

# STEPHEN LEACOCK PUBLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL

## School Council Constitution

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**PREAMBLE**

This Constitution is made under the authority of Ontario Regulations 612/00 and 613/00. In the case where the Constitution is deemed to be in conflict with Ontario Regulation 612/00 or Ontario Regulation 613/00, the applicable Ontario Regulation will supercede the Constitution.

**ARTICLE 1 - . DEFINITIONS**

1. The School Council for Stephen Leacock Public School is constituted under the Education Act, 1998 and specifically the Ontario Regulation 612/00, dated December 13, 2000. It is a volunteer group of members of the school community – parents, community representatives, students, teachers, administrators and support staff – dedicated to improving student achievement, enhancing the accountability of the education system to parents and strengthening partnerships with the community. This Constitution governing the conduct of Stephen Leacock School Council complies with Board Policy P.014. SCO: School Councils, and with Board Procedure PR.509.SCO: School Council Elections.
2. Stephen Leacock Public School Council shall hereinafter be referred to as the Council.
3. The Board is the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board under whose jurisdiction the school falls.
4. Member is a parent elected in accordance with Appendix B and is in good standing.
5. School is Stephen Leacock Public School, Kanata, Ontario.
6. Parent is the birth parent, adoptive parent or the legal guardian of one or more students at the school.
7. Student is a student currently enrolled at Stephen Leacock Public School.
8. Term is the period of time from September of one year to the following September and shall hereinafter be referred to as the School Year.
9. Constitution is the Stephen Leacock Public School Council Constitution including all appendices.
10. Fiscal Year shall be from July 1st June 31<sup>st</sup>
11. School Year shall be from September 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**ARTICLE 2 -. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

1. The purpose of the Council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve student achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.
2. The objectives of the council are:
  - a. to develop a strong relationship between home, school and the wider community served by the school, to enhance educational opportunities for all students, and to help each student develop to his or her own potential;

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- b. to provide a forum for the views and opinions of the school's community on the operation of the school and its programs and services within the parameters established by the Board, and ensuring that a school-wide focus is maintained;
- c. to provide advice and recommendations to the principal and, as appropriate, to the Board and its senior staff on the development and implementation of policies, programs and services affecting the school;
- d. to be an effective voice for promoting the interests of the school and students, and actively support the school in meeting the educational, social and recreational needs of students.

**ARTICLE 3 -. AFFILIATIONS**

1. The Council may seek affiliations with other organizations that have similar purposes.
2. Affiliations with other organizations (including any "umbrella" organization of the Board, inter-school councils, etc.) or any subsequent change in such affiliation shall require a majority of votes cast by the elected members present and voting at a meeting for which proper notice has been given to the membership.
3. The School Council shall not raise money for, or donate to, charities. This prohibition shall not apply to money raised in partnership with other OCDSB schools for worthy educational projects.

**ARTICLE 4 -. MEMBERS**

1. The council shall consist of the following members:
  - a. not less than seven parent representatives
  - b. the school principal
  - c. one teacher representative
2. The council may include the following members:
  - a. a community representative
  - b. at the Principal's discretion, a student representative
  - c. an administrative/support staff representative
3. The Council may expand its membership provided that parents always hold the majority of seats.
4. Members shall be elected or appointed as described in Appendix B, "Elections, Acclamations and Vacancies".

**ARTICLE 5 -. OFFICERS**

1. The Officers shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair (or 2 Co-Chairs), Treasurer, Secretary, Communications Officer, Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC)

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Representative, and the Volunteer Coordinator. The duties of the officers, the duties of the principal in relation to the council, and the duties of members of council at large are set forth in Appendix A “Duties”.

2. Officers shall be elected by the Council as a whole in an open public session.
3. The Chair of the council must be a member representing the parents. All other officer positions may be held by any other member of the Council. The election of officers for the School Year shall take place at the first meeting of the council of the year, and members shall remain in office until their successors are elected.
4. A member of the Council is eligible to be elected to hold the same Office for a maximum of five consecutive terms.

