

# **R.A. Riddell School Council**

## **Constitution and Bylaws**

**2015-16**

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# **Constitution**

## **Article I – Name**

The organization shall be known as “R.A. Riddell School Council” and will be referred to as the School Council on all correspondence.

## **Article II – Non-Profit Organization**

The R.A. Riddell School Council will operate without financial gain for its members.

## **Article III – Purpose**

The purpose of the R.A. Riddell School Council is to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians through the active participation of parents/guardians.

## **Article IV – Objectives**

Serve as a communication and information channel between the school and community.

Provide parents/guardians with opportunities to contribute to improving student achievement and school performance.

Make recommendations to the school principal and Board on matters that impact accountability and academic excellence.

## **Article V – HWDSB Vision and Mission Statement**

Vision: All students achieving their full potential.

Mission: Providing relevant, responsive education so that each student becomes a life-long learner and contributing citizen in a diverse world.

## Article VI – Composition of School Council

	Minimum	Maximum	Voting Member
Parents/Guardians	5	20	Yes
Principal/Vice Principal	1	2	No
Teacher Representative	1	1	Yes
Non-Teacher Representative	1	1	Yes
Senior Student	0	2	Yes
Community Representative	1	3	Yes
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>29</b>	

Notwithstanding the maximum number of Council members per category, parent members must constitute a majority of the members of the School Council (Reg. 612/00).

## Article VII – Duties and Scope of School Council

School Council may make recommendations to the principal or the HWDSB on any matter. Advice provided to the principal or the HWDSB will be based on the general views of the school community and the best interest of all students in the school. It is expected that School Council will consult with parents of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the council (Reg. 612/00).

Matters to the HWDSB may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Establishment or amendment of board policies and guidelines that relate to:
  - Student achievement;
  - Conduct of persons in schools;
  - Appropriate dress for students;
  - Allocation of funding by the board to School Councils;
  - Fundraising activities of School Council;
  - Conflict resolution processes for internal school disputes; and
  - Reimbursement by the board of expenses incurred by members and officers of School Council.
- b) Development and implementation of plans for new initiatives.
- c) The process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals.
- d) Board action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's (EQAO) reports on the results of tests of pupils and the communication of those plans to the public (Reg. 612/00).

Matters to the Principal may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parent/guardians, including a local code of conduct and appropriate dress for students in schools (Reg. 613/00).
- b) Development of implementation plans for new education initiatives (Reg. 613/00).
- c) School action plans for improvement based on the EQAO's reports on the results of tests of students, and the communication of those plans to the public (Reg. 613/00).
- d) Preparation of the school profile.
- e) School budget priorities, including local capital improvement plans.
- f) School, community, and parent communications strategies.
- g) Extra-curricular activities in the school, and use of the facilities by the public.
- h) School fundraising programs that will benefit all children in the school.
- i) School based services and community partnerships related to business, social, health, recreation, and nutrition programs.
- j) Development, implementation, and review of board policies at the local level.

In addition to the above, the School Council is responsible to ensure the election and appointment of new members to School Council according to the School Council bylaws.

### **Article VIII – Code of Ethics**

All members will:

- a) Be guided by our purpose, yearly goals and commitment to parent engagement.
- b) Respect confidential nature of some school business and the limitations that this may place on the operation of the School Council
- c) Conduct oneself in an ethical manner.
- d) Encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- e) Limit discussions at School Council meetings to matters that concern the school community as a whole.
- f) Declare a conflict of interest.
- g) Promote positive attitudes towards public education.
- h) Adhere to the following HWDSB policies:
  - i. [Policy 1.3 Equity and Inclusive Education](#)
  - ii. [Policy 6.3 Code of Conduct](#)

