



## OP-6016 School Councils Procedure

**Approval Date: 2023**

**Review Date: 2028**

### 1. Purpose

Trillium Lakelands District School Board (TLDSB) recognizes the importance of a strong partnership between the school board members and parents of students and community members in our school district.

By active participation through the local School Council, parents, community members, and staff will have opportunities to improve student learning by increasing student achievement, well-being and accountability of the education system in a positive learning environment.

### 2. References and Related Documents

TLDSB Procedures and Reference Documents

- [District School Council / Parent Involvement Committee Procedure BD-2008](#)
- [Fundraising Procedure ES-5006](#)
- [School Funds Administration Procedure ES-3530](#)
- [Records Retention Procedure BD-2036](#)

External Reference Documents

- [Education Act – Ontario Reg. 612/00: School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees](#)
- [Ministry of Education Document “School Councils: A Guide for Members”](#)
- Ontario Parent Involvement Policy “[Parents in Partnership](#)” 2010
- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

TLDSB Forms for Internal Use

- [School Generated Funds Accounting Procedure Handbook](#)

### 3. Terms and Definitions

**Central Office:** the administrative offices for TLDSB which consist of departments headed by senior administration.

**District School Council / Parent Involvement Committee (DSC-PIC):** all school council chairs, trustees, principals, and the director meet a minimum of four times a year to focus on supporting schools in the planning and implementation of strategies to involve parents at the school and the district level.

**Improvement Plan:** a plan developed annually which includes goals for improving student achievement and well-being as well as for enhancing a safe and caring school culture.

**Meeting:** a regularly scheduled meeting of the School Council as prescribed in the local school constitution.

**Parent:** includes a guardian as defined in Section 1 of the Education Act.

**Parent Involvement:** includes, but is not limited to, a wide range of activities from parenting workshops, helping with homework, attending school functions or events, serving on School Councils or provincial/local committees, communicating with and meeting with teachers, and volunteering in the classroom or on school trips.

**Parent Member:** a parent on the School Council who is elected to the council position of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and/or other positions stated in the School Council Constitution; in accordance with The Education Act, Board Policy, and the local school constitution.

**The School Council:** the local body which will support and advise the Board and the school in efforts to encourage enhanced parent involvement in children's education in consultation, where necessary with the TLDSB District School Council / Parent Involvement Committee as well as funds provided by the Ministry of Education. Funding allocations allow School Councils to support local efforts to communicate with and engage parents.

#### 4. Administrative Procedure

##### 4.1. Responsibilities

- a) School Councils will endeavour to support the direction and activities of the TLDSB District School Council / Parent Involvement Committee;
- b) School Councils, as advisory bodies, may make recommendations to the school principal or to the Board on any matter that will improve student achievement, well-being and accountability of the education system to parents;
- c) School Councils will focus on engaging parents and fostering involvement in their school community as a key factor in improving student achievement and success. Strategies will be developed to:
  - i. Encourage and broaden opportunities for parents;
  - ii. Remove barriers for parents who find involvement more challenging;
  - iii. Recognize active members among the parent community;
  - iv. Recognize parent and community volunteers;
  - v. Report on levels of parent involvement;
  - vi. Report on Parent Engagement Fund allocation.
- d) School Councils shall not be incorporated.

##### 4.2. Composition of School Councils

The following members shall be qualified to be a member of School Council:

- a) Parents of students in the school who must form the majority of the School Council membership;
- b) The principal of the school, or the vice-principal as designated by the principal;
- c) One teacher currently employed at the school. Teachers in the school, excluding the principal and vice-principals, will elect a teacher representative to the School Council;

- d) One other person employed at the school other than the principal, vice-principal, or teacher. An employee representative in the school, other than the teachers, principal or vice-principal, shall be elected by those employed at the school, excluding teachers, principal, and vice-principals;
- e) At the secondary level, one student who is appointed by the student council executive;
- f) At the elementary level, one student appointed by the principal, or as deemed appropriate by the School Council;
- g) One community representative appointed by the other members of the council. A person employed by the Board can only be appointed as a community representative if they are not employed at the school, and further, other members of the School Council must be informed of the person's employment status before the appointment;
- h) One person appointed by the Ontario Federation of Home & School Association, if the Association is represented in the school;
- i) Trustees may not be members of any School Council.

