

School Council Handbook for Brock Public School

Contents

Executive Summary (content under development)

Section I: Introduction

About Brock Public School and its School Council
Other Ways for Parents to Help
Use of Information Collected by the School Council

Section II: Brock School Council Bylaws

1. Purpose and Objectives
2. Interpretation
3. Membership
4. Election Procedures
5. Executive
6. Expectations of Council Members
7. Meetings
8. Committees
9. Making Decisions
10. Minutes and Financial Records
11. Conflict of Interest
12. Advisory Authority of School Councils
13. Duty of the Board to Respond
14. Consultation with Parents
15. Annual Report
16. Changing Bylaws

Section III: Appendices

Revision Log

Executive Summary

Content under development

Section I: Introduction

About Brock Public School and its School Council

Brock Public School (Brock PS) is a public school in Ward 9 within the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). The school is located at 93 Margueretta Avenue, in the area bounded by Bloor/College and Lansdowne/Dufferin. Brock has been part of the local community for more than 125 years, since opening in 1887. As of 2015, the Brock student population is 243 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8.

Ontario's *Education Act* requires all schools to have a school council. You may be familiar with school councils under other names, such as Parent Councils, School Advisory Committees (SACs) or Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). The School Council is made up of interested and concerned parents and school community members who are either elected or appointed to their positions.

The council works with the school administration throughout the year to lead, communicate, advise on and otherwise support important initiatives to improve our school and its educational goals. It is also a link between our school and the community, and it leads parent committees and fun parent-run events for the whole school.

Running for council is an excellent way to support your child's education at Brock. The school council election is held in September of each year. Interested parents may nominate themselves, or another parent of a current Brock student, for election. Up to 12 parent positions are elected each year.

School council meetings are held in the Brock library. There are usually 6-8 meetings per year, and they are typically an hour long. Child care and refreshments are available to meeting attendees.

All school council meetings are open to the community: parents/guardians of current Brock students, Brock staff members and Brock students are welcome to attend.

Other Ways for Parents to Help

Many parents would like to help the school in ways other than being elected to a position on the school council. That's great! The Brock School Council coordinates lots of ways for parents to support their child's education at Brock: you just have to let us know. Ways you can help include:

- Signing up for Brock's Field Trip Volunteer List
- Helping out with events like school treat sales, team practices or play days
- Working on the school's rooftop garden
- Offering to share a special skill or coordinate an event
- Making a financial donation to the school (charitable tax receipts for amounts over \$20)
- Helping out in another way we haven't thought of yet – send us your ideas!

To volunteer, or to learn more about how you can support Brock PS as a parent, contact the school office or email [\[TDSB-approved school council email address pending\]](#) (please note: this email account is not monitored outside the school year).

Use of Contact Information Collected by School Council

The School Council wants to keep all Brock parents up to date on important happenings in the Brock community. At the beginning of each school year, the Council collects and compiles a list of parent contact information. The list allows the Council to communicate with parents about school council business and official Brock Public School events.

Joining the list is voluntary. Access to parent contact information is limited to the current year's Council Chair, Secretary, and Chair of the Communications Committee. It is used only for school council and official Brock School business, and will not be shared. A parent can ask to have his/her information added or removed from the list at any time during the school year by sending a request to: [\[official TDSB Brock School Council email address. As of May 5, 2015 not yet received from the Board\]](#).

Section II: Brock School Council Bylaws

1. Purpose and Objectives

a) The Brock PS School Council is the parent voice on important matters that affect Brock students' education. The council consists of elected parent members who form the majority of members, along with other designated positions. The council communicates, organizes and implements various parent initiatives and enrichment programs at the school. The Council holds at least six meetings during the school year, and council committees meet on as-needed basis. The School Council acts as a sounding board to the school administration and serves as link between the school and the community. It encourages the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community and observes the council's Code of Ethics and these bylaws.

b) The School Council is established under Regulation 612 of Ontario's Education Act, which states:

- The purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.
- A school council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with this Regulation to the principal of the school and the board that established the council.

