

Steve MacLean Public School Council Bylaws

Revised: November 17, 2006

Table of Contents

1 General.....	4
1.1 Purpose of this Document.....	4
1.2 Amendments	4
1.3 Annual Revision.....	4
1.4 Definitions.....	4
1.5 Purpose of the Council.....	5
1.6 Limitations	5
2 Membership	6
2.1 Composition.....	6
2.2 Term of Office	6
2.3 Responsibilities of Council Members.....	7
2.4 Council Officers.....	7
2.5 Responsibilities of Council Officers.....	7
2.5.1 Responsibilities of the Chair.....	7
2.5.2 Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair	8
2.5.3 Responsibilities of the Treasurer	8
2.5.4 Responsibilities of the Secretary.....	8
2.5.5 Responsibilities of the Fundraising Coordinator	8
2.5.6 Responsibilities of the Volunteer Coordinator	8
2.5.7 Responsibilities of the Communications Coordinator	9
3 Elections of Parent Members	10
3.1 Timing.....	10
3.2 Notice.....	10
3.3 Nomination Process	10
3.4 Campaigning.....	11
3.5 Voting Process	11
3.6 Ties.....	11
3.7 Elections of Parent Members At Large.....	11
3.8 Vacancies	12
4 Council Meetings.....	13
4.1 Frequency.....	13
4.2 Notice of Meetings.....	13
4.3 Meeting Agenda.....	13
4.4 Meeting Procedure.....	13
4.5 Motions	14
4.6 Duration	14
4.7 Public Meetings	14
4.8 Special Meetings.....	14
4.9 Quorum.....	15
4.10 Minutes	15
5 Financial Records and Controls.....	16
5.1 Expenditures	16
5.2 Contractual Obligations	16

5.3 Financial Record Keeping.....	16
5.4 Financial Reporting to Council.....	16
5.5 Availability of Financial Records	16
6 Conflict of Interest.....	17
7 Conflict Resolution	18
Appendix A – Council Liability	19

1 General

1.1 Purpose of this Document

This document describes principles and procedures specific to the Steve MacLean Public School Council (the Council). The Council is a School Council as defined under Regulation 612/00 of the Ontario Education Act, and is subject to its provisions.

1.2 Amendments

All proposed amendments to these bylaws must be included with the notice and agenda of the meeting at which the amendments will be initially proposed. Amendments shall be adopted by a two thirds vote cast by council members for two readings at two successive meetings.

1.3 Annual Review

Each school year the incoming council shall review the bylaws. This should be done and accepted by the November meeting.

1.4 Definitions

Throughout this document,

- • “the school” is Steve MacLean Public School;
- • “the council” is the Steve MacLean Public School Council;
- • “the board” is the Ottawa Carleton District School Board;
- • “OCASC” is the Ottawa Carleton Association of School Councils;
- • “the regulation” is Ontario Regulation 612/00 of the Education Act;
- • “parent” includes a guardian as defined in section 1 of the Ontario Education Act.

1.5 Purpose of the Council

The council exists to:

- 1) Improve pupil achievement, and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents;
- 2) Review the school's action plan for improvement, and contribute to the plan by offering advice and actively soliciting feedback from the parent community;
- 3) Assist the principal in achieving the objectives set out in the school's action plan for improvement;
- 4) Facilitate effective, two-way communication between the principal and the parent community;
- 5) Share information with parents and the community members, and seek their ideas and views about matters under consideration by the council;
- 6) Take a lead role in celebrating the successes of the school;
- 7) Conduct fundraising initiatives to support the objectives of the school;
- 8) Promote parental involvement in the school's success.

1.6 Limitations

Council will maintain a school wide focus on all issues. Council meetings are not forum for discussion about individual parents, teachers, staff, trustees, or council members. Under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (1989), councils can not access information on individual students or staff. Individual members of the school community shall deal directly with staff members and principal to resolve specific concerns; council will not act as a vehicle for this purpose.

2 Membership

2.1 Composition

The council shall include:

- 1) The principal or vice-principal of the school.**
- 2) One teacher per grade division if possible (primary, junior, intermediate) to a maximum of three employed in the school, other than the principal or vice-principal.**

Prior to the first council meeting of each academic year, the teaching personnel of the school will elect a council representative.

- 3) One non-teaching employee of the school.** Prior to the first council meeting of each academic year, the non-teaching personnel of the school will elect a council representative.

4) One community representative. The community representative must not be a parent of a pupil at the school, and must not be an employee of the board. The community representative will be appointed by the chair and ratified by majority vote of the council.