#### **4.3. School Council Constitution**

- a) Each School Council shall develop a constitution. Under the bylaws of the School Council constitution, the constitution may include bylaws that address:
  - i. The inclusion of two or more community representatives on the School Council;
  - ii. A means of ensuring that parents constitute a majority of members of the School Council;
  - iii. Methods to fill vacancies on the School Council;
  - iv. Conflict of interest;
  - v. A dispute resolution process;
  - vi. A voting procedure.
- b) Members of the School Council shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of the School Council;
- c) The Board may reimburse members of the School Council for expenses incurred as a direct request by the Board to participate in School Council activities beyond the Board's jurisdiction.

#### **4.4. Election of Parent Members**

- a) A person is qualified to be a member of the School Council if they are a parent of a student enrolled in the school;
- b) A person is qualified to be a member of the School Council at a site operating as a Trillium Lakelands Alternate Education and Training Centre, if they are eighteen (18) years of age and enrolled as a student in the Centre;
- c) The following persons are not qualified to be parent members of the School Council:
  - i. employees at the school;
  - ii. employees of the Board, unless they take responsible steps to inform people through the election process of their employment status with the Board.
- d) A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members of the School Council if they are a parent of a student enrolled in the school;
- e) An election of parent members shall be held during the first thirty (30) days of each school year on a date established by the chair, after consultation with the principal of the school;
- f) The principal shall give written notice of the date of elections of parent members at least fourteen (14) days before the day of the elections. The notice, including the date, time, and location of the election, shall be distributed to every parent who has a student enrolled in the school and posted in the school, in a location accessible to parents;
- g) The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.

#### **4.5. Terms of Office**

- a) Until the date of the first School Council Meeting after the election, the current school council members shall be deemed to constitute the School Council;
- b) After elections have been held in accordance with this policy, a person, who has been elected or appointed as a member of the School Council, shall hold office from the date of the election or appointment until the date of the first meeting after elections in the next school year;
- c) A person may be re-elected or re-appointed unless the School Council constitution states otherwise;
- d) A vacancy in the membership of School Council members shall be filled by an election or appointment, in accordance with the School Council constitution;
- e) A vacancy in the membership does not prevent the School Council from continuing to function.

#### **4.6. Officers**

- a) Each School Council shall have a chair who must be a parent elected by the members of the School Council. The Chair will automatically become a member of the District School Council Parent Involvement Committee and will be invited to attend a minimum of four (4) meetings of this Committee per school year. The Chair may delegate this role to another member of School Council;
- b) School Council constitutions may include bylaws that allow for co-chairs, a secretary, a treasurer, and other positions stated in the School Council constitution;
- c) A person employed by the Board may not fill the position of chair or co-chair;
- d) Any vacancies shall be filled in accordance with the School Council constitution.

#### **4.7. Meetings**

- a) A School Council shall meet at least four (4) times during the school year;
- b) The first meeting shall take place within thirty-five (35) school days of the school year after the election;
- c) The principal shall establish the date of the first meeting;
- d) A meeting can only be constituted if a majority of parents on the School Council is present, and further, a majority of the entire membership of the School Council is present;
- e) All meetings of the School Council shall be held at a location that is central for all attendees or consider alternative ways for members to participate, for example by videoconference or teleconference;
- f) All meetings are open to the public (Education Act, Ontario Regulation 612/00);
- g) The principal shall provide written notice to parents, on behalf of the School Council, as to the date, time and location of a meeting. Meeting information shall also be posted in a location in the school accessible to parents.
- h) The meeting agenda shall include discussion items.
- i) The purpose of the school council meetings is to support the principal with the School Improvement Plan as it relates to the school.
- j) School councils in Ontario do not have the legal authority to hold closed or "In-Camera" meetings. School councils can handle sensitive issues through Agenda Management including strictly prohibiting discussing individual students, parents, or teachers by name or identifiable detail. Discussion that moves toward personal opinions, agendas, political or religious viewpoints etc may be stopped by the chair.

#### **4.8. Committees**

As required by the School Council constitution, subcommittees of the School Council may be established under the following guidelines:

- a) Each subcommittee must include at least one parent member of the council;
- b) Subcommittees may include persons who are not members of the School Council;
- c) All subcommittees of the School Council must comply with meeting requirements stated in 4.7.

