

Meadowbrook Public School

York Region District School Board

School Council Bylaws

Ratified September 2024

All school council activities shall be governed by Ontario Regulation 612/00 (as amended) in force at the start of the school year, YRDSB School Policy and Procedures #262.0, and the YRDSB school council handbook except as detailed herein. Proposed amendments to any of the above shall be immediately communicated to the school council by the principal for review.

Composition:

The school council shall be comprised of a minimum of six (6) parent/guardian members, in addition to the non-parent/guardian members.

The executive committee may be comprised of the following roles:

- One (1) chair or two (2) co-chairs
- One (1) vice-chair
- One (1) treasurer
- One (1) Secretary

If a Student Leadership Team is in place, a representative from that Student Leadership Team may attend Council.

Role of the Executive Officers:

Chair/Co-chair

In addition to the school council, school council executive, and parent/guardian member duties outlined in O.Reg 612/00 and YRDSB Board Policy and Procedure #262.0, the chair/co-chairs have the following responsibilities:

- establish a school council meeting schedule for the year, to be distributed by the principal
- prepare, or delegate preparation of the agenda for meetings
- chair all council meetings
- supervise the operation of council in conjunction with school Administration
- establish committees for the activities of school council, and act as a tie-breaking vote for all committee decisions, if necessary
- make, or delegate the making of public statements on behalf of the school council in consultation with Administration
- ensure that school council members behave ethically, with Administration support as required
- communicate school council initiatives and considerations to the school community in partnership with Administration
- consult with senior Board staff and trustees, as required
- review and approve the reports and any other financial records of school council
- ensure other school council executives understand their roles and responsibilities

- communicate regularly with the school principal and consult with them with regard to all proposed school council activities and/or initiatives that will involve or impact the school community, staff, or students
- ensure that there is consultation between the school community and the principal regarding the distribution of school council funds
- work with the principal to ensure that all school council fundraising activities and uses of school council funds comply with board policies
- work with the principal to ensure there are processes in place to manage funds raised by school council and to maintain the security of school council funds and financial records
- prepare, or delegate preparation of an annual report outlining all school council activities for the school year per O.Reg 612/00
- Promote diversity and inclusivity in school council membership and committee creation

Vice-chair

In addition to the school council, school council executive, and parent/guardian member duties outlined in O.Reg 612/00 and YRDSB Board Policy and Procedure #262.0, the vice-chair(s) has/have the following responsibilities:

- Learn and/or prepare to take on, the role of chair/co-chair to facilitate transition of parent/guardian members whose children matriculate out of the school, and to provide new leadership and ideas to the school council
- Promote diversity and inclusivity in school council membership and committee creation

Treasurer

In addition to the school council, school council executive, and parent/guardian member duties outlined in O.Reg 612/00 and YRDSB Board Policy and Procedure #262.0, the treasurer has the following responsibilities:

- Review and approve all financial records for school council fundraising, expenses, purchases, and budget planning in consultation with Administration and School Council Chair(s)
- Promote diversity and inclusivity in school council membership and committee creation

Secretary

In addition to the school council, school council executive, and parent/guardian member duties outlined in O.Reg 612/00 and YRDSB Board Policy and Procedure #262.0, the treasurer has the following responsibilities:

- Prepare, or assist with preparation of council meeting agenda
- Record minutes of school council meetings and distribute minutes to the school community
- Promote diversity and inclusivity in school council membership and committee creation

Election of Parent/guardian members:

Except as required by O.Reg 612/00, Meadowbrook P.S., in consultation with the school community has developed the following “Meadowbrook School Council Inclusivity Initiative”:

The school community of Meadowbrook Public School has raised concerns with parent/guardian member election processes which potentially prevent certain members of the school community from election to school council. The specific issues raised are summarized as follows:

- 1) Parents for whom English is a second language feel unable, uncomfortable, or unwilling to be nominated or nominate themselves*
- 2) Parents who are unable to physically attend school council meetings at the school for a variety of reasons (child care, work schedules, etc.) feel they cannot participate*
- 3) Preparation of nominee backgrounds may include personal information which parents do not want distributed, may make new members unwilling to submit nominations due to lack of experience, and can create issues for parents for whom English is a second language*
- 4) The issues raised all appear to contravene the YRDSB requirements to promote diversity in school council*

Given that Meadowbrook P.S. wishes to make our school council the strongest it can be, it must provide opportunity for everyone who wishes to participate, create a diverse opinion base, and promote a culture of inclusion and respect. As such, we make the following bylaw with regards to the Election of Parent/guardian members:

‘All school community members who are eligible to be parent/guardian members of school council under O.Reg 612/00 4.(1) and 4.(2) are automatically acclaimed to a position on school council as a non-voting parent/guardian member, unless otherwise expressed during the establishment of Council so as to maintain quorum.’

Election of Officers:

Except as required by O.Reg 612/00, school council officers shall be nominated from the parent/guardian members who attend the first council meeting of each school year. In the event a nominee is unable to attend the first council meeting of the school year, they (or a person on their behalf) shall submit a nomination to the council at, or before the council meeting where elections are taking place.

