

ROCKWOOD CENTENNIAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

School Council, BY-LAWS

Mission Statement:

To work as a collaborative group with the school, parents, and the community to enrich and enhance our children's learning experience at Rockwood Centennial Public School.

A. Name

The name of the School Council shall be Rockwood Centennial School Council, also called the School Council.

B. Terms of Reference

The School Council shall operate in accordance with Ontario Regulation 612/00-School Councils and Upper Grand District School Board Policy #201-School Councils.

The School Council will operate within the parameters of the Education Act and Regulations, other relevant legislation, Board Policies and Collective Agreements.

In accordance with the aforementioned parameters the Rockwood Centennial School Council will operate as follows:

C. Purpose

The School Council will act in an advisory capacity to the Principal of the school to make recommendations to the school Principal and, as appropriate, the Board. The purpose of the School Council is to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. The School Council will place the overall interests of the school and students first.

D. By-Law Review and Amendments

These By-Laws will be provided to Council members at the first meeting of the school year.

These By-Laws may be amended by a majority vote of the Council.

E. Meetings of Quorum

A quorum of School Council shall be a majority of School Council members, and when a majority of parent members of School Council are in attendance.

Meetings cannot be held unless a quorum is present, including at least one member of the Executive and the Principal (or designate).

F. Membership

Membership in School Council shall be open to any parent/guardian of a pupil registered in the school. The **School Council** shall include:

- A maximum of 25 Formal Members (minimum of 5) parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school
- 1 Community representative
- 1 Student representative
- 1 Principal of the school
- 1 Teacher from school staff
- 1 Non-teaching staff member

There are two types of membership in School Council – Formal and Informal membership. Informal and formal members contribute equally to Council, are all official members and all have the right to share their ideas and be active in the discussion and decision making process. In the event that consensus is not reached in the decision making process, Formal members of the School Council will each have one vote as long as attendance criteria of all meetings, minus one, is reached.

All parents and/or guardians are encouraged to attend School Council meetings and to participate on committees, whether they are formal/informal School Council members or not.

G. Election Procedures

Membership in the School Council shall be determined in the following ways:

- 1) Parents and guardians shall be elected by the parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in the school
- 2) Elections and appointments will be held at the first council meeting of the year. This meeting will be held within 30 days of school opening
- 3) Information regarding the election; i.e. process, procedures, dates, time lines, will be sent to parents by the Principal in the Spring and during the first week of school
- 4) Parents and guardians will make up the majority of the School Council members. If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed
- 5) Voting if required will be conducted by secret ballot
- 6) The executive officers of the School Council will include a Chair, Co-chair(s) and Treasurer
- 7) The Chair, Co-Chair(s) and Treasurer of the School Council shall be a member who is a parent/guardian and who is not a Board employee or a Trustee, and shall be elected by the School Council at the first meeting of the year
- 8) The community representative shall be appointed by the School Council. If School Council is unable to engage a community representative, the School Council will function without one
- 9) The Student representative shall be elected by the students
- 10) The Teacher representative shall be appointed by the Principal
- 11) The Non-teaching staff member shall be appointed by the Principal
- 12) The term of office for School Council positions is one year

H. Process for Filling Vacancies

Vacancies that arise on the School Council during the year may be filled by election or appointment at the discretion of the School Council.

I. Conflict of Interest

Any member of the School Council who has a personal financial interest in a matter before the School Council, must declare the conflict, refrain from participating in the decision-making and or voting on the matter, or attempting to influence the decision-making or vote on the matter.

