

Ryerson School Council By-Laws

APPROVED June 14, 2018

Statutory References

Ontario Regulation 612/00: School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees under the Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2. Regulation 298. These regulations serve as the constitution of the School Council.

Mission Statement

The Ryerson School Council will promote the academic, social and emotional development and well-being of the students.

Objectives

1. To advise and make recommendations to the Principal and to the School Board which will enhance the educational experience within our school
2. To provide input to the Ryerson School Plan to improve the student achievement levels by enhancing the way curriculum is delivered and by creating a positive environment for learning
3. To enhance communication among all members of the Ryerson Community
4. To encourage guardians to actively participate in the education of their children
5. To monitor, evaluate and respond to changes in the education system
6. To monitor, evaluate and respond to curriculum issues
7. To assist in the financial well-being of the school by raising funds and providing feedback to the School Board regarding funding requirements
8. To provide advice on the process of decision making and implementation of change within Ryerson

By-laws

Article I. Definitions

- a) "AGM" refers to the School Council Annual General Meeting
- b) "School Board" refers to the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board or HWDSB
- c) "Ryerson Community" includes all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, students, families and people residing in the catchment area served by Ryerson School, as defined by the local School Board
- d) "Guardian" refers to the parent or legal guardian of a student attending Ryerson School
- e) "School" refers to Ryerson School
- f) "School Council" refers to the Ryerson School Council

- g) "Staff" refers to employees of the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, who are assigned to Ryerson School
- h) "Student" refers to a student enrolled at Ryerson School

Article II. Membership

Section 2.0.1 Composition of School Council

- a) Subject to clauses (b), (c) and (d), the School Council shall be made up of the following members:
 - 1) Guardian representatives, no fewer than 5 and not more than 20, elected as hereafter set out. Guardian members must disclose if they are Board employees
 - 2) The Ryerson Principal
 - 3) One teaching staff representative, elected by the teaching staff as a whole. Teaching Staff cannot be Guardian Members
 - 4) One non-teaching staff representative (exclusive of the Ryerson Principal), elected by the non-teaching staff as a whole
 - 5) One representative from the Ryerson Community, who is not otherwise eligible for membership, appointed by the School Council
- b) Guardians must comprise the majority of the School Council
- c) Subject to clause (b), if a vacancy occurs during the school year, the School Council may require that the position is filled immediately, or it may defer or dispense with filling the vacant spot
- d) Criteria for composition of membership shall comply with the Ministry of Education policies, as issued from time to time
- e) If the Council feels, at any time during the school year, that any group within the Ryerson Community is not adequately represented, it may expand the Council by appointing up to three new members by special resolution, subject to clause (b)

Section 2.02 Terms of Office

- a) The term of office for elected or appointed members shall be for the duration of the school year
- b) Members may seek additional terms of office
- c) The Chair and Vice-Chair may seek additional terms of office in their respective executive positions to a maximum of two consecutive years

Section 2.03 Election of Guardian Representatives

- a) During the final 3 weeks of the school year, the summer break thereafter and the first 2 weeks of the new school year, the Ryerson Principal shall advertise to all guardians their eligibility for membership on School Council, by:
 - 1) Posting a notice in a conspicuous place in the main floor hallway of the school
 - 2) Sending at least one notice home with each student already attending the school; and
 - 3) Sending at least one notice to each family of any newly enrolled student
- b) A guardian seeking to become a member of the School Council must attend the first Council meeting of the school year and put their name forward. Guardians who are Board employees must disclose this information.

- c) In the event that the total number of guardians who are seeking to become members does not exceed the maximum allowable number of guardian representatives, the guardians seeking to become members shall be acclaimed. Otherwise, the new members shall be elected under the following process:
 - a. Election shall be by secret ballot. The Ryerson Principal shall make the ballots available to all guardians present at the AGM, with each guardian being able to vote for as many guardian representatives as there are positions available to be filled. The ballots will be counted by the Principal, a past member of Council, and if possible, a guardian who is not standing for election.
- d) The Election must be held within the first 30 days of the school year
- e) The Ryerson Principal will provide a School Council membership list to the school community within 30 days of the appointments or election

Section 2.04 Officers

- a) Executive Positions
 - 1) The position of Chair and Vice-Chair shall be executive positions. The Chair should have previous School Council experience
 - 2) Guardian representatives shall hold both executive positions
 - 3) The School Council shall appoint the executive positions no later than the 2nd meeting of the school year
 - 4) In the event that the Chair resigns during the year, the Vice Chair shall become Chair and the School Council will appoint a new Vice Chair
- b) Recording Secretary
 - 1) The School Council shall elect a Recording Secretary who will be responsible for maintaining a set of all records with respect to School Council activity. These records shall be maintained in a designated area of the School Office, available for viewing by all members of the Ryerson community. Records shall be maintained for a minimum of 4 years as required by Board and Ministry policies.
 - 2) Responsibility for recording minutes of meetings may be divided among all School Council members.

