

**THE YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

**H.G. BERNARD PUBLIC SCHOOL**



**SCHOOL COUNCIL**

**CONSTITUTION**



# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Regulation 612 (2000) from the Ministry of Education
- 1.2 Beliefs and Values
- 1.3 Name, Vision, Objectives
- 1.4 Resources and Assistance for Council Members
- 1.5 Non-Profit Organization

## **2.0 MEMBERSHIP**

- 2.1 Positions
- 2.2 Election/Appointment Procedures
- 2.3 Closed Electoral Process

## **3.0 ROLES**

- 3.1 Advisory Role
- 3.2 Non-Advisory Role

## **4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1 School Council
- 4.2 Principal
- 4.3 Chair/Co-Chair
- 4.4 Council Members
- 4.5 Secretary
- 4.6 Treasurer

## **5.0 PROCEDURES FOR CALLING AND CONDUCTING REGULAR MEETINGS**

- 5.1 Quorum
- 5.2 Decision Making Process
- 5.3 Minutes
- 5.4 Attendance
- 5.5 Order
- 5.6 Agenda Items

## **6.0 OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 6.1 Operating Norms
- 6.2 School Creed
- 6.3 Annual Report
- 6.4 Constitution Amendment Procedure
- 6.5 Finance and Administrative Procedure

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Regulation 612**

The board's policy encouraged school communities either to establish entirely new organizations as the School Councils or to set up the School Councils by adapting existing parent/community associations or committees, so that they conform to the requirements set out in Memorandum No. 122. It is important to note, however, that school communities may have parent/community organizations in addition to the School Councils.

According to the Ministry of Education Regulation 612 and Board Policy 262, the role of the school councils is to improve student learning and to develop a shared sense of accountability for the public education system among both parents and educators.

- School Councils are advisory bodies.
- They can make recommendations to the principal and or the board on ANY matter (with the exception of confidential personnel matters)

### **1.2 Beliefs and Values**

The YRDSB, through its mission statement, believes that collaborative partnerships among the school, the family and the community are essential to improving student learning and increasing a shared sense of accountability for public education.

- The Board believes that strong school community partnerships are built around a common vision, common goals and nurtured through regular communication, meaningful consultation and the extensive involvement of all members of the school community.
- The Board believes that school councils play an important role in building school, family and community partnerships by providing input into relevant school level and Board decisions and by encouraging the meaningful involvement of all members of the school community in support of student learning.

School councils achieve these goals through a variety of strategies including:

- on-going dialogue with and advice to the principal
- participation in the development and support of the school improvement plan
- volunteering in various capacities
- promoting parent education and learning at home
- co-ordinating community resources.

While the primary role of a school council is focused within the school community, the Board values advice from school councils on the development and review of policies and other matters of concern to councils.

School Councils will provide a process of community collaboration for school-based planning and consensus building for the purposes of improving student learning and school effectiveness.

- Schools require forums for dialogue and collaboration to provide information and support for school plans and to provide support for student success.
- Schools value a partnership of learners that includes students, staff, parents, trustees, and the wider community for the purpose of enhancing student learning.
- Within our diverse communities, the contributions of all participants in the partnership are welcomed and valued. School Councils are one of the ways in which active parent and community involvement can be supported.
- School Councils encourage shared participation regarding broad school issues and develop community support and commitment for schools.

### **1.3 Name, Vision, Objective**

The organization will be known as:

#### **H.G. BERNARD SCHOOL COUNCIL**

It is the vision of H. G. Bernard School Council that:

- H.G. Bernard will have an operating School Council that is representative of its community and reflects the uniqueness of our school
- Our School Council will be a vehicle for open and honest communication
- Our School Council will encourage community involvement and influence the decision-making process in order to enhance the education of our children
- Our School Council will be a forum for collaborative activity, i.e. sharing information, assisting in programs, and participating in activities. Council participants will achieve a positive and accepting group atmosphere that fosters contribution of everyone
- The members of our School Council will be accountable for the work of the Council and be responsible for consultation and communication with their constituents