**ARTICLE 6 -. MEETINGS**

1. There shall be one Annual General Meeting open to all members of the school’s community.
2. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at least four times in each school year. Notice of Council meetings will be posted on the school notice board and be circulated to parents/guardians in the school newsletter. In addition, the community at large may be given notice of meetings and informed of school council activities by posting on community notice boards or giving notice in community newsletters or other local media.
3. Special meetings of the council may be held at the call of the Chair, or on the written request of one half of the members given to the Secretary.
4. A quorum is established when a majority of the current members of the school council are present, and a majority of the members present are parent members.
5. Decision Making: All decisions made by the school council will be made through consensus of all persons in attendance rather than by vote. If consensus cannot be reached and a decision is required at that time, the decision will be made by a vote of members. Should any member require a Council decision on any matter, that member will provide a Notice of Motion at least one week in advance of the council meeting, directed to all council members, setting out the reason for requiring the decision and the wording of the required decision. The decision making at the council meeting will be in accordance with this paragraph.
6. All members of the Council who are eligible to vote have equal privileges and voting rights, including the Chair, who may vote with the other members.
7. Decisions may be made using E-mail at the discretion of the Chair. The decision making guidelines of Article 7 paragraphs 5 and 6 apply to decisions made using E-mail.
8. Meetings of the Council shall be open to the general public, and no one may be excluded from the meeting except for disruptive behavior.
9. A member who is not present and has not provided notice to the Secretary at three consecutive meetings will be deemed to have resigned. They may be reinstated by

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vote of the Council.

10. The principal may be represented by the vice-principal or designate. Teacher, student and administrative/staff representatives may be represented by another member of their group chosen by the represented member. Representatives will have full voting rights.
11. Minutes of the meetings will be kept by the Secretary, and shall be made available to all members and parents. A copy of the minutes will be available at the school for examination without charge by any person.
12. At the first meeting of the Council, all members shall be given a copy of the current Stephen Leacock Public School Council constitution.

**ARTICLE 7 - . COMMITTEES**

1. The council may establish permanent standing committees, ad hoc committees or other special committees as needed and appoint members to them. Membership on such committees shall not be restricted to members of the council except that the Chair of any committee shall be a member of the Council, appointed by the Council.

**ARTICLE 8 - . PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

1. The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order (1990) shall govern the conduct of meetings of the Council in all cases where they are applicable, and are not inconsistent with any bylaws or special rules the Council has adopted.

**ARTICLE 9 - . AMENDMENTS**

1. The Constitution shall be reviewed annually.
2. The Constitution may be amended by approval of a motion by two thirds of members of council present and voting, provided that at least two weeks' notice is given of such a motion and details of the proposed amendment are circulated to all members with that notice.
3. A current copy of the Constitution shall be posted on the school web site and shall also be available on request from the school office.

**ARTICLE 10 - . EFFECTIVE DATE**

1. This constitution is in effect on the date it is adopted by Council.

ADOPTED by the Council this 19th day of January, 2010, in Kanata, Ontario.

## **Appendix A - Duties of Officers and Members**

1. Duties of Council officers and members shall be as follows:

a) The Chair/Co-Chair :

- i. must be elected as a parent member;
- ii. acts as Chair at the Annual General Meetings and all Council meetings;
- iii. prepares the agenda for and calls Council meetings;
- iv. acts as the official spokesperson of the Council;
- v. prepares the annual report of the school council to the Principal and Director of Education, including, if the Council engages in fundraising activities, a report on fundraising.
- vi. has signing authority for Council cheques and other documents;
- vii. ensures the Community Representative Nominating Committee is established at the first School Council meeting of the School Year if Council decides to appoint a community representative;
- viii. works collaboratively with school members to assign and delegate the roles and responsibilities of the school council as outlined in OCDSB Policy P.014, Section C, subsection 1.23.
- ix. ensures the constitution is maintained and up to date and reviewed annually by Council
- x. attends Inter- School Council and OCASC meetings if there is no inter-school council or OCASC representative.
- xi. ensures that accurate minutes and records, including records of all financial transactions, are kept available for at least 4 years at the school for examination without charge by any person;
- xii. ensure that a current Principal profile is on file with the Board by October 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.
- xiii. ensures that there is regular communication with the school community, in conjunction with the Communications Officer
- xiv. communicates and coordinates with the school Principal

b) The Vice-Chair:

- i. performs the duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chair; and
- ii. assists the Chair in the conduct of that office;
- iii. arranges to have the financial records audited annually.