#### **4.9. Voting Procedures**

- a) Each member of the School Council, or subcommittee, is entitled to one vote on matters requiring a voting process;
- b) The principal is not entitled to voting privileges on matters of the School Council or subcommittee.

#### **4.10. Minutes / Financial Records**

- a) Each School Council shall keep minutes of all regular meetings of the School Council and each subcommittee shall keep minutes for each meeting held. The subcommittee minutes will be provided at the next meeting of the School Council;
- b) All financial transactions shall be recorded;
- c) Records of all meetings and financial transactions shall be kept for seven (7) years - six (6) years plus the current year - in a place known to the principal at the school and readily accessible to all school council members;
- d) All minutes of School Council and subcommittee meetings shall be made available for examination, upon request by any person, without charge.

#### **4.11. Fundraising**

- a) School Councils may engage in fundraising in accordance with the Fundraising Procedure ES-5006;
- b) All funds raised must be used to enhance learning for the pupils enrolled in the school. The purpose to which the funds are used must be approved by the Board or authorized by any applicable policies by the Board;
- c) Should fundraising activities be undertaken by the School Council, a treasurer must be appointed, who is a parent on the School Council to oversee the financial activities of the Council;
- d) All School Council financial activities must flow through the school's bank account using the Board approved school banking software; the Principal will provide the school council with regular updates (print-outs) of School Council financial activities;
- e) The School Council will provide advice to the Principal about the expenditure of any funds raised in accordance with the School Improvement and Equity Plan;
- f) Alcohol will not be served or sold on or off-site at any fund-raising event organized by the school or School Council.

#### **4.12. Expenditure of Grants for Parent Engagement**

- a) In consultation with the Principal, School Councils will approve expenditures for mobilization and outreach activities funded with the annual Ministry of Education allocation after seeking out the advice and ideas of other parents and partners;

- b) With these funds, in consultation with the Principal, School Councils will plan and implement strategies to involve more parents at the school level (e.g. broadening the number of school events that include parents and the number of parents who attend; diversification of communication tools to meet the varied needs of parents);
- c) Schools must maintain a record which includes the allocation of the funding, the rationale for this allocation, and receipts for monies spent. The Parent Engagement Grant report must be completed and submitted to the Executive Assistant responsible for DSC-PIC by June 15, of the school year (see Appendix B).

#### **4.13. Dispute Resolution**

- a) Once the dispute resolution process has been fully implemented, the Principal or the School Council chair may request the area superintendent acts as a mediator to assist with the resolution of the dispute within the School Council.
- b) Should the School Council become dysfunctional due to unresolved internal conflicts, the Board may disband the School Council, upon recommendation by the area Superintendent, until the next election.

#### **4.14. Consultation with The Board**

The Board shall solicit the views of School Councils, on matters related to student achievement, well-being and accountability of the education system with respect to:

- a) code of conduct;
- b) funding of School Councils;
- c) fundraising activities of School Councils
- d) conflict resolution process for School Councils;
- e) reimbursement of expenses incurred by members and officers of School Council;
- f) Board Improvement and Equity Plans and School Improvement and Equity Plans;
- g) a process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice principals;
- h) annual Board budget;
- i) other matters of interest to the Board.

#### **4.15. Communication with Senior Administration**

- a) Issues identified by the School Council will be dealt with in partnership with the school principal who can forward questions and concerns to the appropriate central office department;
- b) School Councils wishing to communicate with central office staff will forward their correspondence to the appropriate superintendent. A list of superintendents and their responsibilities is available on the board website.
- c) Any communication shared with central staff from a School Council will include a copy to the school principal and will be provided on the School Council's letterhead or on a blank page;
- d) Requests received by superintendents will be dealt with in a timely manner. Any correspondence generated by central office staff will include a copy to the school principal.

#### **4.16. Communication**

- a) Councils may provide a written recommendation(s) to the Board for consideration which includes a copy to the school principal and the school superintendent;
- b) The Board shall consider each recommendation from School Council;

- c) The Board will provide a response to the School Council, with a copy to the school principal and the school superintendent, on the recommendation(s), within a timeline not to exceed two regular meetings of the Board.