The objectives of the H.G. Bernard School Council are:

- To create and maintain an environment which is conducive to improving student learning and school effectiveness
- Enhance lines of communication among parents and/or guardians, administrators, teachers and children in the school community
- Provide a forum for input into educational matters for members of the School Community
- Provide a vehicle for transmitting parental ideas, or recommendations to the board itself and concerns to school board committees
- Provide advice on the development, implementation and review of the school plan for continuous improvement
- Provide support for school, family, and community partnerships that assist parents in the education of children
- Sponsor additional programs, such as educating the Council on how the school board operates, that would not otherwise be provided
- Assist in the building of a viable school community which works together in the interest of education at H.G. Bernard Public School.

#### **1.4 Resources/Assistance for Council Members**

Orientation and ongoing in-service will be provided for School Councils by the School Board

Resource materials have been provided to our school, including a School Council Handbook (produced by the Ministry of Education and Training). The handbook will contain materials and information to assist the members of School Councils in carrying out their responsibilities.

#### **1.5 Non-Profit Organization**

The Council will operate without financial gain for its members. Any profit to the organization will be used in promoting its purposes. The H.G. Bernard School Council will operate any fund-raising activities in strict accordance with board policy under the guidance of the School Principal.

## **2.0 MEMBERSHIP**

### **2.1 Positions**

Members of the H.G. Bernard School Council will include the following:

- Parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school totaling eight (8) members. A parent can not be employed at the school with the exception of school lay assistant. This applies to community member too.
- Community representatives from either the business sector, senior citizens, and/or parents of pre-schoolers totaling one (1) member
- The School Principal and Vice-Principal who shall be designated members with one (1) vote (between them) on the Council
- One teacher-elected by the teachers
- One Support Staff-non-teaching staff member

TOTAL MEMBERS = 13

TOTAL VOTING MEMBERS = 12

Parents and guardians shall form the majority of the council.

The Council acknowledges and supports the cultural diversity of our school community through representation from our membership.

### **2.2 Election/Appointment Procedures**

The following positions/appointments are subject to elections on a yearly basis

- The Parent representative positions shall be elected upon completion of their one (1) year term
- The Chairperson and Co-Chairperson of Council shall be members who are also parents and shall be elected by the Council on an annual basis
- The School Principal and Vice-Principal shall be designated members (not subject to election process)
- Members of the teaching staff of H.G. Bernard P.S shall elect the Teacher representative.
- Members of the non-teaching staff of H.G. Bernard P.S shall elect the non-teaching staff member.
- The Community representative positions shall be filled upon completion of their one (1) year term and determined by vote of the other Council members
- The Secretary and Treasurer position shall be elected by the Council on an annual basis

**Membership in the School Council shall be determined in the following manner:**

- **Parents may be acclaimed or elected;**
- **Elections must be held during the first 30 calendar days of each school year;**
- Public notice must be given 14 days before the election, specifying date, time and location;
- Each parent of a student has one vote by secret ballot and may vote for up to as many parent candidates as there are parent positions on council.
- **Election of Officers**
  - The council members elect the chair/co-chairs. (They must be parents and not employed with the Board);
  - The council members may elect other officers if it is stated in your constitution.
- **Vacancies**
  - Do not prevent the school council from exercising its authority for members who miss three consecutive meetings without a valid explanation will be asked to vacate their position
  - Can be filled by election or appointment
- **Term of Office**
  - The Term of Office for elected members will be evenly distributed as alternative two year terms (3 parent members, 1 community representative).
  - The Term of Office for appointed positions (teaching, non-Teaching staff and Student Council member positions) will be minimum of one year.
  - There shall be no more than one member on the H.G. Bernard Public School Council from any one household.
  - All Council positions are strictly voluntary, with no fees paid for services rendered.