- 5) Between 7 and 12 parent members** elected as per the procedures detailed in section 3.

2.2 Term of Office

General elections are held during the first council meeting in each school year. A person elected to council during the general election holds office from the date of the second council meeting in the school year to the second council meeting in the next school year. During the period between the first and second council meetings of the school year, council members work with newly elected council members to ensure a smooth transition.

Members that are appointed to council at other times during the year hold office from the point at which the appointment is ratified by council until the second council meeting of the next year.

There is no limit to the number of terms that a council member may serve provided he or she is duly re-elected or re-appointed each year.

2.3 Responsibilities of Council Members

All council members must:

- 1) Make best efforts to attend all council meetings;
- 2) Endeavor to gain a thorough understanding of the Ontario education system and the operation of schools in particular;
- 3) Participate in information and training programs;
- 4) Act as a link between the school council and the community;
- 5) Maintain a broad focus on issues of a school-wide concern;
- 6) Encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community.

2.4 Council Officers

The officers shall be the chair, vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, volunteer coordinator, fundraising coordinator, and communications coordinator. All officers must be parent members.

2.5 Responsibilities of Council Officers

2.5.1 Responsibilities of the Chair

- 1) Act as a primary point of contact representing the council;
- 2) Call council meetings;
- 3) Prepare the council meeting agenda;
- 4) Preside over council meetings;
- 5) Ensures that the minutes of council meetings are recorded and maintained;
- 6) Ensure that vacancies on the council are filled;
- 7) Maintain these bylaws;
- 8) Ensure that accurate records including financial are kept;
- 9) Monitor the council's mail box and ensure that all queries are addressed in a timely manner;
- 10) Participate in information and training programs;
- 11) Communicate regularly with the school principal;
- 12) Ensure that there is regular communication with the school community;
- 13) Prepare the annual report of the school council as per section 24 of the regulations;
- 14) One of three signing officers on the council's bank account.

2.5.2 Responsibilities of the Vice-Chair

- 1) Assist the chair;
- 2) Take the place of the chair in his or her absence;
- 3) One of three signing officers on the council's bank account.
- 4) Ensure that the council is represented at the Ottawa Carleton Association of School Councils.

2.5.3 Responsibilities of the Treasurer

- 1) Prepare and present the annual council budget;
- 2) One of three signing officers on the council's bank account;
- 3) Maintain accurate records of all financial activity of the council.
- 4) Report on financial activities at each council meeting.

2.5.4 Responsibilities of the Secretary

- 1) Attend all council meetings
- 2) Take written record of proceedings during council meetings. In case of absence, designate an alternate council member to take minutes;
- 3) Prepare meeting minutes in a timely manner;
- 4) Ensure that meeting minutes that have been approved by council are made available to parents, teachers, and the community.
- 5) Ensure school council bulletin board is current and maintained

2.5.5 Responsibilities of the Fundraising Coordinator

- 1) Present fundraising plans to the council for discussion and approval;
- 2) Oversee the implementation of all fundraising activities.
- 3) Ensure that the council adheres to the board's policies and guidelines for fundraising activities;
- 4) Report on fundraising activities.

2.5.6 Responsibilities of the Volunteer Coordinator

- 1) Present plans for initiatives related to parent volunteerism to the council for discussion and approval;
- 2) Oversee the implementation of all initiatives related to parent volunteerism.
- 3) Report on results related to parent volunteerism.

2.5.7 Responsibilities of the Communications Coordinator

- 1) Prepare a communications plan and present it to the council for approval;
- 2) Ensure that there are effective vehicles in place to communicate the activities of the council to the school community;
- 3) Ensure that there are effective vehicles in place by which the school community can provide feedback to the council;
- 4) Assist the Chair in monitoring the council's mail box and ensure that all queries are addressed in a timely manner;
- 5) Ensure the web site is up to date;
- 6) Contribute content to the school newsletter.

3 Elections of Parent Members

3.1 Timing

Elections of parent members shall take place at the first meeting of council in each school year. The election must be the first order of business following approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.

3.2 Notice

The chair plus one executive member of council in consultation with the principal shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, on behalf of the school council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school. The notices must describe the responsibilities of council members as listed in section 2.3 as well as the responsibilities of the council officers as per section 2.5. The notices shall be accompanied by nomination forms as described in section 3.3.

