

# **Buttonville School Council**

## **Constitution and Operating Procedures (Bylaws)**

Finalized 2015

# BUTTONVILLE SCHOOL COUNCIL

## CONSTITUTION AND OPERATING PROCEDURES (BYLAWS)

### **ARTICLE 1: Name**

The school council shall be named the Buttonville School Council, in the Region of York and Province of Ontario. It shall herein after be referred to as the School Council or Council.

### **ARTICLE 2: Purpose of Council**

Ontario Regulation 612/00, School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees and Ontario Regulation 298, governing the Operation of Schools (as amended to Ontario Regulation 613/00) together address three key areas: the purpose of school councils, operational matters, and the obligation of principals and school boards to consult school councils. The purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents and community members, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

Buttonville School Council is committed to:

- a) Providing informed advice to the principal to assist in making decisions. The advice should reflect the views of the school community and the best interests of the students.
- b) Supporting the school in providing a caring, co-operative and safe learning environment built on mutual respect.

### **ARTICLE 3: Roles and Responsibilities of School Councils**

School Councils are advisory bodies within the parameters of the Education Act, Board Policies and Collective Agreements, and other pertinent legislation. Therefore, in order to realize the goals outlined, the Council will, as an advisory body, provide input and advice on such matters as:

- Fostering and increasing parental contact and participation in their children's education.
- Assisting in identifying local conditions that need to be addressed in the school's efforts to educate its students.
- Advising in the allocation of school level resources.
- Advising in the allocation of council-generated resources.

- Advocating for the school in the community.
- Advising on opportunities for parent education.
- Linkages with community resources.
- Supporting school code of conduct.
- Responses of the school or school board to achievement in provincial and board assessment programs.
- Providing input for criteria to assist the Board in the appointment of the principal.
- Methods of reporting to parents and community.
- Supporting extra-curricular activities in the school.
- School-based services and community partnerships.
- Development, implementation and review of board policies at the local level.

Council members are to maintain a school-wide focus on all issues. Council meetings are not a forum of discussion about individual parents, students, staff, trustees or other council members.

#### **ARTICLE 4: Membership**

1. All members on the Council are equal partners. The elected parent/guardian members shall form the majority of the School Council.
2. Membership on the School Council may consist of:
  - a) Minimum of 4 parent/guardian representatives who have children enrolled in the school (can be employed elsewhere within the school board but must declare this) elected by parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school.
  - b) One teacher representative of the school elected by the teaching staff; this position cannot be filled by the Principal or Vice-principal.
  - c) One non-teaching school staff elected by non-teaching staff.
  - d) The school principal/vice-principal.
  - e) One community representative (not a board employee) appointed by Council members.
  - f) The chairperson or co-chair of a school council must be a parent member of the council; School Board employees are not eligible.
  - g) Only one person from any household shall be a Council member.

## **ARTICLE 5: Executive Officers**

1. As per Ministry of Education guidelines, School Council elections shall be held yearly within the first 30 days of the school year. At the first Council meeting, each September, the Council, shall elect the following Executive Officers. Each position can be held by a single person or two people jointly sharing the responsibilities.
  - Chairperson
  - Co-Chairperson
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - The Executive Officers must be parent representatives.
  - The Principal shall serve as a non-voting member of the Executive.
  - The Past Chair is a designated member of the Executive.
- a) For appointed positions, it is desirable that membership be determined by consensus of the body they represent.
- b) The election of the Executive Committee, if required, will take place by secret ballot and be conducted by the Principal of the school.
- c) Executive members may be elected for more than one term. One term constitutes one school year.
- d) Each Co-Chairperson shall commit for a 2 year term, with one of the Co-Chairs moving on into the role of Past-Chair each year. Elected and appointed Executive members may seek additional terms of office.
- e) When possible, the prior year chair will lead the first meeting until the election of the new chair. If the prior year chair is unavailable, a member of the prior year's Executive Committee will lead the first meeting until the election of the new chair. Officers assume their new role at the time of the election.

