

The Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School
School Council
Constitution

As set at the May 26, 2014 Meeting of the GWWSSC

ARTICLE 1: NAME

This organization shall be known as the **Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School Council (GWWSSC)**.

ARTICLE 2: DEFINITIONS

In this document:

“Article” is also considered to be a “By-Law” for the purposes of the Education Act and Regulations

“Parent” includes a guardian as defined in the Education Act.

ARTICLE 3: PURPOSE

The objectives of the GWWSSC shall be to:

- a) Help create and maintain an environment which is conducive to improving student achievement and school effectiveness.
- b) Serve as an advisory body to the school principal, other school committees and the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) on matters relating to students of the Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School.
- c) Enhance lines of communication among parents and/or guardians, administrators, teachers, support staff, and the students in the school community.
- d) Provide a forum for input into educational matters for members of the school community.
- e) Develop and advocate parental ideas, recommendations and concerns to the YRDSB and to the Minister of Education.
- f) Provide advice on the development, implementation and review of the School Plan for Continuous Improvement.
- g) Help refine the student Code of Conduct.
- h) Provide support for school, family, and community partnerships that assist parents in the education of children.
- i) Assist in the building of a viable school community that works together in the interest of education at Williams.
- j) Support the school in its effort to focus teachers’ time and school resources on the essential tasks of teaching and learning.
- k) Facilitate the development and pursuit of a common vision for our school.

ARTICLE 4: PROCEDURES AND OPERATING GUIDELINES

The operational procedures of this council are outlined in the YRDSB Policy and Procedure 262. All recommendations and activities of the Council shall comply with the Education Act and Regulations, all Ministry and YRDSB Policies and Procedures, and Staff Collective Agreements.

ARTICLE 5: NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

The Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School Council is a non-profit organization that will operate without financial gain for its members. Any profit to the organization will be used in promoting its purposes. Any fund-raising activities will be in strict accordance with Board policy under the guidance of the school principal.

ARTICLE 6: SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

The School Council shall consist of parents; the principal (or Designate) of the school; 1 teacher employed at the school (other than the principal or vice-principals); 1 staff person employed at the school who is not a teacher; 1 student representative appointed by the students’ council, and may include 1

community member appointed by the other members of the School Council. The membership of the School Council is established by election and/or acclamation at the first meeting of the school year.

ARTICLE 7: SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The first School Council meeting in each school year shall take place within the first 30 days of the school year.

Notice of Election of School Council Members

Within the first 14 days of the new school year the principal shall, on behalf of the School Council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a student who is enrolled in the school. The notice shall state that elections for members of the School Council shall be held at the first meeting of School Council.

Eligibility to Vote for Parent Members of School Council

All parents of students enrolled in the school and who are present at the first meeting of the school year are eligible to vote for a parent member of School Council.

Eligibility for Election as a Parent Member of School Council

Each parent seeking election as a parent member of School Council must have a child enrolled at the school, and must nominate themselves. A person is not qualified to be a parent member of School Council if he or she is employed at the school. A person who is not employed by the school but is employed elsewhere by the YRDSB may be a parent member if they declare that they are employed by the YRDSB before the election.

Election of Parent Members of School Council

If the number of nominations for parent members of School Council is greater than the number of parent positions available, an election shall occur at that first meeting. Each parent eligible to vote who attends the first meeting of the School Council shall be entitled to vote for as many candidates as there are parent positions on School Council. The election shall be by secret ballot.

The election of parent members shall be by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to, or less than, the number of parent member positions available on School Council.

A list of candidates and the vote results shall be kept on file by the School Council for use in the event that a vacancy of a parent member on School Council occurs.

Election of Teacher Members of School Council

Teachers employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principals, are eligible to vote for the teacher member of School Council.

Election of Non-Teacher Staff Member of School Council

Persons employed at the school, other than the principal, vice-principal or any other teacher, are eligible to vote for the non-teaching (support) staff member of School Council.

Officers

This School Council shall include a Chairperson (or two Co-Chairpersons), a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Grade 9 Parent Representative. The Chairperson or Co-Chairpersons must be parent members and cannot be employees of the YRDSB.

Officers shall be selected from, and elected by, the elected members of School Council. Officers are not to be construed as an executive, but are to act instead according to the wishes of the School Council.

Publication of Election Results

All candidates standing for election shall be notified of the results before the results are released to the school community.

The School Council shall ensure that the names of members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election.

Acclamations:

Parent elections shall be by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to, or less than, the number of parent member positions available on the council.

Term of Office:

A person elected or appointed as a member of the Council holds office from the date of the first meeting of the Council immediately following the election or appointment until the elections are held at the first meeting of Council in the next school year.

Elected and appointed members may be re-elected or re-appointed.

ARTICLE 8: VACANCIES (for an Executive position):

A vacancy in the membership of the School Council does not prevent the School Council from exercising its authority.

Should one or more parent member positions become vacant before the next election, the School Council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.

If none of the previous candidates remains interested in becoming a School Council member, the School Council may request that interested parents submit their names for consideration. The School Council shall then appoint the appropriate number of parents to fill the vacancies.

If a voting member of School Council leaves during his/her term, then another (non-member) parent can fill the spot if they have attended at least two meetings.

