

Dunlace Public School School Council Constitution, By-laws & Practices

**June 2005
Revised June 2008**

Article 1 – PURPOSE:

Section 1: Foundation Statement

“The Toronto District School Board believes that education is a shared responsibility among parents, the community, students, staff and the Board. By working together we all contribute to the achievement of our students and the improvement of our schools. Parents have a responsibility to provide encouragement and guidance to children at home. Schools have a responsibility to provide a caring and supportive environment, which encourages all students to learn. Parents and schools shall hold themselves accountable for fulfilling those responsibilities.

All parents have a right to information about our programs and policies. They shall be consulted about decisions which affect their students and the schools. The Board shall ensure that all members of our diverse community have the opportunity to participate, as individuals or as groups, in all ways which contribute to the success of our students. The Toronto District School Board shall provide the resources necessary to support an effective partnership among parents, the community, students, staff and the Board.”

Section 2: Mandate

- Under existing Ministry legislation, Regulations 612 / 613, each school is required to establish and maintain a school council of parents, staff and the principal. The legislated mandate of the school council is advisory to the school and to the Board. Its purpose is to focus on matters relating to the achievement and well-being of students, and on the improvement of the school.
- The purpose of a school council is, through active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. (*Reg. 612/2.1*)
- A school council may make recommendations to the principal of the school or to the Board on any matter. (*Reg. 612/20*)
- The school council is an advisory body which consists of elected parents, teacher(s), principal / vice-principal, support staff, community representative(s) ... and a representative from the Ontario Home and School Association, if such a group exists in the school. (*Reg. 612/3.8*)

Section 3: Responsibilities

The School Council shall:

- Consult with parents / guardians of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the council. *(Reg. 612/23)*
- Develop by-laws that govern election procedures, filling vacancies, a conflict of interest, and a conflict resolution process. *(Reg. 612/15.2)*
- Keep minutes of meetings and records of financial transactions available at the school for a period of four years, for examination without charge by any person. *(Reg. 612/16)*
- Produce an annual written report of the council activities, including financial activities, to be submitted to the principal and the Board. *(Reg. 612/24)*

The Principal shall:

- Act as a resource person to the school council, and assist the council in obtaining information relevant to its functions, including information related to relevant legislation and policies. *(Reg. 613/20)*
- Solicit the views of the school council with respect to:
 - School policies and guidelines that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents;
 - A local code of conduct and a local student dress code;
 - New education initiatives that relate to students or to the accountability of the education system to parents;
 - School action plans for improvement based on EQAO results and communication of those plans to the public. *(Reg. 613/1-3)*
- Consider each recommendation made by the council and advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation. *(Reg. 613/18)*
- Distribute the school council's annual report to the every parent / guardian and post it in an accessible location. *(Reg. 613/24.3)*
- Distribute materials intended for school councils from the Ministry of Education to school council members and post them in an accessible location. *(Reg. 613/12.1)*
- Give written notice of the elections to parents at least 14 days before the election and post such notice in an accessible location. *(Reg. 612/6&7)*
- Attend every school council meeting. *(Reg. 613/3.16)*

The Board of Education shall:

- Solicit the views of school councils concerning the development of policies and guidelines with respect to pupil achievement and the accountability of the education system to parents, including: codes of conduct; dress codes for students; allocation of funds to school councils; fundraising; conflict resolution processes; reimbursement of expenses incurred by the school council members; education improvement plans; and selection criteria for principals and vice-principals. *(Reg. 612/19.1)*

- Consider each recommendation made to the Board by school councils and shall advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation. *(Reg. 612/21)*

The Ministry of Education:

- Shall report to school councils annually on education issues in the province and may provide them with information on their roles and responsibilities. *(Reg. 612/10.1)*
- May collect names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of school council members and may share this information with the Ontario Parent Council. *(Reg. 612/9.1-2)*

Section 4: Mission Statement

Dunlace Public School Council is a voluntary group of parents, caregivers and school staff who are committed to:

- Supporting and enhancing students' learning through the cooperative efforts of all people involved at Dunlace Public School;
- Supporting the learning environment by consulting / advising with administration on issues of concern for the school community;
- Promoting and encouraging parental involvement.

