

Markville Secondary School Council Constitution

Table of Contents:

Article 1: Name and Address	page 2
Article 2: Mission Statement	page 2
Article 3: Purpose and Objectives	page 2
Article 4: Procedures and Guidelines	pages 2-6
Article 5: Membership	pages 6
5.1: Number of Parent Members	
5.2: Number of Community Representatives	
5.3: Student Representative	
5.4: Other Members	
Article 6: Elections	pages 7-8
6.1: Acclamations	
6.2: Election Procedures for Parent Members	
6.3: Terms of Office	
6.4: Vacancies in Membership	
6.5: Resignations	
6.6: Removal	
Article 7: Executive	page 8
7.1: Chair/Co-Chair	
7.2: Officers	
7.3: Vacancies in Office	
Article 8: Sub-Committees	page 8-9
8.1: Establishment	
8.2: Sub-Committee Membership	
8.3: Chairs of Sub-Committees	
Article 9: Meetings	page 9-10
9.1: Timetable	
9.2: Quorum	
9.3: Decision-Making	
9.4: Conflict of Interest	
9.5: Conflict Resolution	
Article 10: Financial	page 10
10.1: Signing Authorities	
10.2: Disbursement and Allocation of Funds	
10.3: Financial Records	
10.4: Annual Audit	
10.5: Scholarship(s)	
10.6: Fee	
Article 11: Agendas and Minutes	page 10
Article 12: Constitutional Amendments	page 11

Markville Secondary School Council Constitution

Article 1: Name and Address

The organization will be known as Markville Secondary school council. A subcommittee will be recruited, and charged with its maintenance. The constitution will be reviewed annually, and posted onto the school council website.

Markville Secondary School
1000 Carlton Road
Markham, ON L3P 7P5
Phone: (905) 940-8840
Fax: (905) 940-8895

Email: markville.ss@yrdsb.edu.on.ca

Article 2: Mission Statement

Markville School Council believes in creating an inviting and wholesome environment. In doing so, they will build partnerships with parents, administration team, students and staff and achieve the highest possible standards of education.

Article 3: Purpose and Objectives

To support and encourage:

- Facilitate meetings, communication, and workshops
- Facilitate frequent and regular communication between and among school staff, students, parents and all partners in education.
- Participate in the school improvement planning and implementation process
- Reviewing and modifying the school profile.
- Provide input into decisions made by the school administration, the York Region Board of Education, and the Ontario Ministry of Education (as deemed appropriate by the Ministry guidelines)

Article 4: Procedures and Operating Guidelines (procedure262 Appendix 1)

This procedure outlines the purpose, roles and responsibilities of school councils in order to support improved student learning and to develop an increased sense of shared accountability for public education. The Chair will facilitate the annual orientation to the roles and responsibilities with the elected/acclaimed council members.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees shall:

- consult school councils on the establishment or amendment of Board policies that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including;
 - codes of conduct within schools,
 - appropriate dress of students in schools,
 - allocation of funds to school councils,
 - conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes,
 - fundraising,
 - budget, and
 - reimbursement of expenses incurred by members and officers of school councils;
- consult school councils on the development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents including;
 - conduct of persons in schools, and

- appropriate dress for students in schools;
- consult school councils on the Board Plan for Continuous Improvement;
- consult school councils on the process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals;
- consider each recommendation made to the Board by school councils and advise school councils, through the appropriate superintendent, of decisions reached or actions taken in response to recommendations made to the Board by school councils, along with a rationale for these actions or decisions;
- provide legal protection to school councils and members of councils for actions taken in the course of carrying out their responsibilities, provided that such actions are consistent with all Board policies and procedures;
- rule on internal disputes of school councils that are referred to the Board by the council (such decisions of the Board shall be final);
- not sit as a member of a school council

Superintendent of Education, with portfolio responsibility for school councils, shall:

- coordinate school council forums in each Community Education Centre at least twice annually for the purposes of conducting professional development, sharing effective practices, and facilitating communication among council chairs, council members, local trustees, principals and senior administrators;
- in collaboration with school council representatives, offer relevant professional development for council chairs, principals, and council members; and
- appoint school council representatives to various ad hoc advisory committees, as required by the Ministry or deemed appropriate by the Board.

Superintendents of Education shall:

- take responsibility for considering and/forwarding recommendations made by school councils to the appropriate person(s); and
- respond to recommendations made by school councils.