**Election Process:**

- a. The Returning Officer (School Principal) shall, on behalf of the council, notify all parents informing them of the vacancy(ies) sought and requesting nominations for those interested in filling council positions. This notice will be sent out on the second week of each school year (September) and must be returned to the school for consideration no later than 15 days from the date of the nomination announcement.
- b. In the event that there are more applications than positions, an election will be called to provide parents with an opportunity to elect members to the vacant position(s). The Nomination sub-committee will send a ballot home for return to the school within one (1) week, in order that the election process be completed by early October.
- c. Positions that become vacant on the Council due to resignation or otherwise shall be filled as soon as possible by appointment from the Council. The term of these

appointed positions would be for the remainder of the present school year only. Consideration will be given to those who volunteered their candidacy in the most recent election.

### **2.3 Closed Electoral Process**

Upon completion of elections for Council membership, the Council will vote for the following executive positions: Co- Chairperson (1), Co-Chairperson (2), Secretary and Treasurer. Only parent members are eligible for Co-Chairperson position.

A “Closed Electoral Process” will do this. The non-voting members of the School administration will facilitate the election for executive positions in the following manner:

- a. All Council members will complete a “nominations listing”. This listing will identify a nominee’s personal acceptance as candidates in the position(s) of interest.  
All positions must have at least one candidate prior to voting.
- b. All Council members will receive a ballot, voting for one (1) person for each position (no write-ins or voting for the same person in more than one position). The non-voting member of the School administration will tally the confidential ballots and report said results to the Council.
- c. The elected positions will be based upon the candidates receiving the most votes per position. If one person receives the most votes in more than one position, they will be awarded in the following sequence, (first) Co-Chairperson, (second) Co-Chairperson, (third) Secretary, and (fourth) Treasurer. All “ties” will be re-voted using step “b” until all positions are filled.
- d. Persons can serve the same position for a maximum of two (2) consecutive years with yearly elections as stated in steps a, b and c.
- e. There shall be no disputes or recalls of this electoral process.



## CLOSED ELECTORAL PROCESS

Nominations Listing:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Acceptance</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Chairperson	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
<hr/>			
Co-Chairperson	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
<hr/>			
Treasurer	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
<hr/>			
Secretary	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
<hr/>			
Fundraising Chair	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

## **3.0 ROLES**

### **3.1 Advisory Role**

The advisory role of the School Council will be to provide ideas and opinions to assist the principal and, where appropriate, school board trustees in their decision-making on educational issues. The advice should be based on the general views of the school community, and in the best interest of all students of H.G. Bernard Public School. The School Council must operate within the Ministry of Education and training and board policies and procedure.

### **3.2 Non-Advisory Role**

- Establish its goals, priorities and procedures
- Communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by the Council and to report on the activities of the Council to the school community

## **4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **4.1 Responsibilities of the School Council**

**Consultation:** School councils must consult with parents.

**Meetings:**

- At least four per year, open to the public and in a location accessible to the public.
- The first meeting must be held within the first 35 days of the school year.
- Meeting will be no longer than two (2) hours in length
- It will be an objective of the Council to begin and end meetings on time
- Regular meeting dates are subject to change based upon consensus approval by Council
- Decisions are made only when there is a quorum (a majority of the members are present; and a majority of those present are parent members).
- All activities must be in compliance with the Board policies.

**Minutes and Financial Records**

- Kept for a four-year period and made available at the school.
- A written annual report (including fundraising) made to the principal and the Board.

**Principal and Vice-Principal Profiles**

- Prepare/Review and submit annually to the school's superintendent of education, an administrator profile outlining the preferred characteristics of the school's principal and/or vice-principal.

## **4.2 Responsibilities of Principal**

The principal of the school shall:

### **Communicate**

- Give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings to every parent.
- Give a copy of the annual report to every parent.
- Make known the names of members of the school council by newsletter or other means.
- Distribute any materials received from the Ministry or Board to council members.
- Ensure that copies of the minutes are kept at the school and are accessible to all parents.
- Ensure that the school council constitution is readily available to the school community.
- Assist the council in communicating with the school community.

### **Consult**

- Seek input from council in areas, which have been identified as priorities, including but not limited to:
  - a) school policies and guidelines on school code of conduct and appropriate dress for students,
  - b) the school's improvement plans.
- Consider recommendations made by council and provide rationale for decisions made regarding these recommendations.
- Advise council when they are not in compliance with Board policies and procedures.

