

# Rawlinson Community School Council By-Laws

## 1.0 Preamble

- 1.1 School Councils are legislated bodies, governed by Regulation 612 (the “Regulation”) of the Ontario Education Act. School Council and all of those who attend School Council meetings and activities shall adhere to these regulations. School Councils are required to have bylaws in accordance with the Regulation.
- 1.2 A School Council will work collaboratively with parents, teachers, students and the community on matters pertinent to the health and general wellbeing of the school. The School Council shall:
- consult with parents/caregivers of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the School Council; and
  - create, maintain and contribute to a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the rights and dignity of each person and identify, confront and eliminate barriers to engagement and participation.
- 1.3 The name of this School Council shall be Rawlinson Community School Council and referred to as the School Council. Please note the term “parents/caregivers” includes the parents, caregivers, guardians and families of students, as shown on the school registration.

## 2.0 Membership

- 2.1 An effective School Council relies on the contributions of the broader school community. The School Council will work to elect/acclaim members who are representative of this school's community. To this end, eligible candidates will be encouraged to seek office regardless of their race, colour, creed, culture, ethnicity, linguistic origin, disability, level of ability, socio-economic class, age, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, body image, citizenship, immigration status, family status, marital status or as First Nations, Metis or Inuit.
- 2.2 School Council composition will include a minimum of 5 parents/caregivers and a maximum of 35 parents/caregivers (as defined in Ontario Regulation 612/00), the Principal (non-voting), one teacher, one non-teaching staff, one community representative (optional) and one student representative (optional).
- 2.3 Following the election of Parent Members (see 3.0 Election), School Council shall elect, from among the Parent Members, an Executive comprised of:
- 1 or more Chair/Co-Chairs;
  - 1 or more Vice-Chair(s);
  - 1 or more Treasurer(s);
  - 1 or more Secretaries;
  - 1 or more Ward 9 Representative(s) (optional) (a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer or Secretary may also hold the position of Ward 9 Representative).

- 2.4 Each member of the School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the School Council. Each committee/subcommittee member is entitled to one vote in votes taken at the committee/subcommittee level. All School Council votes/decisions will be recorded in the School Council minutes. The Principal is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the School Council nor by a committee/subcommittee of the School Council.
- 2.5 Major decisions (including but not limited to member suspension or bylaw changes) shall involve consultation with the Principal and require the support of two-thirds of voting School Council members in attendance at a meeting. In addition, two-thirds of the Parent Members in attendance must support the decision. Notification of major decisions must be given to members at least one week in advance of the meeting where the major decision will be voted on. Where School Council needs to make a decision between several options and no single option receives two-thirds of the votes, the option receiving the fewest votes will be eliminated in successive rounds until one or more options receives two-thirds approval.

### **3.0 Election**

- 3.1 Elections will be inclusive, transparent and accountable, ensuring that all members of the school community are included, welcomed and feel valued. Elections for the School Council:
- shall be supervised by the Principal (or designate) and at least two parent(s)/caregiver(s) not seeking election;
  - the school (Principal or designate) will receive and file all nomination forms;
  - written information (picture not required) about each candidate, supplied by the candidate, shall be made available to the school community prior to the election;
  - nominations will not be accepted from the floor on the evening of the elections;
  - candidates may not utilize School Council resources, including School Council social media or other tools, to promote their candidacy; and
  - the names of the successful candidates shall be shared with the school community and posted on the school website.
- 3.2 Elections of parent/caregiver members:
- shall be held during the first 30 days of the school year on a date that is set by the School Council Chair/Co-Chairs in consultation with the Principal;
  - the date, time and location of the election shall be given to parents/caregivers of students enrolled in the school, prior to the date of the election by the Principal; and
  - parent/caregiver of a student in the school, who is seeking election, must be nominated or self-nominated in writing.
    - A person is not qualified to be a parent/caregiver member if they are employed at the school;
    - If employed by the Board but not at the school, they must take reasonable steps to inform those qualified to vote in the election of their Board employment status.
- 3.3 Elections for teaching and non-teaching staff representatives:
- shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year;
  - the teaching representative shall be elected by those individuals at the school qualified to

be the teacher representative in any method they determine;

- the non-teaching staff shall be elected by those individuals at the school qualified to be the non-teaching staff representative in any method they determine; and
- if positions are not filled during an election, the School Council may fill them via appointments throughout the school year. (see 5.0 Vacancies)

3.4 Appointment of Student Representative: the Principal will consult with Council to determine if there is to be a student representative on Council. If a positive decision is reached, the Principal will appoint a student representative.

