

Maple Ridge Elementary School Council
Constitution/By-Laws

Approved by Council Members
Maple Ridge Elementary School

May 2022

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1. CONSTITUTION

I. NAME AND DEFINITIONS

- 1) The organization shall be called the Maple Ridge Elementary School Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council.
- 2) The school community is defined as persons living within the attendance boundaries of the school, parents/guardians with children attending the school, school staff, students and guests invited by the Council.
- 3) Any reference to parents/guardians herein shall mean parents/guardians of students attending Maple Ridge Elementary School.
- 4) Any reference to the “Board” herein shall mean the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

II. PURPOSE

- 1) The objectives of the Council are:
 - a. To develop a strong relationship between home, school and the wider community served by the school, to enhance educational opportunities for all students, and to help each student develop to his or her potential;
 - b. To seek the views and opinions of the school community on the operation of the school and the programs and services provided;
 - c. To provide advice to the principal and, as appropriate to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and/or its senior staff, on the development and implementation of policies, programs and services affecting the school;
 - d. To be an effective voice for promoting the interests of the school, and to actively support the school in meeting the educational, social and recreational needs of students; and
 - e. To conduct fundraising activities for the purpose of financially assisting with supplies and activities deemed beneficial by staff and council.

III. AFFILIATIONS

- 1) The Council may seek affiliation with other organizations that have similar purposes (i.e. Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils “OCASC”).
- 2) Affiliations with other organizations, including any “umbrella” organization of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board school councils, or any subsequent

changes in such affiliation, shall require a majority of votes at a meeting for which proper notice has been given to the membership.

IV. MEMBERS/OFFICERS

- 1) The Council shall consist of the following voting members/officers who shall have equal privileges and voting rights:
 - a. A minimum of 9 members, at least 5 members being parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school:
 - i. Chair/Two Co-Chairs;
 - ii. Treasurer;
 - iii. Secretary;
 - iv. Communications coordinator (optional);
 - v. Fundraising coordinator (optional);
 - vi. One community representative;
 - vii. Student representative (optional);
 - viii. One teacher employed in the school (other than the principal or vice-principal); and/or one non-teaching employee of the school; and/or one extended day program (EDP) staff;
 - b. the following non-voting member(s):
 - i. the school principal and/or vice principal.
- 2) Membership in the Council shall be determined in the following ways:
 - a. Parents/guardians shall be elected/acclaimed by parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school and parent/guardian members must form the majority of school council members;
 - b. The community representative shall be appointed by the Council;
 - c. The school principal and/or the vice principal shall be designated non-voting members of the Council;
 - d. The teacher representative shall be elected/acclaimed by the members of the teaching staff; and
 - e. The non-teaching staff member and/or the EDP staff shall be elected/acclaimed by the members of the non-teaching staff.
- 3) Council members and officers shall be elected/acclaimed/appointed within 30 days of the beginning of the current school year.
- 4) Positions shall be held from the date of election/appointment/acclamation to the date of the next Council election or until successors are elected/appointed. Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms of office. There is no limit to the number of annual terms of office to which a Council member may

be elected. If the position is not acclaimed, officers are elected by majority vote.

- 5) In the event of a vacancy, if there remains a parent/guardian majority on Council, the Council may choose not to fill the vacant position. If the majority of parents on Council is not maintained, the vacant position may be filled by appointment of the Council for the remaining term of office from among members of the School Community who meet the requirements set for the vacant positions. When a vacancy has been filled, the new member's term shall expire on the date of the next election.
- 6) There will be no honorarium paid to members of the Council.

V. MEETINGS

- 1) There shall be one Annual General Meeting in June of each year open to all members of the school community at which Council shall appoint an Election Committee (see Section XII for election procedure and responsibilities).
- 2) At least six meetings shall be held in a school year. Meeting dates shall be circulated to parents/guardians. The community at large may be given notice of meetings and informed of Council activities by such means as posting on community notice boards, school website, e-mail notifications, newsletters and/or other local media. Meetings can be held either in-person or virtually using Google Meet or other virtual meeting platform when required. If an in-person meeting is not feasible, the virtual meeting details will be circulated to parents/guardians and staff.
- 3) Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair/ Co-Chair based on the request of any Council member.
- 4) To form a quorum as required for a meeting of the Council:
 - a. a majority of the current members of the school council must be present; and
 - b. a majority of the members present shall be parent/guardian members.
- 5) The duties of the Chair/Co-Chair can be assumed by the Secretary or other Council member in their absence.
- 6) Voting rights regarding the disposition of Council funds shall be extended to all parents/guardians in attendance at the Council meeting.
- 7) Meetings shall be open to members of the general public and no such member may be excluded from the meeting except for disruptive behaviour. Discussion at

meetings will be open to members of the school community, as defined in Article I.