Section 5: Objectives

1. To represent the interests of the children, parents and the community.
2. To offer parents / caregivers / guardians the opportunity to support each other.
3. To consult with the school board on specific policy issues as required.
4. To respond to Ministry of Education reports as provided.

Article 2 – MEMBERSHIP:

Section 1: Eligibility

- The majority of school council members must be parents / guardians of pupils enrolled in the school. *(Reg. 612/4.1)*
- Board employees who work at their child's school are not eligible for election as school council parent members in that school. *(Reg. 612/3.5, 4.2)*
- Board employees who stand for school council election as parent members in their child's school (where they do not work) must disclose their employment with the Board. *(Reg. 612/3.5, 4.2)*
- Board employees are not eligible to be Chair or Co-Chair of any school council in that Board. *(Reg. 612/8.3)*
- A school trustee is not eligible to be a member of a school council. *(Reg. 612.3.6)*
- Sub-committees may include non-elected members of the school community and must include at least one parent member of the school council. *(Reg. 612/13.2-3)*

BY-LAW #1: School Council Composition and Responsibilities:

Section 2: Executive Committee

The Executive Committee may consist of:

- 1 Chair
- 1 Vice-Chair
- 1 Past-Chair
- 1 Secretary
- 1 Treasurer
- Principal or Vice-Principal (ex-officio)

Section 3: The School Council

The School Council will be made up of the Executive Committee plus members whose roles may include:

- 1 Teacher
- 1 Staff / Support Staff Member (caretaker, secretary, additional teacher)
- 1 Parent Representative to Ward Council
- 1 Community Representative (appointed)
- 1 Family of Schools representative
- Committee Chairs (see below)

Section 4: Executive Committee Responsibilities:

Chair: Sets the agenda in consultation with school council members, maintains communication with all committees, posts the agenda prior to meeting date, signs documents, chairs meetings, liaises with principal and Executive Committee, produces an annual report.

PRACTICE: The agenda should be set 1 week in advance – but at least 48 hours in advance – of the meeting.

Vice-Chair: Assists the Chair when necessary and fills in when the Chair is not available and may assume the role of Chair in the following year.

Past-Chair: Provides guidance and support to the current Chair.

Treasurer: Manages bank accounts, signs documents, keeps records of all financial transactions, produces monthly financial statements, produces end of year financial report.

Secretary: Takes minutes at school council meetings and arranges for the distribution and posting. Also maintains records of all correspondence.

Section 5: Committee Chairs / Representatives / Members and Responsibilities:

Daycare Rep: This Chair liaises between the Daycare and the School Council, attending Daycare meetings and reporting to the School Council on their activities as appropriate.

CPF Rep: This Chair liaises between the Canadian Parents for French (CPF) and the School Council, attending CPF meetings and reporting to the council on their activities as appropriate.

Fundraising: This committee undertakes efforts to raise money which is used for the benefit of the children and the school within the guidelines set out in the TDSB Fundraising Policy.

Fun Fair: During the years which a Fun Fair is planned, this committee is responsible for organizing, planning and executing the Fun Fair. This Chair must work closely with the Fundraising Chair and keep SC informed of their activities.

PRACTICE: The Fun Fair is held annually the first Saturday in May.

Grade Six: This committee includes the Grade 6 teachers and is responsible for organizing and coordinating activities which may include a graduation ceremony, party and any necessary fundraising activities. This Chair must work closely with the Fundraising Chair and keep SC informed of their activities.

Lice: This Chair coordinates parent volunteers to examine the heads of every child in the school on the same day.

PRACTICE: Approximately 3 times per year: September, January, March.

Lunch Club / After School Activities: This committee is responsible for organizing extracurricular programs at lunch for the benefit of the students and coordinating the “lunch lady” with special lunch days and hot lunch programs.

PRACTICE: Special lunch days may include but are not limited to pizza and hot dog lunches.

Family of School Rep: This rep attends the Family of School meetings and reports to council as appropriate.

Ward Rep: This rep attends the Ward Trustee meetings and reports to council as appropriate.

Choir: The Chair liaises between the primary and junior choirmasters and SC.