Section 2.05 Duties and Responsibilities of School Council Members

- a) General to all School Council members
 - 1) Attend School Council meetings.
 - l) At a minimum, it is expected that School Council Members will not miss more than 3 meetings or 50% of the total number of meetings in the school year, whichever is the lesser.
 - 2) Fairly represent and communicate to the School Council the views and wishes of the Ryerson Community
 - 3) Communicate the School Council activities to the Ryerson Community and solicit the advice and opinions of the guardians of Ryerson students
 - 4) Sit on and contribute to School Council Workgroups, as required
 - 5) Provide informed advice to the Ryerson Principal
 - 6) Monitor and contribute to the effectiveness of the School Council
 - 7) Ensure continuing emphasis on student learning and school improvement
 - 8) Become and remain reasonably informed on relevant legislation and literature

- 9) Participate in information and in-service training sessions for School Council members
 - 10) Participate in special working committees as required to address specific School Council initiatives during the course of the school year
- b) Chair
- 1) Preside over and control procedure of all meetings
 - 2) Prepare the agenda in consultation with the Ryerson Principal, prior to the meeting, and distribute together with other relevant materials, to all School Council members
 - 3) Distribute minutes to all School Council members
 - 4) Review all correspondence directed to the School Council, and distribute to School Council members as appropriate
 - 5) Act as public relations contact and as liaison with local and provincial School Council organizations
 - 6) Keep minutes of meetings and relevant correspondence in centralized binders or files, to be passed onto the next Chair
 - 7) Complete and present an annual report on the activities of the Council to the Council members
 - 8) Ensure distribution of the annual report to all guardians with a copy to the Board of Education
 - 9) The Chair has regular membership voting status and is not to be used as a tie-breaker
- c) Vice Chair
- 1) Perform the duties of the Chair in his or her absence
 - 2) Assume the chair while the Chair moves and advocates a resolution
- d) Recording Secretary
- 1) Prepare minutes of the meeting or meetings assigned to the member
 - 2) Forward minutes to the Ryerson School Council Chair for distribution, preferably within one of and not more than two weeks after the subject meeting
 - 3) Where a Recording Secretary or Secretaries have not been designated for the year, voting members of Council shall each take the role in turn as part of their member duties
- e) Principal
- 1) Assist Chair in preparation of the agenda for each meeting
 - 2) Assist Chair in distributing completed minutes of meetings by:
 - I) Inserting in a binder in the school office for access by all members of the Ryerson Community
 - II) Post the minutes to the Ryerson School website
 - III) Sending to HWDSB as requested
 - 3) Report at each School Council meeting regarding ongoing issues and decisions of the school
 - 4) Bring new initiatives at the school to the attention of the School Council
 - 5) Provide and where appropriate, interpret Ministry of Education and HWDSB policies for the School Council
 - 6) Seek comment and advice from the School Council on issues affecting the manner and quality of the education provided by the school. This must include but is not limited to:
 - I) Code of Conduct
 - II) Dress Code
 - III) Allocating funding of Board to Council
 - IV) School Council Fundraising policies
 - V) EQAO reporting
 - VI) Policy re: selection/placement of principals and vice principals
 - 7) Review the School Plan with the School Council

- 8) Assist the Chair in assembling, updating and distributing an orientation package for all new members including:
 - I) The Bylaws
 - II) A member list containing email addresses and phone numbers
 - III) A list of meeting dates
 - IV) Resource materials, including policy booklets, and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education and the HWDSB
- 9) Take all steps required to ensure orderly election of guardian representatives and proper appointment of other representatives
- 10) Post notice of the AGM and proposed resolutions for amendment of the By-Laws

Section 2.06 Resignation and Removal of School Council Members

- a) Resignations
 - 1) Resignations must be made in writing to the Chair
 - 2) Resignations shall be effective immediately, unless otherwise indicated therein
- b) Removal of Members
 - 1) For School Council to be effective and achieve its mission, it is important that quorum is reached at all meetings and that members fulfill the duties and responsibilities outlined in Section 2.05.
 - 2) In instances where an elected member fails to attend meetings on a regular basis, or substantially fails to perform the duties and responsibilities of School Council membership, the Chair and/or Vice Chair may choose to address the situation with the member. They will discuss with the member whether he or she is able and willing to continue to serve on the School Council. On being made aware of the importance of regular attendance and expectations, the member may be willing to make attendance a priority and/or adjust his/her behaviour. Alternatively, the member may decide to resign from Council.

