

Gordon Price School Council

TERMS OF REFERENCE

PREAMBLE

School councils have a legislated role at their schools and are there to ensure the best possible education for students. Our school councils are comprised of democratically elected representatives of our parent community. Together, they:

- focus on student learning and the best interest of all students,
- provide a forum through which parents and other members of school communities can contribute to improving student achievement and school performance,
- make recommendations to the school principal and the Board on any matter they see impacting accountability and academic excellence and;
- serve as a communication and information channel between the school and community

The Gordon Price School Council (henceforth referred to as GPSC) has adopted these terms of reference to guide its operations.

1.0 GPSC POSITIONS

Member Selection

- 1.1 Parents/guardians of students attending Gordon Price School can self-nominate by completing a nomination ballot, provided by the school, and returning it to the school at the beginning of the school year.
- 1.2 Council terms for elected and appointed positions are for a one-year term. Members can seek re-election each subsequent year. There is no restriction on the number of times that a member can be re-elected.
- 1.3 The maximum number of parents on council is 30.
- 1.4 To maintain their voting status, members must attend meetings or send their regrets to the Chairperson(s), in advance of the meeting. Once 2 consecutive meetings, without regrets are missed, the member forfeits their voting right for the remainder of the GPSC term.

Membership:

- Parents and guardians shall form the majority.
- the principal or vice-principal of the school (the principal may delegate membership responsibility to the vice-principal)
- one teacher employed in the school, other than the principal or vice-principal
- one non-teaching employee of the school
- one student, in the case of secondary schools (optional for elementary schools)
- one or more community representatives appointed by the elected council, who cannot be an employee at the school. If the community representative is employed elsewhere by the board, he or she must inform other council members of his or her employment prior to appointment.
- one person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations (if applicable)

Executive

- 1.5 At the first meeting of the school year, GPSC will elect a Chair from the parent/guardian members. The Chair is responsible for facilitating meetings and accurately representing the GPSC's position on issues.

- 1.6 The council may also elect a Co-Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary or Treasurer. A Chair or Co-Chair of a school council must be a parent member of the council.

2.0 FUNCTIONS OF GPSC

Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 The primary focus of GPSC shall be to promote and improve student learning and enhance system accountability.
- 2.2 The GPSC shall act in an advisory capacity to the Gordon Price School principal and to the Board and/or senior staff in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Board and of the Education Act and Regulations.
- 2.3 In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the GPSC shall: promote the best interests of the student body, school and community establish its goals, priorities and procedures.
- 2.4 Determine the need, and organize information and training sessions to enable members of the Council to develop their skills as Council members.
- 2.5 Communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by GPSC, and to report on the activities of GPSC to the school community.
- 2.6 Establish a procedure for reimbursement of expenses incurred by school council members on behalf of the Council.
- 2.7 GPSC will determine use of board designated funds, such as PIC, on a yearly basis, or as awarded.
- 2.8 GPSC will achieve these goals through a variety of strategies, including:
- a) Communicating with and providing ongoing advice to the Principal;
 - b) Participating in the development and implementation of the school improvement plan;
 - c) volunteering in various capacities;
 - d) promoting parent education and learning at home;
 - e) coordinating community resources;
 - f) encouraging the membership of GPSC to be reflective of the diversity of the school community.

3.0 MEETINGS

Frequency

- 3.1 GPSC will hold a minimum of four meetings per year, open to members of the school community.
- 3.2 GPSC will establish the meeting schedule at the beginning of every academic year.

Quorum

- 3.3 A quorum for Committee meetings will consist of one more parent/guardian than non parent/guardian member as well as the principal/vice-principal or delegate.

- 3.4 Guests are welcome to participate in meetings; however, they do not count towards the determination of the quorum and thus do not have voting rights.
- 3.5 If quorum is not reached, the items discussed at the meeting will be for information purposes and will not include the passing of recommendations or approvals.

Agenda Items

- 3.6 The Chairs will prepare the agenda in consultation with the principal, for each meeting and distribute it to all members one week in advance of regularly scheduled GPSC meetings.

Minutes

- 3.7 The Secretary or delegate shall prepare the minutes.
- 3.8 Motions in the minutes shall be recorded in the following manner:

On a motion duly moved and seconded, the minutes of the meeting held on January 25, 2011, were approved.

It was duly moved and seconded,
that Council approve the recommendation to
The motion was **carried**.

Meeting Structure

- 3.9 After a meeting is called to order, the first item of business shall be to approve the circulated agenda. If a member wishes to add a new item to the agenda, there shall be a motion to amend the agenda and it shall be seconded.
- 3.10 The minutes of the previous meeting shall be approved at the beginning of each meeting. Once approved, the minutes can only be changed by a formal action of GPSC based on evidence with respect to specific errors.
- 3.11 The mover of a motion to **amend** the minutes of a previous meeting should have been in attendance at that meeting, although it is not necessary for the seconder to have been present. A member who was absent can identify inaccuracies that can be confirmed independently. However, in the case of a controversy concerning a recorded happening, only those members known to be present at the meeting can participate in a vote to amend the minutes of that meeting.
- 3.12 Motions are a formal statement, such as “motion to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2011 meeting”. The process of moving a motion is not completed until another member present seconds it.
- 3.13 The purpose of seconding is to indicate that there is sufficient interest in the proposal for the matter to be considered by the whole Council. Although not in favour of a motion, a person may still second it, in order to have the matter discussed at the meeting. There is no requirement for either the mover or the seconder of a motion to vote in favour of it.
- 3.14 If a motion is not seconded within a reasonable period of time, the Chair asks if any member wishes to second it. If no one speaks up, the motion dies, and the Chair recognizes another member who wishes to speak and/or moves to the next agenda item.

4.0 GENERAL

- 4.1 Council may amend these terms of reference at any time, as deemed necessary to facilitate the ongoing effective operation of the Committee.
- 4.2 Council shall review the terms of reference yearly.

One of a school council's main purposes is to share information with parents and the community and to seek their ideas and views about matters under consideration by the council. The issue before the council will determine when it is appropriate to consult with parents and the community. Some issues may only require that information be provided to the school community. Other issues may require obtaining a formal position from the school community.

5.0 COUNCIL RECORDS AND INFORMATION

- 5.1 The following information must be stored in the school and made available for a minimum of four years: school council and committee meeting minutes financial transactions/records
- 5.2 GPSC may decide that other documents would also be of value for reference. These might include the following: school council agendas, school council annual reports, school profiles, principal profiles.
- 5.3 The above information should be readily available to parents wishing to learn more about the history of their school council. Regardless of where the material is kept, whether it be in the resource centre or in another location in the school, parents should be made aware of the location and should have easy access to this material.

6.0 ORIENTATION FOR NEW MEMBERS

- 6.1 To help new school council members become acquainted with their roles, council may compile an orientation package that includes resources such as the following:
 - a) *School Councils – A Guide for Members*
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/council02.pdf>
 - b) a copy of Ontario Regulations 612/00 and 298, which set out the legal requirements for and responsibilities of school councils, boards, and principals
 - c) information about the school, the local school board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education the school council's bylaws relating to election procedures, conflict of interest, and conflict resolution, and any operating bylaws, if bylaws have already been established
 - d) the GPSC's code of ethics for its members,
 - e) the school profile

_____ (Co-Chair) _____ (Date)

_____ (Co-Chair) _____ (Date)

_____ (Principal) _____ (Date)