

Williamsburg Public School

School Council By-laws

School councils have been created to enhance students' learning through the cooperative efforts of parents, students, staff members and others in the community. Your school council is an advisory body of volunteers who work together to provide ideas and opinions to help the principal and sometimes the school district, make the school a better place for learning. Council members are to maintain a school-wide focus on all issues. Council meetings are not a forum for discussion about individual parents, students, staff, trustees or other council members.

Article 1: Regulations

These by-laws are made under the authority of the Ontario Regulation 612.00. In any case where these by-laws are deemed to be in conflict with the Ontario Regulation 612.00, or Ontario Regulation 613.00, the Ontario Regulation will supersede these by-laws.

Article 2: Organization Name

- A. The organization name shall be: "Williamsburg Public School Council", hereinafter referred to as "the School Council".
- B. The Waterloo Region District School Board will be hereinafter referred to as "the Board".
- C. This School Council may not be incorporated.

Article 3: Membership

- A. The School Council will be comprised, but not limited to:
 - Minimum of 5 parents / guardians of children enrolled in the school. Parents / guardians must form the majority of School Council Members.
 - One Chairperson or 2 Co-Chairpersons
 - One Treasurer
 - One Secretary
 - The Principal or Vice Principal (a non-voting member)
 - One volunteer Support Staff Member from the school, when available elected by the support staff.
 - One volunteer Teacher from the school, elected by the teaching staff when available
 - One Community Member (may include parents of students that have moved on) appointed by the School Council.
- B. School Council membership shall include elected Parents / Guardians of children enrolled in Williamsburg Public School.
- C. Membership of the School Council will be determined first by a call to parents/guardians for volunteers, then in the absence of sufficient volunteers, by recruitment.
- D. In order to become a voting School Council member, you must be present at the election meeting (September) or attend two consecutive meetings, during the school year.
- E. If 2 consecutive meetings are missed, during the school year, the member will relinquish School Council voting privileges, until 2 consecutive meetings have been attending again.

- F. Members will serve for a one year term but may seek additional terms of office. Terms start from the date of the first meeting of School Council after the election, until the date of the first meeting after election the following year.
- G. School Council positions that become vacant during the term will be filled by vote by Council. A vacancy in the membership of the School Council does not prevent the School Council from functioning.

Article 4: Committees

- A. School Council may establish committees.
- B. Committees will report to School Council with verbal updates and recommendations. School council may vote on recommendations as necessary.
- C. There must be at least one voting Parent / Guardian member on each committee.
- D. Committee decision-making will be by consensus or vote. The Principal is not to vote.
- E. Committees may include, but not be limited to:
Fundraising, Parent Education, Special Events, etc.
- F. A viable committee will consist of 3 or more voting members with an agreed upon chair by the committee.
- G. Committees are advisory in nature to Williamsburg Public School council, school staff and Principal

Article 5: Election of Parent / Guardian Members

- A. All parents / guardians of students enrolled at Williamsburg Public school are qualified to stand for election, unless they are employed at the school.
- B. Parents / guardians of Williamsburg Public School that are employed by the Board, working at locations other than Williamsburg Public School, are qualified to stand for election if they have taken reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote that they are so employed.
- C. Elections shall take place in the first 30 days of each school year.
- D. The date for election of School Council will be determined by the Chairperson (or Co-Chairs) after consulting with the Principal
- E. The Principal will notify all parents / guardians at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, of the election date, time and location.
- F. Voting will take place by secret ballot
- G. The Chair will appoint two vote counters.
- H. Vote counting will be open to scrutiny by all candidates.
- I. The candidates receiving the most votes will be declared elected.

Article 6: Election of School Council Officers

- A. The School Council shall elect a Chairperson or Co-chairs of the School Council within the first 30 days of the school year.
- B. The School Council shall elect or appoint a secretary and a treasurer of the School Council within the first 30 days of the school year.

Article 7: Roles of All School Council Members

The members of the School Council shall:

- Participate in council meetings;
- As a part of common courtesy, call or email the Chairperson at least one day in advance if unable to attend a meeting, and also provide input or comments on the agenda items.
- Arrive at meetings prepared and on time. Familiarize themselves with items on the agenda. Do homework before the meeting by calling or emailing the Chairperson,

Principal or other members for clarification if necessary. Be prepared to report on any action items they agreed to take care of.

- Participate in information and training programs;
- Act as a link between the School Council and the community;
- Encourage the participation of parents and other people within the community;
- Participate on sub-committees and report on the activities of sub-committees.

