

Maple Ridge Elementary School Council

Constitution/By-Laws

***Approved by Council Members
Maple Ridge Elementary School***

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1. CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 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.

ARTICLE 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; and
 - 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.
 - e. To conduct fundraising activities for the purpose of financially assisting with supplies and activities deemed beneficial by staff and council.

ARTICLE 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.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERS

- 1) The Council shall consist of the following voting members who shall have equal privileges and voting rights:
 - a. Up to eleven (11) parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school consisting of:
 - i. Chair/ Two Co-Chairs;
 - ii. Treasurer;
 - iii. Secretary;
 - iv. Communications coordinator (optional);
 - v. Fundraising coordinator (optional);
 - vi. Up to eight members at large;
 - vii. One community representative;
 - viii. Student representative (optional);
 - ix. One teacher employed in the school, other than the principal or vice-principal;
 - x. One non-teaching employee of the school
 - xi. One EDP staff and/or parent; and
 - b. the following non-voting member:
 - 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 shall be a designated non-voting member 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 shall be elected/acclaimed by the members of the non-teaching staff.
- 3) Council members shall be elected/acclaimed/appointed within 30 days of the beginning of the current school year.
 - 4) The term of office for elected/appointed/acclaimed positions shall commence on the date of election/appointment/acclamation and end on the date of the next Council election. Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms of office. The Chair/Co-Chair position shall be limited to two years. In the event that no other candidate presents himself/herself for the position of Chair/Co-Chair, the Council may with unanimous consent extend the term of this position.
 - 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 at the date of the next election.

- 6) There will be no honorarium paid to members of the Council.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

- 1) The Officers shall be the Chair or Two Co-Chairs, Treasurer and Secretary. The duties of the officers and of members of the Council at large are set forth in Article X(2) herein.
- 2) Officers shall be elected by the Council at a meeting for which proper notice has been given within 30 calendar days of the beginning of the current school year (as per Article IV). This can be done at the same meeting as the election/acclamation of Council, once the Council has been established.
- 3) The Chair/ Co-Chair of the Council must be a member representing the parents and guardians and must be elected by council amongst

parent/guardian representatives. All other officer positions may be held by any other parent member of the Council.

- 4) Subject to the limitations set out *in* Article IV, officers shall remain in office until their successors are elected or appointed.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

- 1) There shall be one Annual General Meeting in June of each year, open to all members of the school community. At this meeting, the Council shall appoint an Election Committee, the responsibilities of which are set out in Article XIII below.
- 2) Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at the school, at least six times in each school year. Notice of Council meetings will be posted on the school's notice boards and circulated to parents and guardians in the school's newsletter. In addition, the community at large may be given notice of meetings and informed of Council activities by such means as posting on community notice boards or the Council Website or giving notice in community newsletters or other local media.
- 3) Special meetings of the Council may be held at the call of the Chair/Co-Chair, on the written request of one half of the members or more given to the Secretary.
- 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 at the meeting; and
 - b. a majority of the members present shall be parent/guardian members.
- 5) In the event that neither the Chair/Co-Chair are in attendance at a meeting, the duties of the Chair/Co-Chair can be assumed by the Secretary or another Council member.
- 6) In matters relating to disposition of funds available to the Council, voting rights shall be extended to all parents/guardians in attendance at the Council meeting.
- 7) Meetings of the Council shall be open to members of the general public and no such member may be excluded from the meeting except for disruptive behavior. 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) Members of Council 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 member 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 behavior are inappropriate or detrimental to the school or Council. A Council meeting will be scheduled for the vote to remove the member from Council.

ARTICLE VII - COMMITTEES

- 1) The Council may establish permanent standing committees, ad hoc or other special purpose committees, as deemed necessary from time to time, and appoint the members thereto: 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.

ARTICLE VIII - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

- 1) The rules contained in Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of meetings of the Council in all cases where they are applicable, and are not inconsistent with any by-laws or special rules the Council may adopt from time to time.
- 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.

ARTICLE IX - 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.

