

PEPS School Council By-Laws 2019/20

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the PEPS School Council is to provide a collaborative forum among parents, caregivers, guardians, and staff, to build and foster the spirit of community and nurture an environment of open communication to support the guiding principles of the school.

PURPOSE

The purpose of PEPS School Council is:

- a) to work co-operatively with the school administration, teaching staff, and the parent community to build school community
- b) to improve student achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system through the active participation of parents
- c) to organize parent/community volunteer activities in support of the school and promote a safe, enjoyable learning environment for our students
- d) to work together to improve the financial resources of our school to support the Ontario Curriculum.
- e) to place the overall interests of the students and school first.

BY-LAW REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

These by-laws will be made available to parents/guardians at any time upon request. These by-laws may be amended by throughout the school year. These by-laws will be reviewed and revised as necessary every 3 years.

MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL

School Council is composed of the following people:

- 1) School Council Executive Members
- 2) Voting and Non-Voting Parent Members
- 3) The principal and/or vice-principal
- 4) One "Teacher Representative," who is employed at the school

If any of the above positions can't be filled, they may remain vacant at the discretion of the PEPS School Council, with the exception of the School Council Executive.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in School Council is open to all parents/guardians of students registered in the school. There are three (3) types of membership:

- 1) Executive Member: all members have the right to hold a position within the executive. The executive consists of the following: Chair/Co-Chairs, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer (see descriptions below). Executive Members are also Voting Members. The open positions for executive members will be voted in by secret ballot by all voting & general parent/guardian members in attendance at the Executive Meeting. The outcome of each vote will be determined by a majority (50%+1) vote. Each executive member has the opportunity to hold the position for a 2-year term.
- 2) Voting Member: all Voting Members are welcome to attend meetings and have the right to share their ideas and to participate in School Council discussions. If consensus cannot be reached on a School Council issue and a vote is required, voting members have the right to vote. A Voting Member is required to commit to attend a minimum of three (3) School Council Meetings.
- 3) General Member: all General Members are welcome to attend meetings, have the right to share their ideas, and are encouraged to participate in School Council discussions and activities.

SCHOOL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

1. Chair/CoChairs

- The Chair/CoChairs will have served on the Council for at least 1 year prior to holding the position of chair
- Set agenda in consultation with principal and Council members
- Chair all School Council Meetings
- Promote open dialogue between School Council members
- Create a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued
- Regularly communicate with the Executive regarding all School Council matters

- Complete an annual report on the activities of the School Council
- Consult with the Principal, Trustees, and Board Members on behalf of the Council as required
- Be responsible for the content and production or delegation of any official correspondence and communication of the School Council
- Be responsible that all School Council initiatives that are voted on are carried out as per the outcome of the vote
- Verify the Financial Report and ensure that it is available to any parent/guardian upon request

2. Vice Chair

- The Vice Chair will assist the Chair in carrying out his/her responsibilities
- In the event the Chair is unable to fulfill any of his/her responsibilities, the Vice Chair shall act as the Chair's designate

3. Treasurer

- Be available during school hours to make bank deposits
- Keep accurate and detailed records of the financial activities of School Council
- Be responsible to ensure best accounting practices are followed for School Council generated funds
- Provide a Financial Report to be shared at each School Council meeting and ensure that it is available to any parent/guardian upon request
- Along with the principal, signing officers may be any two of the following: Treasurer, Chair/CoChairs, and Principal

4. Secretary

- Record and distribute minutes for all School Council meetings in a timely and accurate fashion
- Prepare and distribute the monthly newsletter in consultation with the School Council Executive

ELECTION PROCEDURES FOR EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

An election of Executive Members to School Council shall be held within thirty (30) days of the beginning of the school year. The principal of the school will notify parents/guardians of the date, time, and location of the meeting. Nominations may be sponsored or self-nominated at the first School Council meeting of the school year. Sponsored nominations must be accepted by the nominee. Nominees must be willing to speak about why they would like to hold the executive position for which they are running. Nomination forms will be available at the school for parents/guardians who would like to nominate themselves for an executive position but are unable to attend the first meeting. Absentee nominations must include a written statement detailing why they would like to hold the position for which they are running. If there is more than one nominee for any position, the election of Executive Members shall be by secret ballot. Elections of Executive Members shall be coordinated by the Principal. A person is qualified to vote in an election of Executive Members to School Council if they are a parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school. Each parent/guardian is entitled to 1 vote. An elected executive member shall serve a term of two years.

ELECTION PROCEDURES FOR ALL OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

The election of all other members of council shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year. The Principal shall hold an election at the first Staff meeting of the year to determine the teacher representative. A person is qualified to vote in an election for the teacher representative if he/she is a teacher, other than the principal or vice-principal, who is employed at the school. The Principal or Vice Principal may appoint a representative if necessary.

MEETINGS AND QUORUM

A quorum of Council shall be 3 members of Council, including at least 50% of the School Council Executive. In the case where quorum is not met, motions and decisions will be deferred until quorum is met.

At the first meeting of the year, the new School Council will set dates, times, and location(s) for the meetings throughout the year.

FILLING VACANCIES

A vacancy within the School Council Executive shall be filled by election at the earliest possible meeting. Non-elected candidates will have the first opportunity to submit their name for consideration for the vacant position. If the position cannot be filled, the nominations will be opened up to the General Members. If necessary the Council may request that interested parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. When a vacant position on council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election. The school community will be

informed that the vacancy has been filled and by whom. A vacancy in the membership of the Council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority.

VOTING/DECISION MAKING

The School Council supports consensus-oriented models in all areas of decision-making. The School Council will adopt the following steps in decision-making whenever possible:

Step 1: Introduce and clarify issue(s)

The Chair/Co-Chairs, Principal, Subcommittee Lead, or Concerned Member should introduce the issue as clearly as possible. The School Council should ask questions and provide more information on the issue.

Step 2: Explore the issue and look for ideas. The School Council should discuss the issue and brainstorm/discuss ideas. This process will be facilitated by the Chair/Co-Chairs.

Step 3: Look for emerging proposals/solutions. The Chair/Co-Chairs should synthesize the discussion and guide the School Council toward common ideas/themes.

Step 4: Discuss, clarify, and amend proposal/solution. The School Council should discuss the issue and propose a solution/way forward. The Chair/Co-Chairs should facilitate this process.

Step 5: Test for agreement. The Chair/Co-Chairs may ask for a show of support and any objections to the proposal. If agreement is not reached, the Chair/Co-Chairs may direct the group back to Step 1 or 3.

Step 6: Implement the decision. Once consensus is reached, the School Council must carry a motion and record the details in the minutes. Should the School Council be unable to reach consensus on an issue, the Chair/Co-Chairs may call a vote of the Voting Members to reach a decision.

SUBCOMMITTEES

If warranted a sub-committee may be formed to address special projects.

Participation on sub-committees is not restricted to members of the Council.

CODE OF ETHICS - Code of Ethics was adapted from "School Councils: a Guide For Members, 2001."

- A member shall consider the best interests of all students;
- A member shall be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements;
- A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education;
- A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them;
- A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity;
- A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community;
- A member shall treat other members with respect and allow diverse opinions to be shared without interruption;
- A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
- A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council;
- A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council;
- A member shall not disclose confidential information;
- A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise;
- A member shall declare any conflict of interest;
- A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Each School Council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the mission and purpose of the school council and a personal or vested interest that arise in connection with his/her duties as a School Council member. Should an issue or agenda item arise during a council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest situation, he/she shall declare conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.