Principals shall:

- be a member of the school council;
- Not be entitled to vote in votes taken by the school council or by a committee of the school council.
- attend all school council meetings, unless s/he is unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond his or her control (where possible, the vice-principal shall attend as a delegate);
- call the first school council meeting within the first 35 days of the school year;
- provide written notice (at least 14 days before the election date) of dates, times and locations of the election to every parent of a student who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school;
- make known the names of members of the school council to parents of students enrolled in the school by 30 days after the determination of the school council;
- provide written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the school council to every parent of a student who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school;
- ensure that copies of the minutes of the school council meetings are kept at the school and are accessible to all parents;
- ensure that the school council constitution and by-laws are readily available to the school community;
- provide one copy per family of written notices and the annual report to each student enrolled in the school (on the date the copy is given), for delivery to his or her parent(s) provided that the parents reside in the same home;
- post notices and the annual report in the school in a location that is accessible to parents;
- distribute to each member of the school council any materials received from and identified by the Ministry of Education or the Board as being relevant for distribution to school councils;
- act as a resource person to the school council and assist the council in obtaining information regarding the function of school councils, including information relating to relevant legislation, regulations and policies;

- consider each school council recommendation and advise the council of decisions reached or actions taken in response to each recommendation, along with a rationale for these actions or decisions;
- solicit the views of the school council with respect to the establishment, implementation or amendment of school policies and guidelines, in accordance with Board policies and procedures, that relate to the school's code of conduct, and appropriate dress for students;
- solicit the views of the school council with respect to the establishment, implementation, review and communication of the school plan for continuous improvement and the school profile;
- support and promote the school council's operations and activities;
- assist the council in communicating with the school community; and
- advise school councils when they are not in compliance with Board policies and procedures.

School councils shall:

- carry out responsibilities in accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures, and their school council's constitution and by-laws;
 - hold elections for members of school councils during the first 30 calendar days of each school year;
- fill vacancies in council membership or in the officers of a school council by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the council;
- continue in its duties even if there is a vacancy;
- meet at least four times during the school year (with the first meeting occurring within the first 35 calendar days of the school year) at meetings that are open to the public and in a location accessible to the public;
- hold meetings where decisions are made only when a majority of the members are present and of those present, a majority is parent members;
- record and maintain minutes of all meetings and records of all financial transactions for a four-year period;
- make the minutes and financial records available at the school for examination without charge by any person;
- submit a written annual report and a treasurer's report on its activities, including fundraising, by September 15th of the following school year, to the principal of the school and to the Board;
- prepare/review and submit annually, no later than November of each school year or as requested by the superintendent, an administrator profile outlining the preferred characteristics of the school's principal and/or vice-principal to the superintendent of education (if an updated profile is not submitted the most recent version will be considered);
- ensure compliance with the Board policy on fundraising when taking part in fundraising activities;
- engage in internal conflict resolution activities in accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures, and by-laws of the council;
- consult with parents of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the school council;
- not be incorporated;
- not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of a school council; and
- receive reimbursement for expenses incurred as members or officers of the school council in accordance with relevant procedures established by the Board.

School councils may:

- create by-laws regarding;
 - election procedures and procedures for the filling of vacancies between elections, and
 - a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes;
- specify the number of parent members provided that the number would constitute a majority on the school council (otherwise the number of parent members is six);
- specify the number of community representatives as two or more appointed by the other members of the school council (otherwise there will be one community representative appointed by other members of the school council);

- limit the number of times that a school council member may be re-elected or re-appointed (otherwise there is no limit);
- specify that the school council may have two co-chairs (otherwise there is only one);
- specify other officers of the school council;
- establish committees to make recommendations to the school council such that membership on the committee includes at least one parent member of the council and may include persons who are not members of the school council;
- set norms and rules for conducting school council meetings and committees;
- refer internal disputes to the Board for the Board's consideration and ruling (which is final);
- make recommendations (reflected in the minutes of school council meetings) to principals either verbally or in writing;
- make recommendations (reflected in the minutes of school council meetings) to the Board by submitting them in writing to the school's superintendent of education; and
- in collaboration with the principal, undertake fundraising and decision making regarding the expenditure of such funds in accordance with relevant Board policies and procedures.

School council members shall:

- be elected during the first 30 calendar days of each school year, on a date that is established by the chair or co-chairs of the school council after consulting with the principal of the school;
- in the case of a new school, hold the first election of parent members to the school council during the first 30 calendar days of the school year, on a date that is fixed by the principal;
- hold office from the later of either;
 - the date s/he is elected or appointed, and
 - the date of the first meeting of the school council after the election are held during the school year;
 until the date of the first meeting of the school council after elections are held in the next school year;
- be able to be re-elected or re-appointed in subsequent years unless otherwise specified in the by-laws of the school council;
- be entitled to one vote, when a consensus cannot be reached and voting is necessary by school council;
- be entitled to one vote, in votes taken by a committee of the school council on which the member sits;
- be accountable to the members of the school community whom they represent;
- maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;

- regularly attend school council meetings;
- participate in information sharing and training programs;
- act as a communication link between the school council and the community; encourage the participation of all parents and of other people within the school community; and
- participate on sub-committees and assist with tasks of the school council as appropriate.

