

Strathcona

School Council

Constitution

2014



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Constitution

Article I - Name

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

Article II – Non-Profit Organization

The Strathcona School Council will operate without financial gain for its members.

Article III – Purpose

The purpose of the Strathcona 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 the Board on matters that impact accountability and academic excellence.

Develop and implement a school fundraising plan to enhance school programs and facilities.

Article V – HWDSB Vision and Mission Statement

Vision: A future in which all students can achieve their full potential.

Mission: Educating students to become lifelong learners and contributing citizens in a challenging, changing and multi-cultural world.

Article VI – Composition of Council

	Minimum	Maximum
Parents/Guardians	8	18 – 50% Sage
Principal	1	1
Teacher Representative	1	3
Non-Teacher Representative	0	1
Senior Student	0	2
Community Representative	0	1
Total Council	10	26

Article VII – Duties and Scope of Council

School council may make recommendations to the principal or the HWDSB on any matter (Reg.612). 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 council, conflict resolution processes for internal school disputes and reimbursement by the board of expenses incurred by members and officers of council.
- b) Development and implementation plans for new education 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 (EQOA) reports on the results of tests of pupils and the communication of those plans to the public (Reg. 612.)

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 parents, including, a local code of conduct and appropriate dress for students in schools (Reg. 613).
- b) Development of implementation plans for new education initiatives (Reg. 613).
- 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).
- d) Preparation of the school profile.
- e) School budget priorities including local capital improvement plans/fundraising goals.
- f) School, community and parent communications strategies.
- g) Extra-curricular activities in the school and the use of these 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 council is responsible to ensure the election and appointment of new members to council as outlined in the council by-laws.

Article VIII – Code of Ethics

All members will:

- a) Be guided by our purpose, yearly goals and commitment to parent engagement.
- b) Maintain confidentiality.
- 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 to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- f) Declare a conflict of interest.
- g) Promote positive attitudes towards public education.
- h) Adhere to the HWDSB inclusivity policy.

Strathcona School Council Operating and Procedural By-Laws

By-Law 1 - Membership

It is expected that membership will reflect the diversity of the school community and council shall be comprised of:

- 1.1 Parents/guardians shall form the simple majority and must reside within the boundaries of the school or have board permission to attend the school.
- 1.2 Parents/guardians who are employed by HWDSB can be members of the school council provided they reside within the boundaries of the school or have board permission to attend the school, and disclose their employment to the School Council at the first meeting.
- 1.3 Council membership has been set at a maximum of 31 members, 8 member minimum.
- 1.4 Principal of the school.

- 1.5 At least one teacher elected by fellow teachers.
- 1.6 A member of HWDSB staff cannot be a voting member of a school council.
- 1.7 The council may include other members as deemed appropriate to reflect the school's community.

By-Law 2 – Nomination and Election Procedures

- 2.1 An election of new parent members of council shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the co-chairs after consulting with the principal (Reg. 612). Co-chairs are elected at an agreed upon date in June of the previous school year to allow for proper planning.
- 2.2 The principal shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, on behalf of the council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school (Reg. 612).
- 2.3 A person is qualified to be a parent member of school council if he or she is a parent or representative guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school (Reg. 612).
- 2.4 A person is not qualified to be a parent member if he or she is employed at the school or employed elsewhere by the HWDSB, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment (Reg. 612).
- 2.5 A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members of school council if he or she is a parent or representative guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school or if he or she is a teacher or non-teaching staff member, other than the principal or vice-principal, who is employed at the school (Reg.612) .
- 2.6 The schools will forward the nomination forms to the chair and vice-chair.
- 2.7 Self-nominations are welcome and encouraged and previous members of council can re-nominate themselves to remain on council for the following school year, prior to the completion of the previous year. Nomination forms must be received a week before the declared voting date to qualify.
- 2.8 The co-chairs will contact the nominees to confirm eligibility and interest in participating.

- 2.9 Elections will be accepted on a first-come basis based on the order in which nomination forms are received in the office. Otherwise, all members are acclaimed.
- 2.10 No individual campaign literature may be distributed or posted in the school. A fact sheet listing qualifications and goals may be distributed to households and/or at the candidates' forum.
- 2.11 The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot (Reg. 612) and a minimum of 4 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.