3.5 Selection of Community Representative(s): all appointments of community representatives to Council are to be by majority vote at a meeting of Council.

3.6 A vote will be held on the date set by the Chair/Co-Chairs, in consultation with the Principal, if the number of declared candidates is higher than the number of position. If the number of declared candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, no vote is required and the candidates will be acclaimed, notified and communicated to the school/community.

#### **4.0 Term of Office**

4.1 The term of office for elected or appointed School Council members runs from the date of election or appointment in the current school year to the date of the first School Council meeting, following the election, of the following school year. Council members may be re-elected or reappointed.

#### **5.0 Vacancies**

5.1 A vacancy in the membership of the School Council shall be filled by election or appointment.

5.2 A vacancy in the membership of the School Council does not prevent the School Council from exercising its authority. If an election is held to fill a vacancy in the membership of a School Council, the School Council's elections' process will apply. If an appointment is held to fill a vacancy, the School Council may request that interested parents/caregivers submit their name for consideration. The School Council shall then vote to appoint candidates to fill the vacancy/vacancies.

5.3 Executive vacancies will be opened to nominations from the voting members.

#### **6.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

6.1 Attendance: School Council members shall make best efforts to attend all scheduled meetings. Should a member miss three (3) consecutive meetings without prior notifications to the School Council, the Chair/Co-Chair(s) may call a meeting with the member to determine the member's interest in the School Council and whether the member has vacated the position. If a teaching, non-teaching staff, student (if appointed) or community

member (if elected) misses three (3) consecutive meetings, the Chair/Co-Chair(s) will consult with the Principal about their continued participation and/or representation.

6.2 No person shall receive any remuneration for serving as a member or Officer of the School Council. Members shall be reimbursed for pre-approved expenses that they incur as members or Officers of the School Council, as per Board procedures.

6.3 Parent/Caregiver Members:

- solicit the views of other parents/caregivers to share with the School Council;
- represent the views and the opinions of the parent/caregiver community;
- attend and participate in all meetings;
- participate on School Council committees;
- are encouraged to participate in and to facilitate any events that the School Council holds during the school year, and must participate in at least one event, initiative or Committee; and
- observe the School Council's and/or the Board's Code of Conduct and these By-Laws.

6.4 Chair or Co-Chair(s):

- arrange for School Council meetings;
- prepare agendas for School Council meetings;
- chair School Council meetings;
- ensure that minutes of School Council meetings are recorded and maintained;
- ensure that the Annual Report is completed;
- facilitate conflict resolution;
- communicate with the Principal on behalf of the School Council;
- consult with senior board Staff and Trustees as required on behalf of the School Council;
- act as Joint Signing Officer;
- act as ex officio member(s) of School Council committees/subcommittees and any school committees; and
- observe the School Council's and/or the Board's Code of Conduct and these By-Laws.

6.5 Vice-Chair(s):

- fulfil the duties of the Chair(s) to the extent so requested by the Chair(s); and
- observe the School Council's and/or the Board's Code of Conduct and these By-Laws.

6.6 Secretary/Secretaries:

- complete records of all meetings, including minutes, in a timely manner;
- assist the Chair/Co-Chair(s) in the distribution of minutes to all School Council members, and ensure minutes, once approved, are available to the parent/caregiver body;
- prepare summaries of Council happenings for distribution to the school community;
- may act as a Joint Signing Officer; and
- observe the School Council's and/or the Board's Code of Conduct and these By-Laws.

6.7 Treasurer(s):

- act as custodian of the funds of the School Council;
- handle receipts and disbursement of School Council monies;
- keep proper records of all financial transactions;
- arrange for verification of the School Council's financial records in June of each year;
- act as a Joint Signing Officer;
- adhere to the financial protocol instructions outlined by the TDSB (e.g., School Council Financial Guide);
- prepare the annual Public-Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) report; and
- observe the School Council's and/or the Board's Code of Conduct and these By-Laws.

6.8 Ward 9 Representative (optional):

- attends Ward Forum meetings;
- reports back to Council on matters discussed at Ward Forum meetings;
- receives input from Council and present it to the Ward Forum when requested; and
- observes the School Council's and/or the Board's Code of Conduct and these By-Laws.