## **R.A. Riddell School Council Operating and Procedural Bylaws**

### **1 Membership**

- 1.1 It is expected that membership will reflect the diversity of the school community and council shall be comprised of:
  - a) Parents/guardians of a child enrolled in the school, elected by the parents of the school, or by acclamation if within the maximum number of parent members.
  - b) Principal and/or Vice Principal of the school, determined by the principal.
  - c) One teacher representative, elected by other teachers in the school.
  - d) One non-teacher representative, elected by other non-teachers in the school.
  - e) A minimum of one community member not employed at the school, elected by other members of School Council.
  - f) Annually, the council will determine if up to two students should be part of council; students will be appointed by the principal.
- 1.2 Parents/guardians who are employed by the HWDSB can be members of the School Council, provided their employment with HWDSB is not at the school, they have a child enrolled in the school, and they disclose their employment to the School Council at the first meeting. Parents/guardians who are employed by the HWDSB at the school are eligible to be elected as the teaching or non-teaching staff representative.
- 1.3 School Council membership has been set at a maximum of 29 members with a 9 member minimum. Parent members must constitute a majority of the members of the School Council.
- 1.4 School Council membership is limited to one voting member per family unit/household.
- 1.5 The Principal/ Vice-Principal of the school are non-voting members of the council.
- 1.6 School Council meetings are open to the public so any non-member of the public including parents, school staff, community members and students can attend meetings but are not entitled to vote on matters brought before council.

## **2 Nomination and Election Process**

- 2.1 The election of members of School Council shall be held during the first 30-days of each school year. The election date shall be fixed by the chair(s) of School Council in consultation with the principal (Reg. 612/00).
- 2.2 The principal shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent/guardian members, on behalf of School Council, give written notice of the date, time, and location of the election to every parent/guardian of each student enrolled in the school on the date the notice is given (Reg. 612/00).
- 2.3 Persons who are eligible to be members of School Council are outlined in Bylaw 1 of these Operational and Procedural Bylaws.
- 2.4 Persons who are eligible to vote in an election of School Council are outlined in Article VI - Composition of School Council.
- 2.5 The school will solicit interest in nominations for School Council 14 days before the election of parent/guardian members. Parent/guardian candidates may be self-nominated or nominated by another parent or guardian.
- 2.6 The school shall forward all nominee information to the chair of School Council.
- 2.7 The Chair will contact the nominees to confirm eligibility and interest in participating.
- 2.8 If the number of parent/guardian members nominated to become a member of School Council is within the maximum number of positions those parent/guardian members will be acclaimed. Additional parent/guardian members can join the School Council during the school year if vacancies exist.
- 2.9 In the event that more than the maximum number of parent/guardian members are nominated then each nominee will be asked to prepare a brief biography listing qualification and goals which will be made available to the parent/guardian population of the school and an election will take place within the first 30 days of school.
- 2.10 No individual campaign literature may be distributed or posted in the school.
- 2.11 The election of parent/guardian members to School Council shall be by secret ballot (Reg. 612/00), and a minimum of 2 representatives shall count the ballots.

- 2.12 After the elections are held, the School Council shall meet within the first 35 days of the school year.

### **3 Terms of Office**

- 3.1 A person elected or appointed as a member of School Council holds office from the date of he/she is elected or appointed until the date of the first meeting of the School Council after the elections are held in the next school year (Reg. 612/00).
- 3.2 A member of School Council may be re-elected or re-appointed (Reg. 612/00).
- 3.3 The School Council executive shall be comprised of a minimum of 2 members who have served on School Council for a minimum of 1 year, unless the entire School Council is newly elected, or those having served for a minimum of 1 year are unwilling to hold an executive position.
- 3.4 Names of the School Council chair(s) will be forwarded to the appropriate board official within 30-days of the election results.
- 3.5 Names of School Council chair(s) will be published to the school community in the first newsletter after the election, and names of all School Council members will be available on the school website. A contact email for School Council will be circulated to the school community.