New Initiatives: This is an ad hoc committee made up of the Principal, teachers and parents. It develops policies and procedures specific for Dunlace, resulting from issues arising from the School Improvement Plan, Safe Schools Act and any other policies introduced through the Board.

Class Rep: This rep recruits and coordinates parents to act as liaisons between the teacher and parents for each class, providing for communication between all parties.
PRACTICE: The recruiting is done each September.

Web Site: The Chair coordinates the school web site.

Babysitting: The Chair coordinates the babysitters for SC meetings, arranging payment and ensuring safe arrivals and departures.

Constitution & By-laws: This Chair prepares constitutional and by-laws revisions.

- The above positions shall attend School Council meetings and shall report to the School Council as appropriate.

PRACTICE: The above positions shall be filled by members elected / appointed to the School Council.

ARTICLE 3: ELECTIONS:

Section 1: Election Rules

- A person is qualified to be a parent member of a school council if he/she is a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school. *(Reg. 612/4.1)*
- A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members if he/she is a parent of a student who is enrolled in the school. *(Reg. 612/4.3)*
- Election of school council members shall be held in the month of June for the following positions:
Chair Vice Chair Treasurer Secretary
Fundraising Chair Grade 6 Committee Chair Lunch Club/After School
Activities Chair
Advance notification of 14 days shall be given.
- Election of all other school council members shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, with 14 days advance notice. *(Reg. 612/4.4 & 12.4)*
- Elections of parent members shall be by secret ballot. *(Reg. 612/4.8)*
- The term of office is one year (members may be re-elected for more than one term). *(Reg. 612/6.1)* The term is July 1 – June 30.
PRACTICE: It is recommended that a member not serve more than three consecutive terms.
- A vacancy in the membership of the school council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the council. *(Reg. 612/7.1)*
- Teacher member(s) are elected by teachers; support staff are elected by support staff; community member(s) are appointed by the council. *(Reg. 612/5.1-4)*
PRACTICE: Teachers / support staff attend SC meetings on a rotational basis. Conveners alternate attendance.

Section 2: Procedure

BY-LAW #2: Election Procedure

- Elections shall occur during the first thirty days of the start of each school year with the exception of the following positions which will be held in the month of June:
Chair Vice Chair Treasurer Secretary
Fundraising Chair Grade 6 Committee Chair Lunch Club/After School
Activities Chair
- 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.
- 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 school council to help plan the election process, the gathering of the 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 be comprised of the Immediate Past Chair plus at least one school council member who is not standing for election.
- The election committee shall:
 - Provide nomination forms;
 - Ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date(s), location, time, at least 14 days in advance of the election;
 - If more than one candidate for a given position, request a profile from candidates and make these available to the electorate;
 - Conduct the elections by secret ballot;
 - Count the ballots;
 - Help the Chair or Principal notify all candidates of the results;
 - Keep all results and related information confidential.
- 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 the new members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election.

Section 3: Vacancies

BY-LAW #3: Replacements and Vacancies

Vacancies on the Executive Committee or of non-executive SC positions may be filled by any member of the parent community upon a majority vote by all existing SC members.

ARTICLE 4: SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCEDURES:

Section 1: Meetings

- The school council shall meet at least 4 times during the school year to discuss and decide on matters that it has the authority to consider. (*Reg. 612/12.1*) At the annual meeting in June, the school council shall set dates, times and locations for its meetings throughout the year.
- The Annual Meeting of the school council shall be held in June.
- Notice of the Annual Meeting shall be given at least thirty days (30) in advance of the Annual Meeting. Nominations for the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Fundraising Chair, Grade 6 Committee Chair and Lunch Club/After School Activities Chair shall be given to the Election Chair at least fourteen days (14) in advance of the meeting.
- A majority of parents must be present to have a duly constituted meeting of the school council (quorum). (*Reg. 612/12.3*)
- A newly elected school council shall meet within 35 days of the school year on a date set by the principal. (*Reg. 612/12.2*)
- All school council meetings shall be open to the public. (*Reg. 612/12.4*)

PRACTICE: All school council meetings will occur on the school site.

