

W. E. Gowling

Public School

School Council Constitution



Mission Statement: W.E Gowling Public School Council works to support activities within our school that foster quality education for all.

1. Name of Organization:

W.E. Gowling Public School Council (hereinafter called the 'Council')

2. Mission statement:

W.E. Gowling Public School Council works to support activities within our school that foster quality education for all.

3. Purpose:

3.1: The purpose of the Council is, through the active participation of parents, administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and members of the community at large, to improve pupil achievement and to

enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. The Council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations, in accordance with the general principles laid out in the Education Act and the procedures and policies required by Ontario Regulation 612/00, to the Principal of the W.E. Gowling Public School (the 'School') and the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) that established this council.

3.2: The Council will be prepared to provide the OCDSB with views on the following as they pertain to The Education Act:

3.2.1: The development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including:

- implementation plans for Policies and Procedures with respect to conduct of persons in the Board's schools;
- implementation plans for Policies and Procedures respecting appropriate dress of pupils in the Board's schools.

3.2.2: Board action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of pupils, and the communication of those plans to the public.

3.2.3: The process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of Principals and Vice-Principals.

3.3: The Council may make recommendations to the Principal of the School or to the Board on any matter.

4. Membership:

4.1: The Council shall be composed of the following people:

- Parents/Grandparents/Guardians. This group must form a majority on council. Based on membership requirements, the minimum number is 6.
- The Principal of the School.

- One (or more) staff member(s) employed at the School other than the Principal or vice Principal.

- Optional - community representative(s) appointed by the other members of the School Council.

5. Election/Nomination of Parent/Grandparent/Guardian Members:

5.1: A person is qualified to be a parent/grandparent/guardian member of the Council if he or she is a parent/grandparent/guardian of a pupil enrolled in the School and is not employed at the School. A person employed elsewhere by the OCDSB must take reasonable steps to inform voters of their employment in order to qualify as a parent member.

5.2: A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent/grandparent/guardian members if he or she is a parent/grandparent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the School.

5.3: The nomination of parent/grandparent/guardian members will be held during the first 30 days of the school year on a date fixed by the Council chair after consulting with the Principal. The confirmation of nomination or the election of members if required will be carried out at the second (October) meeting of Council.

5.4 :The Principal shall, at least 14 days before the membership confirmation/election, provide written notice of the date, time and location of the aforementioned meeting to every parent/grandparent /guardian.

5.5: Any election of parent/grandparent/guardian members shall be by secret ballot. A nomination form stands as membership qualification if no election is required.

6. Election of Other Members:

6.1: The election of staff member(s) of the Council shall occur within the first 30 days of the school year.

6.2: Staff at the School other than the Principal or vice-Principal can vote for the teacher representative on Council.

6.3: Non-teaching employees at the School other than the Principal or vice-Principal can vote for the non-teaching representative on Council.

7. Term of Office:

7.1: The term of office for 'officers' of Council is one year.

8. Officers:

8.1: The Council shall have a chair or co-chairs position(s) held by a parent(s)/grandparent(s)/guardian(s) and elected by the Council. Someone employed by the OCDSB cannot be a chair or co-chair.

9. Remuneration:

9.1: A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of the Council.

10. Meetings:

10.1: The Council shall meet at least six times during the school year.

10.2: The first meeting shall be held within the first 35 days of the school year on a date fixed by the Chair and/or Principal.

10.3: A meeting must have a majority (greater than 50%) of members present and within that group a majority of parents (greater than 50%) in order to constitute a meeting.

10.4: The Principal or his/her designate must be in attendance in order to constitute a meeting.

10.5: All meetings shall be open to the public and held in a location accessible to the public.

10.6: The Council is entitled to hold its meetings at the School.

10.7: The Principal shall give written notice of the date, time and place of the meetings to every parent/ grandparent/guardian. This can be done by sending a notice home with the child, in the regular School newsletter, by Synrevoice, or by posting a notice in the School in a location accessible to parents/guardians.

11. Committees:

11.1: The Council may, in accordance with its by-laws establish committees to make recommendations to the Council.

11.2: Every committee must include at least one parent member of the Council.

11.3: A committee may include persons who are not members of the Council.

11.4: With necessary modifications, committee meetings are public and accessible with notice given to parents/guardians in a manner similar to Council meetings.

12. Voting and decision making:

12.1: Each member of the Council and/or committee is entitled to one vote when votes are taken. The Principal and School staff are not entitled to vote on Council matters and/or committee matters. OCDSB staff who are also parents/grandparents/guardians and are not teachers at the school can be voting members.

13. Minutes and Financial Records:

13.1: Minutes of all meetings and all financial records shall be kept and available without charge, at the School for examination by anyone for a period of four years.

13.2: The Council Treasurer will maintain an accurate set of financial records, and present a report of Council finances at each Council meeting.

