

St. Edward Catholic School, Westport

**St. Edward Catholic School Council Constitution**

**ARTICLE I: Name of the Organization**

- 1.1 This organization will be known as St. Edward's Catholic School Council (hereafter "the Council")

**ARTICLE II: Mandates of the Council**

- 2.1 Working within the mission statement and goals of board policy. The Council will:
- provide opportunities for parents to be more involved in the education of their children
  - develop a Mission Statement and annual goals for the school and evaluate its success in achieving those goals
  - provide advice to the principal on school budgets, school operations and management
  - address the social environment of the school
  - be a voice for Catholic Education and foster good relations among parents, staff, local community and related groups
  - respond to referrals from the board and report on activities if requested by the board
  - all duties must be carried on without purpose of gain of members
- 2.2 The Council will not have any of the powers and duties reserved by law or regulation for the board, the principal or collective agreements (i.e. personnel matters or employment issues)
- the Council will not exceed its mandate as outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training P.P.M. #122
- 2.3 The organization is carried on without purpose of gain for its members, and any profits or other accretions to the organization shall be used solely to promote the objectives.

**ARTICLE III: Representation of Membership**

- 3.1 The Council will be composed of: (minimum requirements)
- the school principal
  - six parents/guardians of students in St. Edward's School
  - one teacher at St. Edward's School
  - one non-teaching staff member
  - one elementary school student (optional)
  - one member of the catholic community (Parish rep.)
  - one community representative selected by the council
  - the number of parents is flexible to ensure that they constitute a majority
- 3.2 Although not mandated, the Council may choose to have additional members to act as advisors. The maximum number of members will 15. The requirements for voting will be 50% +1 of the current year membership.

## **ARTICLE IV: Election and Appointment Procedures**

- 4.1** Following its initial formation, Council Elections will take place during the first 30 calendar days of each school year. Elections are organized by the retiring council and the school principal.
- 4.2** Qualifications - While respecting the rights of Roman Catholics to govern their schools and recognizing the valuable contribution made by non-Catholic parents/guardians, it is the policy of the Board that at least 80% of the elected parent representatives hold the same qualifications as trustees and that up to 20% of these positions may be held by non-Catholic parent/guardian representatives whose residential education taxes are directed to the separate school system. This clause will remain in force as long as the school councils are advisory in nature. Should the school councils be given a governance role, all elected parents representatives will be required to hold the same qualifications as trustees, as outlined in the Education Act.
- 4.3** Parent representatives will be elected according to the following process:
- Information about the upcoming election of parent representatives, along with a nomination ballot will be distributed in the newsletter.
  - Qualifications of parent candidates and electors: must be Canadian Citizens, 18 years of age or older, reside in the area of the school's jurisdiction and Separate School Board ratepayers.
  - A brief nominee profile along with an election ballot (one per family) will be published in the school newsletter and sent to parents/guardians of every student enrolled.
  - Ideally, the nomination/election committee will not include anyone (or spouse) standing for election.
  - Ballots will be returned to the school within 5 days.
  - With respect to privacy, voting can occur in person or by delivering the ballot with the student.
  - Ballots will be counted by the principal and/or scrutineers.
  - Ballots will be destroyed at the direction of the principal; confidential information.
  - Seats may be acclaimed upon singular nomination. The names of the successful candidates will be published in the school newsletter.
- 4.4** The position of the Chair & Vice-Chair will be elected by the elected members of the Council.
- 4.5** Teacher representative will be elected by St. Edward's Catholic School teaching staff during a regularly scheduled staff meeting. Seats may be acclaimed upon singular nomination.
- 4.6** Non-teaching staff representative is elected by non-teaching staff members of St. Edward's Catholic School. If no candidate is available in this category, (support staff, secretarial, custodial, lunchroom assistants, etc.) a second teacher may substitute. Seats may be acclaimed upon singular nomination.
- 4.7** Parish representation will be the pastor of St. Edward's Church or his designate.
- 4.8** Appointed members of the council, who represent the Catholic Community and other significant groups, will be selected and appointed by the elected members. Any council member may recommend the names of persons to be appointed. Community representatives must be Catholic School ratepayers, with the same qualifications as trustees.
- 4.9** The names of all council members will be published in the school newsletter.
- 4.10** The names and addresses of all Council members will be forwarded to the school board following elections. If some positions remain vacant initially, the Council will continue to seek involvement through community outreach strategies.

- 4.11** Dual Representation - This may occur in certain circumstances, as indicated below. However, only one vote per elected member may be cast:
- a parent/guardian is elected by the parent community and also asked to sit as parish or non-teaching rep.
  - a parent who is elected, is also a teacher at the school.
  - If the parish rep. is not the Pastor or a parent, they may also fulfill the requirements of non-parent ratepayer/community rep.
  - Only one spouse may be elected, however, the spouse of an elected member may be appointed to a position on Council.
  - These instances would be decided by Council on a per case basis.