#### **4.17. Consultation with Parents**

The School Council has the responsibility to consult with parents of pupils enrolled in school on all matters under consideration.

#### **4.18. Annual Report**

- a) Each year the School Council shall prepare and submit a written report on all activities undertaken during the school year.
- b) This annual report shall be submitted to the principal and forwarded to the Board not later than June 15 of each year (see Appendix 5.3).
- c) The annual report shall include an account of all School Council fundraising activities and how the funds were used.
- d) A copy of the School Council annual report shall be shared with parents of the pupils enrolled in the school, and posted in a location in the school, accessible to the parents.

#### **4.19. Principal Responsibilities to School Council**

The following is a list of responsibilities for principals in support of School Councils:

- a) Provide for prompt distribution of materials to members of School Councils from:
  - i. the Board;
  - ii. the Ministry of Education;
  - iii. all material shall be posted in a location easily accessible by parents.
- b) Ensure that the School Council meets within thirty-five (35) school days following the election of members of the School Council;
- c) Attend all School Council meetings unless unable to do so for medical or reasons beyond personal control;
- d) Act as a resource person to the School Council by providing information on relevant functions of the council, Board policies and procedures, and Ministry regulations;
- e) Consider all recommendations made by the School Council on actions taken relating to:
  - i. Code of Conduct and implementation plans for all persons in the school;
  - ii. Action plans for school improvement based on EQAO reports;
  - iii. Communication regarding improvements;
  - iv. Other school matters of significant interest to the School Council.

#### **4.20. Collection of Information by The Ministry of Education**

- a) For the purpose of consultation and communication directly with members of the School Councils, the Ministry of Education may collect the names, mailing addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of the Chairs of School Councils and other members of the School Council, as deemed appropriate.
- b) All information collected shall be in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

#### **4.21. Ministry of Education Reports**

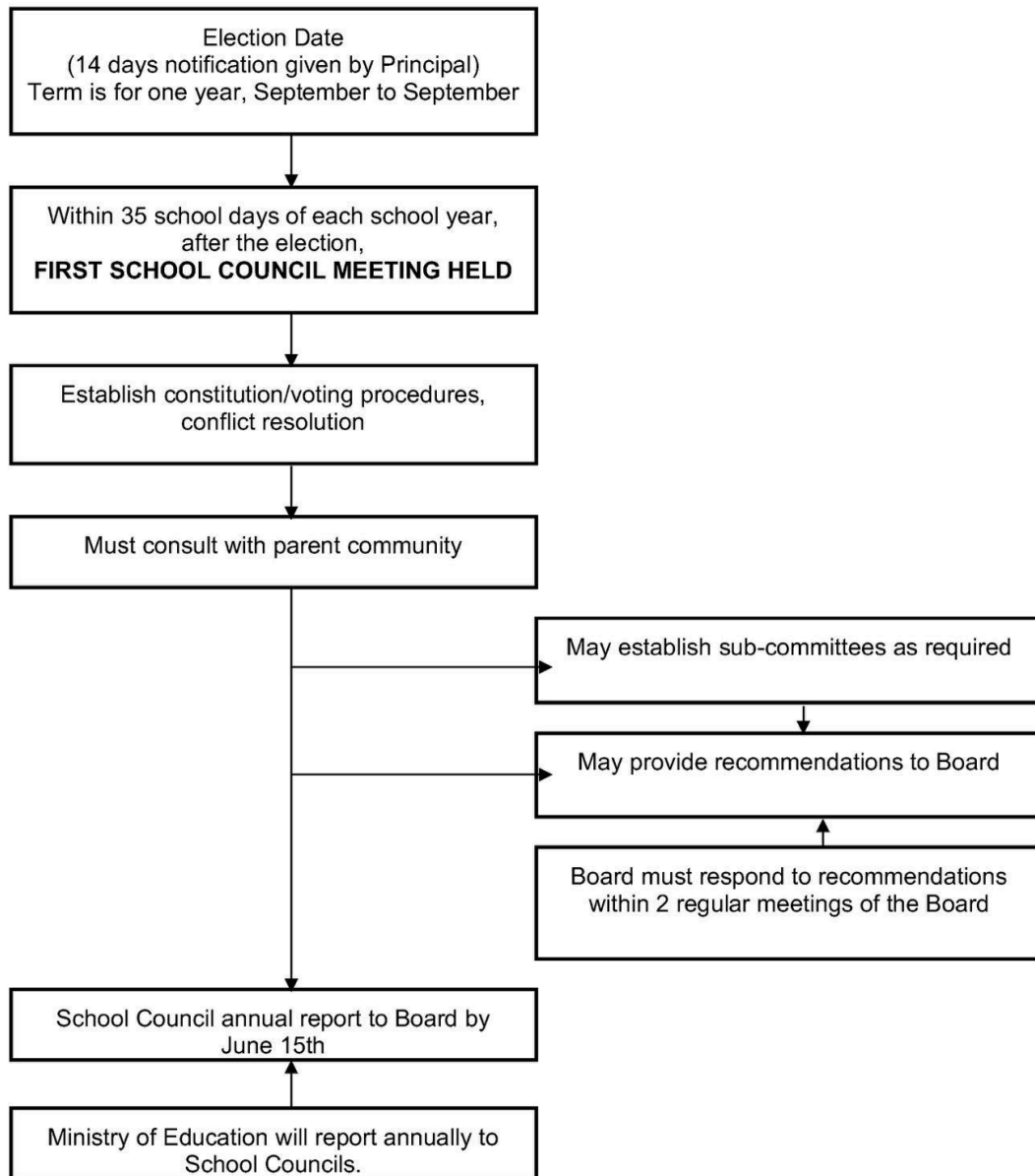
The Ministry of Education shall report annually to members of the School Council.