## **ARTICLE 6: Roles and Responsibilities of School Council**

1. The Co-Chairpersons, in consultation with the Principal, shall:
  - Call School Council meetings.
  - Prepare the agenda for school council meetings
  - Chair school council meetings.
  - Ensure that the minutes of the school council meetings are recorded and maintained.
  - Participate in information and training programs.
  - Communicate with the school principal as required.
  - Act as a liaison and facilitate communication with the school community and Council members.
  - Represent the council in school/board activities as required and consult with senior Board staff and trustees, as required.
2. The Past Chairperson shall:
  - Conduct meetings in the absence of, and upon request of, the Co-chairpersons.
  - Assist the Chairs in his/her duties.
3. The Secretary shall:
  - Take, distribute and maintain accurate minutes of council meetings.
  - Provide notice of council meetings to the Council members by email one week prior to.
  - Provide notice of council meetings to the School community by ensuring a notice

- is posted at the school one week prior to.
  - Make approved Minutes available to the School community.
  - Ensure that the Minutes are signed by the Chair or Vice-Chair and principal following adoption by the Council.
  - Ensure that the Minutes are retained for a five-year period.
  - Provide, on request, a copy(ies) of the minutes to any member of Council or the school community.
  - Prepare any correspondence necessary with respect to Council matters.
  - Ensure that annual records are kept at the school.
4. The Treasurer shall:
- Ensure an accurate and up-to-date accounting of all monies raised and dispensed.
  - Request payment of bills to the school secretary
  - Present a statement of account at each general Council meeting.
5. The Principal shall:
- Facilitate the establishment of the School Council and assist in its operation.
  - Assist the Co-Chairs in developing the agendas.
  - Support and promote the School Council's activities that are consistent with the board's policy statement dealing with School Councils.
  - Seek input from the School Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibilities.
  - Act as a resource on laws, regulations, board policies, and collective agreements.
  - Obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make informed decisions.
  - Communicate with the Chairperson as required and keep School Council members informed of school activities and planning.
  - Assist the council in communicating with the school community.
  - Ensure that copies of minutes of the School Council meetings and financial reports are kept at the school.
  - Encourage the participation of all parents/guardians and of other people within the community
6. All members of the School Council shall:
- Provide informed advice to the school principal on matters related to student learning and school improvement.
  - Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.
  - Participate in council meetings.
  - Participate in information and training programs.
  - Act as a link between the School Council and the community.
  - Encourage the participation of all parents/guardians and of other people within the community.
7. In the event a Council member is not in regular attendance (2 consecutive Council meetings or 3 nonconsecutive meetings for the academic calendar year) without prior contact with the Chairperson or School Principal with valid reason, Council reserves the right to request resignation of said Council member.
8. Any Council member, except the principal, may resign their position by writing a letter of resignation to the chair. The vacated position will be filled according to Article 13.10.

## **ARTICLE 7: Meeting Dates**

1. At the beginning of each school year Council will set a schedule of meetings of the School Council. A minimum of four meetings must be held per year.
2. The dates of the meetings will be publicized to the parent community with the assistance of the school office, i.e. school newsletters, community bulletins, newspapers, etc.
3. Hold meetings in school or a location accessible to the public.

## **ARTICLE 8: Quorum**

A meeting of the Council cannot be held unless:

- a) A majority of the Council members are present at the meeting and that majority are parent members.
- b) Decision-making may be made by consensus or majority vote as determined by the Council (consensus being the preferred method). Decision making may be allowed via email should an issue arise between meetings.

## **ARTICLE 9: Meeting Operating Procedures**

1. During the absence or inability of the Principal, the Vice-Principal or designate shall exercise the duties and powers of the same.
2. During the absence or inability of a Co-Chairperson, the Past Chairperson shall exercise the duties and powers of the same.
3. In the absence of the Co-Chairpersons and Past Chairperson, the meetings may be chaired by another member of the school council appointed by members of the Council so present.
4. Meetings will be held at the school.
5. If a quorum cannot be met/reached the meetings should be cancelled.
6. Council members need to represent the views of the whole school community.
7. Council members present shall vote to determine the decision of the majority.
8. Requests for presentations and/or items to be put on the agenda must be forwarded to the Chairperson and Principal for consideration at least one week prior to the meeting.

