

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAW(S)
Dr. J.M. Denison Secondary School

Revised May-2019

Article I: Name and Affiliation

1. The name of this organization shall be Denison School Council. The members of the Council shall be responsible for maintaining the constitution.
2. The address shall be: c/o Chair School Council, 135 Bristol Rd, Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 8J7 and/or dr.j.m.denison.ss@yrdsb.ca

Article II: Mission Statement

1. Our School Council believes that collaborative partnership among the school, the family, and the community is essential to improving student achievement and well-being, and increasing a shared sense of accountability for public education

Article III: Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of the School Council include but are not limited to:

1. Fostering and encouraging effective parental involvement in the education of their children
2. Providing a means for regular communication and dialogue between all partners in education
3. Participating in the School Improvement Process
4. Providing input into decisions made by the school administration, the Board, and the Ministry

Article IV: Procedures and Operating Guidelines

1. The operational procedures of this Council are outlined in the Board's School Councils policy and procedure.
2. All recommendations and activities of the Council shall comply with Ministry of Education Acts, York Region District School Board Policies and Procedures, and relevant Staff Collective Agreements.

Article V: Norms of Behaviour and Practice

1. The School Council shall develop norms of behaviour at meetings on an annual basis through discussion, activity, and consensus

SAMPLE:

- Agenda set by Chair and Principal and circulated in advance
- Meetings begin and end on time
- Consensus decision-making
- All speakers and opinions are respected
- Individual students, families, and staff are not discussed
- Be open-minded and objective
- Refer family or student issues to the teacher or principal

Article VI: Membership

1. The majority of members of the Council shall be families of students enrolled in at DR DENISON SS in the year in which they are members
2. Parent Representatives
 - a. The number of parent representatives on the Council shall be a determined by the school's constitution committee
 - b. A parent representative shall not be employed by the Board at DR DENISON SS
 - c. A parent representative may be employed by the Board at another location providing the parent discloses such employment on declaring interest in joining the Council
3. Teacher Representatives
 - a. There shall be ONE (1) teacher representative on Council
 - b. The teacher representative must be employed at DR DENISON SS, selected by the teaching staff of the school in accordance with Board's School Councils policy and procedure
 - c. This position may be shared by more than one teacher on a rotating basis
4. Support Staff Representatives
 - a. There may be ONE (1) support staff representative on Council
 - b. The support staff representative must be employed at DR DENISON SS, selected by the support staff of the school in accordance with Board's School Councils policy and procedure
 - c. This position may be shared by more than one support staff on a rotating basis
5. Community Representatives
 - a. Community representatives—not families of students at the school, but interested community partners-- may apply for membership in writing to Council or be invited by Council
 - b. The number of community representatives on Council shall not exceed FOUR (4)
 - c. A community representative shall not be employed by the Board at DR DENISON SS
 - d. A community representative may be employed by the Board at another location providing the individual discloses such employment on declaring interest in joining the Council
6. Student Representative
 - a. The Principal may appoint ONE (1) student representative at his/her discretion
7. Principal of the school

Article VII: Elections & Voting

1. Election Notice
 - a. Public notice of the annual elections and nomination forms shall be given to the school community at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the election
 - b. Notice of the annual election shall include date, time, and location of the election
 - c. Elections should be in September of the school year
 - d. Written notice (paper and/or electronic) shall be given to all families/ parents/guardians of registered students at DR DENISON SS
2. Election Procedure for Parent Representatives
 - a. Nomination. Each parent/guardian seeking election must
 - i. be nominated or self-nominated in writing
 - ii. have a child registered for that school year at DR DENISON SS
 - iii. declare if he/she is employed by the Board
 - b. Family election shall be by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of family representative positions on Council (ten).
 - c. If the number of candidates exceeds the number of spots, an election must take place (see Section e)
 - d. An election Committee of the Council and the Principal shall:
 - i. Ensure nomination forms are provided to all families (as in through the opening day

Book of Forms)

- ii. Ensure the school community is notified of election date/date/location, at least fourteen (14) days in advance of election
- iii. Require a written profile of all candidates for distribution at the election meeting
- iv. Ensure the election takes place within the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school year

e. Voting

- i. Each family/parent/guardian of a student enrolled at DR DENISON SS may cast a ballot for each vacant family/parent representative position on the Council
- ii. When the number of candidates exceeds the number of positions, a single ballot shall be prepared containing the names of all candidates. This list shall be distributed to all parent/guardians at the opening voting meeting
- iii. Voting for the (maximum) ten spots shall occur by families / parents/guardians selecting (maximum) ten names on the ballot
- iv. The election shall be conducted by secret ballot
- v. Counting is conducted by a non-voting attendee (administration, non member staff, etc)

f. Reporting

- i. Only release the names of successful candidates to the school community, AFTER the candidates have been informed of their success or lack thereof in being elected