## 5. **Appendices**

- 5.1– School Council Procedure Flowchart
- 5.2 – Parent Engagement School Grants Report
- 5.3 – School Council Annual Report
- 5.4 - School Council Constitution Template

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact Communications Services at [info@tlds.on.ca](mailto:info@tlds.on.ca).

**School Councils Procedure**



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**PARENT ENGAGEMENT SCHOOL GRANTS  
District School Councils  
Principals**

Funding from the Ministry of Education Parent Involvement Initiative will be added to the school budget allocation of each TLDSB school in the fall of the school year.

In consultation with the Principal, School Councils will approve expenditures for mobilization and outreach activities funded with the annual Ministry of Education allocation after seeking out the advice and ideas of other parents and partners.

Money spent must be for activities that will increase parent engagement at the school level. Examples could be adding school events that include parents or increasing the number of parents who attend annual school events.

Schools must maintain a record which includes the allocation of the funding, the rationale for this allocation, and receipts for monies spent. The attached template must be completed and submitted to the Executive Assistant responsible for DSC-PIC by June 15th of the school year.

School Name: _____		
Date	Parent Engagement Initiative Details (include rationale)	Cost



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**TRILLIUM LAKELANDS DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD  
SCHOOL COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT**

**Name of School** \_\_\_\_\_ **School Year** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dates of School Council meetings:**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Fundraising Activities and Events:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**How were School Council funds used in this school year?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**School Council Chair** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_

## School Council Constitution Template

### Name

The organization shall be known as *ABC Public School Council*. Hereafter, it will be referred to as the Council.

### Purpose and Scope of Council

- The Council will support student success and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents by making recommendations to the Principal and the school board.
- Council will advise on the following:
  - school and learning environment;
  - curriculum and program;
  - communication and promotion of school activities;
  - school code of conduct;
  - school improvement plan;
  - fundraising activities;
  - school leadership;
  - school-community communication strategies;
  - extra-curricular activities;
  - school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational and nutritional programs;
  - community use of school facilities;
  - co-ordination of local services for children and youth;
  - Board policies.

### Membership

- Members of the School Council shall include:
  - parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school;
  - community representatives;
  - a student;
  - a teacher;
  - a support staff member;
  - one person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations.
- Parents/guardians shall form the majority of the Council;
- The Council should be composed of a minimum of eleven (11) members and a maximum of twenty (20). If these numbers are not possible, Council may continue to function so long as parents form the majority of the membership.