School council chairs/co-chairs shall:

- carry out tasks in accordance with Board policies and procedures and their school council's constitution and by-laws;
- call school council meetings (minimum four per year) in consultation with the principal;
- ensure that parents are consulted about matters under consideration by the council;
- ensure that fundraising activities, management of the proceeds of fundraising and all expenditures are in accordance with applicable Board policies and procedures;
- prepare the agenda for school council meetings in consultation with the school's principal;
- chair school council meetings according to the agenda;
- ensure that minutes of school council meetings are recorded;
- communicate with the school principal;
- communicate with senior Board staff and trustees, as required; and
- ensure that the school council constitution and by-laws are reviewed annually.

School council vice-chairs shall:

- assist the chair/co-chairs in carrying out his/her responsibilities; and
- act on behalf of the chair/co-chairs in the event of his/her absence.

Student representative shall:

- in secondary schools, be named by the student council (where one exists) or be elected by the student population if a student council does not exist;
- in elementary schools, be appointed by the principal after consulting with the school council to determine if the school council wants a student representative; and
- Not be applicable to a school that is established primarily for adults.

Community representative shall:

- be one community representative or up to four community representatives if the council chooses to so specify in a by-law, provided that the majority of members continues to be parents;
- be appointed by the members of the school council; and
- Not be employed at the school as a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager and if employed in such a capacity elsewhere in the Board must inform the other members of the council of his or her employment before the appointment.

Teaching staff representative shall:

- be one teacher who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal; and
- be elected by teachers employed at the school.

Support staff shall:

- be one person who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal or any other teacher; and
- be elected by support staff employed at the school.

School council officers (chair, co-chair or officer) shall:

- be elected by the new school council;
- be a parent member of the council; and
- Not be a person who is employed by the Board or who is a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager.

Parents of students enrolled in the school shall:

- form the majority of the members of the school council;
- have the number of representatives defined by either of the following;
 - school council by-law which specifies the number of parent members, or
 - six by default;
 - not qualify to be a parent member of a school council if;
 - s/he is employed at the school, a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager, or
 - s/he is not employed at the school, but is employed elsewhere by the Board (unless s/he takes reasonable steps to inform parents that s/he is an employee of the Board);
- each have one vote in the election of school council members;
- be elected to school council by secret ballot; and
- be elected to school council by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to, or less than the number of parent member positions on the council (if additional vacancies exist, parent members may be appointed by the council according to the by-laws of the council).

Article 5: Membership

5.1: Number of Parent/Guardian Members

The number of parents/guardians on the school council will be a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 30 parent/guardian members.

5.2: Number of Community Representatives

The number of community representatives will be a minimum of one not to exceed four.

5.3: Student Representative

The Student Council will appoint one student.

5.4: Other Members

Teacher representative and support staff representative shall be elected or appointed

Article 6: Elections

6.1: Acclamations

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

Parents must form the majority of council members.

6.2: Election Procedures for Parent Members

Each parent/guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at the school, and must declare if he or she is employed by the Board. If a parent works for the Board but not at Markville, he or she may be a parent member. Parents must form the majority of council members.

1. Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent/guardian membership position on the council.
2. The school council shall strike an election committee before school's out for the year, to help plan the election process, the gathering of nominations, and the running of the election. No one standing for election, or the spouse of anyone standing for election, shall be a member of the election committee.
3. The election committee shall:
 - Provide nomination forms;
 - Ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date(s), location, and time, at least 14 days in advance of election;
 - Request a profile from all candidates and make these available to the electorate;
 - Conduct the elections by secret ballot;
 - Count the ballots;
 - Help the principal notify all candidates of the results;
 - Keep all the results and related information confidential;
 - Only release the names of successful candidates. A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file for use in the event of vacancy on the council;
 - Shall notify all individuals standing for election of the results before the results are released to the school community.

6.3: Terms of Office

Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms of office, no more than 2 years.

6.4: Vacancies in Membership

- A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the council from exercising its authority.
- If parent member positions remain vacant on council, after the election, the council may appoint parent members.
- Positions that become vacant due to resignation or removal shall be filled as soon as possible by:

- Offering the person with the next largest number of votes who was not elected, the opportunity to accept the position.
- Where there are not enough candidates to fill the vacancies, notice will be sent to all parents informing them of the vacancies and application by interested volunteers sought.
- If there are more applications than positions, an election will be called.
- When no more candidates are available, council may appoint parent members.
- Vacancies will only be filled until June of the current year, at which time the vacant positions will be filled through September elections.

6.5: Resignations

- Anyone who is a council member, except the principal, may resign their position by writing a letter of resignation to the chair.
- If someone resigns the position vacated will be filled according to Article 6.4 Vacancies.

6.6: Removal

The council may choose to remove from council any member who misses 2 consecutive meetings, subject to the review of the rationale for meetings missed. The council shall undertake to replace that person according to Article 6.4: Vacancies.