6.9 Principal (not a voting member):

- promptly distributes materials identified by the Ministry for distribution to School Council members and posts said material(s) in a school location accessible to parents/caregivers;
- attends every meeting of the School Council or delegates this responsibility to the Vice Principal (or designate) if unable to attend;
- acts as a resource person to the School Council and shall assist the School Council in obtaining information relevant to the functions of the School Council, including information relating to relevant legislation, regulations and policies;
- considers each recommendation made to the Principal by the School Council and advise the School Council of the action taken in response to the recommendation;
- provides input on the School Improvement Plan (SIP), 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; and
- observes the School Council's and/or the Board's Code of Conduct and these By-Laws.

6.10 Student (if appointed), Teaching and Non-Teaching Representatives:

- contributes to the discussions of the School Council;
- solicits views from their peers to share with the School Council;
- may participate on any committees established by the School Council;
- communicates information back to their peers; and
- observes the School Council's and/or the Board's Code of Conduct and these By-Laws.

6.11 Community Representative (if elected to the School Council):

- contributes to the discussions of the School Council;
- represents the community's perspective;
- may participate on any School Council committee;

- helps to build partnerships and links between the school and the community; and
- observes the School Council's and/or the Board's Code of Conduct and these By-Laws.

## 7.0 Meetings

- 7.1 All School Council meetings and events will start with the reading of a Land Acknowledgement.
- 7.2 The first meeting of the School Council will take place within the first 35 days of the start of the school year, after the election, on a date set by the Principal, in consultation with the Chair/Co-Chair(s).
- 7.3 An official meeting (quorum) of the School Council cannot be held unless a majority (51%) of the current members of the School Council are present (in-person or virtually) at the meeting and a majority (51%) of the members who are present are parents/caregivers of students who attend our school.
- 7.4 A School Council shall meet at least 4 times in the school year. Meetings of the School Council and committees/subcommittees may be virtual, in-person or a combination of the two.
- All in-person School Council meetings shall be held at the school or in a location that is accessible to the public in alignment with school or Board policies and procedures.
  - If at the school, the space will be reserved by the Principal. School Council meetings shall be open to the public. Virtual meeting platforms (e.g., Zoom, Google Meets) must include a call-in option to ensure access for all parents/caregivers.
  - Recognizing that not all parents/caregivers will have access to these platforms, the School Council will ensure that the minutes are available electronically and in hard copy.
- 7.5 Where a meeting can no longer proceed due to a participant's behavior (e.g., attendee becomes disruptive during a meeting), the Chair/Co-Chairs(s), after three attempts of unsuccessfully asking for order, the Chair/Co-Chair(s) will ask conflicted parties to leave the meeting, citing reasons for the request. This does not prevent the conflicted School Council member(s)/attendees from participating in future meetings of the School Council. The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Superintendent within one week of the meeting, by the Principal. The School Council Chair/Co-Chair(s), in collaboration with the Principal, shall:
- request that the disputing member(s) participate in a private meeting, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution to the dispute. Such a meeting will be a private meeting and shall not be construed as a meeting of the School Council. The meeting will result in clear steps to be taken by each party to resolve the conflict. The Chairs/Co-Chair(s) will provide an update of the resolution at the next formal meeting of the School Council;
  - if a resolution was not possible, the Chair/Co-Chairs(s) may call for a special meeting of the School Council to review the conflict/dispute and to explore options that may include suspension of the member/attendee.

## **8.0 Minutes and Financial Records**

8.1 School Council shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings and accurate financial records/transactions for four (4) years. Minutes and financial records shall be available for examination by any person, without charge.

## **9.0 Finances and Fundraising**

9.1 All School Council collections, expenditures and disbursements should be captured in its financial statements. The financial statements should be shared with School Council members and the Principal and should be presented at each School Council meeting. Funds will not be used to support staff appreciation events or gifts. The School Council will not borrow funds nor enter into any financial commitment for which funds are not already in hand. The School Council budget includes the funds provided to School Councils by the Board and the Ministry of Education, as held in the school's non-board accounts.

9.2 All expenditures, greater than \$500.00, from the School Council account must be approved by School Council prior to disbursing the funds. The Executive is authorized to approve expenditures up to \$500.00 at any time, if an approval is required outside of a regular Council meeting for time-sensitive issues. Any such expenditure must be in accordance with Council's mandate and must be approved by a majority of the Executive. The Treasurer or Chair/Co-Chair(s) will report to Council on any such expenditures at the next Council meeting thereafter.

9.3 Cheques written on Council's bank account and other financial documents must be signed by either a Chair/Co-Chair(s) or a Treasurer plus one other Executive member, subject to any requirements of the bank, the TDSB or other authority.