Section 2: Decisions

BY-LAW #4: Voting

Each elected SC member as well as each parent present at the meeting has one vote with the exception of the Chair and Principal who do not vote. The Chair can vote only to settle a tie. Decisions made by the Executive Committee shall be made by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, voting shall be by secret ballot. Decisions at SC meetings shall be made by a show of hands.

BY-LAW #5: Immediate Decisions

Items requiring immediate decisions (prior to the next SC meeting) may be made by the Executive Committee (with a quorum of 4 Executive Committee members) and shall be made by consensus.

BY-LAW #6: Proxy

An elected SC member may vote by proxy in which case the Dunlace School Council Proxy form shall be used. The proxy form must be given to the Chair prior to the commencement of the meeting. (See Attachment #1.)

BY-LAW #7: Quorum

A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of members shall consist of 2 voting members of the Executive Committee and at least 2 other members of the School Council such that the majority of members present are parents.

BY-LAW #8: Recording of Decisions

All decisions shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Minutes of the meeting shall be available to all parents, posted in the school and distributed as determined by the council.

Section 3: Conflict of Interest

BY-LAW # 9: Conflict of Interest

Any time the school council does business with the potential for monetary gain / loss with any person, agency or company, and a member of the school council has a vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency or company, that member shall declare a conflict of interest and shall not discuss or vote on any such resolution relating to the matter.

Section 4: Conflict Resolution:

BY-LAW #10: Conflict Resolution

- Council members shall agree to abide by the Board's Common Code of Behaviour and the School Council: A guide for members. (Copies shall be made available from the school office.)
- In the event that any person attending a meeting refuses to abide by the above Codes of Behaviour, they shall be asked to leave the meeting by a member of the Executive Committee or the Principal.
- In the event that any elected council member's behaviour continues to be at odds with the Mission Statement and the Objectives of the school council, they can be removed from the council by a review committee appointed by at least 3 members of the Executive Committee and the Principal.

ARTICLE 5: FINANCIAL PROCEDURES:

Section 1: Fundraising

- A school council may engage in fundraising activities. (*Reg. 612/22.1*)
- The fundraising activities of the school council shall be conducted in accordance with applicable Board policies and for a purpose approved by the Board. (*Reg. 612/22.2 A & B*)
- A school council shall not be incorporated. (*Reg. 612/17*)

BY-LAW #11: Fundraising

- Fundraising shall be undertaken by the council and appropriate sub-committees to enhance the learning environment of the students.
- Funds raised are to be used for the purpose intended and should be spent within a two-year period unless earmarked for a special project.
- Fundraising efforts are to be concluded within the school year unless earmarked for a special long-term project.

PRACTICE: The annual Bovait McDermid Award, a cash amount for each teacher to spend in the classroom at their discretion, will continue, in memory of past parent volunteers. The amount of the Award will be considered annually in light of the funds available.

Section 2: Finances

BY-LAW #12: Expenditures

Any expenditure over \$50.00 must be approved at a school council meeting. An exception can be made for items of an urgent nature where an immediate decision is allowed under the terms of By-law #5.

BY-LAW #13: Approval of Expenditures

Approval of expenditures shall be sought at the council meeting before the funds are committed.

BY-LAW #14: Signing Authority

Signing authority shall be given to the Chair, Vice-Chair, the Treasurer, the Secretary and the Principal / Vice-Principal. Cheques must be signed by the Principal / Vice-Principal and one other of the above positions.

ARTICLE 6: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS:

An annual review of the school council Constitution & By-Laws shall be conducted at the Annual Meeting. Recommendations for amendments to the school council Constitution & By-Laws shall be given to all school council members at least thirty days (30) in advance of the Annual Meeting.

Attachment #1

Dunlace School Council

PROXY

The undersigned elected member of the Dunlace School Council, North York hereby appoints

as proxy of the undersigned elected member to vote for and on behalf of the undersigned member at the Meeting of the Dunlace School Council, North York to the same extent and with the same power as if the undersigned elected member was present. Said meeting is to be held on

_____ at Dunlace Elementary School, North York, to vote

_____ on the issue of _____

Dated this _____ day of _____, _____
Month Year

Signature of Member

Printed Name of Member