Article III. Meetings

Section 3.01 Frequency and Notice of Meetings

- a) Meetings will include one AGM and at least 4 regular meetings during the school year
- b) The School Council shall attempt to conduct meetings at a regular time and place that is mutually convenient to the members. The schedule of meetings for the next school year shall be set in the spring, so that it can be published in the school calendar.
- c) Meeting times will be posted in the school calendar and in school newsletters

Section 3.02 Annual General Meeting

- a) General
 - 1) The AGM will be held in September, on a date set by the School Council in the prior school year
 - 2) Notice of the meeting shall be posted at least two weeks prior to the date for it, in a conspicuous place in the main floor hallway of the school, and be included in the school newsletter and calendar
- b) Review of Prior Year and setting of Future Goals

- 1) Members shall bring to the AGM, or shall submit to the outgoing Chair in advance thereof, their recommendations for matters, policies and issues that they propose to be considered in the current school year.
- 2) At the AGM the outgoing Chair shall deliver a report to the members, containing a review of the prior year's work, and an outline of the new matters, policies and issues that may be considered in the current school year.
- c) Amendments to the Bylaws
 - 1) Amendments to the Bylaws will normally be entertained at the AGM
 - 2) A resolution for amendment of the Bylaws shall be passed as a Special Resolution
 - 3) A written copy of the proposed resolution shall be posted as part of the notice for the AGM

Section 3.03 Quorum

- a) A meeting shall be deemed to have a quorum when 60 percent of total membership are present, with at least half of the members present being guardians
- b) No meeting may pass resolutions unless quorum is present

Section 3.04 Resolutions

- a) All decisions of School Council shall be by resolution
- b) Every resolution shall be moved and seconded, and the members shall have an opportunity to discuss the resolution prior to voting upon it
- c) No resolution may be passed except at a meeting in which a quorum is present, and which is either a regularly scheduled meeting or is one arranged upon written notice to all members. In the case of a meeting arranged upon written notice, the notice shall contain a description of the subject matter of the proposed resolution.
- d) Every resolution shall be passed as a General Resolution, unless specifically required by these bylaws to be passed as a Special Resolution.
 - 1) *Special Resolutions must be provided, in writing, to all council members, at least 5 days prior to the meeting.*
- e) General and Special Resolutions shall be passed by a two-thirds majority of members present at the meeting.
- f) Resolutions of the School Council shall not conflict with the Education Act or the policies of the local School Board
- g) The School Council can at any time submit opinions and advice to the Board through a resolution of Council

Section 3.05 Procedure

- a) The School Council standing rules of order shall be the rules of order issued from time to time in the guidelines contained in the Ministry of Education School Council Handbook, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with these Bylaws.
- b) In the event that any matter arises that is not covered by these Bylaws or the said guidelines, the practice shall be by analogy to Roberts Rules of Order
- c) Non-voting members of the Ryerson Community are encouraged to participate in meetings, and may request a 5 minute comment session at the end of the meeting
- d) Any matter may be added to the agenda upon approval by the Chair prior to the meeting

- e) An item may be added to the agenda that has not been approved in advance of the meeting by the Chair, by General resolution.