13.3: For revenues raised by the Council - monies will be deposited in the Council bank account following the OCDSB financial policies and procedures.

14. Incorporation:

14.1: The Council shall not be incorporated.

15. Fundraising:

15.1: The Council may engage in fundraising that is conducted in accordance with applicable policies established by the OCDSB, to raise funds for a purpose selected by the Council, in compliance with the OCDSB or by any applicable policies established by the Board.

16. Communication with Parents:

16.1: The Council shall consult with parents/grandparents/guardians of pupils in the School about matters under consideration by the Council.

16.2: The Council shall regularly provide a written report/minutes, including any fundraising activities to the School Principal and to the OCDSB. The Principal shall in turn provide parents/grandparents/guardians with a copy, upon request.

16.3: Written reports/minutes are distributed to Council members via email and a variety of external resources/partners, including bulletin boards at school, and are posted on Council's website.

17. Amending Process:

Amendments to this constitution require a 2/3-majority vote.

BY-LAWS

1. Membership: All parents are welcome at any meeting of the Council. The minimum number of parent members is set by legislation.

- To make up a council of 9, the minimum number of parents is 6.
- The Council has set a maximum number of 12 voting members exclusive of the officers (3) for a total of 15. Voting members will be identified at the September council meeting.
- If a circumstance arises whereby the number of parents wishing to be members exceeds 15, the Chair can entertain a motion to either call for an election by secret ballot to select 15, or a motion to make provision for the greater number of members.
- Decisions will be taken by consensus by the attendees of each meeting. If a decision by consensus is not possible, the Chair will require a vote to make the final decision.
- In the instances where a vote is required, officers and the 12 identified voting members will participate.
- At the discretion of the Chair, membership may also be extended for voting purposes in specific instances where greater parent participation may be warranted.
- As an elementary school, student representation is to be brought forward through the staff member or the Principal.

2. Quorum: Legislation states there must always be a majority of members and a majority of parents to constitute a meeting. If for a period of three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings a quorum fails to exist, a membership review committee shall be struck to make recommendations on how to proceed.

3. Elections and Vacancies: In the event of a vacancy that requires fulfillment after the initial election process the Council will decide by majority consensus the course of action.

4. Officers: In addition to the mandated chair or co-chair the Council's parent/grandparent/guardian members will also nominate and acclaim or elect a secretary and a treasurer at the meeting where other elections are taking place.

The following lists duties or responsibilities of the officers.

4.1 The Chair or Co-Chairs:

- Consult(s) with the Principal to set the date of the annual election;
- Call(s) meetings;
- Ensures meeting dates and times are established;
- Sets the agenda in consultation with the Principal and community;
- Distributes the agenda prior to the meeting;
- Runs the meetings in a democratic manner;
- Ensures that constitution and by-laws are followed;
- Ensures the annual report to the parents and Board is prepared;
- Ensures that meetings with parents and community are conducted on matters within the Council's responsibility;
- Works with the Principal in communicating with the OCDSB;
- Communicates as required with other school councils and organizations;
- Other duties assigned to the chair by the Council.

4.2 Secretary:

- Records and transcribes minutes of the meetings;
- Publishes and distributes minutes prior to subsequent meetings.
- Maintains an archive of minutes and pertinent correspondence for at least four years.

4.3 Treasurer:

- Is responsible for tracking of all monies raised by the Council in accordance with OCDSB Policy and Procedures;
- Provides the Council with a financial report at each meeting;
- Provides parents/guardians of students at the School with a financial report for the school year as part of the Council's annual report. The duty of 'accounting procedures' will be conducted by

the Treasurer, together with administration (secretary) of the school. The Treasurer and administration will reconcile Council's accounts on a regular basis.

5. Selection of Officers and Filling Vacancies: The method selection and filling vacancies is specified in section 3.

6. Committees: According to Ontario Regulation 612/00, the Council may specify particular committees. Should this be done, each committee will be responsible for drafting at minimum a single paragraph describing their mandate and membership, as well as the reporting structure of the committee (i.e. to the Chair or Co-chairs, or to the Council).

6.1 Community Engagement Committee: There will be a sub-committee of Council that will include Council members and staff representatives. This group will:

- establish the fundraising goals and schedule of fundraising events for the year
- be responsible for all monies raised by the Council in accordance with Board Policy and Procedures; and ensure that funds raised are given to the Treasurer, who in turn will work with the administration (secretary) to ensure all policies/procedures are complied with
- provide the council with a financial report upon completion of the fundraising event.

6.2 Other Committees: There will be other sub-committees that are struck from time-to-time, on the instruction of the Council. The parameters for any sub-committee will be discussed and approved by the Council, and the mandate and reporting structure will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting when the Committee was formed, or of the meeting immediately following the Committee's formation when the paragraph listed under item 6 is available for presentation to the Council.