By-Law 3 – Term of Office

- 3.1 A person elected or appointed as a member of school council holds office from the date he or she is elected or appointed until the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections held in the next school year (Reg. 612).
- 3.2 A member of school council may be re-elected or re-appointed (Reg. 612).
- 3.3 A council member must have served a minimum of one year on council before holding an executive position, unless the council has been newly established.
- 3.4 The executive council co-chairs shall not serve more than 2 (two) consecutive terms in the same capacity and shall be elected annually.
- 3.5 Teachers shall be elected annually by their peers as their representative on school council.
- 3.6 Names of the council chair and vice-chair will be forwarded to the appropriate board official within 30 days of the election results.
- 3.7 Names of council members will be published to the school community in the first newsletter after the election and the how to contact us 'in every issue thereafter.

By-Law 4 - Vacancies

- 4.1 A vacancy in the office of chair or vice-chair, secretary and treasurer shall be filled by election from its current members.
- 4.2 Member attendance is important and valued and members are expected to attend regularly. Failure to attend 2 consecutive meetings will result in loss of voting privileges.

- 4.3 If a teacher or non-teaching representative vacancy occurs, the principal shall arrange for a replacement, where possible.

By-Law 5 – Officers/Members Roles and Responsibilities

Co-Chairs

- 5.1 Two co-chairs - one of which must be a representative of the SAGE program – must be parent members of the school council and shall be elected by the members of council (Reg. 612).
- 5.2 A person who is employed by the HWDSB cannot be a co-chair of council (Reg. 612).
- 5.3 The chairs primary role is to be the group's facilitator and community contact person for community related issues.
- 5.4 The chairs shall make every effort to encourage widespread participation of every council member.
- 5.5 Participate in orientation of new members.
- 5.6 The chairs are the mechanism for distributing and disseminating information.
- 5.7 Call and chair the council meetings that are open to the public and are held at the school.
- 5.8 Prepare the agenda, in consultation with the principal, based on the members' submitted topics, requests and information received and the principal's report.
- 5.9 Have the agenda and all relevant topic materials available at the school and e-mailed to all council members prior to the next scheduled meeting to facilitate proactive discussion and decision making.
- 5.10 Ensure the appropriate facilities and equipment is ready for the start of the meeting.
- 5.11 The chairs must be diligent in ensuring that any views presented in the capacity of chairperson represent the position of the council.
- 5.12 Consult with executive council members, staff of the school board and trustees, as requested.

- 5.13 Report back to council on any and all relevant information gained from meetings attended in the capacity of council chair(s).
- 5.14 Attend, or send a delegate to, the board workshop on Effective Meeting Procedures or other Board sponsored school council training.
- 5.15 Communicate regularly with the school principals and school community.
- 5.16 Ensure the school council information binder is updated and maintained at the school.
- 5.17 On behalf of the council, prepare and provide an annual report to every parent of students enrolled before the end of the school year (June).

Secretary

- 5.18 Record the minutes of the meetings. Send/E-mail minutes of meetings to council members at least 24 hours prior to the next meeting.
- 5.19 Maintain and post the minutes of the meeting, after they have been approved by the council.
- 5.20 Record and audit attendance at meetings.

Treasurer

- 5.21 To maintain financial records as required by the regulations.
- 5.22 To provide reports as required to school council and help in the preparation of the annual school council report.

Council Members

- 5.23 Act as representatives of the entire school community by consulting with parents of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by council.
- 5.24 Encourage parents and others within the school community to participate in education in the school.
- 5.25 Bring new community and school related items to the meetings.
- 5.26 Act as liaison between the school and the community.
- 5.27 Notify the chair(s) if unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

Principal

- 5.28 On behalf of school council, give written notice of the date, time, and location of the election to every parent of a student who is enrolled in the school (Reg. 612).
- 5.29 On behalf of the council, give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of council to every parent of a student who is enrolled in the school (Reg. 612).
- 5.30 Forward relevant information from HWDSB and the Ministry to the council.
- 5.31 Support and promote the council's activities.
- 5.32 Seek input from the council in areas that affect its purpose and objectives and the school community at large.
- 5.33 Act as a resource on laws, regulations, board policies and collective agreements.
- 5.34 Obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make informed decisions.
- 5.35 Communicate with the chair(s) of the council as required.
- 5.36 Ensure that copies of the meeting minutes are kept at the school.
- 5.37 Assist the council in encouraging participation of all groups within the school community.
- 5.38 Co-operatively help plan the agenda with the council chair(s).
- 5.39 On behalf of the council, post or give a copy of the annual report to every parent of a student enrolled in the school.