### **Support**

- Attend all school council meetings.
- Act as a resource person and assist council in obtaining relevant information.
- Support and promote the school council's operations and activities.
- Support school community organizations, which operate separately from council,
- Be an effective liaison between council and these organizations.

## **4.3 Responsibilities of Council Chair/Co-Chair**

- Call school council meetings, prepare the agenda and chair the meetings.
- Communicate with the school principal, senior Board staff and trustees, as required.
- Ensure that
  - minutes are recorded, and maintained
  - parents are consulted,
  - fundraising meets Board policies, and
  - the constitution is reviewed annually.
- Call School Council meetings
- Determine the agenda for School Council meetings in collaboration with the the Principal and School Council members
- Chair School Council meetings

- Participate in information and training programs
- Communicate with the School Principal
- Ensure the on-going communication of the Council meetings, agendas, decisions and activities to the school community at large
- Prepare any written reports required as a result of School Council business
- Consult with senior board staff and trustees as required
- Support and promote the activities of the school
- Act as spokesperson for the School Council when necessary
- Ensure that the Operating Norms are maintained at all Council activities
- Under normal circumstances, the Chairperson will NOT vote on Council issues unless there is a tie
- Responsible for the preparation, development and distribution of the School Council Annual Report
- Be designated signing officer of School Council financial cheques.

#### **4.4 Responsibilities of Council Members**

The members of the school council are accountable to the parents they represent and MUST:

- Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.
- Regularly attend school 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 within the school community.
- Participate on sub-committees and assist with tasks of the school council.
- Encourage the input and participation of parents and staff members from all groups and people within the community, when appropriate

#### **4.5 Responsibilities of Council Secretary**

- Ensure minutes of all Council meetings are recorded and maintained.
- Minutes are distributed to all members
- Participate in Council meetings

#### **4.6 Responsibilities of Council Treasurer**

- Be responsible for the management and administration of all funds maintained and required for School council activities
- Report on the status of funding as required by the Council
- Establish a “workable” budget
- Facilitate the process by which School Council funds are allocated

- Be responsible for opening and/or maintaining a bank account with a local bank for School Council funds (when such an account is necessary)
- Maintain “up to date” records of all Council financial transactions
- Be a designated signing officer for School Council financial cheques

#### **4.7 Fundraising Chairperson**

- Co-ordinate all fundraising activities
- Responsible of sending notices, collecting, counting money
- Establish a sub-committee of at least 2 more people
- Receive input, review, submit fundraising ideas to the Council

### **5.0 PROCEDURES FOR CALLING AND CONDUCTING REGULAR MEETINGS**

#### **5.1 Quorums**

A “Quorum” is defined as a group consisting of no less than 51% of the voting Council members and consisting of at least three (3) parents in that voting group

All meetings, which require decision-making, will require at least 51% of the voting Council members to constitute a “Quorum”

#### **5.2 Decision Making Process**

- The H.G. Barnard School Council has decided that the Council shall make decisions based upon “consensus” rather than by “vote”. This method fosters a collaborative agreement that ALL Council members will “share in supporting the decisions made in the best interest of the School”. This process will avoid the pitfalls of segregating the council on delicate issues.
- In the interest of time, issues that require additional dialogue and consideration will become “tabled”. It is the responsibility of the meeting Chairperson to “table” such issues for further consideration.
- Issues can be taken “off the table” through a motion by a committee member and consensus by the committee.