ARTICLE 9: REMOVAL OF SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBER:

The Council may choose to remove from council any member who misses 3 consecutive meetings and shall replace that person according to the Vacancy procedure.

ARTICLE 10: MEETINGS

- a) There will be at least 6 regular meetings within the school year. These meetings will be publicized to the school community.
- b) All meetings of the GWWSSC are open to the school community. Notwithstanding, any item of a confidential nature heard at a School Council meeting must remain so for Council members and non-members alike.
- c) Upon written request of 3 voting members of School Council, the Chairperson(s) must ensure that a meeting of the School Council is held within 14 days of the request being received.
- d) Normally, the Chairperson(s) will Chair the meeting.
- e) A financial statement will be available for the Annual Report.

ARTICLE 11: GOVERNANCE OF MEETINGS

- a) The Agenda will be set by the Chairperson(s) and Principal, allowing sufficient time for item (b).
- b) The Agenda for each meeting will be sent out in advance.
- c) Meetings are usually held from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. on the third Monday of September, October, November, January, March, and May. The number of meetings and the dates and times of meetings may be changed by decision of the School Council. The September meeting of the School Council may be moved to an earlier date in order to capitalize on the interest of parents at the beginning of the school year.
- d) Records containing the minutes of all current year meetings, resolutions and correspondence of the School Council and any committee of the School Council shall be maintained and be made available to any concerned participant of the School Community who requests them.

- e) New business items for discussion are to be given to the Chairperson(s) or Principal 9 days prior to each meeting. Notwithstanding, if time permits, new business may be added at the beginning of each meeting for inclusion in the meeting or deferred until the next agenda.
- f) The GWWSSC is to express views representative of the whole school Community. Members are cautioned not to press specific issues or their own agenda that does not reflect the whole School Community.

ARTICLE 12: DECISION-MAKING

- a) Decisions at Council meetings will normally be made by Consensus. After a full and frank discussion the Chairperson(s) will bring closure on the decision by articulating the Sufficient Consensus. The decision made by Consensus must be clearly stated and recorded as such in the minutes.
- b) If Sufficient Consensus is not evident, the Chairperson(s) will ask twice if any person remains opposed to the Sufficient Consensus and any person entitled to participate in the decision may voice his or her opposition as a dissenting person. The dissenting person will be required by the Chairperson(s) to give careful thought as to whether the personal stand is one of individual preference. If the answer is "yes", then that individual is expected to lay the personal preference aside to allow the group to go forward with Sufficient Consensus.
- c) If a vote is taken, the motion must be moved and seconded. More discussion may ensue and amendment may be in order, following the same format. The vote must carry a 51% majority of those eligible to vote.
- d) In a recorded vote, the teacher representative shall have 1 vote, the staff member shall have 1 vote, the Community Member shall have 1 vote, and the parent members shall have one vote each. The Chairperson(s) shall vote only in the case of a tie vote.

ARTICLE 13: QUORUM

A Quorum for a meeting of the School Council shall be 50% plus 1 of the regular/full membership. This must include 1 Executive Member, 1 Parent, and 1 Teacher or Support Staff member. Quorum is not attained if the Principal (or Designate) is not present; however, the Principal does not have a vote.

ARTICLE 14: COMMITTEES

- a) A committee may be formed when the need arises. Committees may be Standing or Ad-Hoc. Each Committee will include a Coordinator and a member of School Council. The Coordinator does not have to be a member of Council. However, close cooperation with School Council must take place.
- b) Committees will keep the School Council informed of any useful information and update the School Council through progress reports at each School Council meeting pertinent to their specialty area.
- c) The Coordinator shall:
 - Consult with the Chairperson(s) and Vice Chairperson whenever necessary.
 - Organize his/her committee and solicit their views and support.
 - Delegate areas of responsibility to committee members.
 - Keep a record of pertinent information, meetings, assignments and budgetary matters.
 - If not a member of School Council, report to School Council through a School Council member on the Committee.

ARTICLE 15: ANNUAL REPORT

- a) In accordance with YRDSB Regulation 262 on School Councils, the GWWSSC must submit an Annual report to the Director of Education including:
 - i) A list of members
 - ii) A summary of meetings held and attendance at those meetings
 - iii) A summary of the School Councils' activities for the past year (September-May).
- b) The School Council shall make the Annual Report available by request to any member of the school community.

ARTICLE 16: RECORDS

Copies of all records/documents shall be deposited with the School Council Secretary as an official copy for the record. The Chairperson(s), Vice Chairperson, and the Principal shall be responsible to oversee record keeping.

Article 17: Conflict

Conflict of Interest

If individual council members perceive themselves to be in conflict of interest, they are honour bound to declare their conflict at the earliest possible opportunity and at the time of the meeting, so the minutes may reflect this declaration.

Conflict Resolution

The council will undertake to resolve all internal conflicts within its mandate in a timely manner.

Article 18: Constitutional Amendments

Constitutional amendments need a 2/3 majority to be passed.

ARTICLE 19: PROTECTION OF SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

The YRDSB holds liability insurance undertaken on behalf of all School Councils, and, as such, members of GWWSSC are not personally liable for decisions and activities undertaken in relation to the School Council, with the exception of any willful destructive or dishonest act or neglect performed by a particular School Council Member for which that person will be held accountable.