

GCVI School Council By-Laws

Amended August 2009

As outlined in Government Regulations 612 and 613 and by the Ministry of Education handbook and the Upper Grand District Handbook for School Councils.

These by-laws may be amended by a consensus of GCVI School Council members.

Role of School Councils

School Councils are mandated to be advisory bodies only and decision-making is by consensus. In the rare occasion that a decision cannot be reached then a vote will take place with the majority of members' present making the decision – principal does not have a vote.

Through active participation of parents, a School Council will work to improve pupil achievement and enhance accountability of the education system to parents.

A school council may make recommendations to the principal of the school or to the Board on any matter.

Membership Structure:

- Maximum 40 parents/guardians (parents/guardians to form majority of Council). Parent members should reflect the diversity of the school. It is encouraged that there be a parent representative from all grade levels. As well it is important to have the multi-cultural make-up of our school community reflected in our parent membership.
- Parents who are Board employees or Trustees are not allowed to be parent members of the council in the school where they work.
- Parents who are Board employees at another school must inform all parents before they run for membership.
- Board employees cannot be the community rep. at the school where they work and must inform the council before they are appointed at another school.
- Board employees cannot chair a school council.
- Principal or designate (non-voting members)
- Community members(s)
- Teaching representatives(s)
- Non-teaching representative
- Student representative(s)
- Chair/Co-chairs will be parent/guardian(s)
- Membership to be determined by September 30th of each year, parents/guardians wishing to attend meetings after this date hold observer status only.
- New parents/guardians to school after September 30th may join as members if numbers allow.

Application for Membership Structure:

- Applicants may contact Principal and/or Chair/Co-chairs to indicate their interest or attend the first School Council meeting in September.
- An election may be held if more than 40 parents/guardians seek membership.
- If less than 40 parents/guardians seek membership all members will be acclaimed.
- New members will be provided with a welcome package.

Election Structure (under Principals direction):

- If more than 40 parents/guardians seek membership, applicants will be asked to complete an application form including their name, student's name and grade and a short (4-5 line) outline of experience and reason why they want to serve.
- All application forms will be compiled into an election package.
- All GCVI parent will be informed via phone that parents wishing to vote on Council membership may pick up election packages at the school (Principal).
- New members to council will receive a welcome package.

Other Membership Details:

- Complete membership information including names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and addresses will be forwarded to the Superintendent for School Councils and to the Superintendent of Secondary School (Secretary)
- Membership information (names only) will be posted on bulletin board in the school, included in the newsletter, and posted on the web site.

Chair/Co-chairs:

- A parent/guardian will be nominated/selected by the Council.
- Will serve a one-year renewable term
- Recommended to have been a member for at least one year.
- Responsibilities include:
 1. Organizing agendas and background documentation for meetings (in discussion with Principal and Secretary).
 2. Chairing all council meetings or arranging for designate
 3. Attending or appointing a delegate to attend meetings as required.
 4. Completing Board and Ministry reports and surveys as required.
 5. Representing Council or appointing designate at school events
 6. Fulfilling (or having fulfilled by designate) other duties as requested by Council.

Secretary:

- Will be a council member nominated/selected by council. If more than 1 nomination is received then an election will be held at the September meeting, supervised by Principal.
- Will serve a one-year renewable term.
- Responsibilities to include:
 1. Circulation of documentation for meetings under the direction of the Chair/Co-chairs and/or Principal
 2. Record, prepare, and distribute minutes from all Council meetings. Drafts to be sent to Chair/Co-chairs prior to distribution to all members.
 3. Distribute minutes to all members prior to meeting.

Vacancies:

- If the number of Council parent/guardian members falls below the majority, additional members will be recruited.
- If the position of Chair, Co-chair or Secretary becomes vacant during the school year a new member will be selected by council members at the earliest convenience.

Principals Responsibilities: (as outlined in Government regulations 613) *Should check to see if this still applies*

- Within 16 days of the start of school, Principal will advertise date, time and location of school council elections to all parents (if required)
- Within 35 days of election will hold first meeting of new school council
- Must attend all meetings (or VP as designate) but cannot vote.
- Must give written notice of dates, times and locations of meetings of council to all parents.
- Shall give a copy of the annual report to all parents.
- Provide for prompt distribution to council members any materials received from the Ministry designated for council members.
- Shall post any materials distributed to members in a location accessible to parents.
- Will provide an update on school activities at all meetings
- Will provide advice and background to council members on matters for council discussion.
- Maintain a resource book of all meeting materials in the Guidance Office.

Membership Responsibilities:

- A member in good standing has not missed more than three council meetings in one year.
- Carries out the expected responsibilities of a council member.
- Will be eligible to vote on decision-making matters if a consensus cannot be reached.

- Will be encouraged to be come involved in one or more of the standing or ad hoc committees
- Responsibilities include:
 1. Being on time for meetings
 2. Attending meetings regularly or contact Chair/co-chair if unable to attend.
 3. Being prepared for meetings by reading minutes, background documentation/agenda prior to the meeting.
 4. Sharing their thoughts, concerns, and ideas.
 5. Showing respect to others.
 6. Following direction to the Chair (hand up, eye contact) to be heard.
 7. Give and receive feedback openly and honestly without personal attacks.
 8. Adhere to rulings of the chair.

Meeting Structure:

- A council meeting cannot be convened unless a majority of members are present.
- A council meeting cannot be convened unless a majority of members present are parents/guardians.
- Meeting dates will be determined by the current council, generally held the second Wednesday in September, October, November, January, February, April, May and June.
- Unless notified meetings will begin at 7:00 pm and finish approximately at 9:00 pm.
- Unless notified meetings will be held at GCVI, usually in the cafeteria.

Other Council Guidelines:

- Minutes and records to be available at the school for four years, but may be retained longer to preserve GC history.
- School councils shall not be incorporated.
- Any fundraising must be in accordance with Board policies.
- Ministry may collect names, mailing addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of council members (as well as provide to Ontario Parent Council).

Committees:

- Standing committees will be formed as the need/opportunity arises at the discretion of the current council.

Conflict of Interest:

- A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.
- 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.
- A member shall exclude him or herself from discussions in which:

1. a conflict of interest is likely to result;
 2. the members ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the school council may be jeopardized;
 3. 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.
- A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

Conflict Resolution:

- Council members volunteer or are elected to serve the school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on council at all times.
- If a council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the chair shall ask for order.
- If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the chair may direct the individual council member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.
- The removal of a member for one meeting does not prevent the council member from participating in future meetings of council.
- The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Superintendent of School within one week of the meeting.
- When the chair has requested the removal of a member or members from a meeting, the chair shall request that the disputing members of council participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting may be a private meeting, and shall not be construed as a meeting of the council.
- The chair may request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.
- An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
- Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.