2. Interpretation

a) "meeting", in respect of a school council or a parent involvement committee, does not include a training session or other event where the council or the committee does not discuss or decide matters that it has authority to decide.

b) "parent" means, in respect of a school council, a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school, and includes a guardian as defined in the *Education Act*.

c) "parent member" means a member of the council who is elected to the council under the school council election procedures, or who fills a vacancy created by a parent member who ceases to hold office.

3. Membership

a) The school council shall be composed of the following members:

- i. Up to twelve elected parent members. A parent employed by Brock Public School may not be elected as a parent member, but may stand for either of the staff council positions (see below) if he/she qualifies.
- ii. The principal of the school. The principal may delegate membership responsibility to a vice-principal.
- iii. One teaching staff representative who is a teacher who is currently employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal, elected by the teaching staff.
 - Teacher representative elections must be within the first 30 calendar days of the school year. Only teaching staff can participate in voting for the teacher representative.
- iv. One non-teaching staff representative who is currently employed at the school, other than the principal, vice-principal or any other teacher, elected by nonteaching staff.
 - Non-teaching staff representative elections must be within the first 30 calendar days of the school year. Only non-teaching staff can participate in voting for the non-teaching staff representative.
- v. One community representative appointed by the other members of the council. The community representative cannot be an employee at the school. If the community representative is employed elsewhere by the board, he or she must inform other council members prior to appointment. Community representatives should not be parents of current Brock PS students.

b) All members, except for the principal or his/her delegate, are voting members of the school council.

c) Parent members must constitute a majority of the members of school council.

d) A person who is employed by the TDSB cannot be appointed as a community representative on the council unless: he or she is not employed at the school; and the other members of the school council are informed of the person's employment before the appointment.

e) A trustee of the TDSB cannot be a member of the school council.

3. Membership (cont.)

f) A person is qualified to be a parent member of a school council if he or she is a parent or guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the school, with the following exceptions:

- he/she is employed at Brock Public School; or
- he/she is not employed at Brock Public School, but is employed elsewhere by the TDSB, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment prior to the vote.

g) A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members of a school council if he or she is a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.

h) Roles and responsibilities of non-parent members are outlined in Appendix B.

4. Election Procedures

4.1 Parent Member Elections

a) In May or June, the Governance Committee shall prepare for council elections in September.

b) If no Governance Committee exists at the designated time for election preparation, one shall be struck.

c) In preparing for an election, the Governance Committee shall:

- i. follow the timelines outlined in Appendix A
- ii. provide nomination forms;
- iii. ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date(s), location, and time, at least fourteen days in advance of the election;
- iv. request a profile from all candidates and make these available to the electorate;
- v. conduct the elections by secret ballot;
- vi. count the ballots;
- vii. help the principal notify all candidates of the results;
- viii. keep all results and related information confidential.

d) An election of parent members of a school council shall be held during the first 30 calendar days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair of the previous year's school council after consulting with the principal of the school.

e) 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 he or she is employed by the school board.

4. Election Procedures (cont.)

- f) Unless otherwise determined by the school council, nomination forms shall follow the format laid out in the Ministry of Education's *School Councils: A Guide for Members*.
- g) The principal of a school shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, on behalf of the school council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.
- h) The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.
- i) Candidates may not observe ballot counting.
- j) If twelve or fewer parent member nominations are received by the nomination deadline, then no election will be held, and all nominated candidates shall be acclaimed as parent members of council.
- k) The newly-elected school council shall meet within 35 calendar days of the first day of the school year.
- l) At the first meeting of the new school council at the beginning of the year, the council shall set dates, times, and locations for its meetings throughout the year.

4.2 Executive Elections

- a) Election of the school council executive officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary) shall take place at the first meeting of the new school council.
- b) Nominations of candidates for executive officer positions shall be made by council members at the meeting. All nominees for school council officer positions shall be parents of current Brock students, and shall not be employed by the Brock Public School. Employees of the Toronto District School Board who are nominated for executive officer positions shall inform council members prior to the vote.
- c) The election of officers shall be by secret ballot. All voting members of council present at the initial meeting may cast a ballot in the election of officers. The principal shall conduct ballot counting for each officer position. At least one council member who is not a candidate for an officer position shall observe ballot counting.
- d) Candidates for officer positions shall not observe ballot counting.
- e) Where there is only one candidate for an officer position, the candidate will be acclaimed to the position.