J. Role of the School Council

The School Council is an advisory body. The School Council may provide advice, where appropriate, to the school Principal and to the School Board on any of the matters listed below that the School Council has identified as priorities:

- Calendar of the school's activities and other input, as requested, into the Board's School Year calendar
- School code of conduct
- Curriculum and program goals and priorities
- The responses of the school or School Board to achievement in provincial and Board assessment programs
- Preparation of the school profile
- Input for selection of Principal
- School budget priorities, including local capital improvement plans
- School-community communications strategies
- Methods of reporting to parents and the community
- Extra-curricular activities in the school
- School-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreation and nutrition programs
- Community use of school facilities
- Local co-ordination of services for children and youth
- Development, implementation and review of Board policies at the local level. e.g. anti racism/non-violence
- The School Council must always operate in a public forum
- The School Council may not discuss any individual staff or student matters

K. Responsibilities of the School Council

In addition to its advisory role, the School Council shall:

- Establish its By-laws, goals, priorities and procedures, and review these annually
- Organize information and training sessions to enable members of the School Council to develop their skills as School Council members
- Hold a minimum of four meetings per year (with quorum)
- Ensure that its prime objective is to improve student learning
- Communicate openly and regularly with parents and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by School Council, and to report on the activities of the School Council to the school community
- Encourage parental involvement in the day to day activities of their children

- Encourage a positive and co-operative team approach
- Promote the best interest of the school community
- Co-operate and provide assistance to other related school groups: e.g. Student Council
- Address the social environment of the school
- Respect the right to privacy of students, staff and parents
- Represent the School Council in such a manner as to foster good will with students, their families, staff members, members of the community and the Upper Grand District School Board
- Represent the School Council in such a manner as to keep the name of the School Council and the name of the school honourable within the community

L. Roles and Responsibilities of the School Council members

Chair/Co-Chair(s)

The Chair/Co-Chair(s) of the School Council shall:

- Call the School Council meetings
- Prepare the agenda for the School Council meetings, in consultation with the Principal and other members of School Council
- Chair School Council meetings
- Ensure that the minutes of the School Council meetings are recorded, maintained and distributed
- Participate in information and training programs
- Work in partnership and communicate with the School Principal and Staff
- Ensure that there is a regular communication with the school community
- Consult with senior Board staff and trustees, as required
- Ensure all financial records are maintained appropriately
- Identify members who fail to attend meetings regularly and who do not have excused absences satisfactory to the School Council
- At the first meeting of the year establish meeting dates for the balance of the year
- Facilitate collaborative decision making

Treasurer

The Treasurer of the School Council shall:

- Be aware of the guidelines for school generated funds
- Receive all funds raised by the School Council and ensure that all monies received are accompanied by a Funds Received Form
- Prepare bank deposits and deposit funds at the bank on a regular basis. All funds are to be deposited in entirety. Monies shall not be withheld for payment of related expenses.
- Ensure that all requests for payments are properly supported and approved
- Record all transactions on a regular basis
- Prepare a monthly Treasurer's report and present at each regular School Council meeting
- Review, sign and date the School Council category reports provided by the school and any other School Council financial reports, to ensure that School Council financial transactions are accurately recorded and updated
- Prepare the annual financial report and submit to the Principal
- Advise the appropriate person of deviations from the guidelines outlined in the UGDSB School Generated Funds Resource Handbook

Secretary

The Secretary of the School Council shall:

- Keep accurate minutes of School Council meetings
- Keep track of the attendance at meetings. The attendance record is necessary to show a quorum.
- Record other members in attendance that are not regular School Council members as observers or guests
- Verify and record all consensus or voted decisions of the School Council
- Distribute a copy of the minutes to School Council members after approval by the Principal
- Ensure that minutes are posted on the website
- Assist with correspondence as needed
- Maintain a file of all correspondence, minutes, by-laws and reports
- Maintain a current membership and contact list of School Council members

Principal

The Principal of the school shall:

- Attend all School Council meetings
- Facilitate the establishment of School Council and assist in its operation
- Support and promote the School Council activities
- Seek input from the School Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility e.g. Code of Conduct, Dress Code and School Improvement Plans based on EQAO test results
- Act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies, and collective agreements
- Obtain and provide information required by School Council to enable it to make informed decisions
- Communicate with the Chair/Co-chair(s) of the School Council
- Ensure that copies of the minutes of the School Council's meetings are kept at the school
- Assist the School Council in communicating with the school community
- Encourage the participation of all parents/guardians and of other people within the school community
- Assist in preparing the agenda
- Provide written notice of the dates, times and locations of the School Council meetings to all parents/guardians of pupils enrolled in the school via the school's monthly newsletters and by posting notice on the School Council bulletin board in the front hall of the school and on the school sign
- Consider the views of the School Council in the annual review of the school's opening or closing exercises
- Consider all recommendations from School Council and advise on the action taken in response to any recommendations
- Approve all printed material from the School Council distributed through the school
- Promptly distribute and make available materials in the school identified and provided for School Councils by the Ministry

Council Members

The members of the School Council shall:

- Participate in School Council meetings
- Participate in information and training programs
- Act as a link between the School Council and the community
- Encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community

- Place the overall interest of the school and students first
- Seek to reach consensus in the decision making processes of School Council

Council Member Commitment

All incoming Council Members will honour these By-laws and amendments and accept them as the School Council's governing mandate.

M. Conflict Resolution

Members will work as a team who will respect the opinions of others on School Council and within the Rockwood Centennial Public School community.

Protocol for Decision making

- 1) Our School Council shall be advisory in nature
- 2) Every attempt will be made to reach consensus
- 3) Consensus is a form of group decision making based on the willingness to consent and support, rather than having a winning and losing side by voting. Consensus is reached when all members of the School Council are willing to accept and support an idea or concept as the best choice for the entire council (keeping in mind that students come first). It allows ownership of ideas by all School Council members.
- 4) In the event that consensus cannot be achieved, a vote may be taken
- 5) Each School Council member shall have one vote in votes taken by the School Council or in committees of the School Council
- 6) The Principal is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the School Council or a School Council committee

Consensus is a decision process for resolving conflicts. Consensus may be difficult to reach, so not every decision will meet with everyone's complete approval, however,

Consensus is reached when participants can say:

- I believe that you understand my point of view
- I believe that I understand your point of view
- Whether or not I prefer this idea or concept, I will support it because it was reached openly and fairly
- I can live with this decision

If the School Council is unable to reach a decision, a vote may be taken (50%+1) to decide the issue.

The Chair/Co-chair(s) of the School Council shall attempt, with the support of the School Council, to help members resolve conflicts within the School Council.

If the School Council is unable to resolve an internal dispute, the Chair/Co-Chair(s) and the principal may contact the appropriate Superintendent for assistance.

N. Committees

The School Council may, as required, establish committees to make recommendations to the School Council on specific areas of interest.

Committees must include one parent member of School Council.

Membership on committees is not restricted to members of the School Council.

School Council committees are entitled to hold meetings at the school. All committee meetings must be open and accessible to the public.

Committees will report to the School Council at each meeting.

O. Financial Procedures

The School Council operates as a category under the school banking system. All cheque release forms must be signed by the Principal and the Treasurer.

The Treasurer will handle all financial transactions of School Council unless unable to perform his/her duties. In that situation the School Council will appoint an acting/replacement Treasurer as soon as possible. The Chair/Co-Chair(s) and Principal will be the signatories in the interim.

All monies for deposit, as well as receipts and invoices must be submitted to the Treasurer.

All expenditures must be discussed and pre-approved by School Council.

The Treasurer shall keep a record of all revenues, operating expenses and expenditures and a financial statement shall be included in the School Council's Annual Report.

P. Fundraising

All fundraising activities of the School Council will be conducted in accordance with Board Policy #102 "School Generated Funds – Fundraising and Accounting".

All funds raised by the School Council will be used in accordance with Board Policy.

Fundraising revenues will be used for the benefit of all students.

The School Council Fund Allocation Committee will establish a process for use of funds raised through School Council activities, which will be reviewed annually.