At the council meeting where elections are taking place:

- A call for nominees for each position will be made. At this time, any parent/guardian member may be nominated, or nominate themselves, and any nomination submissions not already provided to the council shall be provided
- Parent/guardian members shall be asked to ‘second’ each nomination to confirm the nomination in the meeting minutes
- Each officer position with a single nominee shall be acclaimed to the position
- In the event that no more than two nominees are put forward for the chair position, they shall be acclaimed as chair, or two (2) co-chairs, as appropriate
- In the event that no more than one nominee is put forward for the vice chair position, they shall be acclaimed as vice-chair/co-vice-chairs, as appropriate
- Subject to the above, each parent/guardian member shall be entitled to vote for one candidate, or abstain from voting, for each officer position which remains unfilled after the acclamations, if any

Filling of Vacancies During the School Year:

Any person filling a vacancy during the school year shall fill that vacancy only until the end of the term of the position they are filling.

Parent/guardian member vacancies

Vacancies are created by one of the following:

- There are insufficient parent/guardian members of council to have a majority of parent/guardian members present during school council meetings
- Officer positions remain unfilled after an election
- Resignation of a member/officer
- When a member/officer is unable to fulfill their duties

Filling vacancies of parent/guardian members

When a vacancy occurs, any remaining members of the school council may call for volunteers to fill the required position(s) until at least the minimum number of parent/guardian members is reached.

Officer positions remaining unfilled due to any of the above reasons for vacancy, awarded to the person with the second highest number of votes from the original election. If necessary, a full election process, with invitation to all community members, may be called to fill the vacant position(s).

Parent/guardian members/officers who resign their position, or are unable to fulfill their duties, are ineligible to fill the same position during the current term.

If a vacancy cannot be filled, council can continue to operate until a replacement representative is found, as long as there is a quorum and the majority of council members are parents.

Non-parent/guardian member vacancies

Vacancies are created by one of the following:

- Positions remain unfilled after an election
- Resignation of a member
- When a member is unable to fulfill their duties

Filling vacancies of non-parent/guardian members

When a vacancy occurs in a staff position, the principal shall communicate to the appropriate school staff and request they work collaboratively to fill the position.

If a vacancy exists in the community member position, the school council will make all reasonable attempts to fill the position.

If a vacancy can not be filled, council can continue to operate until a replacement representative is found, as long as there is a quorum and the majority of council members are parents.

Conflict of Interest:

A conflict of interest for a school council member involves situations in which the member's private interests may be incompatible or in conflict with their school council responsibilities.

A conflict of interest may be:

- **actual** – a private interest may directly or indirectly influence the exercise of the member's duties and responsibilities
- **perceived** – a reasonably well-informed person could believe that a member was in conflict of interest, even if that conflict of interest did not exist
- **potential** – a private interest could influence the exercise of the member's duties and responsibilities

A council member shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families or their business affiliations could directly or indirectly benefit from the decisions of council.

A council member who identifies a conflict of interest must declare it before any discussion of the matter begins. The member must:

- publicly state the conflict of interest, explain the general nature of the interest and have the declaration recorded in the minutes
- not vote on the matter under discussion
- refrain from engaging while council is discussing the matter and have this fact recorded in the minutes
- not discuss the matter with members or attempt to influence the vote

A council member shall not accept favours or economic benefit from any individuals, organizations or entities known to be seeking business contracts from the school.

It is not considered a conflict of interest for a child of a school council member or a council member to participate in or win a prize as part of an activity supported or run by council. When conducting an event where prizes may be awarded, the draw and reading of the number/name will be conducted by a person who is not entered in the event. In most cases, this will be the principal or vice-principal, or another staff member from the school.

Conflict Resolution:

Occasionally, a dispute may develop among school council members. It is expected that members and the principal will make every effort to resolve the dispute themselves.

Resolving disputes internally

- Council members will demonstrate respect for other council members at all times.
- Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- The chair will ensure all members of the council have the opportunity to speak.
- Speakers will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- The chair will focus the discussion on council issues.
- The chair will clarify speaker statements, identify common points of view and attempt to achieve a consensus among council members.

- The chair may request disputing members of council to meet privately to find a mutually acceptable solution to the issue.

Handling disruptive behaviour

- If a council member becomes disruptive during a meeting, the chair shall call for order.
- If the disruptive behaviour continues, or order cannot be restored, the chair may ask for the removal of the disruptive individual(s) from the current topic of conversation, including possible removal from the meeting. The reasons for the removal, and the extent should be documented in the minutes.
- Removing a member from a discussion or council meeting does not prevent that member from participating in future council meetings, nor prevent them from participating in discussion about other topics at the same meeting unless they are able to conduct themselves in an acceptable manner.

Resolving disputes through mediation

- If it is apparent that a dispute cannot be resolved internally, the chair may ask for Administration or a representative above the highest position of a person involved in the dispute, to help in the role of mediator to help resolve the problem.
- The mediator shall remain neutral and will not make a decision in the dispute. The mediator shall assist the members to find a resolution in the best interests of the school and students.
- The resolution shall be signed and respected by all individuals involved in the dispute.