### **4 Vacancies**

- 4.1 A vacancy in the office of chair, secretary, and treasurer shall be filled by election from the current members of School Council.
- 4.2 A member who holds an executive position who fails to attend 2 consecutive meetings, without reasonable notification and cause to the chair, will be deemed to have resigned their executive position, and members will elect a replacement from the existing School Council membership.
- 4.3 If an elected parent/guardian member fails to attend 2 consecutive meetings without reasonable notification and cause to the chair, that member will be deemed to have resigned and, if applicable, the parent/guardian with the next highest number of votes will be offered the vacant position on the School Council.
- 4.4 If a teacher or non-teaching representative vacancy occurs, the respective groups shall elect a new representative.



## **5 Roles and Responsibilities of School Council Members**

### **5.1 All School Council Members shall:**

- a) Contribute to the discussions of the School Council.
- b) Solicit views from the groups they represent to share with the School Council.
- c) Encourage others to participate to improve student achievement.
- d) May participate on committees established by the School Council.
- e) Communicate information from the School Council to the groups they represent.
- f) Notify the chair or principal if unable to attend a scheduled meeting.
- g) Observe the School Council's Code of Ethics and established bylaws.

### **5.2 Chair(s):**

- a) A minimum of one chair and up to two (2) co-chairs can be elected; chairs are voting members of School Council.
- b) A person who is employed by the HWDSB cannot be chair of School Council.
- c) The chair's primary role is to be the group's facilitator, ensuring all voices are heard, and communicate with school's principal on behalf of School Council.
- d) The chair shall call and chair School Council meetings, which are open to the public and held at the school.
- e) The chair shall prepare the agenda, in consultation with the principal, based on the members' submitted topics, requests and information received and the principal's report.
- f) The chair shall have the agenda and all relevant topic materials available at the school and e-mailed to all School Council members prior to the next scheduled meeting to facilitate the proactive discussion and decision making.
- g) The chair is charged with the general management and supervision of the affairs and operations of the School Council.
- h) The chair will consult with executive School Council members, staff of the board and trustees as requested.
- i) The chair will attend, or send a delegate to, meetings, board workshops and training sessions related to School Councils and report back relevant information gained from attending such events.
- j) The chair, on behalf of the School Council, will prepare and provide an annual report to every parent of each student enrolled in the school before the end of the school year (June).

5.3 Secretary:

- a) The secretary shall record the minutes of the School Council meetings and shall send the meeting minutes to School Council members at least 24 hours prior to the next meeting for review.
- b) The secretary shall maintain and provide minutes of the meeting to the principal to post on the school website, after they have been approved by School Council.
- c) The secretary shall be custodian of all minutes, books, papers, records, correspondence, contracts and other documents belonging to the council for the current term.
- d) At the end of the term, any documents not already provided to the school must be provided and kept at the school for a minimum of four years.
- e) The secretary shall record and audit the attendance at School Council.

5.4 Treasurer:

- a) The treasurer shall maintain the financial records and accounts, including receipts and disbursements, of the School Council as required by regulations.
- b) The treasurer shall provide reports as required to School Council and help in the preparation of the annual School Council report.
- c) The treasurer may delegate administrative duties to such person or persons approved by the School Council.

5.5 School Principal:

- a) On behalf of the School Council, give a minimum of 14 days written notice of the date, time and location of the election to the school community (Reg. 612/00).
- b) Publish the names of the School Council members no later than thirty days following the election. (Reg. 613/00)
- c) On behalf of the School Council, give written notices of the dates, times and location of meetings of School Council and related committees to the school community (Reg. 612/00).
- d) Publish the annual School Council report (Reg. 612/00).
- e) Ensure that copies of the School Council meeting minutes are kept at the school and/or available on the school website for access by the school community.
- f) Forward relevant information from the HWDSB and the Ministry of Education to the School Council and make that information accessible to all parents in the school community (Reg. 613/00).
- g) Support and promote the School Council's activities.
- h) Consider each recommendation made by the School Council and advise council on the action taken in response to the recommendation.

