financial report at each meeting, track expenditures and income, oversee bank accounts and tax receipts, and prepare a year-end financial statement to be included in the annual report.

After Council members are elected at the first Council meeting, Council shall elect the Executive from interested parent members of Council.

5. Term of Office

All members of the Council shall hold office for a period of one year. This term extends from the first meeting after the elections until the date of the first meeting in the next school year.

Any member may be re-elected or re-appointed.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, it is strongly encouraged that each Co-Chair commits to serving a term of two years, running for re-election to Council and as Co-Chair for a second one-year term. Wherever possible, the Co-Chair terms will be staggered so that there will always be one Co-Chair with at least one year of experience in the role.

6. Elections

Prior to the end of each school year, the Council will establish an Election Committee. The Election Committee will ensure that elections for Council members for the next school year are organized and held within the first 30 days of the start of the school year, on a date chosen by the Co-Chairs in consultation with the Principal.

Information on election of Council members is to be posted by the Principal at the school and circulated to parents (eg. via electronic newsletter). This information is to include candidate nomination forms and information about the date by which nominations must be received at the

school, who is eligible to stand for election, the date of the election and other pertinent information. This information must be made available to all parents at least 14 days prior to the election.

Each parent/guardian seeking a position on Council must:

- ☐ Have a child registered at the school
- ☐ Not be an employee at the school
- ☐ Be nominated or submit a self-nomination form
- ☐ Declare whether he/she is employed by the TDSB

Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to vote for Council members at the election meeting.

At the election meeting, if the number of parents nominated for Council is equal to or less than the number needed to fill all the parent member positions, each nominated parent will be asked by the current chair if they are willing to let their name stand for membership. If yes, they will be acclaimed to Council. If a maximum number of parent members has been set and the number of parent nominees is greater than the maximum number of parent members needed, then an election will be held by secret ballot.

The names of successful candidates shall be publicized to the school community within 30 days of the election.

7. Meetings

There shall be a minimum of four meetings per school year. Emergency meetings can be called at the discretion of the Co-Chairs.

All meetings shall be advertised and open to the public.

Meetings shall be held at the school or another location that is accessible to all.

A member of the public may be given a voice at the meeting at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.

8. Consensus and Voting

Consensus shall form the basis for making decisions and passing motions. No motion may be passed without: (a) a majority (50%+1) of members being present and (b) the majority of those members being parent members.

Each member of the Council is entitled to one vote except the Principal / Vice-Principal.

A parent member may appoint a delegate to participate in discussions and/or decision making in his/her place at a Council meeting, providing the absent member notifies the Chair in advance. This delegate must be another parent in the school community. The appointment must be announced at the beginning of the meeting and recorded in the minutes.

9. Fundraising & Expenditures

Each year, the Council will set up a Fundraising Committee, composed of the two Co-Chairs and at least five other members of the Council, the majority of which must be parent members. The plans and activities of the Fundraising Committee will be reported to Council at each meeting.

All expenditures are to be approved by majority vote of Council.

10. Committees

Council may create ad-hoc committees at any time to deal with special issues (eg. greening, arts, science, Board policies). The purpose and scope of such committees are to be approved by the Council. They are expected to report on their activities at each meeting. Recommendations from ad hoc committees must be approved by Council prior to action be taken. At least one of the Co-Chairs shall be on each ad-hoc committee. Committees may include persons who are not members of the Council. Ad hoc committees are expected to adhere to these By-laws and the Code of Conduct.

11. Minutes & Reports

Minutes of each Council meeting will be held for a minimum of four (4) years.

Each year, the Council must prepare and submit an annual written report to the school outlining its goals, activities and achievements including the treasurer's report. The Principal, on behalf of the Council, shall ensure a copy of the annual report is provided to all parents with children enrolled at the school (which may include a paper copy or, for example, a link in an electronic newsletter).

12. Vacancies

Should a Council position become vacant during the year for any reason, nominations will be solicited from the school community. Nominations and a binding election for that position may be held as early as the next council meeting. Should the position not be filled, the Council will extend and open invitation for participation and then continue to do business to the best of its ability.

Any vacancy in an Executive position during the year for any reason shall be filled, if possible, from interested current parent members of Council. If no current Council member is interested in the vacant Executive position, it shall be filled in accordance with the procedure above.

If a vacant spot on Council is filled during the year, the new member's term shall expire at the same time as all other current members of Council.

13. Removal of members

Any motion to remove a member requires 2/3 membership approval, including the subject member's vote. This is a serious matter, and should be used only as a last resort in cases of non-adherence to the Code of Conduct or By-laws, negligence of duty, or undisclosed conflict of interest. Every effort should be made to resolve the conflict in accordance with these By-Laws

prior to bringing a motion forward to remove a member. The Co-Chairs will consult with the Principal and/or Vice-Principal before allowing a motion to remove a member to proceed.

14. Conflict Resolution

Council members are elected to serve the entire school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on Council at all times by allowing speakers to speak without interruption and by maintaining a calm and respectful tone at all times.

Every Council member will be given opportunity to express his or her concerns or opinions about the issue at dispute.

The Chair's responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised and to set out the joint interests of all members.

If all attempts at resolving conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair shall request the intervention of TDSB board member or another independent third party to facilitate a resolution to the conflict. Any resolution reached at a meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all members of Council.

15. Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest means any matter in which a Council representative, members of his or her family, or business entities in which he or she may have an interest, stands to benefit either directly or indirectly by a decision of the Council. A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived or potential.

A Council representative should declare a conflict of interest and excuse him or herself from discussions and voting on matters in which a conflict of interest is likely to result.

A Council member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations or entities that have or are known to be seeking business contracts with the school or the TDSB.

16. Amendments

These by-laws can be amended at any time, subject to opportunity for review by the entire school community and a motion being passed at a regularly scheduled council meeting. All amendments must be consistent with, and not conflict with, Ontario Regulations 612/00 and the TDSB policies.

Code of Conduct

A member shall consider the best interests of all students.

A member shall be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.

A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.

A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.

A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.

A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.

A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.

A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.

A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.

A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.

A member shall not disclose confidential information.

A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.

A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.

A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.

A member shall declare any conflict of interest.

A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.