7. Meetings: Council will establish its meeting schedule at its first meeting of the year in September. Meetings will normally take place on the first Tuesday of the month at 5:15 p.m. The next meeting date is confirmed and

adjusted if required each month. Note that the first Council meeting is required by Ontario Regulation 612/00 to take place within 30 days of the start of the school year.

8. Fundraising: As per OCDSB Policy and Procedures, and in accordance with a majority of Council votes. Fundraising activities will be planned and prioritized in an annual fundraising plan, developed by the Community Development chair, and made available for discussion by Council at the second Council meeting of the year. Wherever possible, fundraising plans will be linked to school learning plans, and other school priorities as communicated by the Principal and staff.

9. Duties of Members:

9.1 Attendance. The council does not wish to spell out expectations and consequences of extended absences; however, the Council will function optimally if members are able to attend and/or communicate regarding Council business effectively.

9.2 Standards of conduct. The following is a sample code of conduct for a meeting:

- One person shall speak at a time.
- No abusive language or personal remarks.
- Confidential issues shall not be discussed.
- Speakers shall limit comments to a reasonable time.
- Speakers shall limit comments to the topic under discussion.
- Use appropriate communications channels when questions arise.
- Accept accountability for decisions.
- Declare any conflict of interest.
- Focus on the best interest of all students.

9.3 Removal clause. In rare cases a member may have to be removed from Council.

9.3.1: A member of Council may be removed for:

- behaviour that regularly prevents the Council from carrying out its responsibilities;

- habitually failing in performing the duties of a member;
- failing to uphold the Constitution or comply with the By-laws of the Council;
- engaging in activities deemed to be detrimental to the interests or contrary to the purposes of the Parent Council. 9.3.2 The permanent removal of a member from Parent Council requires 2/3 of the votes cast by voting members of the Parent Council at a Parent Council meeting attended by not less than 80% of the Parent Council.

10. Decision Making Process:

10.1: Members of Council will attempt to make decisions by consensus. If a consensus is not possible, voting (using ballots or a show of hands) with a majority win will make the decision. See section 1 for membership and voting rules.

10.2: There may be times where decisions are required to be made outside of the regular meeting. In these cases, members' input and vote may be obtained via telephone or electronic mail. A report of any decisions made outside of the regular council meeting will be reported on at the next available meeting and reflected in the minutes as appropriate.

10.3: Requests for funding can be approved by consensus. Requests from staff should come via the attached funding request form. The Principal will collect forms and present to Council for consideration every two months. Information about the requests should be circulated to Council with the agenda, or in a separate distribution at least one week prior to the meeting where they will be discussed.

11. Conflict Resolution: The Council will make every effort to solve its internal disputes in a timely way using the following process.

11.1: Identify the source of the conflict. Conflict usually stems from disagreements on:

- I. facts,
- II. goals,

III. method or values, and/or,

IV. beliefs and ethics.

11.2: Identify contributing problems such as:

11.2.1 Communications. Misinformation or lack of information Ill-defined expectations Hidden agendas Lack of candor or an absence of trust

11.2.2 Organizational Structures Can the Council's defined decision making process be more effective?

11.2.3 Resources Do limited resources such as time or money prevent seeking a solution to this conflict?

11.2.4 Human factors Personality traits such as authoritarianism, rigid viewpoints and low self-esteem can be difficult sources of conflict. They are often impossible to change and can only be managed by diplomacy and tact.

11.3: Resolve the Conflict:

11.3.1 Plan ahead Individual planning and reflection; Specific concerns/interests/positions ; Underlying concerns ; Personal needs ; Establish a meeting place and time

11.3.2 Set the stage Set a positive tone; Adopt a problem-solving mode ; Acknowledge the other person; Agree to some ground rules

11.3.3 Talk it out ; Define the problem ; Understand issues from different perspectives; Deal with emotions Identify needs and interests; Discuss assumptions, values

11.3.4 Create Solutions: Identify a range of options/alternatives; Determine advantages and disadvantages; Choose solutions that are mutually satisfactory; If an impasse is reached, a last resort could be to engage a mediator, volunteer or the regional superintendent of schools.

11.3.5 Plan for Follow-up Agree to a future meeting.

12. Conflict of Interest:

12.1: It is expected that any individual with a conflict of interest with respect to any issue shall immediately notify the Parent Council, who will then decide on that individual's further participation on the issue.

12.2 Individuals employed at the School cannot serve as parent members of the Council.

12.3 Employees of the OCDSB wishing to serve as parent or community members must inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members and the Parent Council, of that employment.

12.4 OCDSB employees cannot serve as chair or co-chair.

13. Council Revenues/Expenditures:

Council will work with the School's administration to ensure accurate record keeping of all Council revenues and expenditures. Please also see Constitution Article 13 Minutes and Financial Records.

14. Amending Process:

Amendments to these by-laws require a majority vote of Council.