

# **SCHOOL COUNCIL BYLAWS**

## **OF Queensdale Elementary School**

**Last updated 26 October 2023  
Approved by membership on 22 November 2023**

**Council Co-Chairpersons  
Amanda Levesque & Jennifer Csele**

**November 22, 2023**

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## **Land Acknowledgement will be read at the start of all school council meetings**

The Queensdale School Community acknowledges that we learn, work, and play on the ancestral land of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabek people.

Each day we respect the past, present, and future of this land by caring for our environment and each other.

### **Name and Address**

Queensdale School Council (Queensdale Parent Council)  
67 Queensdale Avenue East  
Hamilton, Ontario  
L9A 1K4

### **Mission Statement**

To act as a liaison between the staff of Queensdale Elementary School and the community for the betterment of the students, the school and the educational environment.

### **Goal**

To provide opportunities for students and their families to become involved in the school community and to raise funds to support school council initiatives.

### **Procedures and Guidelines**

The school council will comply with the Ministry of Education laws and regulations, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) policies and the collective agreement between the board and its employees.

For all topics not covered in these by-laws, guidance may be found in Ontario Regulation 612/00 and HWDSB policies.

### **Code of Ethics (Conduct)**

All members of school council will adhere to the code of Ethics / Conduct / Norms & Values found in appendix A.

### **Membership**

The number of parents/guardians/caregivers must be greater than all other members combined.

Members of the school council shall include:

- a majority number (to a maximum of 20) of parents/guardians/caregivers who have a child enrolled in the school and are not employed by the board at their children's school.
- the school principal;
- a teacher representative who is employed at the school;
- a non-teaching staff member who is employed at the school; and
- a community representative.

## **Elections**

The election process is as follows.

- Elections will be held during the first 30 days of the new school year.
- A date for the next year's elections will be set during the final council meeting of the school year.
- The principal will distribute nominations forms at least 14 days prior to the meeting where elections will take place.
- Only the candidates elected will be announced.

Elections for each position on council will follow the process outlined below.

### **Parent/Guardian Role**

- A nomination form should be completed and submitted prior to the meeting in which elections will take place.
- Last minute forms may be submitted at the meeting with a valid reason.
- An individual putting their name forward must be in attendance at the meeting in which elections will take place in order to have their name stand.
- If the election of parent members is uncontested the candidates shall be acclaimed.
- The contested election of parent members shall be by secret ballot and follow the steps outlined below:
  - the principal shall conduct a lottery to determine ballot position,
  - the principal shall count the ballots in the presence of at least two persons who are not election candidates, and
  - if there is a tie each candidate shall have the opportunity to give a short oral biography of themselves and then another secret ballot will be carried out.

### **Executive Members**

- A parent/guardian/caregiver's member must be nominated orally and be willing to run for an executive position and may self nominate.
- If the election of an officer is uncontested the candidate shall be acclaimed.
- The contested election of an officer shall be by secret ballot and follow the steps outlined below:
  - the principal shall conduct a lottery to determine ballot position,
  - the principal shall count the ballots in the presence of at least two parent/guardian members who are not candidates running for an office position.
  - if there is a tie each candidate shall have the opportunity to give a short oral biography of themselves and then another secret ballot will be carried out.

### **Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff**

- The principal is not eligible for a teaching or non-teaching staff position.
- A teaching or non-teaching staff candidate may be nominated or self nominated.

- A teaching or non-teaching staff candidate must be in attendance at the meeting in which elections will take place in order to have their name stand.
- If the election of a teaching or non-teaching staff candidate is uncontested, they shall be acclaimed.
- The contested election of a teaching or non-teaching staff candidate shall be by secret ballot and follow the steps outlined below,
  - the principal shall conduct a lottery to determine ballot position;
  - the principal shall count the ballots in the presence of at least two parent/guardian members.
  - if there is a tie each candidate shall have the opportunity to give a short oral biography of themselves and then another secret ballot will be carried out.

### **Community Representative**

- A community representative may be appointed to council by a majority vote at a meeting of council members.

### **Non-Voting Member**

- Council meetings are open to all parents to attend at any time throughout the year.
- Any members not present at the meeting in which elections will take place are considered non-voting council members - not able to cast a vote for any council items.
- Non-voting members are not included in quorum counts.
- Non-voting members may be included in all council and subcommittee discussions, including notice of meetings.

### **Vacancies**

If a parent/guardian/caregiver member position is vacant it may remain vacant until the next council elections unless the number of parent/guardian/caregiver members are no longer the majority. If there is no longer a majority the school council may request nominations from the school community and follow the election procedures outlined above.

If an executive position is vacant, it shall be filled by following the election procedures outlined above. Current council members only will be permitted to run for the executive position.

If a teaching staff, non-teaching staff or community representative position is vacant it shall be filled by following the election procedures outlined above. Council may continue to function while a teaching staff, non-teaching staff or community representative position is vacant so long as quorum is met.

### **Length of Terms**

The term of parent/guardian/caregiver membership shall be from the date of election/acclamation until after elections are held on the date of the first meeting of council in the following school year.

There is no term limit on the number of times a parent/guardian/caregiver can serve on school council. However, a parent/guardian/caregiver must have a child enrolled in the school to be a member of school council.