9.4 School Councils may not enter into any loan arrangements under the name of the school or the School Council.

9.5 All proposed School Council fundraising activities will follow TDSB's fundraising policies.

## **10.0 Committees**

10.1 The School Council will establish committees/subcommittees to make recommendations to the full School Council as needed. At the time a Committee is established, Council will determine the purpose of the Committee, set any spending limits and make clear whether any specific decisions related to the purpose of the Committee requires the approval of Council. It is not necessary to be a member of Council to chair or sit on a committee, however every committee should include at least one (1) current parent / caregiver.

10.2 The School Council Chair/Co-Chair(s) will maintain a record of each committee, including its chair and members, the purpose of the Committee, and any spending limits.

10.3 Committees will report regularly to the School Council on Committee decisions and activities.

## **11.0 Conflict of Interest**

- 11.1 A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential. Each School Council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and the vision of the School. School Council members shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decisions of Council.
- 11.2 Should an issue or an agenda item arise during a School Council meeting where a School Council member is in a conflict of interest situation, they shall declare a conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.
- 11.3 A Council member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

## **12.0 Conflict Resolution**

- 12.1 Conflicts and disputes that occur within the School Council will be facilitated by the following:
- conflict between the Chair/Co-Chair(s) and School Council, will be facilitated by an Executive Officer (Secretary/Treasurer) of the School Council;
  - conflict with the Principal and the School Council, will be facilitated by the Superintendent in collaboration with the Chair/Co-Chair(s);
  - conflict between the Chair/Co-Chairs(s) and the Principal, will be facilitated by the Superintendent; and
  - conflict among the Executives (Chair/Co-Chairs(s), Secretary, Treasurer etc.) will be facilitated by the Principal in consultation with the Superintendent.
- 12.2 Conflicts and disputes that occur within the School Council will be addressed using the following steps:
- the parties to a dispute must attempt to resolve the dispute between themselves;
  - if the parties to the dispute are unable to resolve the dispute between themselves within the time required, any party to the dispute may start the conflict/dispute process by giving written notice to the relevant facilitator of the conflict outlining the parties to the dispute and the matters that are the subject of the dispute;
  - the facilitator will convene a meeting between the parties, which:
    - gives each party to the dispute a reasonable opportunity to make written and/or oral submission about the dispute;
    - give due consideration to any submissions and determine the dispute; and
    - provide written notice of the determination and its reasons.
  - following the determination, a party may give written notice to the facilitator



- accepting the recommended resolution or requesting the appointment of a mediator;
- if a mediator is agreed by all disputants, the facilitator will secure a mediator and each party to the dispute is a party to the mediation;
  - the appropriate facilitator will secure a mediator who may be a Board official or independent party identified by the Board and be mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute;
  - if a mediator is not supported by one of the disputants, another mediator will be secured;
  - if a disputant fails to participate in the mediation called by the facilitator, the disputant will adhere to all recommendations of the mediator;
  - the costs of the mediation will be borne by the parties involved.

### **13.0 Suspension of a School Council Member**

13.1 School Council may consider member suspension when:

- the member's conduct or actions violate the school/School Council or Board Code of Conduct and/or the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- the members in a dispute choose not to participate in a resolution meeting or mediation; or
- the mediation process does not result in a change of behaviours.

13.2 Consideration of the suspension of a member shall take place by the School Council in a meeting separate from a regularly scheduled meeting. Said meeting requires two-thirds of the voting members, the majority being parents/caregivers of students in the school, not including the offending member. A Principal cannot be suspended from the School Council of which they preside. Concerns with the Principal's behaviour should be raised with the Superintendent of Education.

13.3 A member may appeal a suspension in writing, within two (2) weeks of the suspension. The suspension appeal shall be presented to the School Council for review and decision. The suspension may be altered or rescinded only on a vote of two-thirds of the School Council members, the majority being parents/caregivers of the School Council, not including the suspended member. The School Council's decision shall be final and binding, without any further right of appeal.

### **14.0 Annual Report**

14.1 School Council will annually submit a written report of its activities to the Principal and include any fundraising activities. The Principal will, on behalf of the School Council, give a copy of the report to every parent/caregiver of a student who is enrolled in the school, either by giving the report to the student for delivery to their parent/caregiver or posting the report in the school in a place that is visible to parents/caregivers and/or online.

## **15.0 By-Laws' Amendments**

- 15.1 School Council will review these By-Laws at least every four (4) years to ensure that they reflect the current makeup and the needs of the school community.