4. Election Procedures (cont.)

4.3 Committee Chair Selection

- a) Selection of standing committee chairs take place at the first meeting of the new school council, following the election of officers. Selection of ad hoc committee chairs may take place at the first meeting, or at any subsequent meeting of the school council
- b) Candidates for committee chairs shall be nominated by council members.
- c) Selection of committee chairs will follow the council decision-making process (*see* “Making Decisions” section of these bylaws) and will be determined by consensus or by a public vote of the members in attendance.
- d) Where there is only one candidate for a committee chair position, the candidate shall be acclaimed

4.4 Term of Office

- a) A person elected or appointed as a member of a school council holds office from the later of, the date he or she is elected or appointed; and the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections held at the beginning of the school year, until the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections held at the beginning of the next school year.
- b) A member of a school council may be re-elected or reappointed.

4.5 Vacancies

- a) A vacancy in the membership of a school council may be filled by appointment.
- b) A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the council from exercising its authority.
- c) Appointments are to be by majority vote at a meeting of school council.

5. Executive

- a) The school council executive shall have four officers: a chair and a vice-chair (by mutual agreement, the chair and vice-chair may informally function as co-chairs); a secretary; and a treasurer. See Appendix B for descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of Officers.
- b) Officers must be parent members of the council, and shall be elected by the members of the council.
- c) A person who is employed by the board that established the council cannot be an officer of the council.
- d) The chair and the treasurer of the Council have signing authority for the Council.
- e) If the chair cannot be present at a council meeting, the vice-chair shall chair the meeting.
- f) If one of the officers can no longer perform his/her duties, the duties may be immediately assumed by any other officer.
- e) If an executive member or committee chair misses more than two meetings, or is not performing expected tasks, the council may reassign his/her responsibilities in accordance with the council's vacancies procedures

6. Expectations of Council Members

- a) Voting members of council: actively participate in committees established by the school council; contribute to the discussions of the school council; solicit the views of other parents and members of the community to share with the school council; observe the council's code of ethics and established bylaws. See Appendix B for roles and responsibilities of members.
- b) Members should not miss more than two meetings.
- c) Executive members and committee chairs from the previous year are expected to hand off all relevant documentation of their activities to the next year's executive/chairs. Executive members/committee chairs not returning to the school the following year shall deliver all official documentation to the principal of the school before the end of the school year for which they were elected, and the principal shall deliver these materials to the incoming members for the following school year.
- d) School Council members are expected to follow the school council's Code of Ethics, outlined in Appendix C.

7. Meetings

7.1 General

- a) The school council shall meet at least six times during the school year and may meet more frequently as agreed upon by the Council.
- b) The school council shall meet within the first 35 days of the school year, after the elections on a date fixed by the principal of the school.
- c) A meeting of the school council cannot be held unless a majority of the current members of the council are present at the meeting. In addition, of the council members present, the majority must be parent members.
- d) A meeting cannot be held unless the principal, or delegated vice-principal, is in attendance.
- e) All meetings of the school council shall be open to the public.
- f) The school council is entitled to hold its meetings at the school.
- g) All meetings of the school council shall be held at a location that is accessible to the Public.
- h) The principal of a school shall, on behalf of the school council, give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the council to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.

7.2 Conflict Resolution

- a) 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.
- b) Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- c) Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- d) 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.
- e) If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
- f) 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.

8. Committees

- a) A school council may establish committees to make recommendations to the council.
- b) All parent committees shall be struck by council and report through council.
- c) Every committee of a school council must include at least one parent member of the council.
- d) A committee of a school council may include persons who are not members of the council.
- e) All committee meetings shall be open to the public.
- f) A committee is entitled to hold its meetings at the school.
- g) All meetings of a committee shall be held at a location that is accessible to the Public.
- h) The principal of a school shall, on behalf of the committee, give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the committee to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.
- i) Standing Committees:: Communications, Governance.
- j) Ad-hoc Committees: Fundraising, Rooftop Garden, School Grounds, and any other committee that council deems appropriate.
- j) Each committee struck by the council shall submit a written report of its activities since the prior meeting at least ten days before a school council meeting. Committee reports shall be distributed to the council and school parents at least one week prior to the meeting.