By-Law 6 - Committees

- 6.1 The following standing committees shall be established each year as needed: Fundraising and CCC. Other committees will be established as needed.
- 6.2 The SAGE Steering Committee will provide a report and recommendations to school council. SAGE business will be discussed and voted on at SAGE Steering Committee meetings.
- 6.3 Every committee of school council must include at least one (1) parent member of council (Reg. 612).
- 6.4 A committee may include persons who are not members of council (Reg. 612).

By-Law 7 - Voting

- 7.1 Each parent/guardian member of school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by council (Reg.612).
- 7.2 Each parent/guardian member of school council is entitled to one written proxy vote in votes taken by council.
- 7.3 Each member of a committee (By-Law 6) of school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee (Reg.612).
- 7.4 Any HWDSB staff members not attending the meeting as a parent/guardian member of school council are not entitled to vote in votes taken by school council.
- 7.5 Email communication may be used when school consultation is sought. Topics will be presented electronically or hard-copies to members. Members shall vote in accordance with the terms of the communication.

By-Law 8 - Delegations

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

By-Law 9 - Quorum

- 9.1 For the purpose of a vote quorum will be met if 50% + 1 of the elected members of council are present. No proxy or absentee votes are permitted without prior notice to the chair(s).
- 9.2 If it is known that a vote will be taken at the council meeting votes may be emailed to the chair(s) or principal in advance of the meeting.
- 9.3 No council business shall be transacted without a quorum.

By-Law 10 – Conflict Resolution

- 10.1 Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or 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 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 behavior 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 council has a complaint regarding the actions of one or more members of council, or the Bylaws and procedures, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the chair(s) in writing.
- 10.6 The chair(s) shall allow the complainant to voice their concerns at the next meeting of council. Prior to the meeting, the chair should provide the council with a copy of the complaint.
- 10.7 After the complainant has voiced his or her concerns and all other representations have been heard, council shall vote to resolve the matter.

By-Law 11 – Conflict of Interest

- 11.1 Should a council member, including the executive, find that he or she has a conflict with regards to council business, that member shall declare such conflict at the beginning of the meeting and absent themselves from discussion and voting.
- 11.2 Every declaration of conflict and the nature thereof shall be recorded in the minutes.

By-Law 12 – Meeting Procedures

- 12.1 Council shall meet monthly during the school year. December and June's meetings will be more informal and celebratory. June's meeting will also consist of the co-chair elections for the following year. Sub-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 council agrees to a longer meeting.
- 12.4 Agenda items are to be submitted to the chair(s) 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 The agenda shall have the following: a) item number; b) topic; c) person responsible; d) action – decision/discussion/information.
- 12.7 Previous meeting minutes shall be reviewed and adopted first, advertised agenda issues second and any new business items shall be discussed last. Meeting minutes must be approved prior to public posting.
- 12.8 If there is a disagreement concerning procedures used during meetings then “Roberts Rules of Order” will apply.
- 12.9 Accepted meeting minutes are to be recorded, maintained and posted at the school and made available to the community members upon request.
- 12.10 Council members can call an emergency council meeting at the request of three members.

By-Law 13 - Amendments

- 13.1 Any proposed change or addition to the constitution or by-laws 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 2/3rd majority at a general meeting with a minimum of ½ the membership in attendance.
- 13.2 The constitution and its by-laws shall be reviewed annually and or when the Ministry of Education or the HWDSB necessitate a change.

By-Law 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).
- 14.2 If the council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report on those activities (Reg.612).
- 14.3 The principal shall on behalf of school council, give a copy of the report to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the copy is given is enrolled in the school (Reg.612).