- 8) The Council will be responsible for the proper conduct of its members, including a requirement for attendance at meetings and as such may invoke a disciplinary process, including removal from membership.
- 9) Elected officers shall make every reasonable effort to attend all Council meetings. If more than two meetings are missed without reasonable notice to the Chair/Co-Chair or Secretary, the officer shall be contacted by the Chair or Secretary and may be removed at the discretion of Council.
- 10) A Council member may be removed from Council if his or her actions or behaviour are inappropriate or detrimental to the school or Council. A Council meeting will be scheduled for the vote to remove the member from Council.

VI. COMMITTEES

- 1) The Council may establish permanent standing committees, ad hoc or other special purpose committees as necessary. Membership on such committees shall not be restricted to members of the Council, although each committee shall include at least one parent/guardian member of the Council. The Council shall appoint the Chair of any committee.
- 2) Committees may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Constitution Committee;
 - b. Fundraising Committee;
 - c. Safety Committee;
 - d. Communications Committee;
 - e. School Grounds Greening Committee.

VII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

- 1) Meetings shall be conducted according to principles similar to Robert's Rules of Order where applicable e.g. motion, seconded, discussion, majority rule.
- 2) In the event that there are extenuating circumstances that preclude calling a meeting, discussions and/or voting via electronic mail is acceptable. Decisions rendered through a quorum must be communicated to all Council members. Copies of the electronic discussion and/or vote are to be added to the next Council minutes.

VIII. AMENDMENTS

- 1) The Constitution may be amended by approval of a motion by two-third majority of members of Council present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose, provided that at least two weeks' notice is given for such a motion and details of the proposed amendments are circulated to all members with that notice. The Constitution must be reviewed at least every three years.

IX. SCHOOL COUNCIL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) **The Council**, while maintaining a school-wide focus:
 - a. Shall establish its goals, priorities, and procedures;
 - b. May organize information and training sessions to enable members of the Council to develop their skills as council members; and
 - c. Shall promote the best interests of the school community as a whole.
- 2) Responsibilities of Council members shall be as follows:
 - a. **The Chair/ Co-Chair;**
 - i. Calls school council meetings;
 - ii. Prepares the agenda for school council meetings;
 - iii. Chairs school council meetings;
 - iv. Ensures that the minutes of school council meetings are recorded and maintained* (NB*:The minutes should include, or have attached to them, any advice provided in writing to the principal, Board and/or senior staff by the council and the written response(s) in reply);
 - v. May participate or assign an alternate to participate in information and training programs;
 - vi. Communicates with the school principal and trustees as required;
 - vii. Ensures that there is regular communication with the school community;
 - viii. Prepares the annual report of the school council for submission to the school principal and the Director of Education;
 - ix. Ensures that a current principal profile is on file with the Board by October 31 of each year;
 - x. Ensures that the constitution/by-laws of the Council are up to date and are reviewed every three years by the Council; and
 - xi. Acts as a signing officer for the Council.

b. **The Principal** - The Board requires all principals to work in a meaningful and co-operative way with school councils. The principal shall:

- i. Facilitate the establishment of the school Council and assist in its operation;
- ii. Support and promote the Council's activities;
- iii. Seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility;
- iv. Act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies, and collective agreements;
- v. Obtain and provide information, including the budgets for the school and for school-generated funds, required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions;
- vi. Communicate with the Chair/Co-Chair of the Council;
- vii. Ensure that accurate minutes and records are kept available for at least six years and records of all financial transactions are kept available for at least seven years at the school for examination, without charge, by any person;
- viii. Assist the Council in communicating with the school community;
- ix. Encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community, in the life of the school and the activities of the school's Council; and
- x. Appoint the Vice Principal to act in their behalf if necessary.

c. **The Secretary;**

- i. Circulates draft minutes and agenda to members before meetings; (NB: may be circulated by the Chair/Co-chair)
- ii. Maintains a full and accurate account of all Council meetings, ensuring the minutes are signed by the Chair/Co-Chair following approval by the Council (NB: minutes are considered to be signed electronically once uploaded to the school website);
- iii. Prepares correspondence as required;
- iv. Ensures the safe-keeping of Council records; and
- v. Ensures that the minutes and records of the Council are passed to the successor Council and/or to the school.

d. **The Treasurer;**

- i. Takes charge of all Council finances, ensures the safe keeping of the Council finances and provides accounting as required,
- ii. Accounts for money received and committed on behalf of Council, receives and deposits revenue, receives invoices or receipts for

- amounts owing by Council, arranges with the appropriate party for payment and/or reimbursement for purchases;
- iii. Presents a financial report at each meeting, provides an annual financial report to the Council and the membership at large;
 - iv. Ensures there is an annual audit performed on the financial report led by a person other than the Treasurer; and
 - v. Acts as a signing officer for the Council.

e. The Communications Coordinator (optional);

- i. Develops a communications plan for the current school year;
- ii. Liaises with sub-committees to ensure consistent messaging to the school community;
- iii. Develops communication materials for engaging the school community; and
- iv. Maintains Council's electronic mailing account.

f. The Fundraising Coordinator (optional);