## **Duties**

### **Chair (or Co-Chairs)**

- Send notice of meetings (including draft minutes & meeting agenda) to school council members.
- Collaborate with the principal to prepare the agenda for school council meetings.
- Preside over school council meetings.
- Ensure school council minutes are being recorded.
- Ensure records are kept in a place accessible by parents/guardians/caregivers (school office)
- Facilitate the resolution of conflict.
- Communicate with the school community.
- Review all correspondence to the school council, e.g., school council email.
- Act as an ex-officio member of all school council sub committees.
- Maintain school council website working with the school secretary.
- Ensure goals and priorities are established for the school year.
- Ensure the regular review of these by-laws.
- Ensure council participates in the school Annual Fundraising Plan with the principal
- Ensure council's participation in the development and implementation of the School Improvement Plan.
- Ensure school council completes the annual Principal Review Report.
- Ensure the completion of the School Council Annual Report to parents/guardians/caregivers.
- Assist with the transfer of all records to incoming chair (or co-chairs).

### **Vice-Chair**

- Assist the chair (or co-chairs).
- Assume the chair (or co-chairs) duties in his/her or their absence at the chair (or co-chairs) request.

### **Secretary**

- Take minutes during meetings.
  - Include a list of attendees, non-attendees and whether or not non-attendees have communicated a reason for their absence.

- Distribute prepared minutes to members no later than 2 weeks following the meeting.
- Send approved minutes to the office for administrator to post in school and on school website within 1 week of approval.
- Be custodian of current year's minutes to be made available during school council meetings.
- Assist with the transfer of all records to incoming secretary.

### **Treasurer**

- Maintain a detailed report containing all income and expenses as well as any future expenses approved by council that can be provided upon request.
- Meet regularly with school secretary to compare notes and ensure the finances agree.
- Inform school secretary on motions approved regarding the spending of council funds.
- Provide a monthly report containing new income and expenses as well as the amount of available funds.
- Provide a year-end detailed report containing all income and expenses as well as any future expenses approved by council to be in the council annual report to Parents/guardians/caregivers
- Be custodian of current year's financial records to be made available during school council meetings.
- Assist with the transfer of all records to incoming treasurer.

### **Sub Committees**

Committees shall contain at least one parent/guardian/caregiver member and may include persons who are not members of council. The council chair (co-chairs) shall act as an ex-officio member of all school council committees.

### **Sub-Committee Leaders**

Each formed subcommittee shall identify a leader among themselves that will take lead on any given initiative by that subcommittee. The subcommittee leader will be responsible for providing updates at council meetings.

### **Meetings**

#### **Meeting Occurrence**

A council meeting shall take place within the first 35 days of the new school year. A minimum of 4 meetings shall take place each year. A meeting schedule will be determined after elections by council member working with the principal/vice principal schedule. All meetings shall take place in a location accessible to the public.

#### **Notice**

The notice of an upcoming meeting shall appear in the school newsletter and be posted on the school council's webpage.

### **Quorum**

Quorum shall be 50% plus 1 of voting members. Meetings without quorum may take place and items on the agenda may be discussed, but no votes may take place.

### **Meeting Format**

Meetings will observe two formats. Agenda items not involving money will be discussed using a Collaborative format. Votes involving money will observe the Robert's Rules.

### **Minutes**

Minutes must be taken during council meetings. Changes to minutes may be made directly to minutes prior to approval and shall be noted "as corrected". Minutes shall be posted in the school and on the school council website within 7 days of being approved.

### **Voting**

Each member of council is entitled to one vote. Each committee member is entitled to one vote in votes taken by sub committees. The principal is not entitled to a vote.

### **Fundraising**

Fundraising goals for each year will be determined within the first two meetings of the year. Input will be discussed from all groups involved in fundraising: school council, home & school (if applicable), staff, and students.

Demographics, financial situations of parents/guardians/caregivers, and the frequency of fundraisers shall be considered when developing the fundraising plan.

### **Bylaws/Terms of Reference (TOR)**

These by-laws shall be reviewed at the first meeting of the year. Each member of council is required to read and sign the Acknowledgment of By-Laws Read Form, which can be found in the appendix B of these by-laws.

These by-laws shall be kept on file at the school and made available for viewing on the school council website.

### **Amendment of Bylaws**

The by-laws may be amended as follows:

- A notice shall be sent to parent/guardians/caregivers with the date of the meeting that amendments will be voted on. The notice will include instructions on how to obtain a copy of the current by-law(s) and a copy of the proposed by-law(s).
- A 2/3 vote of all members is required to adopt changes to the by-laws.

### **Conflict of Interest**

A council member must declare a conflict of interest at the earliest possible moment the council member realizes a conflict exists. A council member that has a conflict with respect to an item on the agenda shall leave the meeting room when that item is being discussed.



## **Conflict Resolution**

The chair is responsible for conflict resolution and may look to the principal for guidance. Where the chair is in conflict it will fall to the principal for resolution. If the conflict is with the principal, the chair may look to the school's superintendent for resolution. Council members may create their own conflict guidelines or adopt some already created.

## **Attendance**

If a member has communicated to the chair (co-chairs) that they will be unable to attend a meeting for any reason, they will be considered to have missed a meeting with good cause. A member who fails to attend three consecutive council meetings without good cause may be removed from council following the procedure below.

- At a council meeting, a council member may make a motion to begin the process of removing a member for poor attendance.
- Using past meeting minutes, the attendance record will be reviewed by assembled members and a vote will be taken.
- If the motion is approved by two-thirds of the membership, the member is removed from council.

## **Performance**

Council members may be removed from office for not fulfilling their duties outlined in these by-laws by following the procedure outlined below.

- At a membership meeting, a council member may make a motion to begin the process of removing a member from office for not fulfilling their duties.
- The officer shall be given the opportunity to offer an explanation showing good cause which explains their reason for not fulfilling their duties for the school council's consideration.
- Notice must be given to all members that a vote will take place at a specified upcoming meeting.
- If the motion is approved by two-thirds of the membership, the member is removed from office.

## Appendix A

### Code of Ethics/Norms & Values

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.

**Appendix B**

**Acknowledgment of By-Laws Read Form**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DATE READ</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>