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c) The Treasurer:

- i. takes charge and ensures the safe keeping of the finances of the Council;
- ii. prepares an annual budget;
- iii. provides an annual financial report to the Council to be included in the School Council Annual Report, and interim reports to the Council as necessary;
- iv. has signing authority for Council cheques and other documents.
- v. ensures that cheques are signed by two of: Treasurer, Chair or Vice-chair
- vi. provides a report consisting of at least the following at each Council meeting; Balance Sheet, Income statement, Report on fundraising and other revenues, expenditures and NSF cheques
- vii. ensures that records of all financial transactions be available at the school for examination (Ontario Regulation 612/00)
- viii. ensure that all expenditures over \$100 receive the approval of a motion at a Council meeting. Expenditures up to \$100 can be approved outside Council meetings by a majority of the Officers. Any expenditure under \$50 may be authorized by the signature of two of the people noted in paragraph c) v.

d) The Secretary:

- i. ensures that adequate notice of meetings and previous minutes are circulated to all members at least two weeks before each meeting;
- ii. announces and reports on meetings as required to the community at large;
- iii. records minutes, including action items and motions passed by Council of all Council meetings;
- iv. prepares correspondence as required;
- v. ensures the safekeeping of Council records and provides records for inspection to any member of the school community on request;

e) Communications Officer:

- i. ensures that information is prepared and posted as directed by the Council.

f) The Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC) Representative:

- i. represents the Council at OCASC meetings, obtaining input from the council as required;
- ii. reports OCASC activities and upcoming issues to the Council.

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g) Volunteer Coordinator:

- i. sends general volunteer form out to all families each fall;
- ii. compiles and maintains volunteer database throughout the school year;
- iii. contacts volunteers via E-mail for various events throughout the school year;
- iv. forwards names and contact information of volunteers who respond to a particular appeal to the co-ordinator of the event;
- v. ensures transfer of database to successor volunteer co-ordinator, and provides related advice and guidance.

h) The Principal:

- i. assists in the operation of the Council and attends or is represented at its meetings;
- ii. supports and promotes the Council's activities;
- iii. seeks input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility;
- iv. acts as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements;
- v. obtains and provides information, including the budgets for the school and for school-generated funds, required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions;
- vi. ensures that copies of the Council minutes are kept at the school;
- vii. assists the Council in communicating with the school community;
- viii. encourages the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community, in the life of the school and the activities of the Council.

i) Council Members:

- i. attend meetings regularly
- ii. participate actively in the work of the council
- iii. participate in Council meetings in accordance with the rules of meeting conduct;
- iii. participate in information and training programs;
- iv. act as a link between the Council and the community;
- v. encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community.



## **Appendix B - Elections, Acclamations and Vacancies**

### 1. Officers

- a. Notice of each election shall be distributed to the school community at least two weeks before the election.
- b. A nominating committee, consisting of the Principal and at least one parent not standing for election, will be established prior to the notice of election.
- c. The nominating committee shall maintain a list of all nominees.
- d. All candidates nominated for positions must indicate their acceptance.
- e. Nominations for positions shall be accepted until the time voting begins, provided that the person nominated is present and agrees, or their written consent is delivered to the nominating committee.
- f. If the number of candidates nominated is less than or equal to the number of positions to be filled, the candidates shall be acclaimed.
- g. Elections shall be to the Council as a whole. Officers shall be elected at the first Council meeting following an election by majority vote of the Council, in accordance with Article 6. The Principal shall act as Chair at this meeting until a new Chair is elected.
- h. Voting by members shall be by secret ballot. The nominating committee shall count the ballots. Only the name of the successful candidate and the total number of votes cast shall be announced.
- i. In the case of a tie vote for a position, the tied candidates will draw lots to determine the election.
- j. Voting shall be open to all members present at the election meeting. Voting by proxy is not allowed.
- k. If a position remains unfilled after an election or becomes vacant during the School Year, the Council shall function with the members, providing that the minimum Parent representatives (reference Article 4 Paragraph 1) requirement is met.
- l. If the minimum Parent representatives (reference Article 4 Paragraph 1) requirement is not met either after an election or during the School Year, the Council shall make every reasonable effort to fill (by appointment) the vacant places up to the minimum required. If the minimum Parent representative's requirement is still not met, the Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent and interested parents/guardians may develop an interim structure for a school council for the current school year, until such time as a school council can be elected/appointed in keeping with the election procedure outlined in this Appendix.

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- m. If a duly constituted Council cannot be formed in a given school year, the principal shall notify the Board. The principal shall then make every effort to establish a Council the following year.
- n. Any election issues that cannot be resolved shall be referred to the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Education for resolution.

2. Members:

- a. Elections/appointments of members of school councils shall be held annually within 30 calendar days of the beginning of each school year.
- b. The Council shall hold an election for the parent member positions. The Council shall assemble and publish a list of parents who have completed a self-nomination form prior to the election.
- c. The Council shall maintain a list of CURRENT members and their voting eligibility (reference Article 6 Paragraph 9).
- d. The Council shall not limit the number of parent positions (this means we have no maximum numbers).
- e. A Parent may request, in writing to the Chair, to become a parent member. This request may be made at any time during the School Year. The new parent member will have full voting rights after they participate in two meetings.
- f. A Parent who has not attended 3 consecutive School Council meetings, and has failed to inform the Chair prior to these meetings, shall be removed from the list of CURRENT school council members by the Chair, and shall be deemed to no longer be a member of the School Council. The past member may continue to receive minutes of the meetings for the remainder of the School Year.

3. Community Representative:

- a. At its first meeting a new Council shall appoint a Community Representative Nominating Committee. This Committee shall present a recommendation to the Council for approval by the second meeting. The Nominating Committee may confer with community associations in arriving at their decision.

4. Student Representative:

- a. The student representative shall be appointed by the Principal after consultation with the School Council to determine whether a student representative is to be included on the Council.

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5. Teacher Representative:

- a. An election for teacher representative shall be held at a meeting at the beginning of the school year.
- b. All full and part-time teaching staff shall be eligible to vote.
- c. Quorum for this meeting shall be 33% of eligible voters.

7. Administrative/Support Staff Representative:

- a. An election for administrative/support staff representative shall be held at a meeting at the beginning of the school year.
- b. All full and part-time administrative and support staff shall be eligible to vote.
- c. Quorum for this meeting shall be 33% of eligible voters.

8. Principal or Designate:

- a. In accordance with the Board Policy P.014.SCO, the School Principal is a non-voting member of the Council.

## Appendix C - Bylaws

### BYLAW 1. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- a. A Council member is in conflict of interest when:
  - i. the Council does business with the potential for monetary gain/loss with any person, agency or company and that member of the Council has a vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency or company.
  - ii. situations arise in connection with his or her duties as a Council member that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and vision of the Council and a personal or vested interest.
- b. When a conflict of interest is indicated, the member :
  - i. shall disclose the interest and the general nature thereof prior to any consideration of the matter at the meeting;
  - ii. shall not take part in the discussion of, or vote on any question in respect of the matter; and
  - iii. shall not attempt in any way whether before, during or after the meeting to influence the voting on any such question.
- c. Every declaration of conflict of interest and the general nature of the declaration shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- d. In the event that a member has not disclosed a possible conflict of interest by reason of being absent from a meeting, that member shall disclose such interest at the first meeting of the Council attended by him or her. In the event that this conflict of interest would have materially affected the outcome of a vote, the Council shall nullify the previous vote and shall re-vote on the motion.
- e. A member shall not accept favors or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, and entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

### BYLAW 2. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- a. Resolution of Conflict of Opinion
  - i. Every 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.
  - ii. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
  - iii. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption for a specified length of time as pre-determined by the Chair.

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- iv. 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.
  - v. If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
  - vi. If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair may request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.
- b. Resolution of Disruptive Behavior
- i. Council members are elected to serve the school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on Council at all time.
  - ii. Any attendee to a Council meeting shall comply with the guidelines and rules outlined in these by-laws.
  - iii. If a Council member or members, or any other meeting attendee, become disruptive during a meeting, the Chair shall ask for order.
  - iv. The Chair is responsible for taking firm and consistent action to maintain or restore order. This may include, but is not limited to: asking for a comment to be rescinded; tabling the debate; closing the debate; or asking an individual to leave the meeting.
  - v. The removal of an individual for one meeting does not prevent that individual from participating in future meetings of Council.
  - vi. The incident shall be recorded in the Minutes of the Council.
  - vii. When the Chair has requested the removal of a member(s) from a meeting the Chair shall request that the disputing member(s) 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.
  - viii. The Chair may request the intervention or presence of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute. It is recommended that a one on one meeting should not occur for dispute resolution.
  - ix. An independent third party may be a Board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
  - x. Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

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BYLAW 3. CODE OF ETHICS

- a) A member shall consider the best interests of all students.
- b) A member shall be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
- c) A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
- d) A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- e) A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- f) A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- g) A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- h) A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- i) A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
- j) A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- k) A member shall not disclose confidential information.
- l) A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- m) A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- n) A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- o) A member shall declare any conflict of interest.
- p) A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.