Section 3.06 Conflict of Interest

- a) Duty of Members
 - 1) Where a member, either on his or her own behalf or while acting for or through another, has any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in any matter under consideration by the School Council and is present at a meeting at which the matter is being considered, the member:
 - I) Shall, prior to any consideration of the matter at the meeting, disclose the interest and the general nature thereof;
 - II) Shall not take part in the discussion of, or vote on any resolution in respect of the matter; and
 - III) Shall not attempt in any way whether before, during or after the meeting to influence the voting on any such resolution.
 - 2) Where the interest of a member has not been disclosed as required by clause (1) by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, the member shall disclose the interest and otherwise comply with clause (1) at the next meeting attended by the member.
 - 3) For the purposes of the section, a member has an indirect pecuniary interest in any matter in which the School Council is concerned, if:
 - I) The member is a shareholder in, or a director or senior officer of a corporation that has a direct pecuniary interest in the matter; or
 - II) The member is a partner of a person or is in the employment of a person or body that has a direct pecuniary interest in the matter.
 - 4) Clauses (1) & (2) do not apply to a pecuniary interest in any matter that a member may have:
 - I) By reason of the member having a pecuniary interest which is an interest in common with the Ryerson community generally; or
 - II) By reason only of an interest of the member which is so remote or insignificant in its nature that it cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to influence the member.
- b) Failure to Comply with Duty
 - 1) The failure of a member to comply with subsection (1) does not necessarily invalidate a resolution concerning same, but the resolution is voidable by the School Council within two years of the date of same, unless voiding it would harm the rights of any person who acted in good faith and without notice.
- c) Procedure
 - 1) Every declaration of interest and the general nature thereof made under subsection (a) shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
 - 2) Where the number of members who, by reason of this section, are ineligible to participate in a meeting is such that the remaining members do not constitute a quorum, the remaining number of members shall be deemed to constitute a quorum, provided such number is not less than two.

Section 3.07 Minutes of Meetings and Recording Decisions

- a) For each meeting, a record will be kept by the designated recording secretary of motions, resolutions and discussion topics

- b) At the first meeting of the year, members will volunteer or be appointed to take minutes for every meeting scheduled to be held during the school year
- c) Copies of the minutes of every meeting will be kept and distributed as follows:
 - 1) To all School Council Members in advance of the next meeting
 - 2) Upon approval, be inserted in a binder in the school office for access by all members of the Ryerson Community
 - 3) Upon approval, be posted to the Ryerson School website
 - 4) Sent to local School Board, if requested

Article IV. Relationship to Guardian and Staff Groups

Section 4.01 School Plan Committees

- a) Each School Council member is encouraged to have an understanding of the decision making structure and role of each School Plan Committee as presented by the Principal from time to time
- b) Membership on such committees is encouraged, where permissible and practical
- c) The Chair of any School Plan Committee may be invited by the School Council Chair to attend specific School Council Meetings
- d) The Ryerson Principal may take School Council resolutions or questions to the School Plan Committees

Article V. Confidentiality

Section 5.01

Ryerson School Council is committed to protecting the privacy of the personal information of its council members, staff, guardians, and community members. We value the trust of those whom we represent and recognize that maintaining this trust requires that we be transparent and accountable in how we treat the information that may be shared during Council meetings. Whenever personal information is shared or received, it will be carefully protected and any other use of the information is subject to consent.

Article VI. Conflict Resolution

Section 6.01

Conflict can be either a positive or negative force. When approached with respect and the common goal of a successful outcome, conflict can result in creative solutions, bring clarity to an issue, increase involvement of members, and strengthen relationships. However, it can also divert energy, compromise morale, obstruct progress, and create distrust. These guidelines will help ensure that conflict is handled in a respectful and collaborative manner.

- a) *Acknowledge and define the conflict.*
 - 1) The Chair will identify the cause of the conflict and seek agreement from members.

- 2) The Chair will summarize the points of view shared to this point, identify key messages, and set out the intended goals of the discussion that will follow.
- b) *Plan how to deal with the conflict.*
- 1) The Chair, with the input of Council, will determine whether to address the issue immediately or postpone the discussion to a future meeting to allow time for reflection. If postponed, the minutes will reflect a summary of the conflict and note that a discussion will be added to the next meeting's agenda.
 - 2) Depending on the nature of the conflict, Council may decide to address the issue together or have the Chair arrange mediation with the individuals involved.
- c) *Provide time for discussion.*
- 1) The Chair will appoint a moderator to guide the discussion and assign a timeline.
 - 2) Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute.
 - 3) Speakers will maintain a calm and respectful tone.
 - 4) Members will listen attentively, demonstrate respect, and not interrupt.
- d) *Seek resolution.*
- 1) The Chair will again summarize the points of view that were shared and identify common ground. This information will be used to identify options for a solution using collaboration, compromise, and consensus building.
 - 2) If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before deciding how to proceed. Options include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Tabling the discussion to the following meeting
 - b. Putting the issue to a vote of elected members for a final decision
 - c. Striking a special working group to analyze an issue and report back to Council for final resolution
 - d. Requesting the intervention of a superintendent or the assistance of other resource staff