## **ARTICLE 10: Ad Hoc / Sub-committees**

1. Ad Hoc or sub-committees may be established, which can include members of the parent community at-large, to organize events, develop a fundraising plan, fundraise, or to review and/ or respond to Board/School requests, initiatives, or reports, etc.
2. Such sub-committees will be chaired by at least one member of the Council and will communicate regularly with the Chair of the School Council and make general

reports to the Council as deemed necessary by the Executive.

3. Sub-committees will have autonomy over decisions made within the said sub-committee, as long as the decision represents that of the majority within that committee.
4. The Chair and Principal shall be ex-officio members of all such committees.

## **ARTICLE 11: Finances**

1. All monies raised by the School Council shall be used at the discretion of the School Council for the benefit of the school/students and to meet the expenses of the Council.
2. The normal course of business for expenditures is that budgets will be set and preapproved by council. In the event of unusual or unplanned situations, approval from at least two executive members is needed for any funds to be expended up to \$50.00 and any amount over \$50.00 must be brought back to council for approval.
3. All monies shall be deposited by the school in a board account.

## **ARTICLE 12: Annual Report**

The Executive/Chairpersons will prepare a report, at the end of the school year, highlighting the activities, goals, and achievements of Council.

## **ARTICLE 13: Election Procedures**

General elections for school council will be held every year within the first 30 days of the new school year.

1. Election date to be announced at least 14 days before the election, and a voting process notice will be sent home informing parents of the date and time of the election to be held at the school.
2. Each parent seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at the school, and must declare if he/she is employed by the Board.
3. Each parent of a student enrolled in the school is entitled to one vote for each vacant parent position on the Council.
4. The Candidate Declaration forms shall be filed with the Principal. The election shall be conducted by secret ballot.
5. The Principal or designate and at least one parent member not running for any position on council shall be present at counting the ballots.
6. The results of the election will be published using the school newsletter.
7. If nominations received by the due date are fewer than the maximum established vacancies, then nominees shall be acclaimed to the position of School Council.
8. Candidate(s) will be responsible for being present during elections. If they cannot attend, said Candidate(s) shall contact the School Principal or Past Chair. The nominated Candidate(s) must prepare a written statement that shall be read to

the parent community on their behalf.

9. If Nominated Candidate(s) do not contact School Principal or Past Chair with a valid reason(s), said Candidate(s) shall be eliminated from the ballot for this particular term.
10. In the event a vacancy occurs during the council term of one year, such vacancy does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority. Positions that become vacant due to resignation or removal shall be filled as soon as possible by:
  - a) Offering the position to the person with the next largest number of votes who was not elected; or,
  - b) Seeking volunteers from the parent community if all members were acclaimed and
  - c) Calling an election if the number of volunteers exceeds the number of vacancies, or
  - d) Appointing parent members.

## **ARTICLE 14: Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential. 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 decision of the Council.

A member shall exclude him/herself from discussions in which:

- A conflict of interest is likely to result.
- A member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the Council may be jeopardized.
- The School Council member, his or her relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit either directly or indirectly as a result of action that may be taken by the Principal or board in response to advice that the School Council provides to the Principal or to the Board.
- A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations or entities known to be seeking business contracts with Buttonville Public School.

## **ARTICLE 15: Conflict Resolution Procedures**

1. Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.
2. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
3. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
4. The Chair's responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members.
5. If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.



6. If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

## **ARTICLE 16: Amendment of Bylaws**

These bylaws may be amended by a vote in favour of such amendment of two-thirds of the members present at a meeting and in no case shall the bylaws be amended unless such amendment has been approved by at least 51% of the members present and voting at any general meeting. In addition, notice of any proposed amendment must be set forth in the notice of such a meeting.