The Chair/Co-Chair of the School Council shall:

- Facilitate council meetings;
- Provide leadership to the Council and its members;
- Respond to and follow-up on Parent/Community input, ensuring regular communication with the school community;
- Monitor and implement Council decisions;
- Send out notice to all members for items to be considered for the agenda.
- Prepare a written agenda, in cooperation and consultation with the Principal, and ensure distribution to all Council members at least one week prior to each meeting;
- Ensure that the minutes of Council meetings are recorded, distributed and stored in the School Council Handbook available in the School office;
- Meet regularly with the School Principal to discuss agendas and School Council activities;
- Represent School Council with senior board staff/trustees and at board or regional assemblies Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School Councils (WRAPSC) , as appropriate;
- Represent Council at board or regional assemblies, or designate another member of Council to do so;
- Work with the principal to follow/ establish election procedures for the following school year.
- Prepare school council annual report.
- *The Secretary of the School Council Shall:*
- Take minutes and distribute them to council members to be voted on and approved at the next meeting
- Ensure minutes are kept on file in the School Office;
- Photocopy and distribute additions to minutes;
- Other duties as assigned by chair

The Treasurer of the School Council shall:

- be a signing authority for the Council banking arrangements with the Principal;
- set up financial records and maintain appropriate accounting records;
- other duties as assigned by chair
- ensure council is following WRDSD regulations
- provide monthly and annual reporting of financial records

The Principal of the School shall:

- facilitate the establishment of the School Council and assist in its operation;
- notify parents/guardians of who is elected to School Council;
- consult with School Councils in accordance with Ontario Regulation 612/00 considering and responding to recommendations made by the Council;
- facilitate volunteer teacher and support representatives;
- communicate the work of the School Council to all teachers and support staff at the school;
- assist the chair in the preparation and distribution of the agenda to all School Council members at least one week prior to each meeting;
- assist the School Council in communicating with the school community;
- provide written notice of meetings and elections. This notice may be given through a notice or newsletter sent home with every student for sharing with their

- parents/guardians and through a posting on the School Council bulletin board or web site;
- maintain a copy of the School Council minutes at the school for examination, without charge, by any person. Minutes and records must be kept for four years;
- Post a copy of the School Council Annual Report on the school website and Schoolday
- provide for the prompt distribution of Ministry and Board materials designated for School Council members.
- Appoint a designate if unable to attend the School Council meeting (usually the vice-principal)

The role of the Teacher is to:

- Provide the perspective of a teacher in School Council decision making and discussion;
- Provide expertise as an educator to discussions related to the curriculum and educational practices;
- Request input from other teachers with regard to School Council discussions where required; and
- Communicate the work of the School Council to all teachers at the school.

The role of the support staff is to:

- Provide the perspective of a member of the school support staff in School Council decision making and discussion;
- Provide expertise from their particular role in the school where applicable;
- Request input from other support staff with regard to School Council discussions where required;
- Communicate the work of the School Council to all support staff at the school.

Role of the Community Representative is to:

- Provide the perspective of a member of the school community in School Council decision making and discussion;
- Provide particular expertise and information from their own background to the School Council where appropriate; and
- Assist in building community partnerships and relationships that enhance student learning.

Process for Identifying Community Representation:

School Council should define its community and then identify and appoint community representatives.

- Profile the community. Discussion among School Council members will help to profile your particular school community. The Principal will be able to help in this area unless they are new to the school in which case they will appreciate your input. School Council members should make sure they take into account all the families in their school. Identifying where the needs of your community lie will help identify a Community Representative that will be able to complement the members of School Council;
- Identify potential community representatives. Community representatives do not have to live/work in the immediate school community. Members might come from:
 - industry groups or associations (e.g. Board of trade or Chamber of Commerce);
 - social agencies;
 - health-care service organizations;
 - non-profit organizations;
 - senior citizens;
 - parks and recreation department;
 - cultural agencies and arts groups;
 - service clubs;
 - neighbourhood representatives; and

- Federation of Agriculture community club;
- Define the contribution that you would like the Community Representative to make;
- Check to see how many Community Representatives you may appoint in your By-laws. In the absence of any By-law, you must appoint one;
- Decide on who you will approach; and
- Authorize the Chair to invite them to be the Community Representative(s).

