## CONSTITUTION OF FRED VARLEY P.S. SCHOOL COUNCIL.

APRIL 12, 2016
FRED VARLEY P.S.
81 Alexander Lawrie Avenue, Markham L6E OJ8

## Revision History

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| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| April 13, 2016 | 1.0 | Draft document presented and tabled for review by the council. |
| June 01, 2016 | 1.0 | Unanimously voted and adopted by the council. |
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## Article I - NAME and AFFILIATION

School council's official name shall be "FRED VARLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL", and may referred to as "FRED VARLEY P. S. COUNCIL", "SCHOOL COUNCIL" or "COUNCIL".

No other name shall be used in the advertising or representation of the Council.

## Article II - COUNCIL MANDATE

The council's mandate will be as follows:

1) MISSION
"The mission of the Fred Varley Public School Council is to support the academic, physical and emotional well-being of all students, and to promote an effective learning environment in partnership with students, staff, parents and the community. School Council strives to provide the advice and support needed to offer each student the best education possible."
2) VISION
"Our vision of the School Council is to foster an effective, positive, respectful and safe learning environment that enables our students to achieve their full potential. We will accomplish this by representing our school community with a commitment to respectfully promote an open platform for communication that considers all stakeholders and ensures that the students' best interests is at core of our work."
3) OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the Fred Varley Public School Council, in keeping with the Ontario School Council Regulations 612/00 are as follows:
a) To promote and support the involvement of all parents in their children's learning;
b) To advise the Principal on matters relating to the School such as school philosophy, programs and directions, and budget allocations to meet student needs;
c) To facilitate an environment that supports our vision and mission statements;
d) To promote and encourage an inclusive environment for School Council meetings. School Council Meetings are open to the entire School Community thus allowing members of the School Community to ask questions and have input in the decision making process;
e) To facilitate communication, planning and resource allocations to ensure completion of priority programs that are needed to meet the expectations of our School Community;
f) To work, in cooperation with the Principal, to communicate our school's needs to our elected Trustee;
g) To provide positive recognition to volunteers within our School Community;
h) To support School activities in the following capacities: advisory, consultative and participatory;
i) To participate in the development of the school profile and the school's action plan.

## 4) GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All School Council Members shall:
a) Accept that School Council is a cohesive unit. Once an issue is decided on, in Council, it is the responsibility of individual members to publicly support the decision of Council;
b) Be guided by the mission statement and vision of the school;
c) Represent a constituency (parents, teachers, the community), and be responsible for determining and representing the views of his or her constituency to the Principal, the School and School Council;
d) Promote a positive atmosphere where individual contributions of all School Community members are encouraged, valued and respected;
e) Apply democratic principles;
f) Be responsible to base all of his or her deliberations and actions on the interest of the common good of all students and to act in the best interests of all students;
g) Acknowledge that effective partnerships are built on understanding, trust and mutual respect and these are best fostered by open and respectful communication;
h) Declare any conflicts of interest;
i) Accept no remuneration for School Council activities.

Article III - MEMBERSHIP

1) The majority of members of the Council shall be parents of students enrolled at Fred Varley Public School in the year in which they are members.

## 2) Parent Representatives:

a) Minimum number of parent representatives on the Council shall be SEVEN (7) and the maximum shall be no more than FIFTEEN (15).
b) A parent representative shall not be employed by York Region District School Board.
c) A parent representative may be employed by the Board at another location providing the parent disclose such employment on declaring interest in joining the Council.
3) Teacher Representatives:
a) There shall be maximum TWO (2) teacher representatives on Council with privilege to VOTE.
i) Each teacher MUST represent ENGLISH and FRENCH program respectively.
ii) Only ONE (1) Teacher shall represent ENGLISH or FRENCH program.
b) The teacher representative must be employed at Fred Varley Public School, selected by the teaching staff of the school in accordance with Board's School Councils policy and procedure.
c) More than one teacher on a rotating basis may share this position.

## 4) Community Representatives:

a) Community representatives (not parents of students at the school, but interested community partners) may apply for membership in writing to Council or be invited by the Council.
b) The number of community representatives on Council shall not exceed TWO (2).
c) A community representative shall not be employed by York Region District School Board.
d) A community member shall NOT have the privilege to VOTE.
5) Student Representative:
a) The Principal may appoint ONE (1) student representative at his/her discretion.
b) Student representative shall NOT have the privilege to VOTE.
6) Principal of the school