9. Making Decisions

- a) Where possible, Council and committee decisions shall be made by consensus.
- b) In instances where consensus cannot be reached and a decision is required, it shall be made by a vote of the members in attendance.
- c) Voting procedures shall follow the rules of order laid out by the Ministry of Education in its publication *School Councils: A Guide for Members*.
- d) Each member of a school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the council, with the exception of the principal, who is not a voting member.

10. Minutes and Financial Records

- a) A school council shall keep minutes of all of its meetings and records of all of its financial transactions.
- b) The minutes and records shall be available at the school for examination without charge by any person for a minimum of four years.

11. Conflict of Interest

- a) A conflict of interest in the School Council is any situation in which a Council member's personal or financial interests may be incompatible with his or her responsibilities to the School Council.
- b) A conflict of interest may be:
 - **Actual:** When a school council member has a private interest that is sufficiently connected to his or her duties and responsibilities as a council member that it influences the exercise of these duties and responsibilities.
 - **Perceived:** When reasonably well-informed persons could reasonably believe that a school council member has a conflict of interest, even where, in fact, there is no real conflict of interest.
 - **Potential:** When a school council member has a private interest that could affect his or her decision about matters proposed for discussion.
- c) 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 an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decisions of the council.
- d) exclude him- or herself from discussions in which:
 - a conflict of interest is likely to result;
 - the member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the school council may be jeopardized;
 - the council member, his or her relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit either 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.
- e) Members shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

12. Advisory Authority of School Councils

a) A school council may make recommendations to the principal of the school or to the TDSB on any matter. The principal shall consider each recommendation made by the council and advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.

13. Duty of the Board to Respond

a) The TDSB shall consider each recommendation made to the board by the council and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.

14. Consultation with Parents

a) A school council shall consult with parents of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the council.

b) It is expected that any advice provided to the school principal or TDSB will be based on the general views of the school community and the best interests of all the students in the school.

15. Annual Report

a) Every school council shall annually submit a written report on its activities to the principal of the school and to the board that established the council.

b) If the school council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report on those activities.

c) The principal shall, on behalf of the school council, give a copy of the report to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the copy is given, is enrolled in the school.

d) This may be done by, giving the report to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent; and posting the report in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.

16. Changing Bylaws

a) Proposed bylaw changes shall be prepared by the Governance Committee, in consultation with the Chair.

b) If no Governance Committee exists at the time of the proposed changes, one shall be struck.

c) Changes to the bylaws must be accepted by a 2/3 majority vote of council.

d) Proposed changes shall be shared with council members and the school community via the school council email list, and posting on the school's website at least two weeks before the council meeting at which the proposed changes are to be tabled.

e) Minor technical changes to the bylaws are not subject to the other provisions of this section.

Reference Documents:

[Ontario Education Act, O. Reg. 612/00](#)

[School Councils: A Guide for Schools \(2001, revised 2002\), Ontario Ministry of Education](#)
[Summary of School Council Regulations #612, #613 \(2001\), Toronto District School Board](#)

Section III - Appendices

Appendix A - Timelines for Brock School Council Elections

- May/June**
- The Governance Committee begins preparations for school council election of parent members in September.
 - The chair of the Governance Committee must forward the following year's election information package (*School Council Election of Parent Representatives*) to the principal at least two weeks before the end of the current school year.
- Mid-August**
- In the welcome-back-to-school package, the principal includes in the school mailing the *School Council Election of Parent Representatives* which includes election forms, deadline for submitting nominations to the school, who is eligible, the election date and other election information
- Early September**
- The Principal posts election information on the school website and in an accessible area in the school.
 - Parents return nomination forms to schools.
- Early/Mid-September**
- A list of parent nominees with brief biographies is published on the school's website, e-mailed out via the school council e-mail list or sent home, with a reminder of the election date and information on the election process.
- Mid-/End September**
- The ballot box is prepared for the election of parent representatives, and arrangements are made for volunteers to help voters at the voting areas.
 - The election of the teacher, non-teacher and student representatives may take place at the same time or shortly after the election of parent representatives.
- Late September/Early October**
- The first meeting of the new school council takes place and meeting dates, times, and locations for the upcoming year are determined.
 - The names of the new school council members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election, as are the dates, times and locations of future meetings