## **ARTICLE V: Terms of Office**

- 5.1** Council members, except for the principal, are elected or appointed biennially and may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms per title. Members may seek additional terms of office after retiring from service for one year.
- 5.2** Ex-officio members (such as a trustee) and advisors will serve two-year terms. No limit will be set on the number of terms a member will be eligible to serve in an advisory capacity. Other non-voting advisors may be past-chair, chair of a committee, nominees who did not gain a Council seat, non-Catholic parents/teachers, community members with expertise in a special area, etc.
- 5.3** The Principal is appointed by the school board.
- 5.4** The Council may establish committees made up of teachers, parents, business leaders and other citizens.
- 5.5** Membership on the Council will terminate when a member:
- fails to abide by the goals and mission of the Council
  - ceases to hold the criteria for representing a constituency (moves out of district)
  - no longer has a child enrolled in the school (parent)
  - is no longer employed at the school (employee)
  - has missed three consecutive, scheduled meetings without proper notice to the chairperson; or
  - submits a letter of resignation to the chairperson
  - displays behaviour that is disruptive to progress of meetings
- 5.6** Vacancies that occur during the year will be filled by vote of all council members. Nominations may be made by any council member.
- 5.7** The Chair or Vice-Chair of the Council will maintain any duties resulting from Article 5.5.

## **ARTICLE VI: Council procedures**

- 6.1** All school Council meetings will open and close with a prayer.
- 6.2** All Council and Committee meetings shall be open to school staff and parents, however, it may be necessary to move the meeting "in camera" when discussing confidential matters, or at the discretion of the chair (if progress is being obstructed or interrupted frequently). Meetings should follow parliamentary procedure or an acceptable form of conduct.

### Conflict Resolutions:

- Every school council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.
- Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.

- Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
  - The 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 no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
  - If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the chair shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.
- 6.3** Generally, the means of decision making shall be through consensus. As compared to a democratic vote where most people support a decision, consensus would have all members willing to accept a decision as reasonable. In the case that consensus decision making is not appropriate for some reason, a formal vote by private ballot will be used.
- 6.4** The Council is responsible to regularly inform the school and parent community of activities through a Council update in the school newsletter. Minutes are to be displayed near the office for easy access.
- 6.5** Adding items to the agenda. Requests by members of the school community to have items added to the agenda may be made by contacting the chairperson of the S.C. or by consulting the Principal. If it is within the mandate of the Council to discuss, and if time permits, the item will be added. The request must be submitted 5 days before the next scheduled meeting. Some items, out of necessity, would be referred to the committee level before presentation to Council.
- 6.6** The operational procedures of the Council will be governed by "the municipal conflict of interest act".

### **ARTICLE VII: Officers-Council members**

- 7.1** Officers with voting privileges, shall be all elected and appointed Council members as defined in Article 3.1, all others are advisors to the Council. Advisors may participate in all deliberations and consensus decision making.
- 7.2** At the last meeting of the school year, the elected members of the Council shall elect a member of the Council who is a parent/guardian of a St. Edward's student to serve as a chair for the following year. They will elect a vice or Co-chair and secretary.
- 7.3** The parish priest of St. Edward's Church shall be recognized as the spiritual advisor to the Council.

### **ARTICLE VIII: Duties of the Council Officers**

- 8.1** The Chair of the Council is responsible for:
- presiding at all meetings and providing leadership to the Council
  - having general supervision of Council activities
  - working in Co-operation with the Principal to prepare and distribute a written agenda three days prior to meetings
  - in consultation with the Principal, appointing temporary and/or standing committees as needed and servicing as an ex-officio member of all committees
  - expressing consensus as reached by the Council
  - when appropriate, conducting a vote to determine the final decision of the Council
  - serving as a spokesperson for the Council
  - monitoring the implementation of Council decisions

- 8.2** The Vice or Co-Chair of the Council is responsible for:
- assisting the Chair as needed and exercising all functions of the chair in the absence of the Chair
  - maintaining and/or upholding the responsibilities of officers unable to perform their duties
  - performing the duties of additional officers until their roles are defined and an elected officer is in place
- 8.3** The secretary of the Council is responsible for:
- keeping a full and accurate account of all proceedings and transactions of all Council meetings
  - providing a copy of the minutes to the Principal for distribution among Council members
  - maintaining a Council file in the School Administrative Office containing copies of all minutes, correspondence.
- 8.4** The Principal acts as Chief Executive Officer of Council.