3. Term of Office

- a. All positions on the School Council are for a term of one (1) year.
- b. Elected members may seek additional terms of office

4. Vacancies

- a. A vacancy in the membership of the Council—even a vacancy of an officer of the Council—does not prevent the Council from functioning
- b. Should an elected family/parent/guardian council position become vacant before the next election, the council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.
- c. If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming a council member, the council may request that interested families/parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. The council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.
- d. When a vacant spot on council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election.
- e. The position may be filled, by election of Council, of a family/guardian/parent who expresses interest
- f. In the event of an officer position becoming vacant, the position must be decided by way of an election, by secret ballot, of all voting members of the Council

5. Removal due to lack of attendance

- a. A Member who misses three (3) Council meetings shall be removed from Council and replaced according to the process in Section 4 (above)

6. Voting on motions

- a. While decisions of the Council are best decided through consensus, when voting is necessary
 - i. Each member of the Council (excluding the Principal/Vice Principal—but including the Teacher, Support Staff, Community, and Student representatives) is entitled to one vote
 - ii. Voting may take place on motions via a show of hands, unless a written vote is called for

- iii. Each member of a Committee is entitled to one vote on all decisions of the Committee

7. Remuneration

- a. A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as an officer or member of a school Council
- b. Reimbursement for expenses incurred as members or officers of the Council shall be in accordance with relevant procedures established by the Board

Article VIII: Members

- 1. members of the Council are accountable to the school community they represent and shall:
 - a. maintain a school wide perspective on issues
 - b. regularly attend school Council meetings
 - c. participate in information sharing and training programs
 - d. act as a communication link between Council and the community
 - e. encourage the participation of families and other people in the school community
 - f. participate on Sub-Committees and assist with tasks of the Council as required

Article IX Executive/Officers

- 1. Eligibility
 - a. All officers must be drawn from parent representatives of the Council
- 2. At the first meeting AFTER the election/acclamation of members, the Council representatives shall elect a Chair or two Co-Chairs:
 - a. All voting must be conducted by secret ballot
 - b. In voting for co-chairs, the "list ballot", described in Article VII, shall be used, with voters selecting two names from the list.
- 3. Other officers which may be elected or appointed by the Council include (but are not limited to) Communications, Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraiser
- 4. Responsibilities
 - a. **Chair/Co-Chair** shall carry out the following tasks in accordance with the Board's School Councils policy and procedures
 - i. Call a minimum of four (4) meetings per year in consultation with the Principal
 - ii. Consult with Council representatives prior to scheduled meetings regarding topics under consideration
 - iii. Ensure that all fundraising activities, management of the proceeds of fundraising, and all expenditures are in accordance with Board School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds policy and procedure
 - iv. Establish agendas for Council meetings with Principal (including current financial statements for review at meetings)
 - v. Share agenda with Council members by the end of the school day prior to the scheduled meeting
 - vi. Chair Council meetings following the agenda
 - vii. Ensure minutes of meetings are duly recorded
 - viii. Communicate on an ongoing basis with school administration
 - ix. Communicate with Trustee, Board staff as required
 - x. Assist and act on behalf of the other co-chair
 - xi. Ensure the Council Constitution is reviewed regularly
 - b. **Communications Officer** may carry out the following tasks:
 - i. Collect school Council mail and communicates with Chair/Co-Chair

- ii. Photocopies and distributes necessary information
 - iii. Provide updates for Council page on school website and other platforms
- c. **Treasurer** may carry out the following tasks:
 - i. Manage Council finances as outlined in Article Ten (X)
 - ii. Present written financial reports and statements including those required for each School Council meeting
- d. **Secretary** may carry out the following tasks:
 - i. Conduct formal attendance and record same in an official record
 - ii. Take notes during meetings including topics under discussion, motions, and all decisions rendered
 - iii. Prepare written minutes for inclusion in the Council record and distribution to Council members
- e. **Fundraising Officer** may carry out the following tasks:
 - i. Chair fundraising Sub-Committee
 - ii. Oversee all fundraising efforts of the Council
 - iii. Identify fundraising targets and purpose for fundraising initiatives
 - iv. deposit funds promptly with the School Budget Secretary

Article X: Sub-Committees

1. Establishment
 - a. Sub-Committees may be formed to conduct more detailed or in-depth work than is possible during Council meetings, to make recommendations to Council and to keep Council informed of issues and developments in particular areas.
 - b. Sub-Committees may include, but are not limited to: fundraising, elections, volunteer, constitution, health and safety, capital improvements.
 - c. Each subcommittee shall appoint its own Chair or Co-Chairs.
2. Sub-Committee membership
 - a. Each subcommittee shall include at least one family member of Council or an individual appointed by Council.
 - b. Persons who are not members of Council may be members of a Sub-Committee.
3. Reports
 - a. Sub-Committee Chairs or designates shall present a report to Council while the Sub-Committee is active.
 - b. The brief reports shall outline the matters decided by the Sub-Committee and are not a forum for discussion by the Council on the whole.
4. Fundraising for Sub-Committees
 - a. Any fundraising conduction by a Sub-Committee must be approved by the fundraising Officer and must be monitored by the Fundraising Committee.
 - b. All individuals in charge of fundraising activities/events must disclose to Council any financial relationship, benefit, or reward of any kind offered or received as a result of the affiliation with an outside organization.