- i. Oversees the fundraising activities for the school council;
- ii. Manages the fundraising committee;
- iii. Develops a plan for the academic year outlining the fundraising initiatives that have been decided upon by the fundraising committee;
- iv. Attends Council meetings regularly and provides a report on the various fundraisers; and
- v. Works with the Communications Coordinator to come up with messages regarding upcoming initiatives.

g. Community Representative;

- i. Contributes to the discussions of the Council;
- ii. Represents the community's perspective;
- iii. May participate on any committees established by the Council; and
- iv. Helps build partnership and links between the school and the community.

h. Student Representative (optional, upon consultation with the school Council, a student may be appointed by the Principal and/or Vice Principal);

- i. Contributes to school and school council discussions;
- ii. Solicits views of students to share with the Council;

- iii. Participates on council committees; and
- iv. In consultation with Council and/or the Communications Officer, communicates with students on behalf of the Council.

i. All Council Members;

- i. Participate in Council meetings and any committees;
- ii. May participate in information and training programs;
- iii. Act as a link between the school council and the community;
- iv. Encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community;
- v. One member may be appointed to act as third signing officer for the Council when required; and
- vi. Observe the Council's code of ethics and established by-laws.

k. Should the Council choose to become a member of OCASC and an OCASC representative is obtained, the role and responsibilities of the OCASC representative are as follows:

- i. Attends Ottawa-Carleton Assembly meetings on behalf of the Council and speaks for the Council at such meetings (when advised by Council to do so);
- ii. Provides to Council an oral and/or written report of OCASC meetings; and
- iii. Acts as the Council's link to the Assembly and to other organizations with purposes similar to the Council.

i. Teacher/non-teacher/EDP representatives:

- i. Participate in Council meetings;
- ii. Act as a link between the school Council and the school; and
- iii. Participate in Council votes.

X. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- 1) While it is the goal of Council to achieve consensus through discussion if a conflict arises it shall be dealt with as follows:
- 2) If a council member(s) or participant(s) become disruptive, the Chair/Co-Chair shall ask for order. If order is not restored, the individual(s) may be directed to leave the meeting (removal from one meeting does not prevent the individual(s) from participating in future meetings). The Chair/Co-Chair may request the disputing individual(s) to participate in a special meeting to arrive at a mutually

acceptable solution. This should not be construed as a meeting of the Council.

- 3) If an issue cannot be resolved at the local level, the Chair/Co-Chair or Principal will request the Superintendent of Schools to provide direction.

XI. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 1) Members of the Council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decisions of the Council.
- 2) Should an issue or agenda item arise during a council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest situation, he or she shall declare a conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.
- 3) A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.

XII. ELECTION PROCEDURE

- 1) As noted in Article IV, elections shall occur within the first thirty days of the beginning of the current school year. Elections need not be held unless there are more persons than available positions.
- 2) Each parent/guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child enrolled at the school, and must declare if he/she is employed by the OCDSB.
- 3) Each parent/guardian in attendance at the elections meeting shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant membership position.
- 4) The Election Committee appointed at the previous Annual General Meeting shall plan the election process, gather nominations, and run the election. No one standing for election, or the spouse of anyone standing for election, shall be a member of the Election Committee.
- 5) The Election Committee shall;
 - a. Provide nomination forms;
 - b. Ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and elections date(s), location, and time, at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the election;
 - c. Request a profile from all candidates and make these available to the

- electorate;
 - d. Conduct the elections by secret ballot or if no objections, by show of hands;
 - e. Count the ballots;
 - f. Help the Principal notify all candidates of the results; and
 - g. Keep all results and related information confidential.
- 6) Only the names of the successful candidates shall be made public.
- 7) All candidates shall be notified of the results before they are released to the school community.
- 8) The Council shall assist the Principal in publicizing the names of new members to the school community within thirty (30) days of the election.

2. APPENDIX A

Mission and Goals

1) Mission Statement:

Maple Ridge Elementary School Council will facilitate the enrichment of our children's educational experience.

2) Goals:

- i. Communicate with the school community on a regular basis;
- ii. Partner with school staff and parents/guardians to continuously improve the quality of our children's education;
- iii. Partner with school staff and parents/guardians to increase school spirit;
- iv. Develop a list of parent/guardian volunteers;
- v. Increase parent/guardian participation at Council meetings;
- vi. Establish partnerships with companies and people who can help the Council achieve its objectives; and
- vii. Encourage the school community to participate in Council activities.

3. APPENDIX B

Member Code of Conduct

- 1) Members shall;**
 - i. Consider the best interests of all students;
 - ii. Be guided by the school's and the Board's mission statements;
 - iii. Become familiar and act in accordance with the school's policies and operating practices;
 - iv. Maintain the highest standards of integrity;
 - v. Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community;
 - vi. Treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption;
 - vii. Encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
 - viii. Acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the Council;
 - ix. Not disclose confidential information;
 - x. Limit discussions at meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole;
 - xi. Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community; and
 - xii. Declare any conflict of interest.