## Article IV - ELECTIONS \& VOTING

## 1) Election Committee:

a) The Principal shall take on the responsibilities of a Returning Officer (RO) and oversee the entire election process as outlined in "Article IV" of this constitution.
b) RO shall appoint a Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) and/or any other position he/she required to form an Election Committee and delegate all responsibilities of the council election to those individuals.
c) All members of the Election Committee, including the DRO shall:
i) Be members of the school staff OR parents/guardians of students currently enrolled at Fred Varley Public School;
ii) Not seek a position in the council;
iii) Not be a family member of someone who is seeking a position in the council;
iv) Keep all election related activities including but not limited to election results, confidential;
v) Submit all findings and results to $\mathbf{R O}$, at the end of the election;
d) Duties of the Election Committee include but not limited to:
i) Provide nomination forms to all parents by electronically or paper;
ii) Ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date(s), location, and time;
iii) Request a profile from all candidates and make these available to the electorate at the election meeting;
iv) Conduct the elections by secret ballot;
v) Count the ballots;
vi) Assist the RO notify all candidates of the results;

## 2) Election Notice:

a) Elections shall occur within the first thirty (30) days of the start of each school year.
b) 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.
c) Notice of the annual election shall include date, time, and location of the election.
d) Written notice (paper and/or electronic) shall be given to all parents/guardians of registered students at Fred Varley Public School.

## 3) 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 the current school year at Fred Varley Public School;
iii) Declare if he/she is employed by the Board;
b) Parent election shall be by acclamation, when the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of parent representative positions on Council (15);
c) Unless the number of candidates is less than the number of parent representative positions on Council (15), only one (1) parent shall represent his/her child/children at Fred Varley Public School per school year.
d) If the number of candidates exceeds the number of spots, an election must take place $\{$ See clause e) $\}$.
e) Voting:
i) Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled at Fred Varley Public School may cast a ballot for each vacant 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, Grade of their children and the program that they are
enrolled in (English/French). This list shall be distributed to all parent/guardians at the opening voting meeting.
iii) Each candidate shall be positioned in the ballot by their LEGAL last name.
iv) Voting for the (maximum) fifteen spots shall occur by parents/guardians selecting (maximum) fifteen names on the ballot.
v) The election shall be conducted by secret ballot.
vi) Counting is conducted by the election committee $\{$ See section 1 ) $\}$, under the direction of Returning Officer (RO).
vii) In the event of a tie for the final spot(s) of the council, a separate secret ballot shall cast with only the names of those tied in the previous ballot.
f) Reporting:
i) Only release the names of successful candidates to the school community, AFTER the candidates have been informed of their success or unsuccessful of being elected.

## 4) 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.
5) Vacancies:
a) A vacancy in the membership of the Council including a vacancy of an officer of the Council shall not prevent the Council from functioning.
b) Should an elected 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 remains interested in becoming a council member, the council may request that interested 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 position 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 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.
6) Removal due to lack of attendance:
a) A Member who misses three (3) Council meetings shall be removed from the Council and replace according to the process in Section 5 (above).

## Article V - MEMBERS \& ACTIONS

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 parents and other people in the school community;
f) Participate on subcommittees and assist with tasks of the Council as required;
2) Making a motion:
a) A council member shall request to the chair and "obtaining the floor" to make a motion.
b) The chair shall let the member know that it is his or her turn before that person can speak to the council and formally propose a course of action.
c) Once an individual has the floor, he or she may make a formal proposal, or motion.
d) Before the motion can be considered, another individual must second the motion by saying "I second the motion".
i) This does not necessarily indicate that he or she agrees with the proposal, only that he or she believes that it is worthy of discussion.
e) Once a motion has been made and seconded, the chair shall restates the motion ("states the question") so that all members clearly understands what is being proposed.
f) Until the motion is voted on, all discussion must focus solely on the question.
g) If no one wants to speak further to the issue, the chair shall ask the council to vote on the motion by asking for those in favour and those opposed.
h) The vote may be conducted by a show of hands, or by secret ballot.
i) In case of a tie, the motion is defeated.
3) Withdrawing a motion:
a) At any time before a vote, the member making the original motion may ask to withdraw it.
b) The motion to withdraw does not require a seconder.
c) Once the question is withdrawn, it is as if it never existed.
d) If the chair has already stated the question and a request to withdraw the motion has been made, the chair shall ask for any objection to from the council.
i) If there is none, the motion is withdrawn.
ii) If a member(s) objects, the request to withdraw the motion is put to a vote.
4) Tabling a motion:
a) Chair shall motion to table a motion to set it aside for discussion at another time so that more pressing business can be discussed or more information about the issues can be obtained.
i) The motion to table a motion takes precedence over the discussion of the motion.
ii) The motion to table a motion requires a seconder.
iii) There can be no debate on a motion to table.
5) Null \& Void motions:
a) Any motions that contradict provincial laws and regulations, local policy, or school council constitution shall be considered out of order and invalid, even if the motion has been voted on and
passed by a majority vote.
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) 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 of 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 VI - EXECUTIVE / OFFICERS

1) Eligibility
a) All officers shall 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 IV, section 3, clause e), 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) Secretary, and Treasurer.
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 five(5) 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 by 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) 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.
c) Treasurer may carry out the following tasks:
i) Manage Council finances;
ii) Present written financial reports and statements including those required for each School Council meeting.

