



Smithson PUBLIC SCHOOL

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Smithson Public School

School Council Bylaws/Terms of Reference

Smithson Public School operates a
School Council as required, by the
Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) and Ontario's Ministry of Education.

Bylaws Accepted: January 16, 2018
Revision: October 4, 2019

The following document is designed to assist new and existing Smithson Public School stakeholders understand the purpose and roles of School Council and its Code of Conduct. It identifies Bylaws created and approved by School Council and the relevant provincial/board policies and procedures that may affect it.*

*(*stakeholders may include: students, parents/guardians, staff, administration, and community members)*

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Smithson School Council is to support the creation of a safe, positive learning environment that encourages all parents or guardians to assume a responsible and active role in educational programs and services offered. We will provide opportunities for the sharing or exchanging of knowledge, opinions, and ideas on topics which affect the entire school community.

Who we are

The Smithson School Council is an advisory group that is a vital part of this school's activities, meeting at least four (4) times per year.

Role of the School Council

Through the active participation of parents or guardians, to improve student achievement and to share information with parents and the community, we want to help build a strong sense of community at our school, benefiting parents, the staff, the Principal and, most importantly, the students. It promotes communication and involvement in the school and a sense of pride and ownership.

In accordance with the provincial procedures and by-laws outlining of School Councils, an election for positions on the Smithson Public School Council, must be held within thirty days of the beginning of the school year. School Council is not a place for School Council members or parents to pursue personal issues for their own child.

Smithson Public School's Website: <https://smi.wrdsb.ca/>

Purpose of this document

The Education Act regulation 612/00, section 15. (1) to (3) indicates that all School Councils must make bylaws to govern the conduct of its affairs and requires at a minimum, the following:

1. A bylaw that governs **election procedures** and the **filling of vacancies** in the membership of the School Council.
2. A bylaw that establishes rules respecting participation in School Council proceedings in cases of **conflict of interest**.
3. Bylaws must not contravene any aspect of Education Act regulation 612/00 or any policy or procedure of the WRDSB.

All new and revised School Council bylaws must be approved by the School Council and recorded in the minutes.

School Council bylaws should be available in print and electronic versions.

Terms of Office

The terms of office for members of School Council must be from the date of the first meeting of School Council after the election, until the date of the first meeting of School Council after the election the following year. Members may seek additional terms of office.

Code of Conduct

All members shall:

- Consider the best interests of all students.
- Be supportive of the actions and decisions of the School Council
- Be guided by our school and school board's vision, policies and procedures.
- Act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a School Council, as identified by the Ontario Ministry of Education, Waterloo Region District School Board and Smithson Public School's Bylaws.
- Respect each member of our school community.
- Allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- Encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the Council and on what information can be shared.
- Limit discussions at School Council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- Use established communication channels (ie. email) when questions or concerns arise.
- Declare any conflict of interest.
- Not accept any payment or benefit financially through School Council involvement
- Be punctual at meetings and attend as many as possible

Election Procedures

1. Elections shall occur within the first thirty days of the start of each school year.
2. Each parent/guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at the school, and must declare if he or she is employed by the Waterloo Region District School Board.
3. Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent/guardian membership position on the council.
4. Only the names of the successful candidates shall be made public. A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file by the council for use in the event that a vacancy on the council occurs.
5. All individuals standing for election shall be notified of the results before the results are released to the school community.
6. The school council shall help the principal ensure that the names of new members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election.
7. At the first meeting of the new school council at the beginning of the year, the council shall set dates, times, and locations for its meetings throughout the year.

Composition

The Smithson School Council may be composed of the following people:

1. The **Principal (or Vice Principal)** of the school.
2. One **school staff representative** who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal; (this may include support staff or teachers)
3. One or more **community representative** appointed by the other members of the council.
4. A number of **parent members**, between nine to fifteen, if possible.

Taken from the Waterloo Region District School Board School Council Chairperson's Handbook.

Filling of Vacancies

1. Should an elected parent/guardian council position become vacant before the next election, the council shall fill the vacancy by appointment.
2. If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming a council member, the council may request that interested parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. The council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.
3. When a vacant spot on council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election

Conflict Resolution

A conflict of interest for a school council representative is any situation in which the individual's private interests may be incompatible or in conflict with his or her school council responsibilities.

Here is an example of a conflict of interest situation: The school council is discussing the construction of a new playground and possible contractors. The brother of a parent member of the school council is a building contractor, who intends to bid on the contract. The council member could, therefore, find him- or herself in a potential conflict of interest situation

Any time the school council does business with the potential for monetary gain/loss with any person, agency, or company, and a member of the school council has a vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency, or company, that member shall declare a conflict of interest and shall not discuss or vote on any such resolution relating to the matter.

School Council Membership for 2019/2020

Principal: Karen Moore

Teacher Representative: Laura Slemmon and Barb Kelly

Support Person: N/A

Community Member: TBD

Community Member:

Student Member: N/A

Co-Chairs: Ashley Harasym, Jennah Karmaschek

Secretary: Serenity Robertson

Treasurer: Karn Denkers

Fundraising Reps: Becky Mitchell and Marilyn Arbuckle

Parent Membership (Should be 9-15 members for elementary): Becky Mitchell, Cindy Carter, Vicki Folliott, Erin Rudland, Kim Davis, Michael Balan, Shelley MacRae

Note: A vacancy in the membership of the School Council does not prevent the Council from functioning.

Roles and Responsibilities of Executive Council Members

Principal Role: The Principal is the school leader and is ultimately responsibility for the administration and day-to-day operations of the school.

The role of the school Principal is to:

- Facilitate the establishment of the School Council and assist in its operation
- Notify parents of who is elected to School Council
- Consult with School Councils in accordance with Education Act regulation 612/00
- Consider the recommendations made by the School Council and respond to the School Council as to the outcome of their recommendations
- Facilitate the elections for the teacher and support staff and student representative
- Assist Chair in the preparation and distribution of the agenda to all School Council members at least one week prior to each meeting.

Chair/Co-chair Role: Each School Council is required to have at least a Chair, or if individual bylaws so provide, two Co-Chairs or a Chair and Vice-Chair.

- The Chair/Co-Chairs must be a parent member of the Council
- The chair is an elected official of the School Council

The role of the Chair/Co-chair is to:

- Communicate with the school community on a regular basis and ensures that parents of all students are consulted on matters under consideration
- Lead School Council meetings
- Provide leadership to the School Council and its members
- Monitor the implementation of School Council decisions
- Prepare a written agenda, in cooperation and consultation with the Principal
- Distribute meeting agenda to School Council members at least one week prior to each meeting
- Ensure that the minutes of School Council meetings are recorded and stored in paper and electronic format

Member Role: All members should be advocates of a strong School Council, be supportive of the actions and decisions of the School Council and encourage parents and community to become involved in School Council activities.

The role of the school Parent member is to:

- Participate regularly in School Council meetings
- Participate in information and training programs related to School Councils
 - Act as a link between the School Council, the community, and their respective group
 - Provide input to the recommendations and advice made by the School Council to the Principal

Treasurer Role:

The role of the Treasurer is to:

- Ensure that funds raised by the Council are tracked separately and records are maintained. The Treasurer will also provide a report to the School Council regularly.

Secretary:

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Ensure meetings are thoroughly and accurately recorded, gathering reports or relevant handouts as necessary.
- Minutes are to be completed within 10 days of the meeting and are to be reviewed by Co-Chairs and Principal before being distributed publicly.

Fundraising Representative Role:

- Research fundraising opportunities for our school and provide relevant information to present to members at school council meetings.
- Agree to lead the initiative and be the point of contact for the fundraising initiative.

Voting procedures

When required, we will reach decisions by majority vote.

Each school Council member is entitled to one vote on a motion except:

- The Principal who may not vote
- A member who has declared a conflict of interest in the issue at hand.

Quorum* is 50% of council members + 1 to vote on anything to move forward (no voting by email, you need to be present at the meetings to vote). If people miss 2 meetings in a row, then they will be removed from quorum and future council correspondence. Alternatively if you attend 2 meetings in a row you can be added to quorum. Quorum can fluctuate with participation on the council.

Without a quorum, issues may be discussed but council cannot consider or approve motions.

*Quorum is the minimum number of members of the school council that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

Conflict Resolution

School councils may find that they are not able to come to agreement on matters under their consideration. Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.

Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption, subject to a time limit set by the Chair, or Co-Chairs.

The Chair (Co-Chair)'s responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the point of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members. If no common ground can be identified, the Chair,(or Co-Chairs) will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further. If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair,(or Co-Chairs) may request the intervention of the school's Superintendent to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

Additional Resources

What is the “Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School Councils (WRAPSC)”?

It is an independent, parent/guardian-run, non-political organization designed to have a representative from each school in WRDSB for the purposes of: Assisting all school councils in their work with improving student achievement and wellbeing. Providing a single voice for school councils on matters of significant importance which impact all schools. Establish a forum for the exchange of ideas, concerns and best practices for school councils. The meetings provide a forum for networking, support, and sharing of concerns, information, achievements and best practices.

Meetings are held the first Tuesday of October, November, February, April and May, and the second Tuesday in January.

Contact WRAPSC at: wrapsc@gmail.com. More information can be found at: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/our-schools/get-involved/wrapsc/#.WgIKaE2oslc> or on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/WRAPSC>

What is the “Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)”?

The Ontario Ministry of Education mandated that a PIC be established in all school boards in Ontario with the purpose of: Supporting and enhancing meaningful parent involvement at the Board level to improve student achievement and well-being. Acting as an advisory body to the local school board to provide an important link to the Director of Education and trustees. Building parent engagement by providing information and advice to the school board on parent engagement and communication. Developing strategies/initiatives the Board can use to engage more parents to support their children’s learning at home/school. Sharing information with and supporting the work of school councils.

Contact PIC at: pic@wrdsb.on.ca
More information online at: <http://www.wrdsb.ca/pic/>