#### **5.3 Minutes**

- The H.G. Barnard School Council Secretary and/or designate by Chairperson has responsibility for the duty of recording minutes at all council meetings.
- As per the Principal and Vice Principal roles, the minutes will be kept in the school office as well as forwarded to the Board
- The minutes will be forwarded to council members in a timely manner to allow the necessary time to address outstanding issues prior to the next meeting

## **5.4 Attendance**

- The H.G. Bernard School Council members will make every attempt to attend all regular scheduled meetings
- In the event that a member cannot attend, a call to the school office expressing regrets would be appreciated
- All School Council meetings shall be open to the school community and the Council will encourage guests to attend
- Whenever possible, invitations will be provided to Board members and Trustees
- The Chairperson will contact any Council member who misses three (3) consecutive meetings, and their tenure will be subject to Council review

## **5.5 Order**

All council meetings will be subject to Robert's Rules of Order, specifically:

1. Respect the comments and rights of others
2. Share the floor, allowing others the opportunity to express their comments
3. The meeting Chairperson has the responsibility to maintain order at all times

## **5.6 Agenda items**

- It is the responsibility of the Chairperson to determine the agenda for School Council meetings in collaboration with the Secretary and the Principal (See 3.3 Chairperson's Role)
- All requests to add items for agenda consideration prior to the meeting must be submitted on the Agenda Input Form (see attached)
- In order for these items to be added to the printed agenda, the request to add an agenda item must be received by the Chairperson at least one (1) week prior to the meeting
- Items can also be added to the agenda, at the discretion of the Chairperson, at the time of the approval of the agenda at each meeting

## **6.0 OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

### **6.1 Operating Norms**

The H.G. Bernard School Council recognizes the following "Operative Norms":

- The agenda will be set by the Council members and circulated in advance
- Meetings will begin and end on time
- Consensus will be the preferred choice for decision-making
- All speakers and the opinions of others are respected
- Individual students, parents and staff are not mentioned nor discussed at general meeting
- All Council members will be open-minded and objective
- Council members will refer parent or student issues to the respective teacher

## **6.2 School Creed**

At Our School, We.....

- Believe that everyone in the school is a good and worthy person
- Treat one another in the way we would want them to treat us
- Are responsible for our own behaviour
- Aim to do our very best in all areas of school life, and encourage others to do the same
- Learn together in a learning community of teachers, students, parents and other community members of all ages
- Celebrate cultural diversity and individual differences
- Are citizens of the world who respect our environment and know about the world around us

## **6.3 Annual Report**

The School Council is required to submit an Annual Report to the York Region Board of Education with copy to the Ministry of Education at the end of each school year

The Council Chairperson and Co-chairperson are responsible to prepare, document and distribute this report

A photo of all the members of the School Council is to be submitted together with the report. These photos and a copy of this Annual Report will be kept in the School for public access

## **6.4 Constitution Amendment Procedures**

Request for an H.G. Bernard Council Constitution amendment shall be submitted to the Council Chairperson in writing.

The Council will put all such amendments on the Council Agenda for discussion, clarification and ratification before an amendment is granted.

## **6.5 Finance and Administrative Procedure**

- All School Council cheques require two signatures. One must be either the Council Chair or the Treasurer. The second signature must be either the Principal.
- Cheques must be completed with the payee's name, amount of the invoice and date before the cheques are presented for signing by the signing officers. Appropriate backup must accompany the cheque when presented to the signing officers for signing.
- The bank account must be reconciled monthly, reviewed by the Treasurer and filed in a location that is designated for the Council in the School.
- After every fundraising event, the fundraising report (see attachment) must be completed by the individual in charge of that particular event. The fundraising report must be completed within one week of the event completion and submitted to the Treasurer and Chairperson for review. One copy of the fundraising report will be kept in the location that is designated for the Council at the School.
- Fundraising is a partnership between the school, the Board and the fundraising group. Regardless of who makes up the fundraising group, the money is being raised in the name of the school.
- The school principal remains responsible, on behalf of the Board, to ensure that all fundraising activities are in compliance with Board policies and procedures.
- Money collected is to be kept in the school pending deposit to the bank.
- Monies raised during the fundraising event must be counted on a daily basis; a deposit slip prepared and put in the school safe with the monies until the weekly pickup by North York Credit Union. In the cases of events that cover a number of consecutive dates (e.g. two weeks chocolate campaign), monies should not be held on to until the end of the event, but rather counted and deposited regularly in the school safe for safekeeping.