3.3 Nomination Process

Parents wishing to present themselves for election to council must complete and submit a nomination form. On that form, the parent must confirm that he or she is a parent of a pupil enrolled in the school, and that he or she is not employed by the school. In addition, the parent must disclose on the nomination form if he or she is employed by the board so that this information can be disclosed to the voters prior to the election. The nomination form must make it clear that a candidate may put forth his or her name for as many council positions as he or she wishes, those positions being chair, vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, fundraising coordinator, volunteer coordinator, communications coordinator, and parent member at large made up of committee heads such as special events coordinator, cup cake coordinator, pizza coordinator and others as needed). The chair and 1 other council member shall set a deadline for nominations to be received. This deadline should be as close as possible to the date of the first meeting while still leaving sufficient time to prepare ballots.

3.4 Campaigning

Candidates will be given the opportunity to give a brief verbal presentation to those attending at the first meeting of council prior to voting. This presentation may include visual aids, hand-outs, or other presentation material.

3.5 Voting Process

The principal shall be responsible for overseeing the voting process for parent members. The principal may enlist the help of a staff member to conduct the voting process and count votes.

The principal will ensure that only parents of pupils enrolled at the school receive ballots. Each parent in attendance shall receive one ballot per position being contested. Elections shall take place one contested position at a time starting with the chair and followed by vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, fundraising coordinator, volunteer coordinator, communications coordinator and, if necessary, parent member at large in that order. Since there can be up to 5 parent members at large on the council, voting for this position will only be necessary if more than 5 parents wish to serve in that capacity. The results of each election will be announced prior to the start of voting on the next position, at which point the elected parent's name shall be removed from the ballots for remaining positions. This process may result in acclamations for subsequent positions, in which case the acclaimed parent's name shall be removed from the ballots for remaining positions and so on.

3.6 Ties

In the event of a tie for the most votes, voting for the position will be repeated with only the names of those candidates that tied for first place remaining on the ballots. Should this second round of voting not resolve the tie, the principal shall decide the winner by lot.

3.7 Elections of Parent Members At Large

In the event that more than 5 parents present themselves for a position of parent member at large, all candidates will be on a single ballot. Voters will be instructed to vote for up to five candidates. Ballots with more than 5 candidates selected will be considered spoiled. The five parents with the most votes will be elected. In the event of a tie for fifth place, the procedures in section 3.6 will apply.

3.8 Vacancies

In the event of a vacancy in a parent member office, the chair shall find and appoint a parent volunteer to hold the office for the remainder of the term. The appointment of an officer to fill a vacancy requires ratification by a simple majority vote of the council at the council meeting that follows the appointment.

Should the office of chair be vacant, the responsibility of finding and appointing a replacement will fall to the vice-chair. Should both chair and vice-chair offices are vacant, this responsibility will fall to the treasurer and so on.

4 Council Meetings

4.1 Frequency

A minimum of four council meetings must be held each year.

4.2 Notice of Meetings

Notice of the first meeting of the school year must be provided to all parents at least 14 days prior to the meeting. As soon as possible after the first meeting of the school year, a schedule of all remaining school council meeting dates for the year shall be provided to parents. It is suggested that meetings take place at consistent times and days (e.g. 7:00pm on the third Wednesday of each month).

4.3 Meeting Agenda

The chair will distribute the meeting agenda to all council members at least 5 days prior to each meeting.

4.4 Meeting Procedure

The chair will preside over all council meetings. A typical meeting will proceed as follows:

- 1) **Call to Order.**
- 2) **Roll Call.** This may be done by circulating a sign-in sheet.
- 3) **Adoption of the Agenda.** The chair will quickly go over the agenda, which may have been revised since the advance copy was initially distributed. The chair will answer questions, make corrections to the agenda, and re-order the agenda items if necessary.
- 4) **Approval of the Minutes** from the previous meeting.
- 5) **Old Business.** Follow-up discussions on topics introduced previously and tabled.
- 6) **Reports.** The principal shall make a report at every meeting. In addition, other council members or volunteers responsible for ongoing programs or special events may be asked to give brief status reports on their activities.
- 7) **Motions.** See section 4.5.
- 8) **Announcements.**
- 9) **Question Period.** All in attendance are invited to ask questions.

4.5 Motions

Any parent or council member may have a motion added to the agenda on request by notifying the chair. Except for procedural motions, notice of motions must be given to the chair at least five days in advance of the meeting so that the exact wording of the motion as well as supporting information can be distributed to council members with the agenda. If an agenda has already been sent out, the chair shall distribute a revised agenda at the meeting.