ARTICLE X - 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;
 - vii. Ensures that there is regular communication with the school community;
 - viii. Consults with senior Board staff and trustees, as required;
 - ix. prepares the annual report of the school council, including, if the council engages in fund-raising activities, a report of these activities (which may be prepared by the Chair of the Fundraising Committee or the Treasurer), for submission to

- the school principal and the Director of Education;
- x. Ensures that a current principal profile is on file with the Board by October 31 of each year;
 - xi. Ensures that parents/guardians of all students enrolled in the school have the opportunity for consultation about matters under consideration by the Council;
 - xii. Ensures that the constitution/by-laws of the Council are up to date and are reviewed annually by the Council;
 - xiii. Works collaboratively with school council members to assign and delegate the roles and responsibilities of the school council; and
 - xiv. 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, as required;
- vii. Ensure that accurate minutes and records, including records of all financial transactions, are kept available for at least four years at the school for examination without charge by any person;
- viii. Assist the Council in communicating with the school community; and
- 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.

c. **The Secretary;**

- i. Ensures that adequate notice of meetings, the agenda*, and previous minutes are circulated to all members within

- prescribed time lines (*as the agenda is prepared by the Chair/Co-Chair, it may be circulated by the Chair/Co-Chair);
- ii. Maintains a full and accurate account of all Council meetings, and ensures that the minutes are signed by the Chair/Co-Chair following their adoption by the Council;
 - iii. Prepares correspondence as required;
 - iv. Ensures the safe-keeping of Council records;
 - v. Provides for inspection of the minutes and records of the Council to any member of Council or members of the school community, on request;
 - vi. Ensures that a copy of all minutes for the current school year are posted to the MRES website under the School Council link accessible to any member of the school community; and
 - vii. Ensures that the minutes and records of the Council during the council's tenure are passed on to the successor council and to the school.

d. The Treasurer;

- i. Takes charge of any finances of the Council, ensures the safe keeping of the Council finances as in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Board, and provides an accounting thereof as may be required from time to time;
- ii. Provides an annual financial report to the Council and the membership at large;
- iii. Ensures there is an annual audit performed on the financial report led by a person other than the Treasurer;
- iv. Performs such other related duties as may be assigned by the Chair/Co-Chair of Council from time to time; 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. In consultation with Council, develops communication materials for engaging the school community *ie.* Council update in school newsletter; 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 including, but not limited to, recruiting volunteers, chairing meetings to discuss initiatives, communicating with volunteers, establishing volunteer and parent feedback forms, establishing volunteer spreadsheets including contact information;
- iii. Develop a plan for the academic year outlining the fundraising Initiatives that have been decided upon by the fundraising committee;
- iv. Appoints fundraising leaders to each of the activities;
- v. Attends Council meetings regularly and reports to the Council on the status of the various fundraisers;
- vi. Works with the Communications Coordinator to effectively communicate to the school community the status of each fundraising initiative (event launch and event wrap-up).

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;
- iv. Helps build partnership and links between the school and the community; and
- v. Observes the Council's code of ethics and established by-laws.

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. Council Members;

- i. Participate in Council meetings;
- ii. May participate in information and training programs;
- iii. Act as a link between the school council and the community;
and
- 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.

j. 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.

k. 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.

ARTICLE XI - CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- 1) While it is the goal of Council to achieve consensus through discussion, in the event that a conflict arises, the conflict 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 Chair/Co-Chair may direct the individual(s) to leave the meeting (The removal from one meeting does not prevent the individuals from participating in future meetings of Council). The Chair/Co-Chair may request the disputing individual(s) to participate in a special meeting to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting

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.

ARTICLE XII - 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.

ARTICLE XIII - ELECTION PROCEDURE

- 1) As noted in Article **VI** above, 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 seeking a position than are required to fill the number of 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 or she is employed by the school board.
- 3) Each parent/guardian in attendance at the meeting wherein the elections take place shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent/guardian membership position on the Council.
- 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, one from each parent/guardian in attendance at the meeting wherein the elections take place;
 - 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 individuals standing for election shall be notified of the results before the results 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 days of the election.

2. APPENDIX A

ARTICLE I - 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 the school staff and parents/ guardians to continuously improve the quality of our children's education;
- iii. Partner with the 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 school Council activities.

3. APPENDIX B

ARTICLE I - Member Code of Conduct

1) Code of Conduct

- i. A member shall consider the best interests of all students;
- ii. A member shall be guided by the school's and the Board's mission statements;
- iii. A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them;
- iv. A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity;
- v. A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community;
- vi. A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption;
- vii. A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
- viii. A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council;
- ix. A member shall not disclose confidential information;
- x. A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole;
- xi. A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community; and
- xii. A member shall declare any conflict of interest.

4. APPENDIX C

ARTICLE I - Meeting Ground Rules

- 1) Start/end on time;
- 2) One speaker at a time;
- 3) No side conversations;
- 4) Focus on the issues, not on the person;
- 5) Stay on topic;
- 6) Stay within the time estimates; and
- 7) Majority rules.