Article 7: Executive

7.1: Chair and Vice-chair

At the first meeting after the elections, or in the event that the elections are by acclamation, on that same meeting, council will elect a Chair, and Vice Chair whose responsibilities will be to assist the chair, and learn the role in order to assume the role of the chair the following school year.

An employee of the Board cannot be chair.

7.2: Other Officers

At the first meeting of the school year, the council will elect or appoint the following officers: *Secretary, Treasurer, and Other Officers as needed*

7.3: Vacancies in Office

Officer vacancies will be filled as soon as possible according to Article 7.1 and 7.2

TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office for each school council executive position is for one year only but members may be re-elected, and no more than 2 years.

Article 8: Sub-Committees

8.1: Establishment

If member numbers permit, during 1st meeting of year, Sub-committees may be formed to assist council by:

- Functioning outside regular council meetings on a more detailed level. Due to time commitment, this would allow focus on quality project completion.
- Suggest recommendations where viable.

- Keep members in the loop by bringing to their attention any concerns falling under the umbrella of Council.

(I.e. Budget, Capital Improvements, Communications, Constitution, Education, Election, Fundraising, Health & Safety, Policy & Procedure, Social Volunteer)

8.2: Sub-Committee Membership

- Can exist with non-members of council.
- Essential to include one parent member of council.

8.3: Chairs of Sub-Committees

Council will select the chair for each sub-committee.

Article 9: Meetings

9.1: Timetable of Meetings

- At the last meeting of the ending school year, a draft timetable will be developed with the admin team.
- At the first meeting of the new school year, a timetable will be reviewed with council.
- A copy of these dates and times will be included in the minutes of the new school year, and posted onto the school website.
- It is recognized that the timetable may change at any time.
- A copy of the list of dates and times of meetings will be sent to the local trustee.

9.2: Quorum

A meeting will have quorum if:

- The majority of council members are present
AND
- The majority of those present are parents.

A meeting of council can be held if there is no quorum but all voting will be deferred.

9.3: Decision-making

- The preferred method to resolve issues on council is by consensus. Consensus is a collective opinion or general agreement by ALL the council members.

In the case where a decision cannot be reached through consensus, the chair may decide on one of the following:

- To have a vote by way of a show of hands or a silent vote by those present in which a 51% majority shall carry the vote
- To defer the issue to the next meeting
- To defer the issue to a special meeting
- To defer the issue to a sub-committee

*9.4: 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.
- Council members cannot receive any remuneration for their work as a member of council.

*9.5: Conflict Resolution

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

The council will abide by any conflict resolution policy issued by the Board.

Article 10: Financial Records

10.1: Signing Authorities

The principal and 2 council members (Chair and Treasurer) can be the signing authorities. Two of the three signatures will be required on the account.

10.2: Disbursement and Allocation of Money

All money must be collected by the end of the year. Funds should be dispersed or allocated to a specific purpose by the end of the year. Council should aim at having a carry-over amount not to exceed \$500.00 (to cover the costs of yearly commitments) unless unusual circumstances exist which require the accumulation of a specified amount for an approved project.

10.3: Financial Records

Financial records must be prepared, and form part of the minutes. The school council must review, and approve the financial records at each meeting.

10.4: Annual Audit

A formal audit by an accountant is not required by school council. The board may choose to conduct an independent review.

10.5: Scholarship(s)

Markville Secondary School Council Scholarship(s) will be awarded to a Secondary student(s), whose steadfast purpose or course of action, has resulted in going beyond expectations in character and/or academic's. (i.e. she/he will have a steady accumulation of credits to complete their OSSD and whose career resolve is to further their education formally through a post-secondary application.)

10.6: Contribution

A voluntary \$10.00 *contribution* to Markville Secondary School Council will be accepted at registration, to improve the daily quality of life for all students at Markville. These funds will be allocated by the School Council for initiatives and needs throughout the school year.

Article 11: Agendas and Minutes

11.1: Agendas

- Agenda items should be submitted to the Chair one week prior to the council's next meeting.
- The Chair will set the agenda with the principal, prior to the meeting.

11.2: Minutes

- Approved minutes shall be posted onto the school website.
- Posting of minutes onto the school website:
 - Draft minutes can be posted onto the school website, and shall be stamped as DRAFT
 - Once the minutes are approved by council, the minutes will be posted and shall be stamped as APPROVED
- The minutes shall include motions, decisions and actions to be taken.
- Members of the council must inform the Chair if they are going to be absent from a council meeting.

Article 12: Constitutional Amendments

- The school council will review the constitution every two years or as the need arises. A sub-committee can perform the review and bring proposed amendments to the school council for voting.
- Amendments to the constitution must be presented to the council, at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- Constitutional amendments need a 2/3 majority to be passed.

Revised Last on May 9th, 2011