Appendix B – Brock PS School Council Roles and Responsibilities

Parent Member

- Attends a majority of School Council meetings
- Contributes to discussions of the School Council
- Actively participates in School Council committees (Chair and Vice-Chair exempt)
- Helps build partnerships between the School Council and parent community
- Observes the Council's Code of Ethics and Bylaws

Chair (Officer)

- Fulfills his/her responsibilities as a Parent Member as above, and:
- Arranges council meetings and prepares meeting agendas
- Chairs all council meetings (keeps items to time, leads voting, etc.)
- Facilitates the resolution of conflict
- Communicates regularly with other executive members and committee chairs
- Communicates regularly with the school principal on behalf of the council
- Is an authorized signatory for the Council's bank account

Vice-Chair (Officer)

- Fulfills his/her responsibilities as a Parent Member as above, and:
- Fulfills the responsibilities of the Chair if he/she cannot perform his/her duties
- Attends all School Council meetings
- Communicates regularly with the Chair
- Fulfills the responsibilities of the Secretary if the Secretary cannot attend a meeting
- Leads the preparation of the School Council annual report

Treasurer (Officer)

- Fulfills his/her responsibilities as a Parent Member as above, and:
- Attends all School Council meetings
- Is an authorized signatory for the Council's bank account
- Keeps School Council funds deposited in financial institutions
- Oversees a spending budget and maintains detailed, written financial statements, including records of all receipts and disbursements of School Council funds
- Is a member of the Fundraising Committee
- Prepares the financial section of the School Council annual report

Appendix B (cont.) – Brock PS School Council Roles and Responsibilities

Secretary (Officer)

Fulfills his/her responsibilities as a Parent Member as above, and:

- Attends all School Council meetings
- Keeps written minutes of each meeting: major discussion threads; names of all meeting attendees/absentees; decisions made; specific tasks assigned (including name of person assigned to the task)
- Shares draft minutes of a council meeting with the Council for review and revision within two days of the meeting, and distributes the final version of the minutes to the school community within one week of the meeting.
- Is a member of the Communications Committee
- Monitors the school council email account over the summer

Principal or Delegated Vice-Principal

- Distributes promptly to each council member material identified by the ministry for distribution to school council members and posts the material in a school location accessible to parents
- Acts as a resource to the council on laws, regulations and board policies
- Attends all school council meetings
- Considers each recommendation made by the school council to the principal and returns to the council with the action taken in response to the recommendation
- Solicits views on matters pertaining to the establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines relating to student achievement, accountability of the education system to parents and the communication of those plans to the public
- May participate on any committees established by the school council
- May solicit the views of the school council on any matter
- Observes the council's code of ethics and established bylaws

School Staff Representatives (one each from teaching and non-teaching staff)

- Attends a majority of School Council meetings
- Contributes to the discussions of the school council
- Solicits views from their respective staff groups to share with the school council
- May participate on any committees established by the school council
- Communicates information back to their staff groups
- Observes the council's code of ethics and established bylaws

Community Representative

- Contributes to the discussions of the school council
- Represents the community's perspective
- May participate on any committees established by the school council
- Helps build partnerships and links between the school and the community
- Observes the council's code of ethics and established bylaws

Committee Chair

- Attends all School Council meetings
- Sets and attends all meetings of the committee for which he/she is chair
- Communicates regularly with the School Council Chair and members of the school community affected by/involved in the committee
- Facilitates the resolution of conflict
- Reports on committee progress at School Council meetings

Appendix C – Brock PS School Council Code of Ethics

A member of the Brock School Council shall:

- consider the best interests of all students.
- be guided by Brock Public School's and the TDSB's mission statements.
- act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of the Brock PS School Council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the TDSB and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
- become familiar with the council's and school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- acknowledge democratic principles and accept the decision of the council.
- respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- not disclose confidential information.
- limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the overall school community.
- use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- declare any conflict of interest.

A member of the Brock School Council shall not:

- accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.

Revision Log

Summary of Revision	Date Approved
The <i>Brock PS School Council Handbook</i> was approved by a vote of the 2014-2015 Brock PS School Council.	May 4, 2015