### Roles

- The Principal shall:
  - attend all meetings unless unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause;
  - assist in the establishment and operation of School Council;
  - support and promote School Council activities;
  - distribute and post information from the school, the Board and the Ministry of Education;
  - seek input from Council on school policies and guidelines, new initiatives, improvement plans and communication;

- o consider recommendations made by Council and advise Council of actions taken;
- o act as a resource and provide, where reasonable, information requested by Council;
- o maintain on-going communication with the School Council Chair.
- The School Council Chair shall:
  - o call School Council meetings;
  - o prepare the agenda for meetings in collaboration with the Principal;
  - o chair School Council meetings;
  - o ensure that minutes and financial records are recorded and maintained;
  - o maintain on-going communication with the Principal;
  - o encourage community representation;
  - o facilitate communications with parents and community;
  - o ensure representation at Regional School Council meetings.
- The School Council Vice-Chair shall:
  - o fulfil duties of the School Council Chair in the absence of the School Council Chair.
- The Secretary/Treasurer shall:
  - o record and report, without prejudice, the proceedings of the Council;
  - o distribute the minutes and agenda to Council members prior to the meetings;
  - o prepare correspondence on behalf of the Council;
  - o receive and bank monies owed to the Council;
  - o keep full and accurate accounts of monies received/disbursed on behalf of the Council;
  - o present a completed financial statement at the final School Councils meeting of a school year;
  - o act in accordance with the Guidelines for School Generated Funds document.
- All members shall:
  - o attend and participate in Council meetings;
  - o participate in information and training programs as needed;
  - o act as a link between the Council and the community;
  - o welcome the participation of parents/guardians from all groups and of other people in the community;
  - o follow Board policies and procedures and comply with applicable legislation;
  - o act in good faith.

## **Election Procedures**

- Elections shall occur within the first thirty (30) days of the start of each school year;
- 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 they are employed by the school board;
- 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;
- An Election Committee shall be struck by the Council 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;
- The Election Committee shall:
  - o provide nomination forms;
  - o ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date, location and time at least fourteen days in advance of the election;
  - o request a profile from candidates and make these available to voters;

- o conduct the elections by secret ballot;
- o help the Principal notify all candidates of the results;
- o keep all results and related information confidential.
- Only the names of the successful candidates shall be made public. A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file by the Council for use in the event of a vacancy;
- All individuals standing for election shall be notified of the results before the results are released to the school community;
- The School Council shall help the Principal ensure that the names of new members are publicized to the school community within thirty (30) days of the election;
- At the first meeting of the new School Council at the beginning of the year, the Council shall set dates, time and locations for its meetings throughout the year.

### **Filling Vacancies**

- 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;
- If none of the previous candidates remain 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;
- When a vacant spot on Council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election.

### **Conflict of Interest**

- 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 a vested interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly from decisions of the Council;
- A member shall be excluded from discussions and resolutions in which:
  - o a conflict of interest is likely to result;
  - o the member's ability to carry out their duties and responsibilities as a member of the Council may be jeopardized;
  - o the Council member, his or her relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit 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.
- Members shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

### **Conflict Resolution**

- Every Council member will be given an opportunity to express their concern or opinion about the issue at dispute;
- Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times;
- Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption;
- The School Council 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;
- If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the School Council Chair shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other Board administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

### **Quorum**

- A quorum shall consist of fifty per cent (50%) of the voting members plus one;
- In the absence of a quorum, any business requiring decisions either by consensus or vote must be deferred to the next meeting.

### **Governance**

- The Council shall act in a transparent manner;
- The Council will always endeavour to consider the needs and best interests of students before making decisions.

### **Decision Making**

- The Council shall make every attempt to reach decisions by consensus;
- If a consensus is impossible, Roberts Rules of Order will be used for decisions requiring a vote. All School Council members/designates present at the meeting will be eligible to vote.

### **Communications**

- Within thirty (30) days of election of a new Council, the new Council will create and follow a communications plan to raise awareness of Council activities and increase parental involvement.

### **Financial Accountability**

- The Council shall become familiar with and act in a manner consistent with the Ontario Association of School Business Officials Finance Committee Guidelines for School Generated Funds document.

### **Making Amendments**

- From time to time, amendments may be necessary to the Council's constitution. Any amendments to this Council's constitution must have a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of the Council in favour of the amendment. Notice of the intent to amend the constitution along with specific details of the amendment must be provided at least one (1) meeting prior to any vote.