- i) Seek input from the School Council in areas that affect its purpose and objectives and the school community at large, including but not limited to:
  - i. The establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents (Reg. 613/00).
  - ii. The development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents (Reg. 613/00).
  - iii. School action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Officer's reports on the results of tests of students, and the communication of those plans to the public (Reg. 613/00).
- j) Act as a resource on laws, regulations, board policies, and collective agreements, as well as, obtain and provide information required by the School Council to enable it to make informed decisions (Reg. 613/00).
- k) Assist the School Council in encouraging participation from all groups within the school
- l) Communicate with the chair of the School Council as required.
- m) Co-operatively help plan the agenda with the School Council chair.
- n) Provide a report to the members of School Council at each meeting.
- o) Notify the chair if unable to attend a scheduled meeting.
- p) Observe the School Council's code of ethics and established bylaws.

## **6 Committees**

- 6.1 Every committee of School Council must include at least 1 parent representative of School Council (Reg. 612/00).
- 6.2 A committee may include persons who are not members of School Council (Reg. 612/00).
- 6.3 Committee meetings shall be open and accessible to the public (Reg. 612/00).
- 6.4 Committees may make recommendations to the council, but are not to make decisions on behalf of the council.
- 6.5 The chair of a committee, or their delegate will provide updates to School Council as needed.

## **7 Voting**

- 7.1 Each voting member of School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by School Council (Reg. 612/00).

- 7.2 Each voting member of School Council is entitled to one written proxy vote in votes taken by School Council. A sample proxy vote request is provided in [Appendix C](#).
- 7.3 Each member of a committee (Bylaw 6) of School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee.
- 7.4 A discussion at a School Council meeting may result in a motion being put forward for approval by School Council members.
- 7.5 In the event a motion is put forward, the Chair shall provide an opportunity for anyone attending the meeting to ask questions and debate the motion.
- 7.6 The discussion may result in a change to the wording of a motion or withdrawal of a motion; the Chair has the discretion to table the motion if it is deemed that additional information is required before an informed decision can be made.
- 7.7 Once a motion has been discussed a vote will take place using show of hands to vote in favour or against the motion; anyone abstaining from the vote will inform the Chair ahead of the vote. Any member of School Council can request an anonymous vote; in such cases members will cast votes on paper to be counted by the Chair and confirmed by another member of the Executive.
- 7.8 For a motion to pass, the majority of voting members present at the meeting must be in favour.
- 7.9 Electronic voting can be used to address School Council decisions that need to be made between meetings. Motions will be communicated through the Chair and discussion regarding the motion will take place electronically. Once discussion is complete the Chair will request a formal electronic vote. For purposes of an electronic vote it is assumed that all School Council members are available to vote.

## **8 Delegations**

- 8.1 Individuals may approach the chair or the principal to have an issue placed on the agenda. This request must be received 72-hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
- 8.2 Delegations will be limited to 10-minutes unless otherwise approved by School Council members.
- 8.3 Whenever possible, delegations and guest presenters will be scheduled to present after the approval of the minutes (at the beginning of the agenda).

## **9 Quorum**

- 9.1 For the purpose of a vote, a quorum will be met if 50% + 1 of the elected School Council members are present or the minimum number of parent representatives (5) are present, whichever is lower. No proxy or absentee votes are permitted without prior notice to the chair.
- 9.2 If it is known that a vote will be taken at the School Council meeting, absentee votes may be emailed to the chair or principal in advance of the meeting.
- 9.3 No School Council business shall be conducted without a quorum.