At the meeting, there is no need for motions to be seconded. The mover may make a brief presentation to council, after which the council members and the public may ask clarifying questions about the motion. When there are no more questions, the chair will ask for debate on the motion before calling a vote. During debate, the chair will keep a speakers list and give priority to participants that have not already spoken.

The wording of a motion may be amended by a vote of two thirds of the council, but only if the amendment does not change the character of the original motion and the amendment is accepted by the mover. For a motion to carry, it must receive support of two thirds of those voting. Abstentions shall not be considered in calculating the two thirds. The principal is not entitled to vote.

4.6 Duration

In the event that a meeting runs longer than three hours, any participant or observer may interrupt the meeting with a point of personal privilege, and request that the meeting be adjourned. At that point, any outstanding motions that have not been dealt with will be tabled to a future regular meeting or a special meeting if required (see section 4.8).

4.7 Public Meetings

All council meetings shall be open to the public.

4.8 Special Meetings

A special meeting is one that was not part of the schedule of meetings published at the beginning of the school year. Special meetings will be called when deemed necessary by one third of the council members.

4.9 Quorum

To be legitimate and official, a council meeting must meet the following criteria:

- 1) The principal is present;
- 2) At least half of the council members are present;
- 3) At least half of the members present are parent members.

Should a meeting not have quorum, it may proceed with reports and discussion points, but all motions will be tabled. Should a meeting lose quorum before it adjourns, any remaining motions will be tabled, and the point at which quorum was lost will be recorded in the minutes.

4.10 Minutes

The secretary will keep minutes of all council meetings and ensure that the minutes are available for examination by anyone without charge for a minimum of four years. Copies of the minutes will be kept in the school's main office, and may be viewed on request. Minutes must include a list of council members attending and an estimate of the number of non-council members present. The minutes must log the arrival or departure of any council member during the meeting. Minutes must give a clear summary of the discussions that took place at the meeting without including the discussions themselves.

Minutes must include the exact wording of all motions as proposed and as amended. It is not necessary to record the number of yeas and neas for the votes, but it is required to indicate whether the motion was carried or defeated, as well as the number of abstentions.

Minutes of meetings should be distributed to council members with the agenda for the subsequent meeting or earlier.

5 Financial Records and Controls

5.1 Expenditures

All expenditures must be pre-authorized by way of a budget or event plan that is presented, voted on, and approved at a council meeting.

5.2 Contractual Obligations

No member of the council shall obligate the council contractually unless that obligation has been presented and approved in advance by a vote of council.

5.3 Financial Record Keeping

The treasurer is responsible for maintaining accurate and complete financial records. The chair is responsible for ensuring that such records are properly maintained.

5.4 Financial Reporting to Council

At every council meeting, the treasurer shall make a brief report to inform the council of all financial transactions that took place since the previous meeting at which a report was made.

5.5 Availability of Financial Records

All financial records shall be available to any council member or parent on request. Financial records must be kept for no less than four years.

6 Conflict of Interest

Each council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and vision of the council and a personal or vested interest, that arise in connection with his or her duties as a 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 or she shall declare conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.

7 Conflict Resolution

In the event of an internal council dispute, every council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption. The chair will act as arbiter in the dispute or, if the chair feels that he or she cannot fill that role for the issue at hand, the chair will select another council member to act as the arbiter. The arbiter will clarify the statements made by all speakers, identify common ground among the points of view raised, and set out the joint interests of all members. If no common ground can be identified, the arbiter will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.

Appendix A – Council Liability

Council Liability

Board Coverage for School-Sanctioned Activities:

- a) Members of a school council who are participating in school sanctioned activities are in the same situation as school volunteers. Board policy provides that the Director shall ensure that school volunteers are covered by the Board's liability insurance while they are performing their assigned tasks, which would include supervision of school sanctioned activities organized by the school council, whether during school hours or not.
- b) The chair will be responsible for keeping the principal up to date on all council sponsored activities and acquiring permission prior to the event/activity.

Liability of Individual Council Members:

- a) While school councils have status in law under Bill 160, until provincial regulations are provided, they could not be sued as a body. However, the individual members of school councils are not immune from liability for illegal or negligent actions on the same basis as would apply if these actions were taken outside the context of their school council role.

Liability for Libelous/Slandorous Statements by Members:

- a) As indicated by the foregoing, individual members of a school council could be held liable for statements which may be considered libel or slander made in the course of a school council meeting or published (including by electronic means) by or on behalf of the school council.