Article XI: Meetings

1. Timetable of Meetings
 - a. On the second meeting of the school year—following the Election meeting—a calendar of Meetings for the year shall be established in consultation with the Principal.
 - b. Council shall meet a minimum of four (4) times throughout the school year.

- c. Established dates shall be shared with the school community via paper and/or electronic communication.
 - d. It is recognized these dates may change at any time.
 - e. All meetings shall be open to the public (in the school community).
- 2. Quorum
 - a. A meeting will have a quorum if a majority of council members are present, and the majority of those present are families.
 - b. A meeting may be held in the absence of a quorum, but all voting must be deferred to a later date.
 - c. In the absence of a Chair or Co-Chair, another Officer of the Council may chair in their stead.
- 3. Decision-Making
 - a. The preferred method of decision-making is through consensus, a collective opinion or general agreement by all Council Members.
 - b. In the absence of consensus, the Chair may decide by way of a show of hands or silent vote by those present with a 51% majority carrying the vote.
 - c. At any point, a Member may call for a ballot vote on a motion under discussion
- 4. Conflict of Interest.
 - a. Any time the school council does business with the potential for monetary gain/loss with any person, agency, or company, and a member of the school council has a vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency, or company, that member shall declare a conflict of interest.
 - b. If any individual Council Member perceives themselves to be in conflict of interest they are required to declare their conflict at the outset of the relevant discussions at the time of the meeting, and the minutes are to reflect this declaration.
 - c. Council members are not to receive any remuneration for their work as a member of Council Conflict of Interest.
- 5. Conflict Resolution
 - a. The Council will undertake to resolve all internal conflict within its mandate in a timely manner
 - b. 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 them.
 - c. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
 - d. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
 - e. 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.
 - f. If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
 - g. If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the chair shall request the intervention of the Superintendent responsible for School Councils, or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

Article XII: Finances

- 1. Allocation (Budgeting)
 - a. The annual budget should be prepared by the Council Executive. It should be presented, reviewed and approved by Council, before the beginning of each school year in September or at the inaugural meeting for the respective school year.
 - b. Any unforeseen changes to the annual budget should be presented for review and approval at the next scheduled Council meeting.

- c. Expenditures for events/activities wholly or partially funded by the Council are to be presented in budget form for approval by the Council in October for the current school year.
 - d. All fundraising activities must be in accordance with the Board's School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds policy and procedure.
- 2. Disbursement (Expenses)
 - a. All expenses should be school related and at a reasonable cost.
 - b. All non-budgeted items require Council approval.
 - c. All expenses incurred should be supported with original receipts. Cheque requisition and payment are arranged through the school office.
- 3. Receipts
 - a. All cash receipts should be handled, collected, counted and totaled in the presence of at least two (2) Council members or volunteers.
 - b. Receipts should be deposited promptly by the school or stored in the school safe and recorded accurately.
 - c. As Per the Board's School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds policy and procedure, the school is to have one school generated funds account through which all school generated funds flow, the allocation of said funds being under the responsibility of the Principal.
- 4. Fundraising
 - a. Fundraising must take place in accordance with School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds policy and procedure.

Article XIII: Agendas and Minutes

- 1. Agendas shall be shared for each meeting
 - a. Agenda items should be submitted to the chair one week prior to the council's next meeting.
 - b. The chair will set the agenda with the Principal or Vice Principal prior to the meeting and it will be forwarded to Council by the end of the school day prior to the meeting.
- 2. Minutes
 - a. Minutes shall be made available for the school community prior to the next meeting of the council.
 - b. The minutes shall include motions, decisions and actions to be taken. (see Appendix)

Article XIV: Annual Report

- 1. The School Council shall submit a written report on its achievements to the principal of the school and to the York Region District School Board following the established guidelines for such a report.
- 2. A copy of this reports shall be made available (via distribution, public display, or electronic posting) to all families with students enrolled in the school.

Article XV: Incorporation

- 1. The school Council shall not be incorporated

Article XVI: Constitutional Amendments

- 1. The School Council shall review the constitution every year via a sub-committee of the Council, and bring proposed amendments to the Council for approval.
- 2. Amendments shall be presented to the Council as motions for approval at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- 3. Constitutional amendments require a 2/3 majority to be passed.