## **10 Conflict Resolution**

- 10.1 Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express his/her opinion/concern about a topic without interruption.
- 10.2 Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- 10.3 If a School Council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the chair shall ask for order.
- 10.4 If all efforts to restore order fail, or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the chair may direct the individual member or members to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.
- 10.5 When a member of School Council has a complaint regarding the actions of one or more members of the School Council, or the Bylaws and procedures, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the chair in writing.
- 10.6 The chair shall allow the complainant to voice their concerns at the next meeting of School Council. Prior to the meeting, the chair should provide the School Council members with a copy of the complaint.
- 10.7 After the complainant has voiced his/her concerns and all other representatives have been heard, School Council shall vote to resolve the matter.

## **11 Conflict of Interest**

- 11.1 Should a School Council member, including the executive, find that he/she has a conflict with regards to School Council business, that member shall declare such conflict at the beginning of the meeting and abstain from discussion and voting regarding that matter of conflict.

11.2 Every declaration of conflict and the nature thereof, shall be recorded in the minutes.

## **12 Meeting Procedures**

12.1 School Council shall meet a minimum of 5 times during the school year. Committees can meet as often as they see fit.

12.2 Meetings are open to the entire school community.

12.3 Meetings will commence on time, and not last more than 1.5 hours unless School Council agrees to a longer meeting.

12.4 Agenda items are to be submitted to the chair or principal 72-hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

12.5 The agenda, last meeting minutes and relevant topic materials are to be distributed to members via their children and/or email at least 24 hours prior to the next scheduled meeting.

12.6 A sample agenda is found in [Appendix A](#).

12.7 Previous meeting minutes shall be reviewed and adopted first, advertised agenda issues second, and any new business items shall be discussed last.

12.8 Meeting minutes must be approved prior to public posting.

12.9 A sample meeting minute template is found in [Appendix B](#).

12.10 Accepted meeting minutes are to be recorded, maintained and posted on the school website, and made available to the school community in hard copy upon request.

12.11 If there is a disagreement concerning procedures used during the meetings, then "Roberts Rules of Order" will apply.

12.12 School Council members can call an emergency meeting at the request of 3 members.

## **13 Amendments**

13.1 Any proposed change or addition to the constitution or bylaws must be submitted in writing to the chair prior to the next scheduled meeting, and be placed on the agenda. The change must be presented in motion form, and passed by a 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority a School Council meeting where quorum has been met.

13.2 The constitution and its bylaws shall be reviewed annually, and/or when the Ministry of Education or the HWDSB necessitate a change.

**14 Annual Report**

14.1 Every School Council shall annually submit a written report on its activities to the principal of the school and the HWDSB (Reg. 612/00).

14.2 If the School Council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report on those activities (Reg. 612/00).

14.3 The principal, on behalf of the School Council, shall make available in print and/or on the school website for access by every parent of a student who, on the date the report is given, is enrolled in the school (Reg. 612/00).

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SAMPLE AGENDA**

# **AGENDA**

**R.A. Riddell Elementary School  
School Council Meeting  
DATE**

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Approval of Previous Minutes
3. Principal's Report
4. Teacher's Report
5. Naturalization & Beautification Committee Report
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

**Next Meeting: DATE**



**APPENDIX B**

**MEETING MINUTES TEMPLATE**

**R.A. Riddell School Council Meeting Agenda**  
**Date:**

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**Present:**  
**Absent:**  
**Absent with Regrets:**

Item #	Discussion	Name
1	Approval of Minutes	
2	Principal's Report	
3	Teacher's Report	
4	Chair's Report	
5	New Business	

## APPENDIX C

### SAMPLE PROXY VOTE REQUEST

I, the undersigned, hereby acknowledge that I am a member in good standing of the R.A. Riddell School Council and that the person designated below has the authority to vote for me at the meeting.

She/He shall vote:

\_\_\_\_\_ as they wish.

\_\_\_\_\_ as I have designated on the front side of this ballot.

This ballot must be presented to the chair or principal no later than 72-hours in advance of the date of the School Council meeting.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF THE DESIGNATED VOTER: (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF THE ABSENTEE VOTER: (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Absentee voter: \_\_\_\_\_