The Community Representative shall:

- Provide the perspective of a member of the school community in School Council decision making and discussion;
- Provide particular expertise and information from their own background to the School Council where appropriate; and
- Assist in building community partnerships and relationships that enhance student learning.

Assembly Representative of the Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School Councils:

- Is automatically the School Council Chair, or the Chair may delegate this role to another parent/guardian on the School Council with the agreement of the other members of the School Council. The Chair is asked to notify the Assembly of who will represent the School Council after the first School Council meeting;
- Is provided with an email on the Board's email system (WaterWorks) and access to the Assembly conference on this site in order to communicate with other School Councils and the Steering Committee of WRAPSC and to receive information about upcoming meetings, minutes and educational issues. Access to this email can be through the representative's own computer, through the Internet or through access to a computer at the school. This access can be arranged through the Principal;
- Is responsible for forwarding any items of interest on WaterWorks to the other members of their School Council;
- Is to comply with the Board guidelines for use of the WaterWorks system, which is provided on sign-up. Email access may be denied if this does not occur;
- Is authorized to speak on behalf of the School Council at the Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School Council meetings or through the WaterWorks conference and should consult with other School Council members before giving input on major issues. When a vote is required by the Assembly, the representative has one vote on behalf of their School Council;
- Represents the view of the School Council at the Assembly, not their personal view;
- Will communicate information/decisions from the Assembly to the other members of their School Council at each meeting, as a regular agenda item; and
- May utilize the support/networking aspect of the Assembly on behalf of their School Council at any time if they require assistance.

Article 8: Meetings

- A. School Council meetings will be held a minimum of four times per year with more meetings scheduled as desired.
- B. All meetings are open to the public and will be held in the Williamsburg Public School Library from approximately 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm on the dates to be determined by the School Council at the first meeting of the school year or at the call of the Chairperson or Co-Chairs.
- C. A meeting cannot be held unless a majority of voting council members are present and a majority of the members are parent/guardian members
- D. Decision making at the meetings shall be by consensus.
- E. A quorum for the executive is three. A quorum for the School council is six. A vote cannot take place without quorum being reached.
- F. By-laws to be reviewed annual (September)

Article 9: Bylaws

Bylaws may be amended through a two thirds majority vote of the members of the School Council present. Amendments must be on the Agenda and distributed in advance of the Council meeting.

Article 10: Annual Report

- An Annual Report detailing the Council's goals, activities and achievements will be prepared by the Executive and the Principal to be submitted to the School Board with a copy to the School Superintendent.
- Copies of the report shall be distributed to each Council member and all parents/guardians of children enrolled at the school.

Article 11: Conflict of Interest

- When any member has an interest (stands to make financial gain and/or gain advantage for an individual student or family), the member shall disclose the interest and the general nature of the conflict prior to any consideration of the matter at the meeting.
- The member shall not take part in the discussion of, or vote on any question in respect of the matter.
- The member shall not attempt in any way, whether before, during or after the meeting, to influence the voting on any such question.
- The School Council will record any disclosure of a conflict of interest in the minutes of the meeting.

Article 12: Motions

- Any voting member of the council may make a motion at any meeting, with no seconder required
- Any parent may propose a motion for the council to consider at any meeting. If another voting member seconds the motion, the chair will put the motion before the council.
- If a majority of the voting council approves consideration of a motion as proposed from the previous point, the motion will be considered by the council in the same manner as any other motion.
- Each voting member of the council will have one vote on every motion
- A voting member of the council may abstain from voting on any motion
- A motion is approved if a majority of the voting council members present at the meeting vote in favor of it.

Article 12: Resolution of Conflicts

Resolving disputes internally

- **Council members will demonstrate respect for other council members at all times.**
- Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- The chair will ensure all members of the council have the opportunity to speak.
- Speakers will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- The chair will focus the discussion on council issues.
- The chair will clarify speaker statements, identify common points of view and attempt to achieve a consensus among council members

Handling disruptive behavior

- If a council member becomes disruptive during a meeting, the chair shall call for order

- If the disruptive behavior continues, or order cannot be restored, the chair may ask for the removal of the disruptive individual(s). The reason for removal should be documented in the minutes.
- Removing a member from a council meeting may not prevent member from participating in future council meetings after agreeable mediation has occurred.

Resolving disputes through mediation

- If it is apparent that a dispute cannot be resolved internally, the chair may ask the Superintendent of Education to help through a mediation process.

Reference Document - Government of Ontario's School Councils: A Guide For Members 2001

file: Williamsburg Public School Bylaws
September 2015