## Article VII - 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, healthy snacks.
c) Each subcommittee shall appoint its own Chair or Co-Chairs.
2) Sub-Committee membership:
a) Each subcommittee shall include at least one Parent 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 as a 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 because of the affiliation with an outside organization.

## Article VIII - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1) A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.
2) 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 decisions of the council.
3) A member shall exclude him- or herself from discussions in which:
a) a conflict of interest is likely to result;
b) the member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the school council may be jeopardized;
c) the 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 actions that may be taken by the principal or board in response to advice that the council provides to the principal or to the board.
4) A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

## Article IX - CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1) Council members are elected to serve the school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on council at all times.
2) 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.
3) Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
4) Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
5) 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.
6) If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
7) If a council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the chair shall ask for order.
8) If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the chair may direct the individual council member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.
9) The removal of a member for one meeting does not prevent the council member from participating in future meetings of council.
10) When the chair has requested the removal of a member or members from a meeting, the chair shall request that the disputing members of council participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting may be a private meeting, and shall not be construed as a meeting of the council.
11) The chair may request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.
12) An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
13) 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.
14) Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.
15) The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools within TWO (2) weeks of the meeting.

## Article X - AMENDMENTS

1) Constitutional Amendments
a) 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.
b) Amendments shall be presented to the Council as motions for approval at a regularly scheduled meeting.
c) Constitutional amendments require a $2 / 3$ majority to be passed.
2) Amending a Motion
a) Until the chair states the question for a final vote, the member who made the motion may change it.
i) The original seconder may wish to withdraw, requiring another seconder.
b) Once the question has been stated, however, the motion can be amended in one of the following ways:
i) The person making the motion may ask to change the original wording. The chair shall ask for any objections from the council. If no one objects, the wording of the motion is changed. Debate continues on the motion as amended.
ii) If someone does object, the question of whether to allow a change in the wording of the motion is put to a vote. If the group consents to the change, debate continues on the motion as amended.
iii) Someone else may move to amend the motion by saying, "I move to amend the motion by..." If so, the normal process for a motion, as outlined above in $\{$ Article $\mathbf{V}$; Section 2)\}, is followed.
iv) An amendment to the amendment may also be proposed, but a third amendment is out of order.
v) If the amendment has been defeated, discussion returns to the original motion.

## 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 five (5) 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 parents.
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) If any individual Council Member perceives themselves to be in conflict of interest as per \{Article VIII \}, 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

## 5) Conflict Resolution:

a) The Council will undertake to resolve all internal conflict within its mandate as per \{Article IX\}, in a timely manner

Article XII - FINANCES

1) Allocation (Budgeting):
a) The Council Executives shall prepare the annual budget. It shall 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 with 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 YRDSB policy, School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds policy and procedure \# 676.0.

## Article XIII - USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTRONICS

1) School Council shall use technology and electronics to communicate and promote council activities. All use of technology and electronic participation in school council meetings and decision-making shall be accordance with YRDSB policy, Use of Technology procedure \# 194.0 and Use of Non-Board Devices procedure \# 194.1.
2) Council officers, members and school administration collaborate with each other using any of following technologies.

## a) E-Mail

i) Each year, at first council meeting, council shall agree to use the board provided email account or the external (Gmail) account.
ii) Email account password MUST be changed at the beginning of school year by NEW council chair prior to first official council meeting for that school year.
b) Skype or FaceTime
i) Council members shall use Skype or FaceTime to conduct discussions and meetings relate to school council matters.
ii) These meetings shall be use for information gathering purpose only. Any decision made during these meetings MUST be put forward towards the next council meeting and brought up as a motion for a vote.

## c) Google Apps

i) Council members shell share relevant documents among members of the school council using Google apps.

## Article XIV - AGENDAS AND MINUTES

1) Agendas shall be printed 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.

## Article XV - 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.

## APPENDIX I - Resources

* http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/fredvarley.ps/SchoolCouncil/Pages/Documents-and-Information.aspx Documents \& Information, School Council, Fred Varley Public School.
* http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/SchoolCouncils/Documents/SCHandbook.pdf

School Council Hand Book, YRDSB.

* http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/guide.html

School Councils: A Guide for Members, Ontario Ministry of Education

* https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r10330

School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees, Ontario Regulation 612/00, Education Act, Ministry of Ontario.

## CODE OF ETHICS

* A member shall consider the best interests of all students.
* A member shall be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
* A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
* A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
* A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.
* A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
* A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
* A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
* A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
* A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
* A member shall not disclose confidential information.
* A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
* A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
* A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
* A member shall declare any conflict of interest.
* A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.


## ADOPTED BY:

FRED VARLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL
(Official Name)


## Signed:

(Tara Narine, Council Chair)

Signed:

